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***Baltimore and the Rest of the World***

William Corbell McAfee, who will cease to be chief engineer of the Baltimore city fire department on Wednesday, knows as much about fighting fires and other things, probably, as any man of his years in the United States.

For rather more than 14 years he has worn the blue uniform that entitles a man to breathe smoke and swallow cinders, and for rather more than seven years he has represented the average Baltimorean's ideal of what a fireman should be. Though his picture is not in the second reader, there is scarcely a juvenile student of that attractive volume in the city who has not heard of him, and, though he has done his work without thought of the calcium man, there are few who fail to turn round when they see him on the street.

Despite the fact that he is thus better known than most men who receive ten times a fire chief's salary, he is but 37 years old and looks like a boy – a tall, healthy boy, clean-limbed, square-jawed and muscular.

After two years of study at the City College he learned the trade of a plumber and began work in Baltimore. But as soon as he was a journeyman, the spirit of adventure seized him and he went West, to the boom towns and lumber camps and snow wastes. At 19 he was made foreman of one of the "toughest" gangs of plumbers every organized in a civilized country. While engaged in the pleasant task of restraining them from murdering each other, he awoke one morning to find the mercury 30-odd degrees below zero. Then he packed his grip and journeyed homeward and became a fireman and tested the mercury at the other end of the tube.

On his way home he stopped over in Chicago. One day a brick fell from one of that city's tall buildings and struck him on the head. For several weeks he was disabled, but eventually he pulled through and forgot all about it. March 30, 1887, he was appointed a substitute in the fire department. Under the system then in vogue substitutes received such small pay that they were compelled to look for their living to other work. Thus for a year the chief-to-be labored at his trade, with the clang of the fire alarm bell dinning in his ears.

In 1888 he was made a ladderman and a few months later a pipeman. In May, 1890, he became captain of No. 1 Engine. Three years later he was transferred to No. 4-the most important in the city-to succeed Capt. George W. Horton, who in turn will succeed him as chief engineer on Wednesday. February 2, 1894, he became a district engineer, and March 2, 1896-his 31st birthday-he was made chief engineer.

This was quick promotion for a young man with little "infloence." Perhaps those who gave him his successive steps built better than they knew. At any rate, there were fogies who held that he was an experiment, and, as a corollary, that experiments are not for fires. But before they could get their hammers into play, McAfee had been tried-and thereafter there were no more fogies. Today if any one set up a claim that McAfee made a bad fire chief he would be laughed it

as a fool. If he said that the chief might have been more circumspect in dealing with fate some might agree. But this is a matter of opinion, which had better not be argued.