



Mr. Henry Gavie Mitchell Captain of the Dunedin City Fire Brigade, was born in 1848 at Salem, Massachusetts, United States of America, and is the second son of the late Mr. Henry Mitchell, for many years Governor of the United States prison, at Salem. He was educated at the public school in his native place, and at the age of fourteen joined the United States Navy as a second-class boy, and afterwards served in the war ships "Massachusetts," "Siam," and "John Adams," In 1863 he sailed for South America, lived for a short time in the state of Paraguay, and afterwards removed to Bolivia, whence, after a residence of three years, he was compelled to make a hasty departure, owing to a revolution. He accordingly sailed for London, and a few months later embarked for Dunedin, where he landed in 1869. Mr. Mitchell was gold-seeking for several years, chiefly in the Mount Ida district, but without exceptional success. He returned to Dunedin in 1874, and was engaged for about twelve months as a clerk in the railway service. In 1875 he removed to Port Chalmers, and two years later entered the service of the Union Steam Ship Company, as a sail-maker and general hand on shore. There he remained till 1892, when he was appointed captain of the Dunedin City Fire Brigade. Mr. Mitchell's previous experience well fitted him for the position. After his term at sea as a man-of-warsman, he became a member of the No. 2 Ladder Company in the San Francisco Fire Brigade, and shortly after landing in New Zealand he joined the Naseby Brigade. Later on he became a member of the Port Chalmers Brigade, of which he was captain for several years. Mr. Mitchell has taken an active part in the work of the United Fire Brigade Association of New Zealand since its formation in 1878, and now holds its gold star for twenty-five years of service. He was president of the Association in 1888 and 1889. Mr. Mitchell was for many years a member of the Order of Oddfellows, and passed through the various chairs of his lodge. He has been twice married; firstly, to Miss Mary Wright, of Ayrshire, Scotland, who died in 1895, Leaving a family of one son and three daughters; and secondly, to Miss Lee, of Port Chalmers.

Henry Gavie Mitchell is buried in Dunedin's Northern Cemetery.

The Dunedin City Fire Brigade. This Brigade has two stations and two reel-houses. The central station is situated in the Octagon. It is built of brick and plaster, is two stories high, and has furnished private apartments for the captain, sleeping quarters for the firemen, accommodation for the apparatus, and a six stall stable for the horses. The other station is in Great King Street. It is a single storey wooden building, with room for a ladder carriage and a hose reel, and stabling for a horse.

The two reel-houses, each with 500 feet of hose, are in Princes Street South and Arthur Street respectively. The plant of the Brigade is a thoroughly efficient one, and includes one Shand-Mason engine of thirty man-power having two seven-inch cylinders; two hook and ladder carriages, each with two 43-foot sets of ladders; one horse reel; a telescope ladder, ninety feet in length, and said to be the largest in the Australian colonies. In addition to this a stretcher on wheels, with kit complete, the property of the St. John Ambulance Association, is kept at the central station for the use of the Brigade. The city being in possession of an efficient gravitation water service, giving a pressure varying from 150 to 180 pounds to the square inch in the lower levels, no chemical engines are employed. There are two fire-bells—one over the Town Hall and the other at the Great King Street station, and the locality of a fire is indicated by the number of tolls. Thus one toll represents South Ward; two tolls, High Ward; three tolls, Bell Ward; and four tolls, Leith Ward. The city is also supplied with the Morse system of fire alarms, there being upwards of thirty boxes, in various parts of the town. The system was inaugurated as early as 1877, Dunedin being the first city in the Australasian colonies to acquire it, and is personally superintended by the captain of the Brigade. The Dunedin City Fire Brigade consists of the captain, two foremen, one engine keeper, fifteen firemen, and three drivers, and has an honourable name for the fearless and expeditious manner in which it fulfils its hazardous and important duties.

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