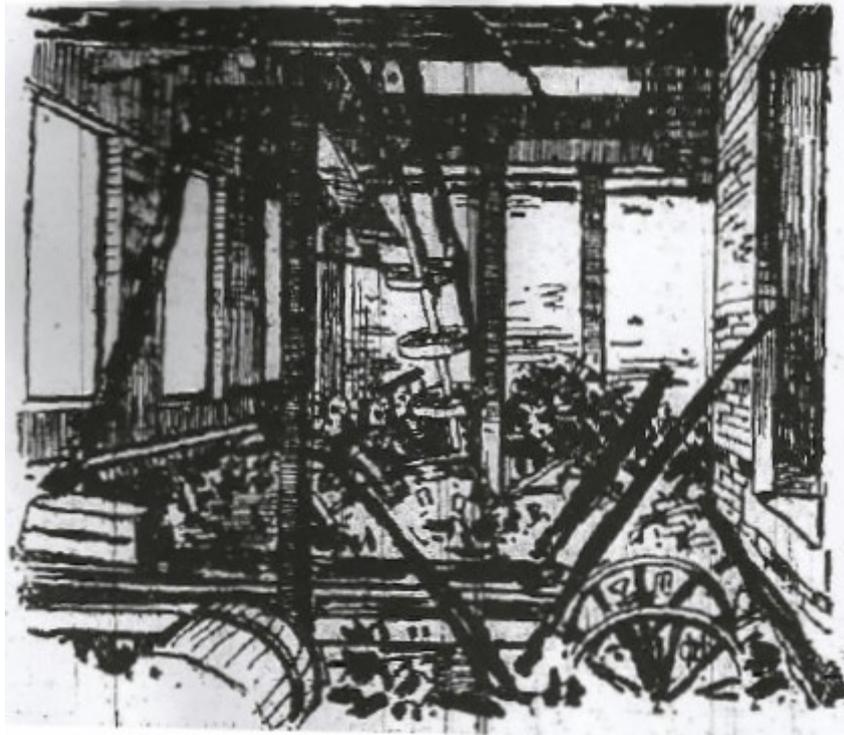


Cutlery Works Fire in Sheffield



The Scene after the Conflagration

A serious fire broke out at a cutlery works in Solly Street, Sheffield, early this morning, and before the efforts of the Fire Brigade had succeeded in quelling the outbreak, damage variously estimated at from £3,000 to £5,000 was done.

It appears that about 4.20 this morning, Police-constable (293) Knight, whilst on duty in Siddall Street, noticed smoke and sparks coming from the works of Mr. Francis John Townsend, Cambridge Cutlery Works, Solly Street. On his arrival at the works, the constable found that the caretaker had already been aroused by a person living in the neighbourhood, who had also noticed the fire. The fire Brigade were telephoned for, and Second-Officer Hadwick at once turned out from the Westbar Fire Station with a strong force and abundant appliances. The fire spread, however, very quickly, and had got a firm hold before the Brigade could get to work in extinguishing it.

On receiving the call Second-Officer Hadwick turned out with two steamers, two tenders, and the horse escape, and on arrival found that the building was well alight. It is of somewhat unusual construction, being a high building, with the third floor on a level with Solly Street, from which that part of the factory is entered, while the ground floor is entered through a yard off Edward Street at a very much lower level. Neither side of the building looks onto a street, and it is enclosed by the surrounding property in a way that at once impressed the firemen with the importance of their task. Owing to the shut-in character of the building, too, the fire had got a firm hold before being discovered, and it was seen from the first that the three top floors were doomed. A large number of jets were got to work, and in half an hour the fire was mastered, but it was not till nine o'clock, four hours afterwards, that it was finally extinguished, and two firemen were still watching the debris, which is in a very dangerous condition.

The two lower floors are used for heavy grinding work, and are shut off from the storeys above by a bricked arched floor. These rooms were saved from the fire, but the three storeys above were completely destroyed, with their contents, though it is a remarkable circumstance that the roof was not burnt through. The third floor was occupied as a light grinding area, and the two upper uppermost floors were cutlery workshops. Nothing but a heap of twisted and broken machinery, charred beams, and ruined brickwork remains in this portion of the building. Portions of the interior walls are still resting on half-burnt beams, and it is feared that the beams may collapse and draw the internal walls of the building into the ruin.

The surrounding property including the engine house and a large warehouse adjoining was entirely saved from the fire, thanks to the skilful operations of the Fire Brigade. The damage will still amount to several thousands of pounds, and the fire is, therefore, one of the most serious that the Sheffield Fire Brigade had had to encounter for some years, but fortunately, the loss both on the building and on its contents is covered by insurance. Besides Mr. Francis John Townsend, cutlery manufacturer, the other occupiers of the Cambridge Works are J. T. Paine, scissors borer; Thomas Ford, table knife cutler; G. Middleton and Sons, tinmen's shears manufacturer; Thomas Turner, fork guard manufacturer; F. W. Ryalls, table knife cutler; and Mrs. Mary Ann Ellis, fork grinder. The work people of several of these different manufacturers are, or course, thrown out of employment by the fire.

A fire, the cause of which is a mystery, occurred early this morning in a wooden building used as a grocery store by Mr. A. R. Cooke, grocer and wines and spirit merchant, Nether Edge Road, Sheffield. Groceries were damaged, and the shed partially burnt, the loss being estimated at £20 which is covered by insurance.