

GREAT FIRE AT THE ATTERCLIFFE CHEMICAL WORKS THIS MORNING

A most alarming and disastrous fire occurred at an early hour this morning at the Attercliffe Chemical Works, situated in Washford Road, Attercliffe. The works, which are very extensive, are in the occupation of Mr. Sharpe Greenwood. The building stands in the centre of other manufactories, and in its immediate vicinity are the extensive steelworks belonging to Messrs. Fair Bros., and the chemical works in the occupation of Mr. Hornby, chemist and druggist, King-street. The River Don runs at the back of the building, dividing it from a district thickly covered with dwelling houses. Mr. Greenwood's works are divided into two portions, one of which used as a kind of warehouse, in which oils and chemicals are stored while the other it fitted up as a distillery. At the back of the buildings is a large yard where the stills were placed, and in which was also stored a largo number of barrels of oil, and a quantity of pitch. It was in this that the fire, which has proved so disastrous in its results, first broke out. It appears that about half past eleven o'clock last night, Mr. Cuttle, the manager of the works, was standing near one of the stills with a lamp in his hand, when flames from the lamp suddenly Ignited the gas that was emitted from a vat of benzolene oil that was placed near. The flames quickly communicated to a large barrel of tar, which as soon as it became ignited, exploded with a loud report. Mr. Cuttle was severely burned on the face and other parts of his body, but notwithstanding his injuries he made every possible effort to extinguish the fire. The flames, however, spread rapidly, and the manager seeing that his efforts were useless, at once raised an alarm and sent for the fire engines. The Corporation Fire Brigade, with the engines, under the direction of Mr. Superintendent Pound, arrived on the scene shortly before half-past twelve o'clock, but by this time the flames had obtained an extensive hold upon the premise. The heat was intense, and it was next to impossible for any one to approach the burning mass with safety. Notwithstanding this, the firemen bravely took up their position at the rear of the building, near to the river, and they at once directed their attention to the work of saving that portion of the premises, which the fire had not reached. This at first appeared to be a hopeless task, for up to this time the flames had been spreading with alarming rapidity, and the whole mass of buildings appeared to be doomed destruction. The scene at this time was of a most terrible character. The whole of the premises appeared to be one mass of flame and amidst the raging of the fire was heard at short intervals, loud and terrible reports, as vats of oil and grease became ignited and exploded. By one of these miniature outbreaks, the hose, which was attached to the engine, was set on fire, and the engine itself was threatened with destruction. The bystanders, many hundreds of whom had by this time assembled, were terrified-by this extension of the conflagration, and they with one accord scampered off to a safe distance. Three lengths of hose were burned, and it was feared that it would be necessary to run the large fire engine into the river in order to save it. The firemen, however, bravely stuck to their post and succeeded in keeping the flames in subjection until new hose could be attached to the engine. They than began to play upon the fire with increased vigour and in a time their efforts were rewarded, for by degrees the

flames were subdued, and by half-past two o'clock the fire was completely extinguished. One of stills was completely destroyed, another was seriously damaged; the greater portion of the buildings stock was also destroyed, or rendered useless, and one portion of the building was completely gutted. The stock was not insured but the building, which belongs to Mr. Reed Halliday, of Huddersfield was insured in a Huddersfield Fire Office. The amount of damages it is imputable to estimate at present with any degree of accuracy but it is feared that the loss will exceed £2.000. Mr. Greenwood, the owner of the works, was absent on business at York Assizes, but his wife and daughter were on the scene of the fire, and rendered useful service by imparting the necessary information to the firemen as to the position of the stock. A similar fire recurred on Mr. Greenwood's premises about eight months ago, but it was extinguished before any considerable amount of damage had been done.