

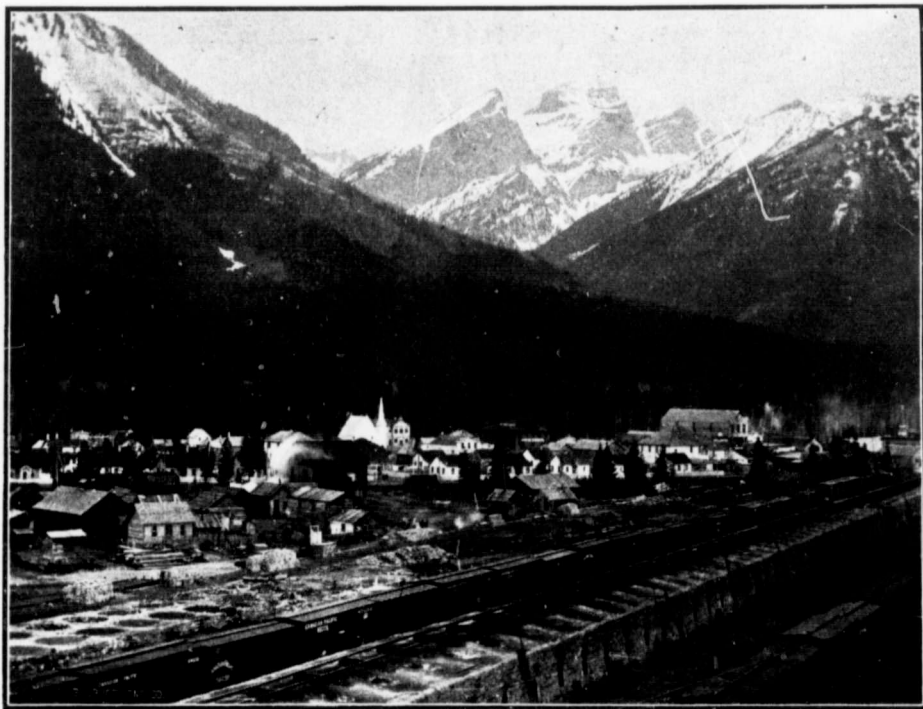
and taking upon himself the larger share of the danger and labour. Time and again he fell gasping, insensible, to be dragged forth by his fresher working mates; each time he would return to duty, directly consciousness was restored. It was he who was on hand to support Manager Drinnan when he fell unconscious, forcing his way through the choke damp—the manager's inert body in his arms—by sheer force of will and determination; it was he who bore out the first recovered body, that of the young lad Robertson; it was he who instantly perceived and did aright all things that such occasions demand of the man who rises nobly to great emergencies.

Fortunately the explosion was not followed by

dred and fifty graves provided in anticipation of the recovery of the bodies.

Victoria Day, instead of witnessing mirth and festivity in the town of Fernie, was given to successive funerals; while during the week ensuing scarcely an hour passed that did not see the going to the little hillside graveyard of the mourners with their mutilated dead—half-masted flags in evidence everywhere—coffins and crape wherever one might look. Nor were the days sufficient for the work of burial. Far into the dusk of evening could be seen the slow-moving processions of black-burdened mourners, toiling laboriously up the mountain side.

It is very greatly to be doubted if any similar dis-



Town of Fernie, in which few families escaped the loss of some members by the disaster of May 22nd.
Coke Ovens in the immediate foreground.

fire, nor was the mine wrecked to any appreciable extent—the roof of the fan house blown off and a few planks dislodged at the pit head constituted the sole external evidence of the disaster—and the recovery of the bodies was therefore greatly expedited. Within the twenty-four hours, effective system ruled the rescue operations, and soon the bruised bodies were being sent to the sorrowing town by train loads, and few of the homes in Fernie but bore the significant badge of black upon the door. Coincidentally the opening of a new cemetery was begun upon the hillside overlooking the desolated town, the site being cleared as though by magic, and one hun-

aster in Canada has been productive of so many dramatic incidents as are associated with the Fernie horror. Among the most remarkable of these is that in which a Scottish miner, Donald McMillan, is the central figure. McMillan worked for a time at Fernie, and on the removal of James R. Wilson from the mine management, followed his former chief down to the newer collieries at Frank, his son remaining, however, in the works at Coal Creek. On the night of the 21st of May, in his boarding house at Frank, this Donald McMillan dreamed a curious dream. It was, as dreams are, vague and incoherent, but it concerned his son, and seemed to forewarn