

### Explosion.

Thursday Morning last a terrible gas explosion occurred in the Laurel Creek mine near Pochahontas, Virginia.

One hundred and fifty-five men were at work there at the time, and such was the force of the explosion that every one was killed, and the fanning machine, engine and cars were blown 300 feet from the entrance. The fanning machine was insufficient for the mines, and before its deficiency could be discovered and remedied by those in the mine the gas accumulated to the explosive point. This place is made up entirely of the houses of the miners, and was built by the Southwestern Improvement Company. A good many of the miners are Northern men and Pennsylvanians. The engineer at work near the mouth of the mine, as well as his assistant and a colored boy, were blown hundreds of feet away, and their mangled bodies found scattered in every direction. The engineer's head was found in a ravine and his legs and arms were found near the mine. Of those at work in or about the mine not one was left to tell the story. The little hamlet, whose population numbers about 500 was resting quietly when the explosion took place, but in two hours after the whole place was roused, and the scene which followed beggared description. The few living beings who saw a puff of smoke shoot from the mine and the sudden upheaval of the engines and cars, rushed into the town with loud cries for help. Men, women and children were roused slowly, and as they took in the intelligence there was a wild rush for the scene of the disaster despite the cold night. Women as well as men rushed off scantily clothed.

Experienced miners soon reaching the scene were satisfied that no man in the mine was living. A slight rain and snow was falling, which added to the horrors of the situation, which has been intensified by the discovery that the mines are on fire.

The Laurel Creek mine is the only one in this section, and has been operated for about two years. The actual number of killed is settled at 149. There were fifty negroes and forty Hungarians, the balance being Germans and natives. The Night Superintendent was one of the oldest miners in the State. Ten mules were killed and six road coal-cars were thrown from the entry of the mine across a ravine 500 yards and buried in the mountains beyond.

The mountain itself was upheaved by the force of the explosion, and in several places, near the entrance of the mines, enormous crevasses were made in the earth, which had uprooted trees. In many places on the mountain coal dust had settled an inch thick. In the debris off the mountain side a mule's head and a child's foot were found, and immense trees were uprooted 400 yards from the mines. Three dwelling houses near the mine were demolished by the falling of cars and debris on them. Two colored women and a child were in one of the houses, and were literally torn into shreds. Attempts are now being made to flood the mines and get a new fanning-machine to work. Until this is done no further entrance can be effected. So far hardy volunteers have gone 100 feet and found several bodies, one decapitated. The scene is indescribable. Men, women and children are around the scene of disaster, rending the air with their laments. The foreigners, most of whom can not speak English, add to the confusion and painfulness of the scene by their unmeaning cries in their own language.