

night, policemen may have had their heads covered up, or they have found it necessary for their health to take a quiet nap in a corner, in which case, of course, the fire had to wait till they had satisfied the wants of their weary nature. In addition to this brilliant service, there was a general impression that a fire-engine existed somewhere. Few knew where. No horse was kept in waiting. If a butcher or a baker happened to be in harness, he unyoked his horse, left his vehicle in the street, and galloped, à la John Gilpin, to the rescue. The first horse got a prize of a sovereign.

now

step down with me to one of our Fire Stations, and take a look with me. The instant a fire occurs, you rush to the nearest box alarm. There is the key behind a small piece of glass. Break that glass. Take out the key. Open the door of the box. The alarm sounds in every station like a flash. Before you have time to know what next to do, engines are tearing along from every direction. Men, trained for the service, and kept day and night in readiness, are twisting on their coats and spurring on their steeds in a breath. The horses themselves know well what it is. You should see them crazy with delight to get to the fray. There's not one of them that would come in second for a good deal.

"I've seen many a heavy fire," the Captain will tell you. "I have been in all the bad fires for twenty years. Saved lives? You bet. Hundreds on 'em. And children, the dear little souls, I've had scores of 'em in my strong arms, when they were too scared to know where I was takin' 'em. Like the service? Well! yes—that is, as well as most things. It's got its drawbacks, like most everything. But we hold together well. No. We've no apprenticeship. The chaps come along and join. They think they'd like to try. A couple o' months is enough for some of 'em. They can't stand the knock-in' about, you see. Yes, indeed, people are kind to us: grateful like, and gives us coffee on cold nights. I've been twenty-four hours at a bad fire, without a break, and have, many's the time, come home frozen stiff. Had to be thawed out. The water, you see, gets into our clothes, and soaks us solid. Then we freeze up as fast



THE REFLS.

as we soak, you see, and by-me-by it's a hard job. Sweet sleep, you may be sure, after we're all fixed up. But we put everything to rights before then. The horses? They know's about as much as I do, they do. You should see how they look at me when they come in. 'Did that job well? didn't we?' they says, as sure as they say anythin'."

As the Captain went on I was proud of him. I set him down in my note book on the page with our sailors and miners and

THE STATIONS

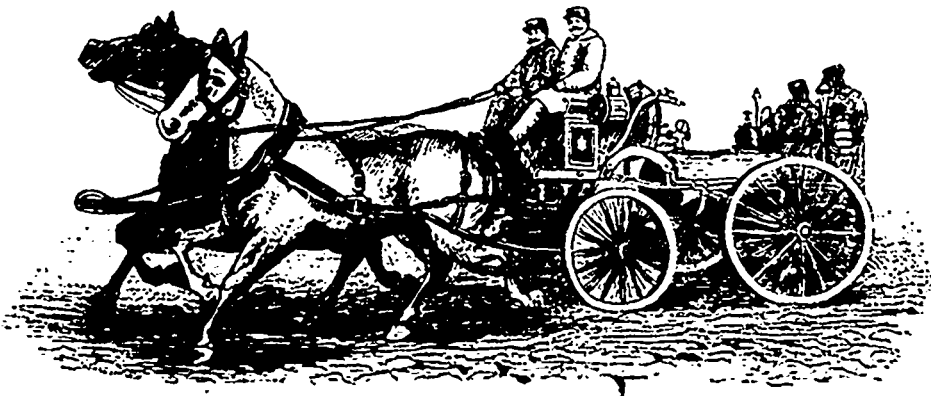
engine-drivers, and if any young Canadian can give me another to add to this page of heroes, I shall be very glad. If any can give me any occupation that should be further up in my pages of heroes, I shall be glad to make a new Page for the special occasion.

are bright and shining pictures. Everything that should shine, shines. Saturday is the great polishing day, but every day is almost a Saturday. The engines and cars stand in waiting, almost like things of life. There is the place for the horse. "By-me-by," as the Captain said, I'll tell you all about them. Just over his head, or where his head will be, the harness is hanging stretched out to drop on to his back. The walls are decorated with pictures of great fires, and narrow escapes. Belts, firemen's belts, hang around as trophies from former battles. When a Brigade from the United States pays us a visit, they exchange belts with our men, pretty much as we ordinary mortals do our photographs. So the wall with the belts is the photographic album of the Station. They have their portraits, too, alas! Chiefs, captains, and comrades, who have gone to their post bravely, and have as bravely never come back again from it. Tenderly let us gaze at them.

The Service has a Chief and three Assistants over all. Each Station has its own distinctive number, its own captain, foreman, and men. There are fifteen stations in Montreal. Toronto, Ottawa, Hamilton, come next, and much friendly rivalry exists among the men. Some of the men are old in the service, and some, as the captain said, are cured of it in a very short time. They live in their station. They sleep upstairs. They have their books and papers, and games and pastimes, and if

they have a half an hour between duty, they can enjoy "doing nothing" about as well as any body of men I ever saw. Day and night there is a man at the signal box. Six hours at a time is his watch. When an alarm is given, the great gong gives one bold, determined stroke. But we must not let it strike just yet.

The Reel Car is over there, with the hose coiled round. The



CHEMICAL ENGINE.