

TWENTY-ONE MINERS MEET INSTANT DEATH

Flames Ignited Dust at New Richland Coal Mine Causing a Terrific Explosion. Nine Fatally Burned.

DAYTON, Tenn., May 27.—At the Richland mine of the Dayton Coal and Iron Company, two miles from town, at 4:30 o'clock this afternoon, a terrific explosion of coal gas occurred, resulting 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 "blown blast."

It is the custom of the miners to place blasts and fire them at quitting time each evening, leaving the coal thrown down to be loaded and hauled from the mine the next morning. The Richland mine is destitute of water and great volumes of fine particles of coal dust, invisible to the naked eye, accumulate at the roof of the mine.

This afternoon at 4:30 o'clock, a dynamite cartridge was placed in position in one of the rooms for a blast and the miners 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 which ignited the accumulations of dust. Instantly a terrific explosion occurred and a seething mass of flame shot out of the mouth of the mine to a distance of three hundred feet, scorching the leaves from near-by trees.

Twenty-one Killed.

There were thirty-four men in the

mine at the time. Four of them escaped or were but slightly injured; twenty-one were killed and nine were terribly burned, most of them fatally. The force of the explosion caused a great mass of coal and slate to cave in from the roof and many of the men were completely buried by it.

Word quickly reached Dayton and rescue parties were at once organized and proceeded to the mine. The crushed and horribly disfigured bodies were taken from the debris, put aboard a locomotive and taken to Dayton. Scores of relatives and others gathered at the mouth of the mine.

Some Pathetic Scenes.

The shrieks of the anxious as the bodies were removed were heart-rending. The two undertaking establishments at Dayton were turned into morgues and the mangled bodies were dressed and prepared for the inspection of relatives. All the men employed in the mine were residents of Dayton.

The Richland mine is the property of the Dayton Coal and Iron Company, a Glasgow corporation, which has an iron furnace at the town. The mine is a new one and extends for two thousand feet. An explosion similar to this one occurred at the old Richland mine some time ago by which twenty-eight miners lost their lives.