

AWFUL CONFLAGRATION.

TOTAL DESTRUCTION OF MESSRS. ENDERBY'S ROPE MANUFACTORY, AT GREENWICH.

On Sunday evening last, the inhabitants of Greenwich and its environs, were dreadfully alarmed at the appearance of a dreadful fire, which broke out in the extensive premises of the Messrs. Enderby's, at East Greenwich. Many at first supposed from the direction of the flames, which rose in terrific masses that it was the Union Workhouse, but the alarm soon subsided, it being quickly known the exact spot of the dreadful calamity. How the fire originated is at present a matter of doubt, although we have heard it whispered that it was the work of an incendiary. The fire was first discovered burning in the rope walk, at the rear of the premises, and an alarm being quickly spread; the two parish engines, together with those of the dockyard, were quickly on the spot, the former accompanied by Mr. Fisher, the High Constable, with an adequate complement of men, whilst that of the dockyard was under the superintendence of that active officer, Inspector Field, of the dockyard police, with a body of his men. Messrs. Enderby had an engine of their own on the premises, the whole of which were quickly got to work, but not before the flames had got such a complete ascendancy that all idea of saving the whole of the buildings was abandoned, but in order if possible to save a further spread of the destructive element, a party of the B division of police, were ordered by Mr. Inspector Douglas, to pull down one end of the rope walk, not yet on fire, by which means the tar warehouse, and also a shed containing a large quantity of flax, were saved from the flames. In a short time Mr. Henderson, the foreman of the London Fire Brigade Establishment, with their large engine arrived, which being taken to the rear of the premises, rendered effective service.

A detachment of Royal Marines, were marched from Woolwich, under the command of Lieutenants Varlow and Forbes, who were of essential service in protecting the property removed from the burning premises, and in working the engines. Notwithstanding the active exertions of all present, it was found impossible to stop the devouring element, and by half-past ten, not only had the factory, and a large portion of the rope shed, but the dwelling house of Mr. U. Enderby, situate at the east end of the manufactory, been completely destroyed and reduced to a heap of smouldering ruins; and it was not until Monday morning that the firemen had completely subdued the flames. In the course of the day, the ruins were visited by the Surveyor of the Imperial and Royal Exchange Fire offices, in which the property is insured, and also by the district Surveyor. From the official report we learn the amount of damage done.

Since the burning of St. Olave's Church and Topping's-wharf, about 18 months since, no calamity has happened in or around the metropolis attended with such frightful loss of property as the fire which overwhelmed the extensive and valuable works of Messrs. Enderby and brother, South Sea merchants, and patentees of the newly manufactured rope, on Sunday last. At daybreak on Monday morning—and it was not till then that the firemen accomplished their arduous task of extinguishing the flames—a scene of the utmost desolation presented itself. Of the main factory, which was a noble building overlooking the Thames, in fact the most prominent object on that side of the river between Greenwich Hospital and Woolwich, nothing remained but its lofty walls, which in the course of the day were blown down with tremendous force by the wind. The machinery it contained was most extensive, and its immense value can be better judged from the fact that its completion has occupied a space of ten years. The firemen went into the ruins at an early hour, to ascertain whether any of it had escaped injury, but the whole was found

to be destroyed. The loss we are assured exceeds £40,000. It is clearly proved the flames were first seen raging in the store room in the rope manufactory, which was detached from the main building, where there has not been a light for several weeks. There was a considerable quantity of manufactured goods deposited there, which was seen perfectly safe a few hours before the outbreak. The supposition is, therefore, that the fire either arose from spontaneous combustion, or was wilfully raised by some incendiary.

The factory, or water-side premises containing joiners' workshops, spinning, card and loom-rooms, is totally destroyed. The hemp and spinning rooms over the engine and boiler-house are burned out, and the iron roof has fallen in. The engine-room beneath is considerably damaged. The weaving workshops, fronting the factory are greatly damaged, the roof has been partly demolished by the falling of the opposite walls. They contained 12 weaving looms, worked by machinery, which are all damaged. The dwelling house of Mr. Enderby, jun., on the north side of the factory, is partly damaged by fire, and most part of the furniture and its contents destroyed. The stores at the back, where the fire commenced, with part of the rope manufactory, is a quarter of a mile in length; about 100 feet is gone; and but for the firemen cutting off the communication, the whole would have been levelled to the ground.

We are glad to state, that a subscription has been commenced for the assistance of the unfortunate persons who have been thrown out of employment by this calamitous event, and we sincerely trust the inhabitants of Greenwich will be unanimous and liberal in their contributions to such a praiseworthy object.