

wards. The quantity of air circulated is about 2,000 cubic feet per minute, which gives an average of more than 50 cubic feet per person per minute, an amount which is obtained by very few ventilating systems. The brine used in cooling and condensing the moisture of the air is cooled by the ammonia compression process, which is not necessary here to describe.

The same year, 1899, that saw the introduction of the atmospheric plan described above, also witnessed a pronounced advancement of the work. Previous to this time a large part of the nursing service was done by volunteers, but it now became necessary to employ a much larger force of paid trained nurses. An advisory medical staff and a regular staff of eminent physicians in the various branches of surgery, ophthalmology, pathology, otology and mental disease were also added to the force. A resident physician and an assistant remain on the hospital throughout the season. The nurses, however, are quartered in a hotel near the wharf, although obtaining their meals on board the boat.

One would hardly expect to find a training school for nurses on board a floating hospital, but here we find one that has already graduated eleven nurses, under the superintendency of Miss L. A. Wilber, and with the assistance in the way of lectures of the physicians of the staff. Only graduate nurses are accepted as students, and nurses gladly accept places in this post-graduate study.

Careful instruction to the mothers and caretakers of the children is given. They are instructed in the preparation of food and regularity of feeding, in cleanliness and care of ailing children. Demonstrations are given, and the mothers earnestly try to understand the process shown them. A bacteriologist is employed and careful attention is paid to all details. Twenty different kinds of food are used. Milk of three different degrees of strength is prepared, and lime water, sterilized water and cream is also similarly treated. Horlick's malted milk, barley water, Jacobi's mixture, peptonized milk, dextrinized barley water, and beef juice are among the foods prepared and distributed every two hours among the nurses. The infants, often from 150 to 200 in number, are fed every two hours.

The food is distributed to the children in its elementary characters. Each child receives a prescription for food made up of these elements in varying proportions, and each prescription is filled by the nurse at feeding time. The food is carried around in trays, each element in a separate receptacle, and the feeding bottle filled with the proportion of each called for in the prescription. It is thus possible to individualize to any extent desirable. The food leaves the laboratory at a certain high temperature in order

that it shall reach the child at the proper heat for feeding, and to facilitate the distribution it is started at six different points in the hospital simultaneously. This method has proved successful, and has been followed ever since its inauguration.

The infants are examined at the Boston wharf every morning by physicians, who make out cards which are given to the mothers, giving them directions as to what the babe should be fed with at home, and the methods to be employed in preparing the food.

The hospital is the originator of a sterilizer so cheap that almost any mother can have one, the cost of the sterilizer and one dozen feeding bottles being only 65 cents.

There are very few enterprises for the public good in the city of Boston that have not had in their earlier stages the encouragement and valued suggestions of Rev. Edward Everett Hale. In this beautiful work, from its inception to the present time, his interest and co-operation have been unflagging.

The Boston Floating Hospital is the best place in Boston to study the diseases of children, for in no other institution is there so great variety. Physicians appreciate this and are glad to volunteer their services, but only those who show marked talent are selected for the staff. Nurses are also glad of the opportunity of taking a post-graduate course in this hospital.

This work differs from that of the floating hospital of St. John's Guild, New York, in many particulars. The New York boat takes many sick children on its sea trips, but with the sick ones go many well children and their mothers and caretakers. There is no permanent hospital on the New York boat, but cases requiring hospital treatment are sent to a seaside hospital.

Neither did the Boston promoters of the enterprise dream of the establishment of a summer hospital that should be movable, but the work grew and patients were sent by physicians, who said, "If this patient can be kept on the boat by night as well as by day it will be given a chance for its life."

The next step in the progress of this institution is the extension of its benefits to a far greater number, and with facilities better adapted to the work. It is confidently expected that a new boat will be built from plans already drawn, a boat that will be especially adapted to hospital work. A fund has already been started for this purpose.

The hospital depends entirely upon voluntary contributions, there being no endowment whatever. It is hoped, however, that some public-spirited and kind-hearted person or persons will be moved to leave the institution a sufficient sum to insure its stability.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)