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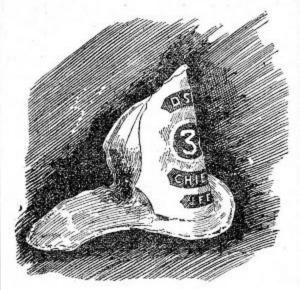
FEBRUARY 16, 1898.

Six Heroic Firemen Killed.

There are names not a few, inscribed upon the memorial records of the Boston Fire Department, of members who have met a violent death at the post of duty; but never before in the history of the local service did the final summons come to so large a number, simultaneously, as at the burning of the great bedding warehouse on Merrimac street, early on the morning of February 5. And it may be said with truth that, while every calamity of this kind has thrilled the entire community with horror at the event and pity for the victims and their families, those sentiments have never been more manifestly intense, nor more earnestly and sincerely expressed, than on this latest occasion, when six of the city's enrolled defenders were stricken down, in the full vigor of manhood, and sealed their pledges of faithfulness with life itself.

This tragedy had no dramatic accompaniments: no sensational features-no element of the romanticdistinguished it. It came in the cold, hard, commonplace routine of duty. Enveloped in smoke and darkness, concealed even from the sight of their near-by comrades, these men were swept from the earthly scene with a suddenness that was simply appalling. Yet the very barrenness of attendant circumstance made public sympathy and its spontaneity the more commendable by revealing an underlying basis of deep and genuine humane feeling instead of the impulsive and fleeting emotion at which cynicism too often hints when firemen pay the last penalty of valor in the glare of flames and the presence of an excited multitude.

That the chief of the Third District and the officers and men of Engine 38 and 39 were heroes of as exalted a type as any who ever fell on land or sea, in behalf of a noble cause, there cannot be a question. Indeed, the courage of a fireman must needs be more continuously maintained than that of a soldier, since the latter usually has some premonition that a conflict is at hand, whereas the former can never know when the summons is to come, nor the exact nature of the foe he will be called upon to encounter. At the very moment that the fateful alarm from box 412 sounded, every man of the six was sleeping peacefully in his bed. One hour and seventeen minutes later, all were dying or dead beneath tons of water-weighted debris, while five of their brethren were lying near, badly maimed, but fortunately in a position which facilitated their frompt rescue. Certainly, such sacrifices, in the interest of their fellow

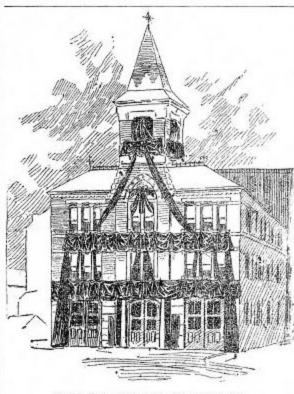


THE DEAD CHIEF'S FIRE HAT.

citizens, should be recognized in a manner scarcely less substantial than are those that were made to preserve the integrity of the government; and it is to Boston's lasting honor that this view was immediately taken and acted upon by her authorities. The unhesitating generosity of many private citizens is likewise deserving of the highest praise.

In speaking of the fallen fire-fighters there is no need to keep in mind the admonitory maxim, "Of the dead be nothing said but what is good." Without exception, they were men of unblemished character, with clear and enviable records in their chosen calling. Each seems to have possessed, in an eminent degree, the qualities essential to social popularity, and to have made friends by the score, both in and out of the Department.

District Chief John Francis Egan was in his 49th year; Capt. James H. Victory in his 45th; Lieut. George J. Gottwald in his 32d; John J. Mulhern in his 31st; Patrick H. Disken in his 40th, and William J. Welch in his 28th. They were in their 22d, 18th, 6th 7th, 12th and 4th years of service, respectively. Chief Egan was a widower, but was soon to marry an estimable lady of East Boston. Capt. Victory, Lieut. Gottwald and ommended on the ninth inst., for promotion to be Hoseman Disken were married. Hosemen Mulhern and Welch were unmarried.



FORT HILL SQUARE FIRE STATION.

All that the most heartfelt sympathy could suggest was done for the bereaved families of the deceased, and messages of condolence were received not only from friends but strangers, in all parts of the country.

The injured firemen, with one exception members of Engine company No. 7, are Capt. Joseph M. Garrity, Senior Hoseman Thomas E. Conroy, Hosemen Edward A. Shea and Philip J. Doherty, and Lieut. John J. McCarthy of Protective company No. 2. While the injuries of some of these are of a serious nature, they feel thankful for their escape from the worse fate which overtook their unfortunate associates.

Deplorable and saddening as such a calamity as this must always be, there is yet some measure of satisfaction to be derived from the insight it affords into the real estimation in which the fire service is held by the people. It reveals a latent feeling of confidence in the firemen as specially appointed protectors of life and property, coupled with respect for their daring and solicitude for their safety and welfare. It also appeals with more than ordinary strength and effect to men's generosity, with the result that the utmost possible relief is given to those upon whom the deepest shadow of misfortune is cast. These are facts that have been most conclusively demonstrated in the present instance; and when time shall have somewhat softened the grief of relatives and friends, there will be no slight consolation to them in the thought that the names, services and sacrifice of their loved ones are engrossed upon the city's roll of honor and are "familiar in our mouths as household words."

Too much credit cannot be given to the officers and men of the Boston Fire Department for the coolness, promptitude and energy with which they acted in a terrible emergency. No time was lost in the work of extrication, nor did any lack of prevision leave cause for regret. The methodical operations of the rescuers gave evidence of a discipline of which any great city might well be proud.

Deserved Promotions.

Capt. Garrity, of Engine company No. 7, was recchief of Boston's third district, a position made vacant by the death of Chief Egan at the fire on Merrimac street, on the fifth inst.

Much satisfaction has been expressed over the promotion of Capt. Garrity. The rank and file of the Department say that no better choice could be made for the position than that of Capt. Garrity. He has always been in the front rank of the fighters and he was well liked by the late Chief Egan, who had often said that he always liked to have Garrity with him in a tight place.

Lieut. James J. O'Connor of Engine company No. 7, has been promoted to the position of captain and Senior Hoseman C. J. O'Brien is advanced to the position of lieutenant in the same company.

These promotions have been justly earned by a faithful performance of duty.

Lieut. James J. O'Connor is considered one of the bravest fire fighters in the Department and has seen some hard service. He has had many narrow escapes from death. He has been 12 years in the Department and has been connected with Engine 7 since 1887.

James H. Osborne, for 14 years chief engineer of the Southington. Conn., Fire Department, has tendered his resignation. The firemen propose to present him with a suitable testimonial in recognition of his service.

Hemet, Cal., is to organize a Volunteer Fire Department. Its necessity has been made apparent by the recent fires.