

FEARLESS BOSTON FIREMEN

Who Take All Kinds of Chances

A SERIES OF PERSONAL STORIES

CAPT L. D. MERRILL LADDER 29

"Oct 28, 1915, I was on my day off and went to Peabody on a little hunting expedition. Like the old-time fire horse, when I heard the fire alarm I responded to the call. The Peabody Parochial School was on fire and hundreds of children's lives were at stake.

"We first laid our lines and fought the fire from the inside. It became so hot we were obliged to go outside. Soon the building was a mass of flames.

"We had gotten every child possible out of the school. We knew other children were in the building and did our utmost to save them, but it was impossible. Ten children had been trapped in the vestibule. The only means of identification was by trinkets found on the bodies. I shall never forget my feeling when we were removing the bodies of those unfortunate children.

"At the Bigelow-Dowse fire on Franklin st in 1903 I had an exciting experience. This fire occurred during the night and the smoke settled down in the street, making it impossible to distinguish an object a few feet away.

"We were fighting this fire from the outside and every few moments heavy rolls of burning paper would fall near us. We were there only a short time when a heavy explosion occurred, blow-



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ing all of the windows out of the building and scattering glass about us.

"The fire had reached a part of the building where cartridges and powder were stored, and the noise reminded one of the battle of Manila Bay. It took us several hours to subdue this fire and it left an impression on me I never shall forget."

Capt Merrill was born in Maine 46 years ago; he joined the department in 1893, was made assistant engineer in 1898, lieutenant in 1902 and captain in 1913. He is one of the few members who have been through every grade.