

HOLMES ATTEMPTED ARSON.

Tried to Burn the Peculiarly Constructed Chicago Building.

TOLEDO, Ohio, July 25.—Charles Cole, a mechanic of this city, says he built the blind wall that has figured in the Chicago discoveries concerning H. H. Holmes and his numerous alleged crimes. Cole worked for Holmes in Chicago in 1889. Holmes engaged him to put in an oil burner in connection with a glass-bending scheme in the basement of the building at Sixty-third and Wallace Streets. When the glass-bending project was under way, Cole assisted Holmes in its operation, and he says that one day he caught Holmes in a deliberate attempt to burn the building. Cole accused Holmes, who did not deny it. Later Cole says he notified Fire Chief Sweeney of the dangerous character of the building.

“Had you any other reasons for suspecting Holmes?”

“Yes; I began to suspect him from the time I went in. The construction of the building was peculiar, the noxious gases in the basement did not strengthen my confidence in him, and then his methods. Why, I had not been there two weeks before he talked to me about having my life insured. I then told him that I was not only not going to have it insured, but that thereafter I would take my meals elsewhere. I found, in many ways, that he was anxious to have the building burn up through my apparent carelessness, and I learned about that time that he had it heavily insured.”

“Did you know Pietzel?”

“Yes, and if there was ever a man under the domination of another, Pietzel was one. Holmes could do as he pleased with him. Pietzel was a reticent man. Holmes and Pietzel and a man named Edwards, who was in the Public Works Office, were together in this glass-bending business, and all three contributed toward paying the office rent. Pietzel and Holmes would frequently hold private interviews, but, aside from this, Pietzel never talked. He went away frequently and was gone days at a time, only to return and hold confidential talks with Holmes. His wife and children visited the office on one or two occasions, but I did not see much of them.”

Cole further stated that he frequently saw Mrs. Connor in Holmes's company during the time that he worked for Holmes. Mrs. Connor used to take care of the drug store in Holmes's absence.