

FIRE ENGINES RAPIDLY LOSING THRILLS THEY USED TO GIVE YOU

Only Three Down-Town Engines Now Drawn by the Plunging Horses That Made Every One Rush to See Them Go By, and Motors Will Soon Replace These



THE THRILLING THREE-HORSE HITCH AND THE PROSAIC MOTOR DRAWN ENGINE THAT HAS REPLACED IT.

Remember how you used to run to the corner to see the fire engines go past? Remember how you used to rush to the window every time you heard the fire bells or the clang of the gong and bells on the engines, and how you used to watch, breathless and wild-eyed, the approach of the engine, smoke belching from the stack and the horses leaping and careening under the guidance of the expert driver?

Recollect the thrills that chased each other up and down your spine as the driver threaded his horses through the maze of traffic or swept them around a corner without seemingly diminishing their speed?

Of course you do, and you probably rush pell-mell to vantage points now if you were sure the horse-drawn apparatus was coming clattering down the street.

But do you ever get a thrill now, now that the city's fire apparatus is rapidly becoming motorized? Probably not, for the approach and departure and the every movement of the motor apparatus is too mechanical. It does not seem the same.

People love anything into which there enters an element of danger, and while, of course, danger lurks in the path of every fast-moving vehicle, there is not that tenseness that characterizes the onrush of the apparatus drawn by the foaming, thundering horses.

It was only recently that Engine 4, smoke and flame belching from its smokestack, clattered down Causeway st and past the North Station. The three-horse hitch of handsome blacks, the driver leaning far over the dashboard urging them on, presented a noble picture. Everybody in the street stopped as in the days of yore, spell-bound.

But it was no novelty, except to one individual who had just emerged from the North Station. He was obviously from the country, perhaps from a remote country village, and his facial expression could not but conjure the inner feelings that were ours every day but so many years ago. He was experiencing a new sensation, a thrill that comes "once in a lifetime."

And Engine 4 is one of the remaining

three steam fire engines pulled by horses through the downtown street.

There are 81 pieces of heavy fire apparatus now motorized, and when the present contracts with the city are filled there will be an additional 19 motor pumping engines, nine aerial ladders and 10 motorized hose cars.

One has only to consult Supervisor of Motor Apparatus Stewart of Fire Headquarters to realize how surely the horse is passing from the Fire Department equipment. Today Engine 4, Bulfinch st, Engine 6 in Leverett st and Engine 7, East st, are the only steam fire engines, horse-drawn, in the downtown section of the city.

In addition, Chemical 1, which shares the Bulfinch-st quarters with Engine 4, Chemical 2, Church st, and Ladder 24, North Grove st, are drawn by horses. These, with Ladder 3, Harrison av and Bristol st, are the only horse-drawn machines from the water front to Northampton st, and even the outer stretches of the city are rapidly becoming motorized. In South Boston, for

instance, everything is motorized except Engine 2 at City Point and Ladder 19 in 4th st.

So the horses will soon be but a memory in the Fire Department, and there are men in the service who will regret the advance of civilization and the consequent obliteration of the horse, with all his intelligence and picturesqueness, fully as much as the man who never outgrew his boyhood when the fire alarm bells sounded.

Another generation and future Bostonians will wonder how the city got along with what will then be the obsolete method of hauling the engines to fires.

But during the snow blockade of this Winter the horses came again into their own. In many instances old fire pungs were hunted up and sent out to fires that the motor apparatus had hard work to reach.

In several cases the men who went with these pungs put out small fires and met on the way back the motor apparatus still struggling through the snow.

