

MINE DISASTER IN BELGIUM.

At the Ritter Heart Mine, Marcinelle, smoke pours out of the shaft from an underground fire which has trapped 260 men a mile below the surface. Desperately anxious families wait at the pithead as a few miners are brought up - some for the last time.

Four bodies are recovered by the first rescue party, and twelve hours after the explosion, only 29 men have reached the surface alive. The fate of the trapped men still hangs in the balance - for intense heat in the galleries makes rescue work almost impossible, until some way can be found of reducing it.

The fire was caused by a severed power line, just after the day shift had started work. Some miners who were injured in the first explosion are brought to safety. This is a tragedy which reaches across frontiers - for half the trapped men are Italians. A tragedy which reminds us once again of the human courage which is the price of coal.