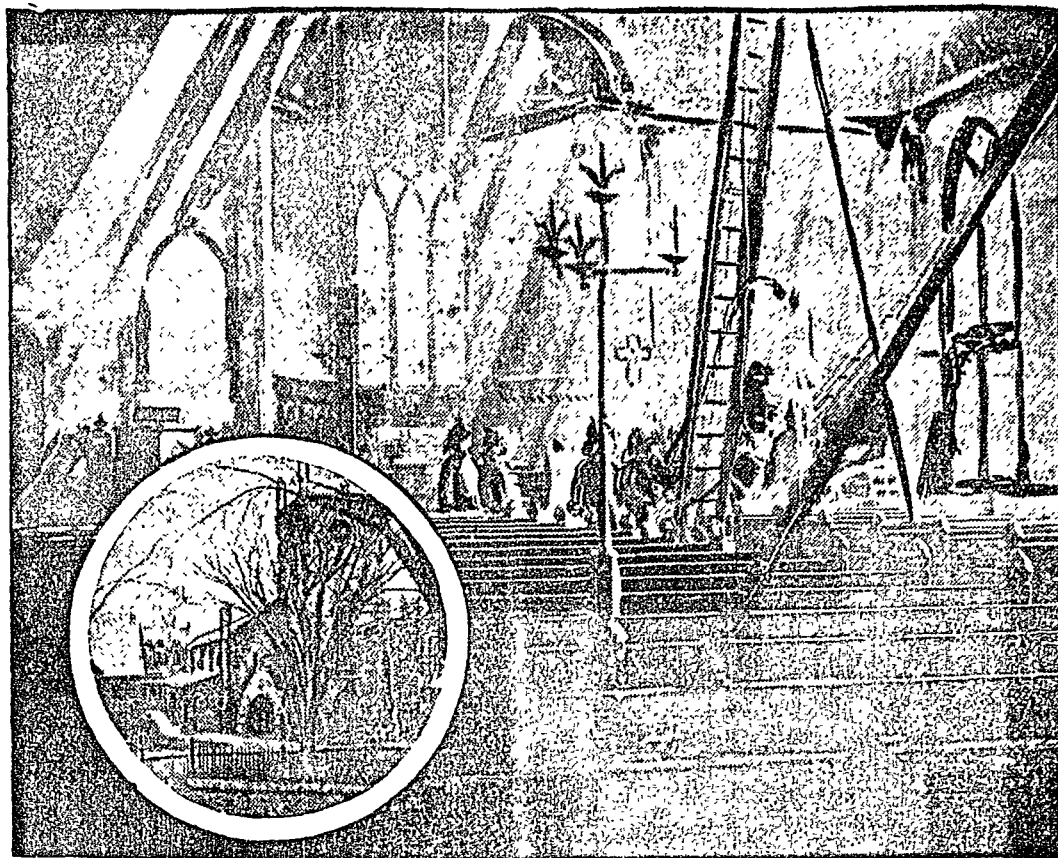


FIRE IN ST JAMES' EPISCOPAL CHURCH.

Interior Gutted and Damage to Extent of \$25,000 Inflicted—Splended New Window Saved.



WORK OF THE FLAMES AND WATER IN ST JAMES' EPISCOPAL CHURCH, ROXBURY.

St James' Episcopal church on St James st, Roxbury, was completely gutted by fire shortly after 1 o'clock yesterday afternoon. It is believed the cause of the fire was a defective wire on the motor in the rear of the organ, which theory is borne out by the fact that there has been more or less trouble with the motor for the past few months and electricians have been called in at various times to try to remedy the difficulty.

The chapel was untouched by fire, and with the exception of a slight smoke and water there was no material damage. The interior of the church, however, was wrecked and it is estimated the damage will reach at least \$25,000. The entire roof will have to be rebuilt and the handsome stained glass windows on the westerly side of the church were damaged almost beyond repair.

The members of the society are especially pleased at the almost miraculous escape of the handsome new memorial window valued at more than \$6000, which was recently placed above the chancel as a memorial to the late rector of the church, Rev Percy Browne.

The heat was most intense at this point, but the firemen directed their efforts to save the window if possible and they were rewarded. The only damage the window sustained was a slight warping of some of the upper panels and these can easily be replaced.

High above the main entrance, in the lofty stone tower, was the old memorial window, which had been in the church since its erection. It was formerly above the chancel and was removed to its present position to make way for the gift of Hon Charles S. Hamlin. It was broken in several places by the heat.

This is the second time the church has been on fire within a year. On the previous occasion some of the sanctuary choir boys were practicing in the chapel and accidentally a lighted taper was knocked against a curtain with the result that a lively fire was in progress

in a short time. It was extinguished, however, before it reached the main auditorium.

The blaze yesterday afternoon was seen simultaneously by several who were sitting on the steps of the St James club, directly opposite the church, Albert G. Kenney, who was one of the number, immediately started an investigation and after securing the keys ran over and opened the door. The smoke poured out and drove him back and he hurried to box 24, situated on the Bartlett-st car shops, and sounded an alarm. District chief Sawyer came with the first detachment of firemen, and upon his arrival immediately ordered a second alarm, and this was followed by a third.

The three alarms brought plenty of apparatus and in their wake came a crowd that took the united efforts of a large detail of police to hold in check. Officers were sent from stations 9 and 10 and ropes were stretched to hold the crowd back.

The church is beautifully situated on a terrace, with a handsome lawn in front. On the northerly side of the church is a row of apartment houses, while on the left is St James pl. In a short time the roofs and windows of the houses were filled and hundreds stood in St James pl to watch the progress of the fire.

Dense smoke was rolling out from every crevice and the firemen were forced to break in the windows to get at the seat of the fire. Three of the large stained glass windows on the Washington-st side were forced out and in doing this they were badly damaged. The fire was hottest at the upper end of the church and had made its way up through the ceiling and inside the space under the roof.

Lines of hose were brought into play from all sides and with the large force of firemen at command the blaze was quickly got under control. It was then seen that the entire interior of the edifice was a wreck. The roof had been burned through in several places and the smoke and water had damaged the decorations and furnishings to such an extent that they will be an almost total loss.

Mr J. M. Haynes, the assistant rector

of the church, rendered valuable service in saving the vestments and the silver communion service, the latter being kept in a small room, but a short distance from where the fire was hottest. Mr Haynes made his way in through the chapel and despite the dense smoke saved the articles.

The library was saved, but many of the books were badly damaged by smoke and water. The church was one of the old landmarks of the Roxbury district, and has stood for more than half a century. The society formerly worshipped in the little stone building on Dudley st, now occupied as an office by a gas company.

The church was built of Roxbury stone and had a seating capacity of about 300. The interior adornments were of a very simple character, there being a lectern, benches for the choir, an organ and an altar at the rear of the sanctuary.

The fire was mainly in the upper part of the edifice, and after the fire was out the firemen were kept at work pulling down the plastering from the ceiling for fear sparks might be smoldering in the ruins. There were also three streams of water carried up above the ceiling and the water ran down from these and thoroughly soaked the cushions in the pews and the carpets on the floor.

Rev Murray W. Dewart is rector of the church, having been chosen at the death of Rev Percy Browne, who was for more than a quarter of a century rector of the church. Services were being held as usual during the summer season. Mr Dewart was not in Roxbury when the fire started, but he arrived while the firemen were still at work.

Among the others to arrive were the vestrymen and wardens of the church, and with Mr Dewart a meeting was hurriedly held in the chapel and it was decided to hold services as usual tomorrow morning in the chapel.

"It is not decided what we will do after tomorrow," said Mr Dewart, "but it is probable that after tomorrow morning services will be discontinued until repairs have been made on the church."

Mr Ernest R. Buffington made an offer to the society to worship in one of his halls.