

### HEROES OF THE MINES

The accident at the mine at Williamstown in which ten lives were lost was one of the most peculiar known in the coal fields, in which peculiar accidents are common. It was not due to an accumulation of mine gas, which is the usual cause of disaster, but to gas and sulphur smoke from the engine which makes frequent trips through the tunnel. All but one of the fatalities were among the rescuers, who apparently made a dash into the mine and lost their lives while groping about for the comrades who had been previously overcome by the gas.

The whole affair is a picture of black horror, brightened only by the heroic courage and self-sacrifice of the rescuers. And let us say right here that nowhere else is exhibited such courage and such devotion to one another as in the mines. In a railroad wreck, in a fire, men become frenzied animals seeking only their own preservation and to this end they do not always hesitate to murder the poor wretches who stand between them and safety. The coal miner never thinks of rescuing only himself. He gives what aid he can to his companions. Many a man has given his life in attempting to rescue victims of mine disasters, as in the Harwick affair, but we believe that the records do not contain a case parallel with that at Williamstown.