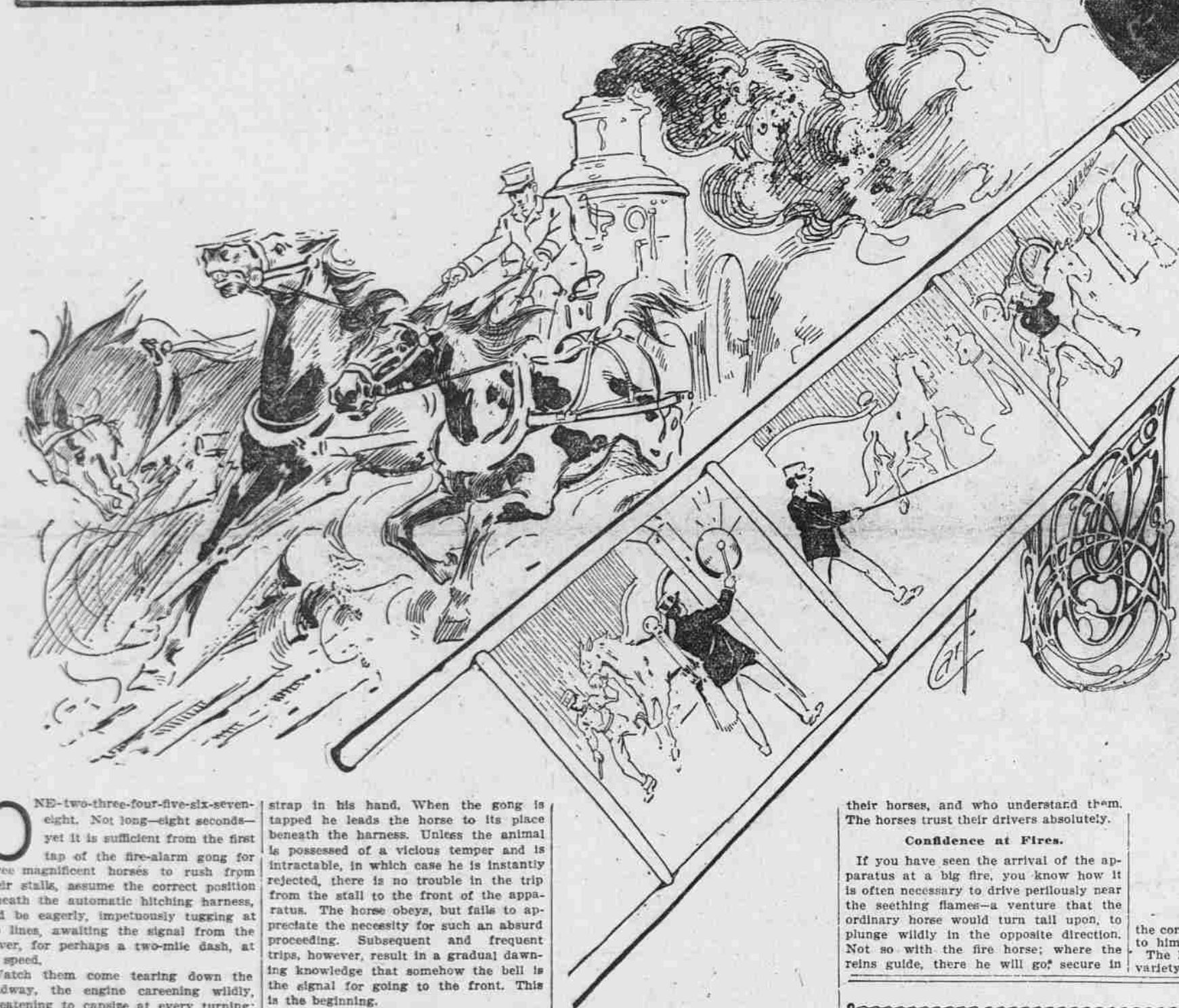
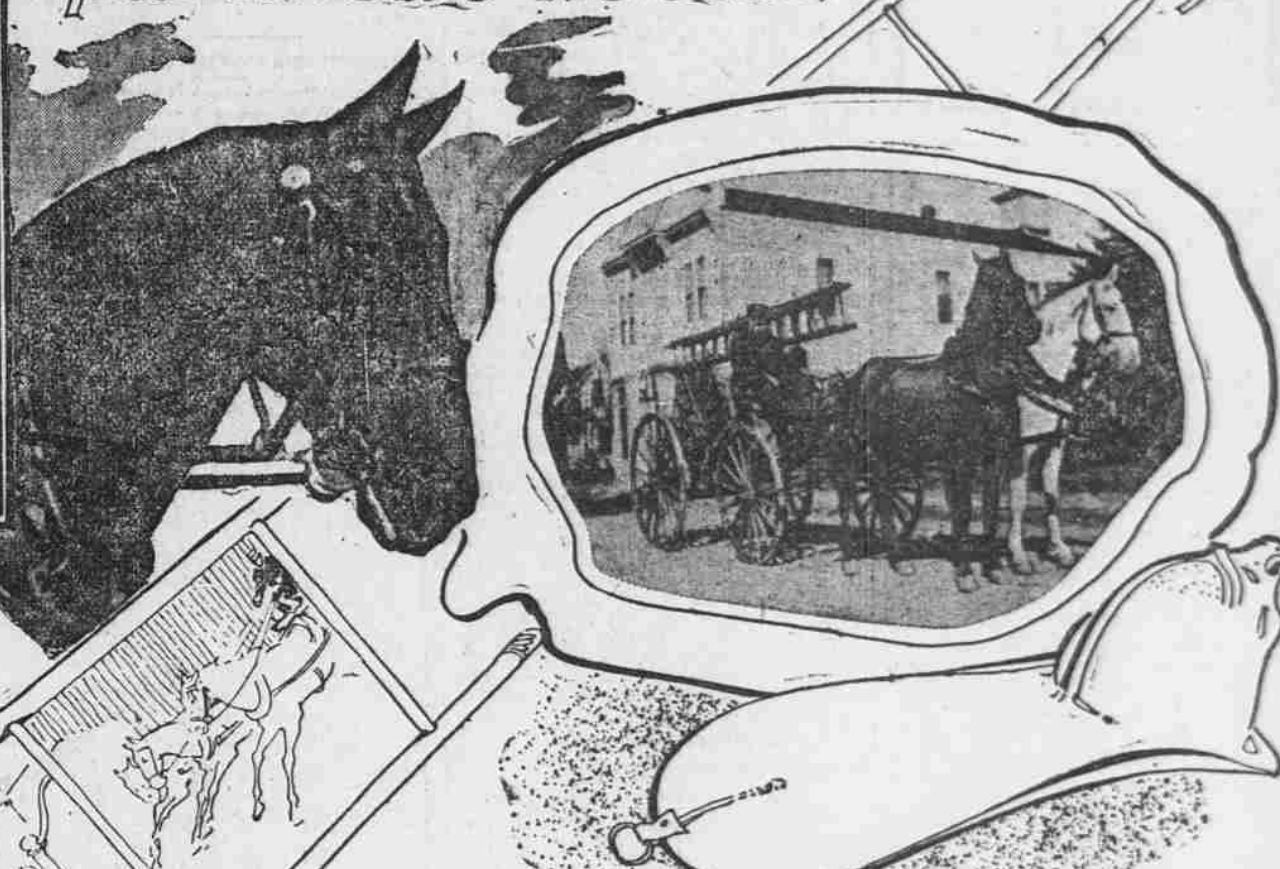




EVOLUTION OF THE FIRE HORSE

Time and care spent in developing those traits of man's most intelligent friend that best serve fire-department needs.



ONE-two-three-four-five-six-seven-eight. Not long—eight seconds—yet it is sufficient from the first tap of the fire-alarm gong for three magnificent horses to rush from their stalls, assume the correct position beneath the automatic hitching harness, and be eagerly, impetuously tugging at the lines, awaiting the signal from the driver, for perhaps a two-mile dash, at top speed.

Watch them come tearing down the roadway, the engine careening wildly, threatening to capsize at every turning; firemen holding fast to the supports, bells clanging, horses attached to other vehicles behaving badly—everything pandemonium! Note the perfect control over the big, powerful animals that the driver exerts! How much do you suppose the most perfect muscular development of one man would count, if the galloping beasts were beyond obeying the reins? For an instant they are in sight, and then, blocks away, a fast-receding trail of dense smoke and sparks marks the onward progress to the scene of the fire.

Courage Essential.

Fire horses are educated, and they have been found to be apt pupils. But before the education begins there must be the inherited qualities that make the training successful. Physical courage will not make prizefighters, and a complete knowledge of ring tactics is of no avail if there be the thickest streak of "yellow" in the man. So, too, there must be no yellow streak in the candidate for fire department equine honors.

In Portland Chief Campbell finds that the best fire horses come from the Willamette Valley, and that where there is a cross between the Cleveland Bay and Canadian stock failure is seldom. Stock buyers are constantly on the lookout for horses such as are wanted, and new animals are being constantly tried out. In weight the figures range from 1250 to 1500 pounds. Sound in limb, a high degree of equine intelligence, and, over and above all, the best possible development of lung power—these are the main requirements. Then there must be what horsemen call a "warm" streak in the blood, which signifies an absolute lack of fear and the perfect confidence of the animal in the man who holds the reins on the driver's seat.

Preliminary Training.

Of every 10 candidates for fire horses, on an average, eight are chosen. The successful ones are from 7 to 8 years old, and have been previously thoroughly broken to ordinary work. The association of ideas and action is the theory the drivers adopt in their training. The one essential thing is to absolutely and completely impress upon the horse mind that, when the gong rings, it is a signal for instant action.

In beginning, the driver stands at the entrance to the stall door, with the halter

strap in his hand. When the gong is tapped he leads the horse to its place beneath the harness. Unless the animal is possessed of a vicious temper and is intractable, in which case he is instantly rejected, there is no trouble in the trip from the stall to the front of the apparatus. The horse obeys, but fails to appreciate the necessity for such an absurd proceeding. Subsequent and frequent trips, however, result in a gradual dawning knowledge that somehow the bell is the signal for going to the front. This is the beginning.

The Second Lesson.

The second lesson follows immediately. The driver takes his place in the rear of the horse, whip in hand. At the tap of the gong the candidate feels the sting of the lash from behind. Usually, if the material is there from which fire horses are made, he will make a dash for the front, but he is apt to become confused because of the whip and to forget his place. However, progress is not slow, although several days of constant training may be required to bring about a complete understanding of this first requirement. The lesson is repeated many times until thoroughly learned.

These first lessons, although by no means the most important, are the most essential. They develop the nature of the horse, determine the treatment necessary to complete his education, and give the driver an opportunity to become acquainted with the newcomer. The first time a new horse feels the hitching harness drop upon him is more than likely to cause consternation, but the feeling of apprehension disappears as the strangeness of the proceeding wears off.

Quick to Learn.

In a week or 10 days the green horse is as quick as those that have been running with the engine for years. Two well-trained horses, hitched to a big steam engine, with a new horse for the third, will do much to instill confidence in the breast of the stranger. The first two or three runs the driver has to pay particular attention to him, but the other two horses prevent him from running away or otherwise misbehaving, and, in the end, he settles down to the routine and enjoys his work.

This is of the successful candidate, but, in the nature of things, there must be failures. Horses have been trained to run to the front of the engine and have done the trick beautifully, only to collapse utterly on the first run. There is all the difference in the world between the practice runs for the new horse and a genuine alarm. In the latter instance, everything is bustling during the few seconds necessary to hitch up. Orders are shouted, the firemen come sliding down from the dormitories above, the other apparatus is being made ready, and man and horse must keep cool and each do his part of the work.

Horses have been known in the depart-

ment who would run to their proper places, only to stand trembling and frightened in a desperate state of blue funk. For such beasts there can be no further training. It is the "cold" streak coming to the surface, and it spells rejection, absolute and immediate.

Not so long ago there was an equine tragedy at engine-house No. 1. A splendid specimen of horseflesh had been sent in to be tried out, and he was put through the training process. Two or three days sufficed to make the animal completely insane. From a well-behaved, good-tempered horse, he became morose, irritable and undependable. It was impossible to get near him—not that he displayed any viciousness, but because of the uncertainty of his behavior and movements. A veterinary surgeon diagnosed the case as insanity, but he didn't add that there was a suicidal tendency along with the ailment. At any rate, the beast got loose from its stall, ran across the street, jumped into the air and deliberately impaled its body on a picket fence; he was so badly injured that it was necessary to shoot him.

Deliberate Suicide.

There was no doubt in the minds of the men who had watched the inception and development of the animal's malady that it was deliberate suicide. Had the horse been actuated with a desire to run away, there was a wide street extending either way, but, instead of seeking liberty, he intentionally went to his death. The patiently trained horses of the large circuses are not more intelligent than the average fire horse, although they have been taught to do more. What the fire horse does, he does well, and he seems to entertain the belief that he is co-responsible with the firemen for the protection of the city from destructive flames. Though his actual training ends when he understands the work cut out for him to do, the development of horse sense continues.

Go into anyone of the engine-houses of the city and look at the animals in their stalls! Intelligence is written on their faces; it is exemplified in their daily lives. They are ruled with kindness and consideration; the drivers are men who love

their horses, and who understand them. The horses trust their drivers absolutely.

Confidence at Fires.

If you have seen the arrival of the apparatus at a big fire, you know how it is often necessary to drive perilously near the seething flames—a venture that the ordinary horse would turn tail upon, to plunge wildly in the opposite direction. Not so with the fire horse; where the reins guide, there he will go! secure in

the confident belief that no harm will come to him. The life of the fire horse depends on a variety of circumstances. Some last a

OF COURSE HE RAVED.



"What did your husband think of that \$25 hat you bought last week?"
"Oh! he just raved over it."

scant twelvemonth; others will work for years without appreciably breaking down. When the first symptoms are discovered that an animal is drooping under the strenuous life, he is sent to one of the outlying engine-houses, and, in the majority of cases, the change does him good; if seriously sick, he goes to the hospital. A veterinary surgeon makes periodical visits to the engine-houses to examine his patients, and their health is carefully guarded. At the hospital there is every facility for their recovery.

Suffered From Indigestion.
Perhaps the most interesting thing there is the surgical department, where, not long ago, one of the fire horses of Portland was operated on for indigestion that refused to yield to any of the advertised remedies for the complaint. "Gray Billie" was the coolest of the three big horses who pulled one of the local fire engines, and, because of his capabilities, he was given the position of honor in the center. But indigestion made him sour and cross. Whenever he needed to be shod, it would be necessary to throw him to the floor and have him held, to prevent injury to smith and smithy. Probably at some previous time he had been hurt in shoeing, and, with his other trouble, there came a vivid remembrance.

"Billie" was sent to the hospital, and was strapped to the operating table. The surgeon was successful, and, after a short period of convalescence, the animal returned to his duties in better health, although probably convinced that some caution should thereafter be observed in the choice of foods.

Patriarchs of Department.

The patriarchs of the department are, at present, at the Sunnyside engine-house; they have been running with the engine ever since the paid fire department was organized in Portland, some 15 years ago. "Put" and "Old Gray Pete" have seen the department grow from a small beginning to its present state of efficiency. They have seen the evolution of fire-fighting apparatus from antiquated, primitive appliances to the powerful machines of the present day. They are about 20 years of age now, but are still "in running order" and acknowledged no superiors. It was only a short time ago that the driver who had been handling them complained that they were too hard on his arms.

That's a glorious service—15 years in the Fire Department, without missing a run in their district! As there is no age retirement, "Put" and "Old Gray Pete" will probably remain in the harness until old age renders them incapable of further service, when they will be sent to

the country, to spend their declining days in well-earned rest.

One the whole, the life of the fire horse is not hard; probably it is more desirable than the existence of the ordinary draught horse, who has 10 hours' work each week day and a holiday on Sunday. The runs average not more than one a day, and, to compensate, there is the best of care, plenty to eat and comfortable quarters. Three times a day there are practice litches, and it is an evidence of horse intelligence that the animals have become able to discriminate between these perfunctory duties and the excitement of a real alarm. They leave their stalls leisurely, and nod, as much as to say: "We have to do this, and it's a damned bore."

ROBERT TYLER.

THE POET.

The poet is he who, with pencil or pen, paints pictures of streamlet and mountain and glen.
Who blends all his colors with a touch so divine
That the rainbow alone does their splendor outshine,
And who gives to each picture he paints with his words
The beauty of sunlight, the music of birds.

He must see in life's sunshine, its sorrow and shade,
The colors from which his pictures are made;
Be able to place each tint at its best,
So that each stands alone, or depends on the rest.
To bring out the beauties that lie hidden there
Of sunlight, of moonlight, of stars everywhere,
The rugged old peaks that stand up alone
Are filled with a beauty that is always their own.

Which he is to paint. And the tiniest still
That springs from their sides has a mission to fill.
As it winds its way down through mountain and lea,
To be painted by him, at its home in the sea.
He who paints with the brush has only to show
A picture as this; and, with delicate care,
Must touch every point with a hand sure and free.

So the reader, while reading, the picture may see:
That show at their best when the heather's in bloom;
While the poet, with words, must paint just as fair
A picture as this; and, with delicate care,
Must touch every point with a hand sure and free.

All life is his subject, its sorrows and fears,
Its sunshine and shadow, its joys and its tears;
The mountains and meadows, the tints of the dawn,
Must be painted in words, their beauties shown
That the simplest in mind may see just as clear
As the mind which regards the whole world as
its sphere.

—T. FRANKEL CRAWFORD.