

Six Brave Firemen Killed.

OTHERS ARE BADLY INJURED AT A FIRE IN BOSTON.

There was a fire in Boston, early on the morning of the fifth inst., which caused the death of six members of the Department and serious injuries to several other members of the force.

The fire started at about four o'clock, in the brick warehouse Nos. 116 to 124 Merrimac street, occupied by G. W. Bent & Co., dealers in bedding, etc. The flames were practically extinguished before the terrible accident, which was caused by the floors giving away precipitating the heroic firemen to four stories beneath under a confused mass of broken timbers and water-soaked stock.

The dead firemen are:

District Chief J. F. EGAN.

Capt. J. H. VICTORY, Engine companies 38 and 39.

Lieut. G. J. GOTTFWALD, Engine companies 38 and 39.

JOHN MULHERN, Engine companies 38 and 39.

P. H. DISKEN, Engine companies 38 and 39.

W. J. WELCH, Engine companies 38 and 39.

The wounded firemen:

Capt. J. M. GARRITY, Engine company 7.

E. A. SHEA, Engine company 7.

T. E. CONROY, Engine company 7.

P. J. DOHERTY, Engine company 7.

Lieut. J. J. MCCARTHY, Protective company No. 2.

The first alarm from box 411 was sent out at 3:58 o'clock. Two other alarms followed in quick succession. Chief Webber was early at the scene and the fire was soon under control. The origin of the fire is said to have been due to electric light wires.

All the firemen did their fullest duty and none shirked from it.

The men of Engine 7 rushed their line into the main entrance of the building and clear to the top floor.

Engine 39, led by Capt. Victory, carried a line over Ladder 8 into a window on the fourth floor, and then up the stairway to the aid of the men of Engine 7.

Chief Egan led the men, and, with his hat off, and, as was his custom, working in his shirt sleeves, the chief directed the two powerful streams in the midst of a blazing furnace.

The flames were soon checked on the top floor, but all this time the timbers supporting that story and the roof had been eaten away by the flames and the men on the upper floor had no idea of the danger they were in.

The great clouds of smoke and steam which now enveloped the brave men made their position almost unbearable, and Capt. Garrity sent a man to the street for an extra lantern.

The man obeyed orders, but in a minute or two when he had dashed back to his post with the lantern he looked in vain for his comrades.

Before him was a yawning chasm. The whole floor had given away and not a man was to be seen.

Lieut. O'Connor of Engine 7, with Hosemen O'Brien, Driscoll and Harrington, had crawled to a window on the side of the building. They had felt the floor giving away beneath them.

The lieutenant and three hosemen made their way down a ladder, and in so doing saved their lives.

But the others.

The last seen of Chief Egan was when he was standing at the head of the stairs.

Then every floor in the building collapsed and the ten men were tumbled clear to the basement beneath a mass of heavy timbers and iron.

The crash was not heard in the street in front of the building, and the man alone on what remained of the top floor searching for his comrades, was the first to bring the awful tidings to Chief Webber.

This happened at about 5 o'clock. The fire was under control at this time and the firemen then gave their united efforts to rescue the imprisoned men.

It was an hour before the slightest trace of them could be found.

Then Lieut. O'Connor received a faint response to his call from a mass of smoking timbers on the first

floor of the building near a window in the alleyway at the side.

The voice came from Hoseman Conroy of Engine No. 7.

Like tigers the men worked, but it was over two hours before the first imprisoned man could be uncovered.

It was Hoseman Shea of Engine 7. He was quickly placed in an ambulance and taken to the hospital.

The timbers of the entire five stories of the building lay twisted and wedged together above the men, and although the voice of Conroy could be heard urging them on, it seemed an age before an opening could be forced in the smoking pile.

At 6:45 Shea was rescued.

At 7:13 the unconscious body of Capt. Garrity of Engine 7 was disclosed to view. A heavy timber lay across his feet and it was only after 15 minutes of the hardest work that the man could be placed on a stretcher.

Six feet beneath him beneath a broken pile of iron bedsteads lay the bodies of Hosemen Conroy and Doherty of Engine 7.

After Capt. Garrity had been removed the awful cry went up, "Give us a line quick; the fire is coming up around the men!"

The heavy stock of hair and excelsior and shavings which had fallen from the top floor had again taken fire and the flames were stopped just in time.

Lieut. O'Connor urging the men on tugged and pulled at the beams with his bare hands and at 7:30 Hoseman Doherty was taken from the smoking ruins. Hoseman Conroy was rescued a few minutes after. He was still conscious.

This accounted for all the men of Engine 7, but the five men of Engine company 38 and 39, with their captain, together with Chief Egan, had not been heard from. It was now nearly two hours and a half after the floors had caved in, but during the search not a sound had been heard that would tell the whereabouts of any of the imprisoned men.

Lieut. McCarthy of Protective 2 was also taken to the hospital suffering from a serious wound on the head occasioned by being struck by falling bricks.

It was a pathetic scene to witness the firemen working heroically to rescue the bodies of their fallen superiors and comrades, dead or alive.

Willing hands dug through the mass of debris, and at 10 o'clock the body of Capt. Victory was discovered beneath a mass of excelsior. It was but the work of a few minutes to wrap the body in blankets and place it on a stretcher. Fr. Finnegan of St. Mary's Church at the North End saw that Capt. Victory was still alive, and he whispered a few words to the dying fireman. Capt. Victory moved his head slightly, but he was too far gone to understand what was said to him.

The body was placed in the police ambulance and was hurried away to the Massachusetts General Hospital.

No sooner had the ambulance containing Capt. Victory departed than another body was taken out, and everybody recognized the familiar features of District Chief Egan. The face of the brave and daring chief was covered with scars. His head was propped up on the stretcher, and he was still breathing when placed in the ambulance, but he and Capt. Victory both died before they reached the hospital.

The bodies of John Mulhern and Patrick Disken were both found at the same time, but both men were dead. But the rescuers did not take any chances, but as quickly as possible their bodies were removed to the hospital.

There were still two men unaccounted for, Lieut. Gottwald and W. J. Welch. The rescue work was continued without a let-up of any kind, and the firemen worked valiantly to secure the bodies from beneath the ruins.

The streets in the vicinity of the fire were crowded with people eager to hear the latest news regarding the fire, and on all sides the deepest sympathy was expressed for the brave men who had lost their lives while in the performance of their duty. As the names

of the dead were mentioned, kind friends and acquaintances gave utterance of warm words of respect and esteem for the dead firemen.

While the work of digging for the bodies of Lieut. Gottwald and Fireman Welch continued on the ground floor, the firemen on the upper floors of the building were throwing out heaps of debris from the windows of the building.

At 10:45 o'clock there was such a mass of debris on the sidewalk in front of the building that a gang of city laborers were put to work loading the excelsior and burned timbers on to pungs and carting them away.

The bodies of Lieut. Gottwald and Fireman Welch were recovered just before noon.

The firemen showed great bravery in penetrating into the midst of the flames and a district chief with three lines of hose were detailed to each story. Chief McDonough was on the third floor, Chief Pope on the second, Chief Ryan was on the roof of the South Margin street houses and Chief Keyes at the side of the building on Merrimac street.

Chief Webber surrounded the fire, but he said that it was the worst conflagration he has had to handle in years.

This same building has been used as a machine shop for a number of years and has been on fire at least half a dozen times. Chief Webber says that at every one of these fires he has had a comparatively easy time of it, but this one with its terrible consequences was by far the hardest of them all.

The fire was a stubborn one from the first. The cotton, rags and excelsior with which the upper stories were stored were rich fuel for the flames, and alarm followed alarm until all the available force of the Department was concentrated.

The blaze forced the firemen to fight it at long range from the start, but some there were who braved the furnace in its fiercest depths.

The building in which the fire was fronts on Merrimac street. Adjoining it on either side are tenement houses.

On the north is a blind alley, and here the firemen made a gallant stand.

On the south the burned building towered over the adjoining four-story tenement house, and from the roof of this building Capt. Quigley of Engine 4 and his gallant men fought the flames.

THE INJURED MEN.

Capt. Joseph M. Garrity, who was injured, is regarded as one of the best fire fighters in the Department, and has had many narrow escapes from death since he entered the service. Before becoming a fireman he was a railroad brakeman. He was appointed Jan. 23, 1886, as a call man on Ladder 12, and the next year, on June 17, was made a permanent man, being assigned to duty on Engine 26. He was promoted to be lieutenant on Engine 7, June 1, 1889. On June 6, 1890, he was transferred back to Engine 26. On Feb. 10, 1893, he went a second time to Engine 7, with the rank of captain.

The records of the other injured men follow, being taken from the official standing of the men at the Bristol Street Fire Headquarters:

Hoseman Edward Shea was born Dec. 29, 1872; appointed to the Department April 17, 1896, on Engine 27; transferred to Engine 7, Sept. 2, 1896; a teamster before entering the Department.

Thomas E. Conroy, senior hoseman on Engine 7, was born in the North end Jan. 9, 1867; polisher by trade; appointed to the Department Sept. 12, 1890, and assigned to Engine 7.

Philip J. Doherty, born Aug. 26, 1867; painter by trade; appointed to the Department March 10, 1894, to Engine 37; transferred to Engine 7, Jan. 4, 1895.

Lieut. John J. McCarthy of the Protective Department, who is among the injured, is 40 years old, and has been a member of the Department for about 15 years. He was formerly in the provision business in the Brighton district. On entering the protective service he was assigned to No. 1 Station, on Purchase street. A few years later he was made a sergeant and

transferred to Station 2. In May, 1896, he was promoted to lieutenant and transferred back to the Purchase Street Station. He is married and has a family.

SKETCHES OF THE DEAD.

District Chief John Francis Egan was born in Boston, April 21, 1849. He was educated in the public schools of that city and after finishing his studies learned the roofing trade. In 1876 he became a member of Ladder company 1 on Friend street.

In 1882 he was promoted to be lieutenant of this company and in 1883 was made captain. He was transferred to East Boston as district chief and afterward transferred back to the city proper and stationed in Fort Hill square.

For more than 20 years Egan has had the reputation of being one of the most intrepid and daring men in the Department. One of his earliest achievements was noted at the fire in Lovell's gun store, many years ago, when he and Ladderman Hutchinson rushed into the blazing store, and while the flames scorched their faces and blistered their bodies carried out a chest of powder.

As a consequence of his daring, Egan probably has had more narrow escapes than any other man in the fire fighting business. He has also had more numerous hospital experiences.

Two of the more notable of these experiences were at the Lincoln street fire of 1893 and the Masonic building fire of two years ago.

Capt. James H. Victory was born August 1, 1853, and for many years before going into the Department was engaged in the grocery business. His first duty in the Fire Department was given him on July 31, 1880, when he was appointed as a call man on Ladder 12. He was made a permanent member of the Department on April 3, 1884, being then transferred from Ladder 12 to Engine 22. He was appointed lieutenant, May 18, 1891, with Engine 6. He was transferred to Engine 26 on February 10, 1893, and on December 22, 1893, when transferred to Engines 38 and 39 he received the rank of captain.

Lieut. George J. Gottwald was born June 25, 1866, and was appointed to the Department as fireman on Engine 31, on May 24, 1889. September 16, 1890, he was transferred to Engine 15, and on August 28, 1896, was promoted to lieutenant, being attached to Engines 38 and 39. Previous to entering the Department he was a clerk.

Hoseman John J. Mulhern, also of Engines 38 and 39, was born December 25, 1867, and was appointed to the Department October 14, 1892, being assigned to Engines 38 and 39, where he has since remained. His occupation was that of carpenter before appointment.

Patrick H. Diskin who went into the Department from the teaming business, was born March 17, 1858. He was appointed October 16, 1886, to Engine 15; transferred to Engine 8, March 11, 1888; Engine 3, May 31, 1889; Engine 7, December 19, 1890; Engine 27, October 6, 1895; Engine 38 and 39, July 28, 1896.

William J. Welch was born November 19, 1870, and was a blacksmith up to June 20, 1894, when he was appointed to the Department. He was then assigned to Engine 43. On September 4, 1896, he went to 38 and 39.

THE LAST SAD SCENES.

The funeral services over the remains of the lamented heroes took place on the eighth inst. All were very largely attended. Many were the tokens of love and esteem made manifest by the beautiful floral offerings. Eloquent lips spoke of the sad fate which befel the heroes and gave words of condolence to the bereaved ones.

There were no services at the late home of District Chief John F. Egan, at the corner of Havre and Decatur streets, East Boston. Shortly before 10 o'clock the ceremony of removing the remains to the church began, and as the pall bearers with uncovered heads

bore their precious burden from the home, they passed between double ranks of brother firemen, under command of District Chief John F. Ryan, who had charge of the funeral. Stationed near by was the East Boston Cadet band, which played a dirge as the casket was placed in the hearse.

The pall bearers were Capt. Littleton of Engine 20, Capt. McManus of Ladder 4, Capt. Kennedy of Engine 25, Lieut. Shallow, Lieut. McLaughlin and Engineman George Frazier of Engine 8, representing the Fire Department, and others representing Excelsior council, Knights of Columbus, of which the dead chief was a member.

Immediately following the hearse and pall bearers came the dead chief's horse, Grover, and wagon, and upon the seat of the latter rested the battered fire hat taken from the ruins. The horse was led by J. J. Sullivan of Ladder 2.

Then came a long line of carriages and a delegation of 200 Knights of Columbus from Boston and vicinity.

In the Church of the Most Holy Redeemer the last services were performed before an immense congregation.

At its conclusion the honored remains were conveyed to Holy Cross cemetery for interment.

The funeral of Patrick H. Diskin, late hoseman of Engines 38 and 39, Boston, was held from his late home, 443 Main street, Charlestown, at 8.30 o'clock. Following a high mass of requiem was celebrated at St. Francis de Sales' Church.

The church was filled, and several hundred persons were obliged to stand. The body was borne into the church by the following firemen who acted as pall bearers: Joseph McManus of Ladder 9, William Riley of Engine 32, John E. Redmond of Engine 27, Dennis Magee and Charles H. Long of Engine 36, and James Magee of Engine 27. A detail of 12 firemen from Charlestown companies acted as escort. The body was dressed in his fireman's uniform, while the cap laid on the top of the casket.

The celebrant of the mass was the Rev. Francis W. Maley. The burial was at Holy Cross cemetery, Malden.

When the services were over, the funeral cortege proceeded on its way to the cemetery, escorted to the Charlestown line by the detail of firemen, headed by District Chief C. H. W. Pope, which included Lieut. John E. Cassidy of Ladder 9, Lieut. B. H. Hayes of Engine 26, W. J. Dowell of Ladder 9, Edward F. Denehy and Edward Cassidy of Engine 32, Thomas Quigley of Engine 36, and Messrs. Stevenson and Judson of the Protective Department.

With all the honors due their rank, the remains of Capt. James H. Victory and Lieut. George Gottwald of Engines 38 and 39, were tenderly laid at rest.

The funerals of both were held from St. Margaret's Catholic Church, corner of Boston and Harvest streets, Dorchester, Capt. Victory's being at 9 o'clock and Lieut. Gottwald's immediately following at 10.30 o'clock.

It was shortly after 8.30 A. M., when the funeral cortege of Capt. Victory left his late residence, 27 Pearl street, on its way to the church.

A detail of 46 men under command of District Chief John A. Mullen, escorted the remains from the house to the church.

The arrangements at the church were perfect. Of these District Chief Mullen had charge, and the immense gathering of mourners were seated without confusion or delay by the ushers, Hosenen Donoghue of Engine 18, Skerly of Engine 38 and Ladderman Doolin of Ladder 3.

The entire double company of Engine 38-39 had been granted leave of absence for the day to attend the funerals, and the members were present in a body.

At the conclusion of the mass the Rev. Fr. Ryan delivered an eloquent eulogy on the dead firemen.

The service over, the pall bearers, Capt. George Wall of Engine 43, Lieut. Wm. Lynch of Engines 38-39, Lieut. Melvin Mitchell of Engine 1, and Engineman M. F. Crowley, Hoseman M. F. Green and H. York,

tenderly carried the remains to the waiting hearse. The pall bearers all wore a bow of purple ribbon and crepe on the arm.

As the cortege left the church the detail of firemen escorted the remains about two blocks down Boston street, where they left them, after drawing up in line on either side of the street and paying a farewell salute to their captain by lifting their hats.

The cortege kept on down Boston street to Dorchester avenue, and thence to the New York, New Haven & Hartford Station, where the 12.45 train was taken for Abington.

In passing the house of Engine 43 and Combination Ladder 3, in Andrew square, both companies were drawn up in line outside the house, and the bell on the truck, which was also pulled into the street, was tolled while the procession passed.

The remains of Capt. Victory arrived in Abington on the train due from Boston at 1.27 P. M., accompanied by a delegation from the Boston Fire Department.

The body was taken to St. Patrick's cemetery, where prayers for the dead were read by the Rev. Fr. Billings, after which they were committed to the silence of the grave.

The funeral of Lieut. Gottwald followed closely after that of Capt. Victory and even while the latter was leaving the church the cortege of the lieutenant was waiting on Boston street, just around the corner.

The hearse containing the remains, however, did not leave the house in Orchard place until the arrival of the honorary escort of firemen, who hurried back after bidding farewell to the remains of their late captain.

In nearly every respect this funeral was similar to the one that had preceded it.

The pall bearers were: Capt. Whall of Engine 43; Lieut. M. L. Lynch, Engines 38 and 39; Lieut. M. F. Mitchell, Engine 1; Hosemen John M. Ryan and James A. Akerly of Engine 38, and Wm. M. Martin, representing South Boston conclave, Independent Order of Heptasoph.

A solemn mass of requiem was celebrated. No eulogy was delivered by the Rev. Fr. Ryan at this service, that of the previous service having been adapted to both.

The cortege, escorted by the detail, then proceeded to Mt. Calvary cemetery, where the interment was made.

The obsequies over the remains of William J. Welch were of an extremely solemn character. Shortly after 8.15 o'clock the body was removed from his late residence, No. 106 Broadway, South Boston, to the hearse in waiting, previous to their being taken to the church. D. L. Caddigan of Ladder 5, Frank P. Chapman of Engine 1, T. C. Haney of Combination Wagon 2 and W. A. Baldwin of Ladder 5 acted as pall bearers.

As the remains were about to be taken from the house, Lieut. S. J. Ryder of Engine 15 and his detail, consisting of James D. Fitzgerald, Engine 3; E. G. Allen, Engine 3; Martin T. Mulligan, Engine 1; T. J. Muldoon, Chemical 8; John Noonan, Engine 15; C. J. Doherty, Ladder 3; C. E. Whiting, Engine 1; W. M. Budreau, Engine 15; E. H. Twist, Protective 1, and William Hart, Engine 2, were drawn up in double file on either side of the doorway, and as the remains passed through their line the comrades of the late hoseman of Engines 38 and 39 stood silently with bowed heads in reverence for the dead, with lifted caps.

When the body had been placed in the hearse, the pall bearers took their places on either side, and with the detail, a guard of honor, in charge of Lieut. S. J. Ryder, the cortege started for SS. Peter and Paul's church, on Broadway.

After the services the funeral cortege started on its sad journey for the cemetery.

Sympathy for the bereaved family of Chief Egan was expressed by Chief John Kerr and Assistant Chief George Blake of St. John, N. B., who contributed a beautiful floral piece inscribed: "We mourn his loss."