

## THE RESCUE OF PRESIDENT WILLIAM GIBLIN

The Story of a Fight for a Man's Life That Will Stand Forever in the Records of Heroism.

At 7:30 o'clock, a fireman came from the building and told his chief that three of his companions were trapped in the basement vaults of the building.

The news spread like wildfire through the ranks of the department and the assembled crowds, and a groan went up.

The building by then was a veritable volcano of fire. Flames were bursting forth from every window, from every crevice. Walls were bulging. Great granite blocks were detaching themselves, and crashing to the ground with thunderous roars. The doors to the basement were clogged with debris.

A hundred firemen volunteered to rescue their comrades, and without waiting for orders sprang toward the basement entrances.

With axes and crowbars, they dashed in and out, scorched by the heat, cased in ice, trying to chop out the three imprisoned men.

At 8 o'clock, a fireman emerged from the building, and spread the news that the vaults were half full of water, and that the imprisoned men were in danger of drowning, but that the pouring in of the water could not be stopped else the men would die of suffocation.

The volunteers redoubled their efforts. They fought among the falling blocks of granite, each one large enough to crush out the

lives of a dozen men, with a heroism and disregard of their own lives, that caused the watching crowds to hold their breaths.

At 8:30, the great walls of the building on the Broadway side, burst outwards in an inferno of flame, and crashed to the ground. Mostly the rescuers barely escaped. Tons of granite and marble fell in the street, and perhaps it never will be known how many firemen perished in that moment of roaring horror.

But the rescuers went back to their heroic work before even the last block had fallen, and at 8:50 o'clock they were able to speak to the imprisoned men through a grating in the vaults.

It was then that it was learned they were not firemen, but President William Giblin, of the Mercantile Safe Deposit company, and two companions.

After twice being driven from the burning building by firemen, Giblin had returned a third time to get papers of inestimable value from his desk, and thus was trapped.

At 9 o'clock Giblin reported to the fighting rescuers that the floors of the vaults had given way and that he had dragged the bodies of his companions, now unconscious, into the main office.

One steel bar still remained for the firemen to dislodge. As they worked at it, the falling of blocks of solid granite became more fu-