



EARLY MORNING FIRE

CHARLTON COTTAGES DESTROYED - TWO FAMILIES HOMELESS

Two thatched cottages, the property of the Earl of Radnor, were gutted by fire at Charlton in the early hours of Tuesday morning, and the occupants were obliged to escape into torrential rain dressed only in their night attire and hastily donned overcoats. The downpour proved a blessing in disguise, however, for it undoubtedly saved other buildings from a similar fate. A gale was blowing at the time, and blazing thatch was hurled in the direction of near-by dwellings. Fortunately the rain had soaked the roofs, and the thatch was consequently far less inflammable than it would otherwise have been. At one time the danger of the fire spreading was so great that the occupants of cottages in the vicinity were warned to make preparations to leave.

AROUSED BY CRACKLING NOISE

The fire is believed to have commenced in a beam adjoining a chimney of the house occupied by Mr. and Mrs. P. Wort, and their three children, and Mrs. Tanner, who discovered the outbreak when she was awakened by a loud crackling noise. She aroused the other members of the household in the nick of time. The flames had already gained a strong hold, and if the family had delayed their departure in an effort to save anything in the upstairs rooms their escape by way of the stairs would have been cut off.

FURNITURE AND MONEY SAVED

The residents of the adjoining cottage, Mr. and Mrs. Sidney Carter and their four children, were at once awakened, but the fire spread along the roofs so rapidly that they, too, were unable to save belongings from their bedrooms. Neighbours did their utmost to assist and most of the furniture on the ground floors of the cottages was removed before the ceilings fell in. In the kitchen of Mrs. Wort's home was an envelope containing £31 belonging to Mrs. Tanner, but this was saved.

SPENDID WORK OF THE FIRE BRIGADE

The Salisbury City Fire Brigade were summoned at 3.10 a.m. by Lord Radnor's agent. During the short time pending their arrival the fire gained complete mastery, and nothing could be done to save the cottages. Owing to recent flooding the land near the River Avon had become waterlogged and the wheels of the engine sank deeply into the soft ground. Before pumping could be commenced it was necessary to remove a gate from its hinges and place it beneath the back wheels. The strenuous work of the firemen subdued the flames within an hour and the danger to other cottages was removed. At eight o'clock a

relief crew arrived and undertook the task of carting away smouldering timbers and thatch, so that there would be no danger of the wind fanning the embers into flame once more.

ACCOMMODATION PROVIDED

The homeless occupants were given accommodation for the night by the Rector of Charlton All Saints (Canon H.C. Winterton). Later Mrs. Tanner and Mr. Wort's children were conveyed to the house of a relative at Bodenham, and the Carter family moved into an unoccupied cottage in the village.

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