

Fire at Sheffield Brewery Damage £11,000

The truth of the old words "It never rains but it pours" was borne out today, when a serious outbreak of fire occurred at the brewery of Messrs. Chambers and Co. in Ellin street. A man named Flourey Goodinson, of 27 Spencer road, Heeley, employed at Messrs. Lockwood Brothers' establishment in Spital hill was walking along the Sheffield Moor this morning about twenty minutes to eleven when he noticed smoke rising from the top of the square tower which faces Ellin street. At first he was undecided as to whether a fire had broken but or not. After he had watched the tower for several minutes, however, his suspicions were confirmed, for suddenly there was a big blaze at the centre of the roof. At the same time a workman named Raynor, employed at Messrs. John Burton and Sons' forged, noticed the outbreak, and acquainted a man named Rhodes, employed at the brewery, with the circumstances. The brewery staff at once used every means at their command, under the directions of Mr. H. C. Chambers to check the outbreak. In the meantime Goodinson had made his way to the central fire station at Rockingham street, and had given an alarm. He acquainted the authorities there with the circumstances that a serious fire had broken out in the roof of the tower, and in a short time Superintendent Pound arrived with the brigade, who brought the tender and a steamer, with them. By the time they reached the scene of the outbreak, the flames had seized nearly every portion of the roof of the tower. There was a big blaze until a quarter past eleven, when the roof fell in with a heavy crash. The efforts of the brigade were effective in confining the fire to the tower, and before noon all danger was practically at an end. The Chief Constable, Inspector Raynor, and a number of officers from Highfield division were early on the scene. The fire attracted a great crowd to Sheffield Moor and Ellin street, but admirable order was kept by the police. The damage, as has been stated, was confined wholly to the tower, and its contents, and will probably reach £1,000. The tower itself, which rises between 70 and 80 feet above the level of the street, has been badly cracked by the heat. A number of hand grenades were kept upon the premises, but although they were used freely by the workmen, the fire continued to make headway until the arrival of the brigade. At the top of the tower, which was the seat of the fire, there was a large malt hopper, which contained about 28 sacks of malt. In the storey below, there was a malt mill, and a hot water tank reached from this place practically up to the roof. On the third floor the mash bin and boiling copper were situated, the ground floor containing the engines and coolers. The malt store and coolers run off at right angles from the central tower, but the store was undamaged by the fire, and most of the mischief is structural. The malt mill, however, was damaged beyond repair, as well as the engine shafting. Most of the beams were protected by cast iron, but a big oak beam in the flue is supposed to have smouldered and then burst into flame. It is probable that some of the powdered malt may have ignited spontaneously, but the authorities do not favour this view. The fire was very rapid. Two of the brewery workmen were in the tower ten minutes before the flames, were observed, and found everything safe. Luckily the Christmas demand was over, and the majority of the customers of the firm were supplied. The firm will carry on their business temporarily in other premises until the damaged buildings have been made secure. The building is insured in the Alliance.