CARING FOR THE SICK

SOME FACTS ABOUT THE AMBULANCE SYSTEM OF NEW YORK.

Luxurious Vehicles for the Comfort of Those Taken Suddenly Ill in the Great Metropolis—Why the Ambulance Is Better Than a Carriage.

The ambulance service of New York city is probably the most complete in the world. Few people reflect as to the scope of its humane work when the noisy gong of the familiar hospital wagon warns every one to "clear the track." It is a nuisance to drivers and pedestrians.

It would seem that the ambulance service, perfect as it is, is appreciated less by the public than almost any other beneficial institution which is supported by the city.

The annual cost of a single ambulance is estimated at $800. There are twenty-six of them in daily service now. This involves an expenditure of $23,400 a year. Incidental expenses are not included in these figures, which only defray the cost of the conveyance, the horse's feed and driver's salary.

The number of ambulance calls responded to in one month was 472. All of these sick people were comfortably and speedily carried to various hospitals and doctored free of charge. In the same month there were fifty-four "heavy calls." These were in cases of emergency, such as fire, poisoning, apoplexy, alcoholism, etc.

The ambulance subject is usually a person in poor circumstances. One rarely sees a well dressed occupant being carried to hospitals by ambulance. It is strange that a lack of confidence should be placed in such a perfect service as the city supports. And yet many people suddenly stricken ill betray a dread and distrust of the ambulance. There is no doubt that lives are lost by this foolish apprehension. All that science and advanced invention can do in the way of easy and speedy transportation, accompanied by the best of medical treatment, is given to the poor and dependent part of the population.

The educated and well placed sick, when unexpectedly stricken, yield to the first impulse to get home at all hazards. A long ride in a close carriage unattended by any physician sometimes proves fatal. The ambulance would be far safer and the treatment unquestionably better.

The ambulances which convey patients to Bellevue are probably the most comfortable conveyances in the world. This is an important factor in the hospital service, as the jolting of an ordinary close carriage often adds untold suffering to the invalid.

The ambulance in itself is a study. The padded bed in it is as soft as a pillow and fits tightly within the soft cushioned sides. Over the bed is laid the stretcher, upon which the patient can be removed from the ambulance to the hospital ward without a jar. The bed in the ambulance is arranged upon rollers, so that it withstands the shock of jolting over the rough pavements altogether. No matter which way the occupant rolls or tosses only cushioned surfaces meet the body. A physician in attendance carries a handling containing stimulants, restoratives, antidotes for poisons and all drugs that may be required in ordinary cases.

The conveyance is always equipped in the same complete manner. Under the driver's seat is a large box, the lid of which forms the seat. Under it are rolls of bandages cut in different widths for use on different parts of the body. Stored away beside these are splints, lint, oakum and oil, salves, etc., for burns. A hip splint, long enough to extend from under the arm to the feet, is always a part of the equipment. This is provided in anticipation of broken legs. There is a lantern at the head of the patient and another at the feet, in order that no time may be lost in obtaining proper light. A strong leather belt, with iron cuffs attached at the side, goes with every ambulance. This is used when a patient is violent or wildly intoxicated.

The fire department system of harnessing is employed, and only three minutes are allowed the ambulance to prepare to respond to a call. On the second alarm the driver drops the suspended harness upon the horse. The buckling takes less than a minute. He hurries with his coat and vest, and appears at the hospital entrance just as an attending physician comes out of the door.

Any point within a distance of two miles is reached in less than fifteen minutes.

The ambulance call is reduced to the minimum degree of simplicity. Everybody should know how to summon an ambulance. The alarm is always sent through the fire department or the police stations. On each fire alarm box is a notice telling where the key is kept. The policeman on the beat usually possesses a separate key. It is also his duty to know where the other key is kept. "Hurry calls," usually street cases, are thus sent through the fire department to the hospitals. Notice given at a police station is at once telephoned to the hospitals. It lies within the discretion of the police officers to decide whether a patient is a fit subject for a prison cell or a hospital.

If an ambulance is summoned and the disease is contagious the sufferer is taken to Bellevue hospital and placed in a tent outside the building. The ambulance is at once fumigated and the patient transferred to the board of health. If removal of a patient by ambulance will endanger life the physician must at once telephone the hospital, meanwhile remaining with the patient. Then another physician is sent in a coupe to attend the sufferer.—New York World.

A man in Springfield, O., claims to have found a combination of chemicals that will generate an electric current lasting three to five years without recharge of batteries. Is this true?

Margarita Rivera, who died at Monterey, Mexico, recently, was undoubtedly 132 years old, the time of her birth being duly recorded in the Spanish cathedral at Malpijo. One would like to know a little more about her—whether she was spry and could see and hear well, and whether it flattered her to be told that she looked twenty years younger than her real age. Because if she was blind, deaf, bent double, far gone in that senile childishness which is so distressing and looked like a mere up old Egyptian mummy, then it would certainly be hoax to either herself or her family that she lived to be 132.

After all the time there was to make ready for the visitation of cholera, which was morally certain in the great seaport of this country, the plague found the port of New York not ready for it. There was no place on land on which to quarantine passengers from the infected steamers; consequently they were kept on board, with some of their fellow passengers being ever and anon attacked with cholera. It is possible, indeed probable, that some of the immigrants that were stricken with the plague on shipboard in New York harbor would have escaped had they been taken off the vessel to a comfortable quarantine camp immediately on their arrival. Now, however, the warning note has been sounded. If the country has not been thoroughly cleaned up and rigid sanitary regulations are not established everywhere before the coming of warm weather next year, then there will be criminal carelessness. It is possible for this whole country to escape with only a light visitation of the pestilence next year, if indeed it be not possible to keep it out altogether. There will be no World's fair of the cholera gets a foothold in America next summer.

Elections and Business.

Charles Stewart Smith, president of the New York chamber of commerce, is tired of so many presidential elections. He would put off the evil day to only once in eight years. His reason, as given in The North American Review, is that the presidential political campaign upsets business all over the country. He says this has become so apparent in Europe that Great Britain fixes the duration of a parliament at seven years. He did not add, however, that only a few times in history have the independent British voters allowed a parliament to "stay put" for the full term, but overturned it with their demands for a change. The late Tory government would have served its seven years if it had lasted till 1892.

France elects a president once in eight years. Mr. Smith wants the eight years' presidential term, with a president ineligible for reelection. He bases the principal argument on the upsetting financial policy of the different political parties. They alternate with wooeffectuous measures diametrically opposed, and the business man does not know which will whip and cannot trim his sails accordingly. Capital is timid in the face of such divergent possibilities. There, too, is the expense attending the presidential election every four years. He says it will cost the two leading political parties $1,500,000 in New York state to run the campaign this fall. He does not seem to see, though, this will at least make business for somebody.

What Tom Did.

A writer in The Rural New Yorker believes that workers in the Union can a young agriculturist with little or no money succeed as well as in southwestern Georgia, where, with fair good luck, with industry and economy to back it, he can pay for a farm in half a dozen years. The young man should hire himself out to a farmer already on the ground for a year or two at first to learn the soil, climate and predictions. The writer declares there are possibilities for peach crops in Georgia that seem incredible—peaches of the most luscious kind.

Then he gives incidentally the story of an old negro who began soon after the war. He could give white men some points on raising a family, could old Tom. Here is his story:

In 1866 Tom Cameron and wife, colored, were given by their master 10 pounds of meal and ten bushels corn, and he and his wife worked for $11.50 per month and his transportation. He fed he and his wife, with his father and mother-in-law, worked hard for 1867 the crop, gathered forty barrels corn and "corn enough." They gained $200 outside of corn "to run them." In 1868 he bought 20 acres of land, paying $200 cash. In 1869 he sold with land paid for the 20 acres and had bought fifty head of stock. From that time he steadily made a good living, raising eight children and steadily laying by money. In October that year he bought 113 acres of land, we judging him $1,800 or so per for it, taking a mortgage on the new land bought, and also on the 20 acres and two mules. We also overhear what little he seemed for supplies.

By December, 1870, he had paid for supplies and $2,000 on the land. In February, 1871, we find $150 paid for another mule for him. In December, 1871, he paid for his supplies as well as for the rents and gain from the land, and would have paid for the whole of the latter if it had not rained so as to prevent his picking his cotton to good condition. He now has five mules and 113 acres of land on which he owes $800, with this year's crop to pay for it, and if the price of cotton was eight cents he would pay up his entire indebtedness. He raised corn, oats, hay, potatoes, sorghum and molasses, and sold, while attending his children, enough cotton to work for.

Raising Squabs.

A correspondent of the Philadelphia Farm Journal relates the following experience in raising squabs:

I first rented for a small rent an old house 40 feet by twenty feet, with ceilings eight feet high, and fitted it up with plenty of boxes, hanging them to the ceiling so that rats could not get at the young ones. The windows were taken out and wire netting substituted in summer. Platforms were placed out of the windows so the birds could get out into the sun and rain. Then I bought common pigeons, the largest I could find, and penned each pair separately in boxes. When mated I put them in, and they went immediately to work. There were twenty pairs.

For food I fed small grained corn and screenings. I gave them also green grass, grass seed and plenty of salt, lime and sand. The birds have a bathing 2 by 3 feet by 4 inches deep and a patent fountain from which to drink. The nesting boxes are cleaned out once a month and lime put in to keep out lice.

I got an average of eight pairs of squabs a year, and these have realized for me forty-five cents a pair. The cost of keeping a pair of breeding fowls can hardly be kept. Small birds do not eat as much as large ones. My birds cost me two dollars per pair for the year in confinement. There are too many losses when at large. Hawks kill them, and people stop to shoot them. When confined these evils are avoided.

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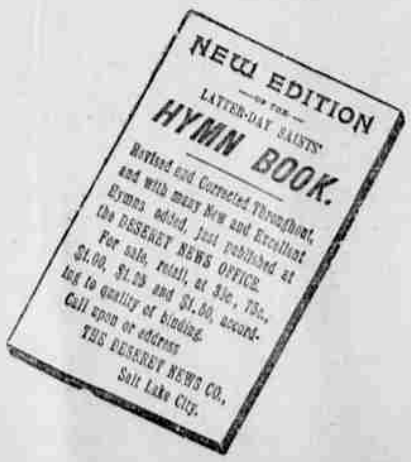

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