

## WHAT SAVED THE CHERRY MINERS.

Owe Their Lives to Govern-  
ment's Rescue Corps.

### RUSHED TO SCENE OF DISASTER

As Soon as Word Was Received of the  
Catastrophe Men Trained at Experi-  
ment Station in Pittsburg in Use of  
Oxygen Helmets Were Sent to St.  
Paul Coal Mine.

It is believed by United States gov-  
ernment officers in Washington that  
the miners who were recently saved  
from death in the St. Paul coal mine  
at Cherry, Ill., owe their lives to the  
work of the government's rescue corps  
connected with the geological survey.  
These men, who are stationed at Pitts-  
burg, where the survey has an experi-  
ment station for investigating the  
causes of mine disasters, were rushed  
to Cherry as soon as word of the catas-  
trophe was received.

Each member of the corps had been  
trained in the use of what is known as  
the oxygen helmet, an apparatus that  
permits artificial breathing in the pres-  
ence of deadly gases. Equipped with  
such helmets the government's life sav-  
ers were able to enter the shaft of the  
burning mine and fight the fire at close  
range.

Officials said that had the methods  
that have been in use in the past been  
employed the mine shaft would have  
been sealed until the fire had been  
smothered for want of oxygen. This,  
of course, would have meant a delay  
sufficient to have caused the death of  
every man under ground.

**Much Time Saved in Reaching Miners.**  
Geological survey officers said that  
the ability of the government's rescue  
corps to enter the mine, filled as it was  
with smoke and gas, saved at least  
several days' time in reaching the en-  
tombled men. To these officers the res-  
cue at Cherry is the most practical  
demonstration ever given anywhere in  
the world of the efficiency of the oxy-  
gen helmets.

They asserted that this experience  
would go a long way toward showing  
mine owners and miners the necessity  
for having a complete equipment of  
oxygen helmets at each mine, together  
with a corps of men trained in their  
use. It is their belief that hundreds of  
lives can be saved in this manner and  
the terrible death rate in American  
mines thereby reduced to a figure  
somewhat approaching the compara-  
tively low rate of casualties in Euro-  
pean coal mines.

With the government's method this  
agonizing wait at the shaft for the  
gas to dissipate is done away with  
and it is not necessary to pour fresh  
air into the mine, for the members of  
the rescue corps in their oxygen hel-  
mets can enter any atmosphere, how-  
ever deadly, and remain for a period  
of two hours. If there has been an  
explosion of gas the members of the  
corps enter the mine at once and look  
for small fires that usually follow ex-  
plosions. These fires are extinguished  
at once, and then the ventilating cur-  
rent is turned on without any danger.  
In other words, the mine's normal con-  
dition is restored at the earliest possi-  
ble moment, and the men who are in  
the farthest recesses of the mine,  
where the black damp has not yet pen-  
etrated, are able to walk out.

The station erected at Pittsburg con-  
sists of an explosive gallery, where  
the powders used in blasting the coal  
are tested and standardized, and also a  
large room for the training of miners  
in rescue work.

**Equipment of the Rescuer.**  
The oxygen helmet and auxiliary ap-  
paratus weigh between thirty-five and  
forty pounds. The helmet is a metal-

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