

ADDRESS

DELIVERED BY

CAPT. JOHN S. DAMRELL,

BEFORE THE

BOSTON VETERAN FIREMEN,

FEBRUARY 2, 1886.

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MR. PRESIDENT:

In accepting your invitation to address the members of this organization on the primary causes which culminated in the great fire of 1872, together with a description of its salient points as well as on its general management, I do so knowing full well that its members are familiar with the topic, and that I am addressing a body of men who by education, experience, and special training, are thoroughly competent to judge the facts presented. They were within the lines on that memorable night, and consequently enabled to observe and exactly know what was done and what was left undone by the chief in command, in his endeavor to control that fire.

The limited time will not permit discussing the subject in as exhaustive a manner as I might otherwise be inclined to do, but I trust I have discovered, and am able to intelligently present, the principal causes which resulted in the greatest local calamity ever experienced.

In treating this subject I will first speak on the causes, and how they by natural results produced the proper conditions for just such a calamity. Secondly, I will talk of the most terrific engage-

ment by the fire department for superiority over the fire-fiend ever recorded in the annals of this city. The conflict raged for fifteen hours with unrelenting fury, while our department, with its allies from other cities, fought with unflinching heroism and bravery, yielding no point where it was possible to stand, and regarding no sacrifice too great to make, could they but vanquish their merciless enemy.

Science, history, and experience teach that magnificent results, as well as terrible calamities, have their origin in small things. Even a mere whisper stirs imperceptibly, the air around the globe. The simple act of eating an apple led to the world's downfall, while a falling one led to its philosophy. Opinions and principles are formed from slight causes, but by them character is shaped and the world subjugated. Our thoughts are our educators, and we are what they make us, and they, finding expression, make public sentiment. A man in this country, whether a citizen by birth or adoption, may raise his standard to whatever height his ambition suggests, but success depends upon his untiring energy; and in his life's work he has the sympathy, support, and protection of the most catholic government on the face of the globe.

Since we first manned the brakes our country has been, pre-eminently, a progressive one. We have seen, on all sides, the old give way to the new; the unpretentious three-story brick building give way to the imposing marble or granite structure of ten stories; the hundred dollar plant with its half dozen employees make room for the million dollar plant with its one thousand employees; the business methods practised by our fathers in the various branches of industry disappear, and our citizens rise from the financial crisis of 1857, able to congratulate each other upon the future business prosperity of our country. We are, therefore, by observation and education taught to look upon this constant change with pleasurable emotion, and gratefully acknowledge that the mighty achievements accomplished are due to that system of government which fosters free speech, and maintains free public schools.

We also heard the tocsins of war, and read the tidings flashed by wire throughout the length and breadth of our land, that the

stars and stripes, the symbol of our union and strength as a republic, had been trailed in the dust. This act proclaimed the dawn of the most gigantic and fratricidal war that ever fell to the lot of the civilized world; and, out of the excitement incidental to this terrible news, we heard the call from the nation's commander-in-chief, and a million patriotic men responded who deemed no sacrifice of either blood or treasure too great to make, if they might thereby maintain and transmit to their children the noble heritage bequeathed to them.

It was at the close of this terrible struggle which had steeped our soil in the blood of noble patriots, and while our citizens were engaged in building up the waste places made desolate, that I was elected, by the municipality of our city, to take command of one of its most important departments, — the Department of Safety. I accepted the trust after carefully weighing its responsibilities, and entered upon the discharge of its duties with a determination not only to be master of, but master in, the service. It became necessary for me to perfect myself in the principles and minor details of the service, so that by a thorough knowledge of the men and material under my command I might bring the department up to a position equal to any and second to none. How well I succeeded can be determined only by my peers; and they are of that class of gentlemen who surround me to-night, and I am content to abide by their decision.

Becoming absorbed in the prosecution of the work and in the study of the fire wastes, for the purpose of fully qualifying myself for the position held, it was clearly evident that our citizens and their representatives in the councils of our city had but a faint knowledge of the great losses occurring, and I was fully convinced of the indifference of the public, as well as those persons who made it a business to collect premiums from the many to pay the losses sustained by the few.

To surmount the causes that produced these disasters became a serious question, and it was a difficult matter to determine the best methods to be adopted to secure the property of our fellow-citizens from further ravages by this element of destruction. Up to this time modern history had not been called on to record the sweep-

ing out or licking up of the whole or part of our American cities. With the improvements in all the mechanical appliances of our age, and the introduction of superior machinery to accomplish work heretofore performed by human muscle, aided by the telegraph and chemistry, now the working tools of our fire department, the average citizen dismissed all thoughts that extensive conflagrations could occur, and one asserting otherwise, with the splendid equipment of fire organizations in large cities, was considered an alarmist, and branded as one possessing other motives than the best interests of the community.

It was on July 4, 1866, that the electric spark communicated the astounding intelligence that the Forest City of Maine — Portland — was being devastated by fire. Its principal business centre, from the Eastern depot to Mount Joy, had been licked up by the flames, and drifted away in smoke out to sea. Its further progress was stopped for want of material to feed on. Such was the news, and the excitement became intense as our citizens gathered around the several newspaper offices, and scanned each succeeding bulletin which reported the progress of the fire.

A municipal inquest was held, to ascertain the cause and to investigate the management of the fire by the Chief Engineer. The cause was briefly stated: it originated by boys playing with fire-crackers. The management received much commendation and praise on the one hand,—harsh and ungenerous criticism on the other. I learned from his Honor the Mayor of that city, the public pulse was so high from the city's great loss, and the fearful privations which many of her citizens were called on to endure, that the sins of neglect on the part of her municipality would have to be expiated by some one; whether that one would be the Mayor or Chief Engineer he could not then determine. Chief Engineer Rogers was, ultimately, officially guillotined, and the clamors of a certain class who constantly thirst for official scalps subsided, they feeling elated and satisfied. The lesson proved to be, as many others have been before, a nine days' wonder, and passed out of the memory of all but the immediate sufferers.

From that time on, to October 9, 1871, the necessities and luxuries of life were easily obtained from the immense resources of our

land, and our citizens' minds were diverted from all thoughts on safety or security in the mad rush for wealth, and absolute blindness seemed to afflict the entire community so that they could not see the impending danger.

But on that date our country was shaken by the news of a fearful calamity which had overtaken the Garden City of the West. In brief, the city was smouldering in ashes, and hundreds of thousands of people were driven from their homes by the ceaseless and merciless flames, with no other protection or shelter than that afforded by the broad prairies and heaven's starlit canopy. A noble, proud, and prosperous city, a city of affluence and wealth, was reduced in a single day to distress. This was a thunderbolt, and its reverberations aroused our citizens from their apathy, and the power of this friend of humanity was now fully understood when unchained and uncontrolled.

Under the inspiration of the hour the generosity of our citizens was boundless. Public assemblies were convened, resolutions of sympathy unanimously passed, supplemented with munificent donations. Boston's firemen sent by the speaker a generous donation to their Chicago brothers. By the outpouring of beneficence the homeless were cared for and the city once again rose, Phoenix-like, even more beautiful than before.

The fire had its origin in a small dilapidated structure used for stabling purposes, and was caused by the overturning of a kerosene lamp. The fire department of that city was arraigned before the bar of public opinion and put on trial. A careful and discriminating jury rendered a verdict of praise and commendation for the heroic service performed, including all from the chief down. On the other hand they were denounced as imbeciles; composed of a class without education, training, principle, or judgment, and performing their duty as the unthinking horse bears the burden to which he is harnessed; that they were demoralized and intoxicated, and commanded by a chief who had not the power to grasp nor the ability to organize and bring his force into reasonable discipline. This force and chief were subject to a board of Fire Commissioners. Later on, pressure was brought to bear by insurance men on the commission and municipal council to send to

New York and secure the services of Gen. Shaler to reorganize, relocate, and strengthen the department. He responded to the call, but his services were of short duration; and suffice it to say that the one upon whom the insurance men and the press had showered unstinting praise of ability as a chief, an organizer and leader, was now deemed to be so incompetent that the basket was prepared and finally received his decapitated head.

Now, in coming to the fire of 1872, it will be necessary to further digress, so that it may be clearly shown what the result of observation produced, and how ample warnings had been given of our liability to such a visitation as had overtaken our sister cities.

October 25, 1848, this city, by authority from the General Court, introduced water from Lake Cochituate for fire and domestic purposes. This action of our municipality had its friends and opponents. Certain sections of our city were piped of a size supposed to be commensurate for an adequate supply, but it proved to be insufficient for the growth of our city.

The water enthusiasts demanded of the city council a reorganization of the fire department. To retain twenty engine companies was a piece of municipal folly, for a fire in Boston of any magnitude was impossible. Their requests were complied with, and the department was reorganized. Engine companies were disbanded, and hose companies substituted, and we can remember the magnificent equipage of two hose jumpers lashed together with spun yarn, drawn through the streets as a four-wheel hose carriage adapted to the new organization. Somehow, and contrary to declarations made, fires still occurred, and many proved very disastrous. The new department soon became the target for severe criticism, and its efficiency was constantly questioned. Ere long the climax was reached, and our citizens set forth, in numerous petitions to the City Council, the inadequacy of the water supply. This was found to be so when several hydrants were tapped at the same time, for the head was so reduced that the streams were not of such power as to be relied on in emergencies. The engine companies were once again reorganized, and the department's strength increased to what it was previous to the introduction of Cochituate. Water-takers were on the increase; new pipes were

laid of the same size and the hydrants were of the capacity first introduced, up to the time of the fire in 1872.

Nature's antagonist, water, has been ever employed by man for the extinction of fire. Science from time to time has endeavored to increase its extinguishing power by mixing chemicals with it. Many novel inventions having that purpose in view, have been presented to the public. Exhibitions have been given to fire departments and the public to show the additional power when aided by the mixtures. Well arranged fires for successfully proving the merits of their patents, obtained for these exhibitors wonderful results, and the press was made use of to thoroughly advertise the great successes obtained. Inventors and their agents held high carnival, and the future safety of our cities was now assured, provided the authorities adopted their fire annihilators and extinguishers.

Thoughtful and practical chiefs, who had educated themselves upon all the points of contact and success as applied by the laws of nature, while admitting their apparent success, would be recreant to official trust if they did not rise above the clamors made for recognition, and demand a full and adequate supply of water. To attain this end I bent my energies, and in my annual reports of 1867, 1868, and 1869, as well as a special communication sent to the City Council in 1869, called attention to the weak points in our city's supply. A map of the district burned in 1872 was furnished me by Mr. Crafts, then City Engineer. The width of streets, height of buildings, size of water mains, number, size, and capacity of hydrants and branch pipes supplying them, were all shown on the plan which accompanied the communication. Many of the branches, owing to corrosion, would not average $2\frac{1}{4}$ " in diameter. It was clearly set forth that the water service might be adequate for the low class of buildings that lined the streets of this part of the city, but the radical changes being made by converting this whole section into a grand business centre, where mercantile buildings of seven and eight stories in height were fast supplanting the three-story dwellings, would require increased water service. While the hand-engines were in use they required only seventy-five gallons per minute, but each of our steamers

demanding a supply of water equal to four hundred gallons per minute. Continuous complaints were made by the department of its inability to obtain a supply for two steamers when working at hydrants on the same line of pipe. A vacuum caused by one steamer drawing all the supply would leave the other without any.

Possessing this knowledge of the defects in our water service, and realizing that our steamers were like a splendid battery without ammunition in the event of a calamity, I felt constrained to lay the whole matter before the president of the Water Board, Mr. Thorndike, stating clearly the necessity of having larger distribution pipes, and suggested the removal of the flush hydrants and the placing of the Lowery or Hill hydrant in all localities where it was necessary to have any.

Of the cost of the several hydrants I was informed from estimates submitted by Mr. Crafts, March 13, 1869, Mr. Lowery, who came from Pittsburgh, Penn., in answer to a communication on that subject, and from Mr. Hill of Baltimore, who also responded in person, and in no case would the price exceed five dollars over the cost of the Boston or Lowell hydrant. In conversation with Mr. Lowery he stated, in answer to a direct question, that he had not personal influence enough to introduce his hydrant at any cost.

I received in answer by messenger from that department, when the Water Board was in want of information on the management or the material to be employed in that department they would communicate with me. In referring to this matter after the fire I was surprised to learn that a gentleman and one who was president of the Water Board of our city, could deny that he had received a communication from the Chief Engineer upon the matter. Yet the fact remains that it was sent, and the answer returned in the way and manner described and in the presence of three witnesses.

Efforts were made to secure the necessary supply in another direction, and the whole question was called to the attention of Mayor Norcross, and it was suggested to him that the money contemplated being spent on building a carriage driveway around Chestnut Hill Reservoir be employed in repiping this district of our city, with a pipe of sufficient size to supply the demands made

for fire extinguishing purposes. Such a course would better serve the city's interest than the driveway.

An appeal was also made to Mr. Henry N. Stone, a member of the Common Council from Ward 5, in 1871, and that gentleman presented a report to the Council advising the use of salt water for fire extinguishing purposes, and the erection and maintenance of pumping stations, to embrace the entire section of the city north of Dover Street. The stations were to be located at the foot of Hanover Street, foot of Cambridge Street, foot of State Street, and junction of Dover and Albany Streets, with twenty-inch mains and eight-inch branches, supplied with post hydrants on the same. The hydrants, being equal to four first class steam fire-engines, with the supply for them which the plan suggested, would have proved very effective in case of such an emergency as occurred. Of the feasibility and practicability no one doubted.

That the necessity existed is undeniable, for after the fire the city complied in many particulars with the demands made, and supplied that territory with proper mains. If the same had been done before the fire, and the Lowery or Hill hydrant had been in use, our steamers would have been massed on that night in batteries of four at each hydrant, with short lines of hose which could have been handled with ease, the friction to overcome would have been slight, and the bursting of hose correspondingly diminished. This would have given us eight streams with an ample supply of water and the full force and effectiveness of our powerful steamers, instead of but one stream from a hydrant, and a very poor one at that. As to how recreant your Chief Engineer was to the city's interest in the matter of water, you certainly are competent to judge.

Another subject engaged the attention of the department, and the Chief Engineer felt it would be in no way disparaging to substantial improvement to officially criticise the defects in construction, in the attempt only to beautify the external portions of the buildings and produce something which was pleasing to the eye. Modern architecture was contributing its full share to the causes of conflagrations, and was responsible in a great degree for the loss of many valuable lives. The walls of these structures, so beautiful and embellished, were thin and unequal to the strains

they were to resist. Party walls as a fire resisting wall was simply a misnomer.

The imaginations of architects must have been sorely taxed as they labored to present drawings of this style and class of construction, which they were forced to in response to the demands of that class of clients who had suddenly grown rich, and wished drawings of magnificent shells, not caring how slight or flimsy they might be, provided the appearance was striking and attractive. If our citizen builders were called in to estimate on the cost of construction, and their figures were in excess of the price determined on by the capitalist, another class was requested to furnish figures. This latter class were oftentimes builders whose nationality was neither one thing nor another, and their responsibility on a par with their business methods. They would take the contract, complete the work, secure the benefit of the bankrupt law, skip the country, and make room for another gang. This order of construction was met with in all sections of our city, and I assure you that the Budenseiks did not all live in New York at this date.

Iron and granite were the principal materials used in construction, and without reference to protection from flame and heat. The thickness of walls corresponded to the avarice or indifference of capitalist or speculator. Internal construction, by the usual methods, consisted of hard pine floor timbers and hard pine upper floors, forming a perfect system of flues throughout, and the whole was crowned by the French or Mansard roofs, which averaged from twelve to twenty feet in height above the walls, and were properly designated, by reason of the material employed, "elevated lumber yards." The elevator wells in use were wooden chimneys, and served as conduits to conduct fire from story to story and to the Mansard roof. By the system adopted for heating they were kept at a temperature of 70° and 80° during the season necessary to use fire for that purpose, while alongside the pipes the temperature ranged from 80° to 200°. Woodwork in contact with the pipes became chemically changed, desiccation and carbonization followed, and the building was thoroughly prepared for a conflagration; and in such an event they were doomed to swift destruction.

The practical relations of landlord and tenant were also duly

considered as to risk and responsibility. I will endeavor to illustrate what is meant by liability and responsibility of landlord and tenant. A capitalist owns a lot of land, value \$75,000.00; he desires to improve it, and erects a building worth \$50,000.00; his investment now represents \$125,000.00, from which he derives an annual rental. He has by nature a perpetual policy of insurance on four-sixths of his entire investment. Now what has the capitalist or landlord done, directly or indirectly, to secure the safety of the tenant's half a million dollars' worth of goods now stored on the premises? My answer is, nothing. Not one dollar has he expended by way of precaution against fire. Nevertheless, the owner with his building, representing only two-sixths at stake, establishes, on general principles, the character of our city for safety and permanency, and to my mind was the concrete foundation and principal cause of the fire of 1872. The buildings were oftentimes occupied by several tenants, and, the responsibility being divided, personal care was removed. It was owing to the indifference on the part of the capitalist and speculator, whose disposition led them to construct buildings of the class described, that prompted me to notify the Board of Underwriters of this city of the great risks they were assuming in writing on such buildings as first-class insurable property. In answer to the communication sent, an invitation was extended to me to attend a meeting of the board. The opportunity was embraced and their attention called to the facts and the possibility of a sweeping conflagration occurring from the slightest cause, if the fire was not checked in its incipency. Municipal and state records will prove that efforts were made to secure the enactment of a building law, which would protect us from further danger in this direction, by your Chief Engineer, and chapter 280 of the Acts of the year 1871 was the result.

A careful examination was made by me to discover in what section of the city the largest and most disastrous fires occurred, and the information gleaned soon convinced me that the location of our apparatus ought to be radically changed, and brought within a radius of one-quarter of a mile of City Hall. A majority of the fires occurring was within that radius, and seventy-five per cent of

Boston's perishable property was within the same territory. It was also a fact that eighty per cent of the wear and tear of the apparatus, to say nothing about the loss of valuable time, was occasioned by the distance travelled from outlying locations into this district. I, therefore, asked that the location of the apparatus be changed, and that permanent companies be substituted for call companies, and if permanent companies were not organized to have tenement houses erected in close proximity to the several pieces of apparatus, for the accommodation of the firemen. This was deemed necessary in order to secure the full measure of power and muscle of the force in the incipient stages of a fire, when the most active and aggressive work has to be performed. This proposition raised the cry of unnecessary and unqualified extravagance,—the fire department was effective and efficient; and one of the leading journals replied in an editorial to the Chief Engineer as follows:—"What matter to the city of Boston whether Hose Company No. 1 or Hose Company No. 100 should succeed in getting a stream of water on to Mrs. Muldoon's feather bed in advance of the other? This rival spirit of *esprit de corps* which seems to possess the rank and file of our department, is all right and proper; but when it seeks to entail upon the city such extravagant expenditure of money for the location of fire apparatus where the land could not be purchased at a less cost than fifty dollars per foot, to say nothing of the cost of erecting new buildings, it is highly absurd, and should meet the condemnation of every tax-paying citizen."

October 21, 1872, information was received by wire that an epidemic had made its appearance among the horses in the city of Toronto, Canada. This news was received at first with seeming indifference, but as each succeeding bulletin announced its spread and that all horses of that vicinity were seriously affected, the alarm became general.

The epidemic spread with fearful rapidity, and in two days after it attacked the horses of our city, thirty-two of our department horses were down with the disease. The requisite order for the care of the horses was issued, and a special meeting of the Committee on Fire Department was held under notice issued by me.

The meeting was presided over by Alderman Woolley. The crippled condition of our department was stated to the members present, and a sub-committee, consisting of Alderman Clark and Councilmen Flanders and Hull, were appointed to procure horses for the department's use. At a subsequent meeting the sub-committee reported that they had visited all the sales stables in the city, and were unable, either by purchase or hire, to secure any sound horses for use.

Section 4 of the Fire Ordinance decreed the powers to make rules for the government and discipline of the department and for the extinguishment of fires, to the Board of Engineers. As it was necessary, a meeting was called of both bodies,—the Committee on Fire Department and the Board of Engineers, to take action on the matter affecting the department. The report of the sub-committee was discussed at this conference, and it was unanimously voted to double the force of the department so that no drawback might exist in the event of a call for its service.

The chief anticipating the action had procured drag ropes for each engine, hose, and hook and ladder company; and they were distributed that night from his office in City Hall to the district engineers, who in turn delivered them to the several companies. The complement of men was secured by the several district engineers and was registered at the chief's office the following day.

Language fails to express the dreadful features and effects of this unparalleled affliction. Business in all the commercial centres of this great country was at a stand-still. The depots were filled with freight, with no possibility of its speedy removal. Boston, with other large cities, was a scene of distress, and we can all remember the measures resorted to, to overcome the situation we were placed in. It was no uncommon sight to see men harnessed to horse-cars, to express wagons, and even to the city carts used for the collection of garbage; and our sad plight was made the most of by some who seized the opportunity to thoroughly advertise their business by drawing wagons and bands of music around.

While feeling anxious about our suffering animals, still greater anxiety existed for the welfare of our city should the department

be called on ; and it was this feeling of insecurity which prompted me to invite the officers and foremen of the several companies to be present at a dinner given by me at Young's Hotel. It was at that place that the department's crippled condition was fully talked over, and I urged those present to assume certain responsibilities should the occasion require it. The order was, in the event of a third alarm to seize and take possession of any horse they could lay hands on and make use of him ; that I would shield them from all responsibility, and if the City Council refused to pay bills caused by such action on their part, I would liquidate them from my own finances. It was necessary to issue such an order, as there were but six department horses fit to take from their stalls ; and it was acted on that night, all assertions to the contrary being false.

Heretofore, when requested to speak on Boston's great fire, I have, for just and proper reasons, declined, believing that duty should be performed by one not so directly and intimately connected with the events to be spoken of ; but from the time of the fire to the present date there has been such a manifest disposition to wrongfully misrepresent and distort the truth and float current such erroneous statements, that I have yielded to the request of the Association and will endeavor to present a truthful and concise statement of the facts as they existed. I shall not attempt to discuss any of the many apocryphal tales that have been put in circulation. These tale-bearers saw everything, yet in fact saw and knew nothing of what was transpiring ; and they can be compared to a person afflicted with the delirium tremens,—seeing what was not and not seeing what was. I will in this review deal with simple facts and not imagination.

November 9, 1872, was one of those beautiful autumn days often experienced in New England. The atmosphere was calm, clear, and exhilarating ; not a cloud obscured the sun, and the gentle breezes that were wafted over our city from the hills and valleys surrounding the Charles did not exceed a velocity of seven miles an hour, varying occasionally two to three points of the compass from northwest to north. As the sun went down behind those hills and settled below the valleys a more brilliant sunset was never witnessed. Our sick horses were convalescing and bade fair

to ultimate recovery, and the clouds of distress and fear which had hung over our city for a week like a black pall, were gradually lifting, and their silver linings were apparent. Many of our citizens, and especially those of the wholesale business centre of our city, had closed their places, the streets were comparatively deserted and surrendered over to the care of the guardians of our peace and safety. There was no forewarning of impending danger from our common enemy, fire, and the owners and occupants of these supposed mercantile fortresses of brick, stone, and iron, retired at the end of their day's labors to enjoy the comfort and quiet of their respective homes. They, as well as the general public, had long enjoyed freedom from its depredations, which was due to the vigilance and *esprit de corps* that characterized the *personnel* of the department. But, alas ! at the close of this beautiful day, unlooked for and unexpected the enemy appeared, and the strong citadels of stone, iron, and brick fell readily at the first attack. We may add, in the language of that Book of books : "If the good man of the house had known what hour the thief was coming, he would have watched."

At twenty-four minutes past seven o'clock, Assistant Engineer John Reagan announced to the department that a fire was in progress in the vicinity of Box 52, one of the weakest points in the city, and the key-note was sounded, followed by four alarms in rapid succession. The fighting force of the city proper consisted of six steam fire-engines, rated as second class, six hose companies, acting as tenders, and two hook and ladder companies, Warren 1 and Franklin 3, a chief engineer and seven assistant engineers, a total force of one hundred and eighty-five men.

Upon receipt of signal, companies not previously notified by the brilliant pyrotechnic display which illuminated the entire city, hastened to the scene. By reason of a fearful oversight or misapprehension of facts, and the illusion strengthened by Engine 7 and Hose 2 at work on the fire, no alarm was sounded until the fire, as described, had been seen one mile distant, fifteen minutes before the alarm was heard. At whose door that misfortune is chargeable I have never yet been able to discover. By location and seniority the command devolved on Assistant Engineer William A.

Green until the arrival of the chief. On reaching the scene I made a careful survey of the location and extent of the fire, direction of wind, and position of the apparatus for effectiveness. I inquired of Capt. Green if he could hold the point where he was then located; he answered he could if I could furnish him sufficient water to maintain it.

The survey revealed a conflagration of a magnitude beyond the power of the force at my command to check. Six separate buildings were on fire and one was a literal blast furnace. Engine No. 4, stationed directly opposite the building in which the fire originated, was in a dangerous position from the scorching heat and explosive granite, and it was unbearable by the engineer in charge. In answer to his question, "What shall I do?" he was ordered to hold his position till the gauge cocks burned off his engine. A stream from the small hose was turned on to the men and engine to protect them, but the granite coping directly overhead exploded and fell, cutting the suction in two. This compelled the company to remove to another position.

The apparatus as located by acting Chief Green had my approval, it being posted at the hydrants nearest the fire, and no better disposition could be made.

Dr. Jenks, a member of the Board of Aldermen, accosted me and said, "Captain, you have got a fearful fire." My answer was, "Yes, and the city is doomed; this fire will go to the water, for I have not sufficient force at my command to stay its progress." He said, "Do you mean what you say?" My reply was, "I do, and know whereof I speak." I then and there requested him to go to the Union Telegraph Office and request help from every city and town accessible, within fifty miles from this city. He asked again, "Is this a request, or shall I execute this as an order from you as chief?" My answer was, "An order, and without delay."

Couriers were sent at this time to intercept the Roxbury, Dorchester, South and East Boston wings of the department, and to hasten if possible their presence. On their arrival they were assigned positions where the most effective work could be accomplished. A request was made of the Chief Engineers of the

Charlestown and the Cambridge departments, who were present for assistance, and messengers with orders from them were sent to bring them, and they responded in very quick time. The entire department and auxiliaries were now hard at work.

Learning from Alderman Jenks that communication by telegraph was cut off on the Boston and Albany line, Assistant Engineer Allen was sent to request that line to make up a train, send it to Worcester, alarm the cities and towns on the way, and ask for help. The order was executed in a prompt and satisfactory manner, and the Worcester and the other departments reported for duty at an early hour of the night.

The key of the fire could now be readily seen, and I determined to hold it at all hazards; and the departments of Cambridge and Charlestown, including the Navy Yard force, were brought into battery at this point and placed under command of Inspector of Buildings Chamberlin, who had volunteered his services to act in any position; he was ably assisted by Chief Delano, Assistant Engineer Casey of Cambridge, and the Chief Engineer of the Navy Yard. A strong and desperate fight was made here, and when success seemed to crown their efforts, I was informed by a courier that the water had given out and they would be obliged to withdraw. An effort was made to hold the position by shutting off all drafts on the supply from other sections, but without success, and we were forced to remove and post the apparatus at other points.

At this time, 8.30 o'clock, the scene and power of the elements defy description. Granite fronts were exploding, and walls, falling, broke not only the water-mains and branches, thus allowing the water to flow with freedom, but the gas-mains had also succumbed to the shock, and the gas was flowing into cellars and sewers and through drains into the buildings. It was a fight for life. Our citizens were growing wild and frantic, making unreasonable demands, offering fabulous sums to desert one position and defend another. Others thoughtlessly opened their stores and invited those who felt inclined to help themselves to the contents. The latter act had a fearful and demoralizing effect upon many, and was satisfying to that particular class that are ever eager to make the most of others' misfortunes.

The Board of Engineers, without exception, fought the fire upon a principle thoroughly understood and marked out, and each and every one was familiar with the district, its water supply, the construction of the buildings, and the methods of attack, and plans to be executed in the event of a fire. By this knowledge even the orders of the chief were anticipated. It was charged by the philosophers, the following day and week, that the fire had been fought piecemeal, and without concerted plan. Such a statement was and is a libel on that board of gentlemen.

A council was held at this hour, 9.15, and the following orders issued. Assistant Engineer Reagan was to seize all hose to be found in any of the manufacturing establishments in the city and convey it to City Hall, there to establish a hose rendezvous. He was to appoint a corps of assistants to collect all bursted hose, remove the couplings from the same, and fit up the new hose taken, and keep the department supplied. Capt. Scott of Engine 6 was ordered to go to East Boston, take possession of the tug-boat Osborn, bring her to the foot of Summer Street, and, with the assistance of Hook and Ladder 5 men, who were detailed to handle her streams under his orders, protect that section.

A re-survey was made of the entire field, the location of the apparatus noted, and under whose command. This survey established the fact that currents and counter currents of air were driving the flames in every direction, on to Mansard roofs, and into every aperture, from whence they would break forth with redoubled energy and fury, and our firemen, overcome for the moment by blinding heat, would stagger, fight their way back to the engine, rallying again, make another charge, and with like results. The several currents swept through our streets with the power of a tornado, and new heat centres were being constantly produced. The terrific force of the flames was made manifest each succeeding moment, and human power up to this time was impotent to resist their advances. The roar of this Niagara of destruction was appalling, its gigantic volumes of flame held full possession of both sides of the streets, tearing and racing as though each side was striving to outdo the other in its destructive efforts. Gas and air explosions in quick succession, falling walls, and intense

heat, made it a terrible experience to that faithful organization which it was my privilege to command, and they fully proved themselves loyal and devoted.

Under such a condition of things it was impossible to locate a piece of apparatus; for a moment it might be a favorable position, and the next moment it would be utterly impossible to maintain it. It was equally impossible to consolidate or mass any amount of apparatus, for the water supply would not admit of such a movement; as a consequence our forces were divided up into small detachments.

If there had been from the commencement of the fire up to this hour, 10 o'clock, a strong direct wind blowing 20 or 30 miles an hour, it would, in part, have counteracted and overcome the currents created, our forces could have been formed into batteries on the plan of the letter A, and more effective work accomplished.

The engines from outlying districts were fast reaching the grounds, and they were assigned to the reservoirs, as their couplings could not be connected with our hydrants, and our own steamers were transferred to the hydrants.

The headquarters of the chief were established on Federal Street and the engineers were informed of the fact, as well as his Honor the Mayor through City Messenger Peters. A sergeant of police was sent to Capt. Quinn, Deputy Chief of Police, with a message to have him report to me immediately. Upon Capt. Quinn's arrival he was ordered to organize a force of men to be sworn in as special officers, for the occasion, take possession of all carpets to be found in the carpet stores, cover buildings exposed to the heat on streets designated, and that he would be assisted by the hook and ladder force and a water battery to keep the same wet. Our ladder men up to this time were employed in protecting buildings from falling brands and cinders. Capt. Quinn left me with the understanding that the orders would be executed, but for reasons best known to himself, never satisfactorily explained, he failed to carry out my instructions, and when hunted up, by order, was found at his home on Porter Street.

The explosions that were now constantly taking place by the mixture of illuminating gas with air and the expansion of air were

very numerous, and some were fearful in their destructive effects, and it was supposed by many to be occasioned by gunpowder; but such was not the fact, and it can only be attributed to the causes stated.

A careful reconnoissance was made, and I was fully convinced of the final results of the fire, its extent and boundary. My judgment was predicated upon what seemed to be the results of the induced currents; the air was intensely rarefied and its direction upward and powerful; this formed a vacuum in the entire area alluded to. The intruding currents filling the vacuum had a velocity of 20 to 30 miles per hour and drew all heat from outward boundaries to the centre or base of the fire; and I concluded that Washington, Milk, Devonshire, State, and Broad Streets would be the best points to operate from, as the heat would not drive the force away. In reply to a question of Mr. Clapp of the Boston Journal and in the presence of Alderman Cutter and his Honor the Mayor, the boundary stated was given; and my judgment was confirmed, as the fire did not pass those points, but was circumscribed in a still smaller area.

From the roof of a granite building on Milk Street below Federal I was able to view the acres of fire and to note the points where effective work could be performed by the department, if massed at them. I was obliged to make a hasty retreat; my throat and lungs were aching and my throat bleeding. On reaching my headquarters Captains Green and Smith were summoned to meet me there for the purpose of taking action upon the matter of using gunpowder.

Its use as an auxiliary in the extinguishment of fire was certainly a debatable question. Its use proved a decided failure in Chicago, October, 1871. Information was sought for from all sections of the country, previous to November 9, where it was used, and the reports, without an exception, proved it was disastrous in the extreme. The Board of Engineers, from their knowledge of the district, were unanimous in the opinion that gunpowder would not prove an effective auxiliary on account of our narrow streets and high buildings, filled to repletion with merchandise.

In order to drop a building there must be a cavity, and it should be shored to accomplish the purpose, otherwise the external walls

would be simply blown out, leaving the floors and stored merchandise fully exposed and in a fit condition for a good bonfire. The gas-mains ought to be supplied with shut off valves, so as to exclude all pressure of gas from the pipes in the street and buildings; if not, then it would have a chance to permeate every part of the debris, and falling cinders would easily ignite the mass.

I was well aware of the fact that no one in this city had any practical experience at such kind of work, and felt myself as competent to perform the work as any one whose experience was parallel with my own.

A demand was made for its use to check the fire, but my personal judgment deprecated it; yet the request was stated to Engineers Smith, Green, and Jacobs in the presence of his Honor the Mayor, Alderman Woolley, chairman of the Committee on Fire Department, Alderman Jenks, and Councilmen Burke and Flinders, and the manner and way it could be used, as well as the danger, liability, and responsibility. I asked his Honor the Mayor if gunpowder was used would the government sustain the action of the Board. He said, "Before answering that question I want to ask you as chief what you have done, what you are doing, and what you propose to do in addition to using gunpowder." In as brief a manner as possible I gave him the working points from the commencement up to the time of speaking, and the plans matured for its final suppression. His answer was, "I am fully satisfied with your work, and in the use of gunpowder, whatever you may do, the government of the city will sustain you; but I charge you to protect our citizens from its dangers."

Capt. Chamberlin was requested to see what buildings were in a fit condition to operate on, and he reported to me that no place could be found by him where he could, consistently, recommend the use of powder. Captains Green and Smith were detailed to procure powder. A tug-boat was pressed into service to procure the stock in the powder boats, and it was landed at the wharf. Capt. Jacobs informed me of a building which could be levelled and it would prevent the fire reaching the oil stores in that vicinity. He procured eighteen casks of powder and brought it under cover of canvas to the building spoken of. The building was shored, as

best it could be in the few moments, the work of mining proceeded with, and a battery of water brought into requisition. The outside of the window frames on the rear wall was on fire at the time. The mine being ready, the bungs were knocked out of the kegs by the heel of the engineer's boot, a newspaper torn up into strips were the fuses employed. All being in readiness, the engineer was ordered from the building by me, and after lighting the fuses I succeeded in jumping through a window. This was the first explosion by gunpowder in the fire of 1872. The building, being nearly empty of merchandise, was a complete wreck, and the fire was soon extinguished.

At this time a sergeant of police notified me that his Honor wished to see me at City Hall. I replied that if his Honor wanted to see me he would find me at my temporary headquarters in Post Office Square. A few minutes later the city messenger Mr. Alvah Peters, said his Honor and a large number of citizens desired to see me. I then consented to comply with the request and went to City Hall. The front doors on School Street were closed and locked, and they were ordered to be opened by me to receive a certain line of goods which was to be sent there for safety. The interview was about twenty minutes in duration. The demand made was to grant authority to certain citizens to enter the fire lines and assist in the removal of goods, blowing up buildings, or any other work which would aid or assist in checking the fire. I then and there wrote twenty or thirty passes admitting persons within the lines to organize for the saving of property or blowing up buildings, under the direction of the engineers.

The issuance of such orders I regretted in an hour from the time they were granted; and I have never forgiven myself for the mistake made in granting authority of the kind, or even permission to assist in the work designated, for they called to their aid, unfortunately, some of the most unreasonable cranks that it was ever my misfortune to meet.

Of their earnest wish to do all they could to aid and assist, I have no doubt whatever, as their courage and earnest efforts clearly indicated; but during the time till daylight the recklessness displayed by those handling gunpowder is inde-

scribable. Our department was fast becoming demoralized by its presence and the uncertainties surrounding them. Luckily, however, it was confined to a very small section of the field of operations. I saw that it was necessary to withdraw all authority granted, and did so, and by a determined fight on my part, ably seconded by Alderman Woolley, who rendered efficient assistance, the department was no longer impeded, and by six o'clock in the morning all powder had been removed, the feeling of insecurity vanished, and confidence was restored.

The divisions on the southern boundaries under Jacobs, Monroe, Allen, Colligan, and Shaw were now doing some grand and aggressive work, and their efforts were fast telling upon the fire in that direction. Communication with all quarters was kept open and uninterrupted, and I was able to concentrate and gradually mass my entire force upon the lines extending from Washington to Milk, Milk to Devonshire, Devonshire to State, State to Broad, Broad to Summer Streets. Our tide-supply on the State and Broad Streets lines was complete, and we were no longer driven back, but fast driving and holding every point gained in attack.

The fearful strain which the force was subjected to was apparent, and the reinforcements during the morning hours were well timed and opportune, and, I assure you, a great relief to our exhausted men. The further spread of the fire was out of the question, and the work of the force was now directed to the inside of buildings which were partially consumed; and at 12 o'clock, Sunday, I officially announced to his Honor the Mayor that the fire was so far under control that any further spread need not be apprehended, and our own force was fully sufficient for the occasion, and I purposed dispensing with the assistance that had come to our relief.

The work continued, success following success, until 4 o'clock, Sunday afternoon, when the first relief was put on duty. A commissary was established, and this was looked after by Alderman Woolley, Councilmen Burke, Jones, and Flanders. The relieving squads of several military organizations were being posted for the purpose of keeping back the curious-minded from dangerous localities. And as the shades of night gathered, it brought out the lurid glare of the flames with additional vividness, and the scene pre-

sented, with tall chimneys and broken fragments of walls in the foreground, is never to be forgotten. Night wore on, and the fire-engines, at their several positions, were belching forth flame and smoke. The streets were being emptied to some extent of the seemingly riveted throng, and when all things indicated a continuance of the tranquillity which had taken possession of both military and fire forces, the city was again startled by the terrific explosion which had taken place on Summer Street near Washington Street. An alarm was pulled in, followed by three alarms in rapid succession.

It was found that the gas connected with a block of stores, which had successfully resisted all advances of the fire-fiend up to this time, had ignited and caused the trouble. The front external wall was blown into the street by the force of it, the merchandise within was immediately ignited, and a terrific fire was again in full blast. The surroundings were of such a character that the most serious apprehensions of the result were fully realized. Adjoining this building were the two largest retail dry goods stores in the city. People again swarmed the streets, and many of our business citizens in West and Winter Streets and Temple Place were panic stricken, and increased the excitement by blocking up those thoroughfares in their mad endeavor to hastily remove their stock of goods. But the military soon restored quietness by putting a stop to the proceedings. The department fought this second outbreak with more than ordinary courage. One life, a lady residing on the premises, was lost, and a number of firemen injured. By 4 o'clock Monday morning the fire was so well under control it did not occasion any further apprehension, and the department was again relieved, excepting those detailed for service.

Work, by reliefs, was continued until the following Saturday noon. During the entire week the effectiveness of our machinery was unimpaired. This was due to the precaution taken to keep on hand the several parts of the several pieces of the machinery, and the apparatus was kept in constant repair and working order by an expert corps of workmen from the Amoskeag Works, Manchester, N. H.

And now, gentlemen, I was not ubiquitous, but I did endeavor

to lend whatever assistance and encouragement my presence would give to those actively engaged, and by words of cheer and encouragement stimulate them. No one doubts the power and effectiveness produced by the presence of a chief in command, and an intelligent one will never fail to wield the great good that arises therefrom. Cases are innumerable which can be cited. The late war furnishes an incident of that fact, and it was thoroughly exemplified by the ride of Phil. Sheridan to Winchester.

Events of like nature transpired during the ordeal which our force passed through, and it proved of good service to be visited by the chief occasionally, and I can recall to mind several instances, one of which I will relate. While engaged with Capt. Jacobs in considering a change of base on the southern boundary, we were approached by Capt. Chamberlin, who reported that he was rendering what service he could to the western division under Engineer Shaw and the chief of Charlestown. He thought it would be well for me to go around and encourage them by my presence; I went there and ordered the lines to advance, which was done with a hearty cheer.

A summary of the day's work of destruction shows that the fire burned over sixty acres of land, the value of which was, in round numbers, \$24,365,000. The assessed value of the buildings consumed was \$12,745,000. Stored in the buildings was personal property destroyed or lost representing an assessed valuation of \$38,454,000, to which add \$10,000,000, the estimated value of consigned goods not included in the assessed valuation, and we have a grand total of over \$60,000,000.00. The buildings destroyed numbered six hundred, of which five hundred and fifty were separate estates, and occupied by over a thousand business firms. In addition to this, eleven valuable lives were lost in the endeavor to save property, and twenty were injured, some slightly, others seriously.

Notwithstanding the losses, Boston's citizens were generous in their donations, for the limits of the fire had hardly been established when the munificent sum of eighty thousand dollars was placed in the hands of a board of trustees for the benefit of those families which had been deprived of husband, father, or brother, and for firemen who were injured while on duty.

One word on the fate of those noble comrades who perished in their efforts for the preservation of our city. I recall them in memory with sorrowful emotion, and with feelings deeper than ordinarily awakened by examples of individual sacrifice. In their relations to the public as firemen, they displayed a loyalty that could not be questioned, and, as was shown, they were ever ready to sacrifice their lives in the faithful discharge of duty. Gratitude for their heroic devotion impresses all hearts. We realize that in this life they belonged to other communities as well as our own, but death's sacrifice made them Boston's forever.

The commissioners appointed to investigate the cause and management of the fire held forty-two consecutive sessions, and extended an invitation to all classes of our citizens to attend and recite what they knew and what they did not know, but imagined, about the same. The testimony taken was compiled and published in a volume of 656 pages, and is certainly as intelligent and comprehensive, relative to the objects sought for, as astronomy is to the uneducated Chinese.

In the report they find that the fire began near the elevator in the building where it was first discovered, whether by accident or design they knew not. That a disastrous delay occurred of fifteen minutes after the fire broke out, before an alarm was sounded, but they cannot tell who was responsible for the delay. That faulty construction of the building and especially the elevator well was the primary cause of the rapid spread of the fire. That our streets were narrow and our buildings high. That our English neighbors knew more about Boston's liability to a fire than her citizens or home insurance companies did. That the fire department of Boston was composed of intelligent men, and possessed the knowledge of its being a dangerous locality, and in the judgment of the commission they should have taken all necessary precaution by bringing all available force to every fire. This was not done, and because the horses were sick the work of the department was impeded. That there was not a sufficient water supply, and the chief's request for the same was not complied with. That the engines were supplied with fuel, for no one steamer failed to make or maintain its steam, although not furnished with coal. That

the couplings used by the departments of other cities were of a different style and thread from those in use in our department, and consequently were, in a measure, a drawback to their efficiency. That our Chief Engineer was full of courage and shrank from no danger,—master of himself, his temper, and his faculties; but while admitting this we feel that the heroism of our engineers was wasted, because they were not directed by a master who was able to grasp the situation. That our firemen were brave to a fault, and language cannot describe their courage and devotion. The story of the engineers of our department is of hardships endured and dangers braved, and more than one of their number proved faithful unto death. That the Chief Engineer did order the withdrawal of one stream from a tenement house and direct it on to a building on Oliver Street, by so doing, and under his personal supervision, saving the block and stopping the progress on that line. That we are of the opinion that the Chief Engineer in case of a conflagration should establish his headquarters in a place known to his subordinates, where he could command a view of the conflagration and receive their reports. This would prevent confusion, and be more effectual than for the chief to be engaged in the combat. He would then have an opportunity of consulting the superintendents of the several railroads, and do other executive work. This we are sorry to say was not done as fully as it should have been. That the gas company had considered the necessity of shutting off street by street in case of a conflagration, and placed water valves for that purpose, but from circumstances, coupled with neglect, they were inoperative and consequently a failure.

Now, I purpose reviewing the work of this honorable commission in a brief way and in no unkind spirit. I fully concur in some findings, for warnings had been given and they were a matter of record. I second heartily every word of praise bestowed on our department for its bravery, courage, and devotion, and bear testimony to the worth of the Board of Engineers, and to the able manner in which they performed all duties devolving on them as division commanders. I concur in their statement relating to the varied sizes of couplings.

I do not concur in or accept the idea advanced that the chief should establish a permanent headquarters and surround himself with a staff, and by aids communicate orders to his subordinates. To receive reports and issue orders on any such principle is not practical, but inconsistent, and such views could only emanate from the sheerest ignorance of the duties to be performed, and the necessity of the case; and I think it is not necessary to discuss at further length such an opinion, and before such an assemblage as is present to-night.

Had the demands made by the chief and his Board of Engineers been complied with, and they furnished with the necessities to overcome such a calamity, who can tell the result? If there had had sufficient water when, in the early stages of the fire, Capt. Green replied he could hold his position if he could get water, who can say the result would have been what it was? It was the lack of water which lost more than one favorable position, and the key of the fire in particular.

Land was afterwards purchased and houses built on it for the accommodation of permanent men. The city has been provided with large pipes since, hydrants adopted that were suggested, and buildings constructed as they should be. If the ideas advanced before, and adopted since, had been in existence November 9, who can say it would be recorded as a memorable date in Boston's historical record?

And here let me ask if the Chief Engineer is all-powerful at a fire, a complete autocrat, as declared? When not in command at a fire his powers rank no higher than those of the humblest citizen. He may recommend, he may suggest, but it is the power behind the throne which wields the sceptre. Now, let me ask again,—is there a single instance recorded where the Chief Engineer failed to assume the full responsibilities of the powers decreed?

Many of the complaints made by our citizens were not actuated by any unkind spirit, but from a sense of duty. From their view it seemed as if there was a terrible waste of energy, power, and water, which might have been better utilized and made more effective; and I assure you no one realized the truth upon which these

complaints were made more than myself or deprecated the results, for under the circumstances I could not afford to waste one particle of judgment, strength, or water. An explanation is not necessary to be given to you, firemen, but to others not so well posted it may be well to explain.

First, the water supply was inadequate.

Second, contrary to recommendations, and in direct opposition to the wants of our city, separate hose companies were maintained. Every effort made by the Board of Engineers to consolidate them with engine companies was opposed by citizens, who petitioned the City Council to have them remain as they were. At a small fire in the neighborhood of these companies they were a protection, but when steamers were present and attached to hydrants, they were wellnigh useless, as the superior draughting force of the steamers would take nearly all the water in the pipes, and force enough did not exist to furnish an effective stream to the hose companies; consequently their streams were oftentimes shattered into spray within twenty feet of the pipe. The same was also true when coupled to an engine, and there was not enough water for the steamer's streams. These hose companies were ambitious to do what they could, but the condition of the streets on that night was, so to speak, a perfect blow pipe, and the lines of these companies could not be carried up into buildings, so that their attention was directed to the outside of the same, with results as stated; thus a great deal of water was apparently wasted and force expended.

Other complaints were made and a great amount of fault-finding existed. The commission labored hard to ascertain whether the chief was cool or crazy, as nearly every witness was questioned on that point. It has never been thought consistent on my part to reason down what has never been reasoned up. I therefore remained quiet and made no answer to any charges other than this. I accepted the responsibilities and asked no one to share the burden or odium cast on the management and results of that memorable fire, and I say, not boastfully, but knowing the full import of what I do say, that I understood my business; and when I could come out of a fire of that kind and character with the full endorsement, without an exception, of the entire force assembled, which repre-

sented not only my own but nearly fifty other departments, who declared by resolutions, in language not to be misunderstood, that the Chief Engineer proved himself equal to the emergency, and therefore commanded their highest admiration and respect; and after passing through the great maelstrom of abuse, with the personal endorsement of his Honor the Mayor, who was in a position to know whereof he spoke, and the endorsement of the Committee on Fire Department, and after complete vindication by an almost unanimous vote of the City Council, which re-elected me chief of the department,— I ought to be proud of my efforts as chief, and of my department, notwithstanding the efforts of certain insurance companies and their agents who opened their batteries and sent forth their newspaper squibs for the purpose of shifting the responsibility of their own shortcomings, which they knew or ought to have known existed. If I could have been proved unstrung by excitement, and not capable of issuing proper orders, or had lost the confidence of my intelligent Board of Engineers, the ignorance and want of common sense, as apparent in their methods of doing business, would be transferred to my shoulders.

Owners of insurance stock lost their ten and fifteen per cent dividends, and the capital they invested had vanished, and the cry was, "Who is responsible?" "Who is answerable?" Our citizens, who had tried to protect themselves by paying annual premiums for that purpose, now fully realized that the foundations of these companies were built on sand, and the amount to be received would be small compared to the loss sustained; so the insurance gentlemen must make it appear that the disastrous fire was not due to their lack of sagacity or business intelligence, but to other causes; so public attention must be diverted from them, and the press was called to their aid for that purpose, and our crushed and distracted citizens could not penetrate the motives which actuated the attacks made. I have no doubt many believe that the Chief Engineer was the city's Jonah, and that he was either drunk or crazy, or both, and had suddenly lost his senses.

That the press was used is a well-known fact, for articles of a nature, condemnatory of Boston's Chief Engineer were written by

certain insurance gentlemen of this city and sent to New York editors, and those same articles appeared as editorials in some of the New York journals. Thanks to that noble, generous, and truthful fireman, Chairman Pope, of the Board of Underwriters of New York City, I learned from whence the attacks emanated, and will say that, as knights errant of exaggeration and falsehood, they are entitled to the front seat until the crime is expiated.

"And we have them on the list,
And they never will be missed."

Now, Mr. President and gentlemen, I have in times past, in your company, fought in many hard battles with the elements: and in closing this address, I wish to follow the dictates of my feelings, as well as the impulses of my heart, in expressing my acknowledgment of the debt of gratitude I owe to you for the repeated honors conferred from time to time; and they were all the more gratifying as they were unexpected. As your chief I was the recipient of your generous confidence and active support; and as long as memory lasts, your kindness will be cherished by me.