

# FEARLESS BOSTON FIREMEN

## Who Take All Kinds of Chances

### A SERIES OF PERSONAL STORIES

#### DISTRICT CHIEF JOHN W. GODBOLD

"The closest call I ever had was when the Webster Hall Building was burned to the ground. It was a cold Winter's morning. There was a driving snow and a howling gale. The men were encased in ice. I was then captain of Engine company 5. When I reached the fire they had taken out several firemen overcome by the smoke.

"I went into the building with my men. We carried our stream to the roof of a two-story building in the rear of the hall, then to the third story. I straddled a window sill and I had been in this position only a few moments when there came a crash and the roof fell in, carrying down 11 men with it.

"The window where I stood was filled with flames and I waited patiently for a ladder to be raised to the roof of an adjoining building. I then ran across the ladder to the roof of the other building. My coat was almost burned off my back. I escaped with a few bruises and burns and returned to work in a short time.

"This thrilling escape made an impression on me that I will not soon forget. The other poor fellows who



JOHN W. GODBOLD  
*District Chief.*

went down with the roof were all badly injured."

District Chief Godbold has been in the department nearly 35 years and has had many narrow escapes.