

CHAPTER XXXIII.

POLICE DEPARTMENT.

“Safety and equal government are things
Which subjects make as happy as their kings.”

Few American cities have a police force equal to that of Grand Rapids, and none has better. The Police Department of the city was organized in 1871. Prior to that time order was maintained by regular peace officers of the law, paid by fees and aided by the general good will and moral support of the people. The first night watch of Grand Rapids was Henry Baker, who was appointed in 1856 and for many years patrolled Canal and Monroe streets between Lyon and Ottawa streets. He was faithful and efficient, and no doubt the burghers of those days felt as secure in the darkness as they now are under the watchful care of twenty-five regular policemen who patrol the city during the night watch, aided by street lights, electric towers and telephones.

The First Police.

In June, 1871, a regular paid police force was organized with one chief and eight patrolmen. The chief of police was James L. Moran. The eight patrolmen were: Wm. Ormond, Jacob Hoek, Thomas McLane, Wm. O'Conner, Charles H. Saunders, Sanford Tucker, Washington L. Stinson and Wm. H. Whalen.

The police force was under the direct management of the Mayor and Common Council until 1881, when a bill was passed by the Legislature creating for the city of Grand Rapids a Board of Police and Fire Commissioners and placing under their control the police and fire department of the city. The act was drawn and advocated by Nathaniel A. Earle, who was a well known lawyer of those days and who that year was a member of both the State Legislature and the Common Council of Grand Rapids. The act provided that the Board should be composed of five commissioners, that George G. Briggs should be commissioner for one year, Orville L. Howard for two years, Lewis H. Withey for three years, Wm. H. Powers for four years and Israel C. Smith for five years,