

## GRAND OLD FIRE HORSE.

**"White Stockings" is 16 and  
Still High Spirited.**

**Now the Tramp of the Department,  
Being Used as a Substitute.**

**Few Drivers There Are Who Like to  
Hold the Reins Over Him.**

The automobile has no terrors for one Boston horse. He is an automaton himself, with enough stored lightning condensed in his makeup to go around among a dozen ordinary animals.

"White Stockings" is not a crook, yet he has many aliases. He is familiarly known among the fire laddies as "Old Stocking," "Stocking," "Bob Fitch," which latter appellation was conferred in honor of a former commissioner, and the "tramp horse" of the department.

"White Stockings" is supposed to have had a humble birth, and his pedigree was lost long before his entrance into the tipcart service in which his earlier years were passed. He is now 16 years old, and has been an honored member of the department for many years.

He was first connected with ladder 4, at the corner of Winslow and Dudley sts, where he was used as the middle horse in the three-horse hitch at that house.

will fight for one, even the men being unable to prevent his forcing the other horse out.

With the first stroke of the gong he is alertness itself, and with ears pricked forward and pawing the stall, he impatiently waits for the doors to open. If it is not his turn out, and he is left behind, as sometimes occurs, he shows every indication of displeasure. If his door is opened the least bit of a crack, he shoots forward as though thrown from a catapult.

On one such occasion he lost his balance, and sliding twice his length, came bang up against the door. His fire-fighting instinct did not desert him even in his extremity, for he was on his feet in an instant, and had backed under one of the swinging harnesses in his anxiety to respond to the alarm, before one of his mates could interfere.

"White Stockings" is a grand looking animal. He weighs 1350 pounds, and is considered one of the best hitch-ups in the department.

He has good wind, long staying powers and no driver has yet been found who could make him trot after he had once smelled fire.

He also has the distinguished honor of having had more snapshots taken of him on the way to fires than any other turnout in the department.

During the winter months, when not otherwise occupied, he is used as a leader on engine 6, and is driven by David Meade of that company.

Everybody loves the "grand old man" of the fire department, but there are many who do not care to handle him after the gong strikes, for he sees no man, and knows no man after the doors are thrown back, until panting and steaming, he holds up in the midst of the blaze and noise, now as gentle as a kitten.



"WHITE STOCKINGS."

At this station for three years he was driven by Fred McElroy, who at that time was considered one of the best drivers in the department. McElroy was a little man, weighing but 20 pounds, and the strain was too much for him, inducing physical ailments, which finally resulted in his leaving the department.

McElroy still loves the old horse, however, and only the other day, in visiting one of the stations, he came upon "Bob Fitch," as he had years ago nicknamed him.

He looked at the flashing eyes for a few moments, and with the tears welling in his eyes he said:

"You are the old man that drove me out of the service, but you are the best horse I ever drove."

After McElroy resigned, it was no uncommon sight to see two, and even three men hanging to the reins, with brake hard set, in the efforts to control the powerful team of which he was one.

He was afterward transferred from ladder 4 to engine 37, in the house on the corner of Longwood and Brookline avs, in Roxbury, where he was used in the hose wagon for 2½ years, after which he became the "tramp horse" of the department, being stationed on Leverett st, and doing duty alternately at engine 4, chemical 1, water tower 1, ladder 1, chemical 11 and engine 10, being called upon at all hours of the day or night to replace horses who had lost a shoe, or who were forced to retire from other accidental causes.

Poor old White Stockings was always ready for the change, although some of the firemen were forced to come for him with a chain bit, so high-spirited was his nature.

At engine 6 "White Stockings" has a center stall, but the spring on his door is just strong enough to unfasten the catch when an alarm is pulled. This is arranged to give the other horses a chance, for when once he gets out first he makes a dash down the passageway and backs into the first vacant collar, and if there are no vacant places he