

TWENTY-ONE MEN KILLED AT DAYTON, TENN., YESTERDAY

Caused by an Explosion of Dust in the New
Richland Coal Mine--A Horri-
ble Affair.

Special to the Leaf-Chronicle.

DAYTON, TENN., May 28.—At the Richland mine of the Dayton Coal & Iron Company, two miles from Dayton, at 4:30 o'clock yesterday afternoon, a terrific explosion of gas, formed by the collection of coal dust, resulted in the death of twenty-one men, all white, and most of them married and with families.

The explosion was caused by what is known among miners as a "blow blast." It is the custom of the miners to place blasts and fire them off at quitting time each afternoon, leaving the coal thus thrown down to be loaded and hauled from the mine the next morning. The Richland mine is destitute of water, and hence great volumes of fine particles of coal dust, invisible to the naked eye, accumulate at the roof of the mine, forming a highly inflammable gas, subject to explosion if exposed to flames.

MASSES OF FLAME.

Yesterday afternoon, at exactly 4:30 o'clock a dynamite cartridge was placed in position in one of the rooms for a blast. The miners had just started for the mouth of the mine. The blast did not explode as intended, but instead a long flame shot out of the blast hole and ignited this accumulation of dust. Instantly a terrific explosion occurred and a seething mass of flame shot to the mouth of the mine and extended 300 feet into the open air, scorching the leaves of the nearby trees. There were thirty-four men in the mine at the time. Four of these escaped with slight injury. Twenty-one were killed and nine were terribly burned, most of them fatally. The force of the explosion caused great masses of coal and slate to cave in from the roof of the mine and many

of the fated miners were completely buried. Word quickly reached Dayton and rescue forces were at once organized and proceeded to the mine.

BLACKENED VICTIMS.

One by one the blackened and horribly disfigured bodies were taken from the debris and carried to the mouth of the mine, where they were loaded into a locomotive and carried to Dayton. Scores of relatives and friends gathered at the mouth of the mine, and shrieks of anguish as the forms of loved ones were removed were heartrending in the extreme.

The two undertaking establishments at Dayton were turned into improvised morgues, where the mangled bodies were dressed and prepared for delivery to their families. All of the men employed in this mine were residents of Dayton.

The Richland mine is the property of the Dayton Coal & Iron Company, composed of Glasgow capitalists. The company operates an iron furnace at Dayton and operates coal mines in connection with it.

December 33, 1895, a similar explosion occurred in the Nelson mines, situated a few hundred feet from where yesterday's explosion occurred, in which twenty-eight miners were instantly killed.

REPORTS NOT EXAGGERATED.

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DAYTON, TENN., May 28.—The disaster at the Richland mines is not exaggerated by the early reports. Of the fifty miners entombed by dust caused from the explosion none escaped injury, and perhaps twenty-five are dead. Twenty-five have been recovered and they were either dead or seriously injured.