

air-chamber or chest, thereby compressing the air in that chest to a high degree. But, having pressed the air to a certain point, the air itself will, in its turn, become stronger than the force-pumps, and exert pressure on the water, which it forces out through the issuing hose to the fire; and this it will continue to do until the water sinks in the chest. So long, therefore, as the two pumps force water into the chest, up to, or above, the requisite level, so long will the compressed air expel the water to the fire in a steady and continuous stream. The two pumps are arranged to work reciprocally—that is, one is drawing water, while the other is forcing it into the air-chamber, each in its turn.



“STAND BACK! LOOK OUT!!”

The rule is, that a steamer shall go from one station and a manual from another station in the neighbourhood. Thus, the stations are not left without resources should another fire break out in the district. All the Metropolitan stations are connected by telegraphic or telephonic communication, so that the Headquarters at Southwark can be acquainted with all that occurs as regards fires in the Metropolis, and a large force concentrated speedily, if necessary, at any point. In addition to Headquarters there are five District Stations, each having a superintendent in control of the district, and having telephonic speech with Headquarters, and with each station in the district.

Being liable to be rung up in their sleep, firemen are, so to speak, kept constantly on duty, except for twenty-four hours in every fourteen days, which is their “day off.” Should, unfortunately,

several fires occur about the same time in the same neighbourhood, the men may have to work for some thirty-six hours at a time. And on returning from a fire the hose has to be cleaned and scrubbed, and hung up in the hose-well to dry; the engines have to be kept in good order, and prepared for another journey at once should necessity arise.

Constant vigilance is the order of the day with the Fire Brigade; and to this is added elaborate preparation and daring bravery. That mad, wild rush through the streets, if we could but see all connected with it, is but an item in the work of the Brigade. Most of the outside public see only the headlong speed and feel the exciting thrill of the fateful moment; but behind and around that dashing ride lies the most careful forethought.

THE GOOD WIFE.

“SHE commandeth her husband in any equal matter by constantly obeying him. She never crosseth her husband in the springtide of his anger, but stays till it be ebbing water. Her clothes are rather comely than costly, and she makes plain cloth to be velvet by her handsome wearing it.”—FULLER.