

DEATH CAME AT A BANQUET.

**Former Alderman Richard B. Leech
Expired After Making an
After Dinner Speech**

AT BRIGHTON BEACH HOTEL.

**He Was One of the Guests at a Reunion
of Civil War Veterans.**

The festivities in connection with the thirty-eighth annual reunion of the Veteran Association of the Forty-eighth Regiment, New York State Volunteers, which was held last night in the Brighton Beach Hotel, were brought to an abrupt end about 8 o'clock by the death of ex-Alderman Richard B. Leech of this borough, who was an invited guest, and had just finished delivering a speech. The members and their friends of the association went to their homes filled with sorrow.

The reunion of the veterans was set for 5 o'clock, and at exactly that hour they were called to order in the private parlor of the hotel by Samuel H. Frankenburg, president of the association. In a few well chosen remarks he congratulated the old veterans on their efforts in behalf of the reunion, and then read several letters from comrades who were unable to be present. The business of the meeting being over, the members, in charge of Dr. George W. Brush, who was chairman of the reception committee, were taken to the private banquet hall, where a feast had been prepared. About thirty-five sat down at the table, President Frankenburg being at the head. On either side were seated the invited guests, including Colonel Bertram T. Clayton, Congressman Howe, Major Corwin, Charles T. White and Mr. Leech. President Frankenburg read a letter of regret from Governor Roosevelt, who said he was extremely sorry he could not attend, and also one from Colonel Loomis L. Langdon.

The dinner was partaken of and the members and their guests had an enjoyable time, fighting the battles of the Civil War all over again in their conversations. After the cigars had been lighted the speech making began. Chairman Brush called on the guests to respond to the toasts. Congressman Howe was the first speaker, responding to the toast "Our Country," and was vigorously applauded. The other toasts and the speakers were: "The Officers of the Regiment," Major B. R. Corwin; "The Boys of '61," by Major William J. Carlton; "The Boys of '93," Colonel Bertram T. Clayton; "The Press," Charles T. White; "The Navy," Richard B. Leech.

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CHARLES I. WHITE; THE STAFF; MICHAEL D. Leech.

Mr. Leech had had heart trouble for a long time, but last night he was feeling very well. When he was called upon to speak, he arose and talked for perhaps fifteen minutes and was generously applauded. While the next speaker had the floor Dr. Brush, who occupied a seat opposite Mr. Leech, noticed that the latter had suddenly become pale. Dr. Brush quietly left his seat and went around to where Mr. Leech was sitting and spoke to him. He got no answer and again he observed that a deathly pallor had come over Mr. Leech's face. Bending down, Dr. Brush felt the pulse and placed his ear to the left breast and found that life was extinct.

Mrs. Leech was sitting near at the time, saw the actions of Dr. Brush and immediately inquired as to her husband's trouble. The physician told her that her husband had died of heart disease and she swooned. Assistance was called and Mrs. Leech was carried to another room, where she was revived. The dinner, of course, was at an end, and Dr. Brush telephoned to Coroner Burger for permission to remove the body of Mr. Leech. It was granted and the body was taken to his late home, at 51 Putnam avenue, this borough. The news that one of the guests at the dinner had died suddenly caused considerable excitement in the hotel, when it became known, but Detective Maxwell and his assistants kept perfect order and quiet.

Richard B. Leech was born in the Fifth Ward of this borough in 1841. His father then kept a stone yard, corner of Bridge and Plymouth streets, and was a prominent citizen of early Brooklyn, being an alderman of the city fifty years ago. In 1850 the family moved to Livingston street, and young Leech attended School No. 1. At the beginning of the Civil War he became paymasters' clerk, serving in the South Atlantic squadron. He was recommended by Admiral Dupont for a similar position in the United States Navy, but at the close of the war entered commercial life. He was for a time in the leather business in the Swamp, but in 1869 started the coal yard on Atlantic street, near Smith, now conducted by his son, Richard I. He had retired from active business for some years, owing to ill health, and had just returned yesterday from a protracted stay at Shrewsbury. His purpose in coming back was to attend the dinner at which he was fatally stricken.

Mr. Leech had been a Republican since he was able to vote, and had been prominent in the councils of his party in this county. He served two terms as alderman and was in the board containing the famous "cold thirteen." He was popular as an after dinner speaker and as a story teller, and personally a most esteemed man. He, with his family, was an attendant at St. Peter's P. E. Church, and the Rev. Lindsay Parker is expected to officiate at the funeral services, which will be held at his late home, 51 Putnam avenue, Sunday evening at 8 o'clock.

Mr. Leech is survived by his wife and two sons, Richard I. and Walter W. Leech. He was a member of the Republican general committee, the Forty-eighth Regiment Veterans' Association, the South Atlantic Squadron Association, Winchester Post, G. A. R.; the Knights of Honor and the Chosen Friends.

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