

tress on the floor of the ambulance. It has a "cut-under" under the driver's seat that the vehicle may take short turns in a narrow street. The body has a wooden frame with wooden sides 18 in. above the floor and heavy carriage sides and top of leather, stretched over a wooden frame slightly bowed at the top. The front of the top has a leather hood projecting over the front to serve in part as a protection to the driver's seat, on which in large letters is placed the word ambulance.

There is one step at the rear, halfway between the ground and the ambulance floor, and a tail-board opening on a level with the floor of the vehicle. Here is also a padded seat for the orderly that lifts sideways, and when lifted is held by catch straps, and handles protect the orderly when the vehicle is in motion. There is a movable glazed window between the driver and the inside of the vehicle, and the wheels are rubber-tyred. A vibrating gong clears the way.

The inside of the ambulance is painted cream white; the whole can be washed out daily with a hose.

The ambulance station is built exclusively for the purpose, the drivers reside on the premises, and their hours on and off duty are scheduled, so that there is always a sufficient relay to meet requirements both day and night. In an ordinary sick case, in which the condition of the patient is definitely known, the ambulance surgeon does not accompany the vehicle, but does so in doubtful or emergency cases. There is a superintendent in charge of the ambulances of the hospital department, and each station has a captain or foreman. The hospital proper, and the "down town" relief station, which is depicted in our first illustration, are connected by telephone; thus the main hospital and the relief station are enabled to co-operate.

By means of a signal code the coming arrival of an ambulance is notified at the Superintendent's office and at one of the three receiving wards—medical, surgical, or lower—to which it is on its way. Thus, on its arrival at the door, the surgeon or physician, with the necessary attendant, is ready to receive the patient.

There is cordial co-operation between the hospital

and police ambulance departments, the combined strength of which can furnish twenty-five ambulances.

The daily runs vary from forty to 114 miles, the odometer record showing as many as 114 miles as a maximum day.

The approximate cost of an ambulance in the first instance, including the ambulance proper, horse, harness, blankets, and miscellaneous outfit, is £190. The cost of maintenance, including the keep of one and one-half horses, the wages, &c., of driver, and the annual and exigency repairs, is £231. This estimate does not include the heating and lighting of the ambulance station, general repairs, uniforms, or expenses incidental to the station as a whole.

In Boston, in the practical working of the ambulance system, the police respond mainly to the calls for street accidents or injured persons, while the hospitals attend principally to the conveyance of the sick. Hospital ambulances, according to a

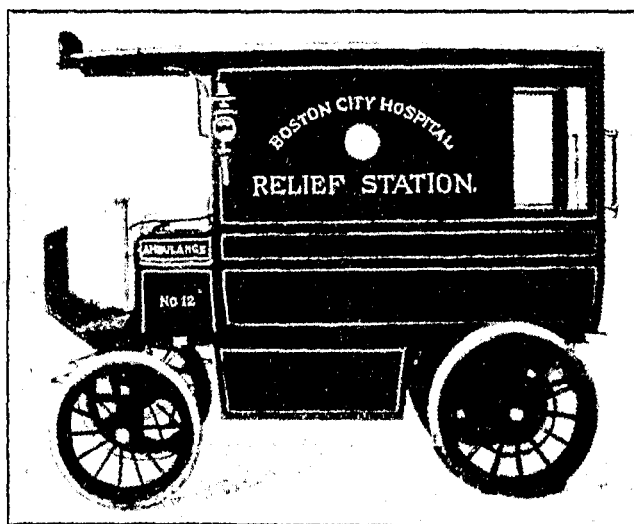
law enacted in 1904, have the right of way which is accorded to fire engines and police patrol wagons in the streets of all cities and towns.

In New York the system is somewhat different to that in Boston, the work being divided into districts like the fire department. Calls can be sent to headquarters from the police boxes, and the ambulance of the hospital covering each district responds to its own call.

Practically all large American cities have similar ambulance systems, and nearly every hospital, except a very small minority of cottage hospitals in non-manufacturing towns, has its own ambulance.

As a contrast to this efficient, well-organised and humanitarian American system, a horse ambulance can rarely be found in any city in England, or in the continental cities and towns, outside the army service. Foreign visitors in large numbers have seen the American ambulance system, and yet are slow to adopt the same methods.

Surely it is time that in this country an efficient service should be organised in connection with this most important department of work. The lack of such a service at present is a deficiency.



An Ambulance of the Boston City Hospital Relief Station.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)