

# FOUR HUNDRED DEAD IN MINE EXPLOSION

## Monongah Disaster Most Appalling in History of Bituminous Operations in America--Eighty Five Bodies Recovered.

Monongah, W. Virginia, Dec. 7.—With unabated energy, five rescuing parties, working from every possible point to enter mines No. 6 and 8 of the Fairmont Coal Company, a subsidiary of the Consolidated Coal Company, of Baltimore, where a terrific explosion of black damp occurred yesterday, this morning are putting forth every effort to reach the 315 men whom they have every reason to believe are still in the mine, dead or alive.

### Hopeless Quest.

There is scarcely a hope entertained that a single one of the 400, or more men, who went into the mine yesterday has survived the terrific explosion and the poisonous gas with which the mines filled immediately after the death-dealing crash.

### 85 in Morgue.

Eighty-five bodies have so far been brought to the surface and the dozen undertakers from this and the surrounding towns, who were on duty all night, by daylight had these bodies washed and made as presentable as possible in an improvised morgue, into which one of the mine buildings has been converted.

### Aisles of Death.

With the dawn of day there began a march up and down along the aisles in which these bodies have been laid, by surviving wives and mothers and sweethearts, orphaned children and strong men, each seeking a near relative or beloved friend. There are between 5,000 and 6,000 inhabitants in the mining town of Monongah, and it is doubtful if in this entire population there are a score of persons who have not a near relative or close friend numbered among the victims of the disaster.

### Stunned By Catastrophy.

The people of the town are stunned

by the catastrophe. They had long believed in these mines as practically immune from the dangers so common to the coal mining industry.

The plant of the company was provided with every device for the protection of life and the equipment was considered the most modern and complete outfit used in the production of bituminous coal. A mine disaster here was considered next to impossible and the fact that these mines should be the scene of the most frightful disaster that has ever occurred in the bituminous coal mines of America, comes as such a shock to the residents of the town that they are stupefied by it.

### Heartrending Scenes.

All night hundreds of men stood about the entrance of the two mines. They said nothing, but when approached and asked a question they would give way to their emotions. During the night few women were to be seen, but all day yesterday the women were the chief actors in the most pathetic and heartrending scenes.

It is thought that by to-night the full extent of the horror will be known and it is feared the knowledge of this will precipitate even more pitiful scenes than those of to-day.

### Entrances Choked.

As the rescuing parties advance they must clear away the debris. The explosion wrecked over six hundred mine cars and these choke the entrances on all sides. Many heavy brattices were also demolished. A peculiar and remarkable feature is that, notwithstanding the force of the explosion; very little of the mine roof was wrecked.

### Appalling Results.

By those who witnessed it, the explosion was likened to the discharge of a cannon. Every movable object

shot with terrific force through the mines. At the entrance to mine No. 8, a concrete power house was completely demolished. A piece of concrete weighing fully one thousand pounds was blown clear across the West Fork river, landing on the side of a hill. In a radius of a half mile, not another piece of concrete can be found. Great holes were torn in the hill, on either side of the entrance of No. 8. Mine cars were crushed as though made of paper, and the huge steel tippie was blown apart. On all sides electric light wires were thrown to the ground, and many persons narrowly escaped death from these in the rush from the mine following the explosion.

The Fairmont and Clarksburg Traction Company's cars pass within ten yards of the mine entrance, and a large car crowded with passengers miraculously escaped being blown into the West Fork river. All the passengers were stunned by the terrific concussion.

### 380 Coffins Ordered.

The mine officials state that forty per cent of the victims are Americans. Fifty physicians are at work near the mines. The company has sent rush orders for coffins to Pittsburg, Zalesville, and other towns, the total number ordered being 380 up to this time.

### Dead Brought to Surface.

Monongah, W. Va., Dec. 7.—Later—Up to 11 o'clock to-day sixteen bodies had been recovered from mines 6 and 8 of the Fairmont Coal Company. Four of these are Americans. About eighty bodies have been found together, but only sixteen have been brought to the surface. Rescuers are now within 1,500 feet of the end of the mines. They are working in two parties of about thirty men each with reliefs every hour.