

# A "Preventorium" Floated by the City Fathers

## The Old Red Ferry Boat Goes Pioneering

By ELENE FOSTER

TIED to the dock at the foot of East Ninetieth Street is an old red ferryboat which, to the casual observer viewing it from the deck of a Sound steamer or from the path that skirts the shore of the East River, would appear to be just an ordinary discarded old craft, awaiting disintegration at the hands of a salvage company.

A closer scrutiny, however, would reveal the fact that although its days of usefulness as a means of transportation are over, it is fulfilling a mission in its ripe old age which will cause it to be remembered long after tunnels and aircraft have driven the last of the ferryboats from the purlieus of the East River. For the old red ferryboat is the pioneer of a new movement; it is giving its few remaining years to a cause, the same being the demonstrating to the public in general, and the city fathers in particular, the absolute necessity of providing camps or preventoriums throughout the city where children who are undernourished or are of tubercular tendencies can be made strong and healthy by means of fresh air, proper food and regular medical supervision.

There are two of these remodelled ferryboats, one at the foot of Ninetieth Street and another in the Williamsburg section of Brooklyn. The idea of utilizing the old ferryboats for this purpose originated with Dr. Louis I. Harris, the director of the Bureau of Preventable Disease, a vitally important branch of the Health Department. Dr. Harris did not select these old boats as being the ideal location for his experiment, but solely for economic reasons, because it was far less expensive to fit these with the necessary equipment than it would have been to put up temporary structures for the purpose. As a matter of fact, there are several serious objections to the permanent use of these old boats, but, while the work is still in the experimental stage, they serve the purpose very well and give, besides, a unique and picturesque setting to the undertaking. If there is anywhere on this side of the water a more interesting schoolroom than that which occupies the forward part of the upper deck of that old red ferryboat overlooking the ever changing panorama of the East River, I have yet to find it.



Setting up exercises for the Army of Defence against tuberculosis

### Why Not Fresh Air The Whole Year Round?

The boat at East Ninetieth Street was opened last July, and the results which have been attained since that time have more than justified its existence and made Dr. Harris very sanguine in regard to the future. He hopes before long to be able to open several more of these camps throughout the city, which shall be housed in inexpensive buildings either in open spaces, such as vacant lots or in the smaller parks; on unused docks, or even, if possible, on the roofs of high buildings, although he fears that the expense connected with the latter site would make it impossible.

It is Dr. Harris's dream to see the establishment of a city fresh air fund, to be used for city children all the year round, supplementing that which enables the city child to go to the country for a week or a fortnight during the summer months. He does not depreciate the benefit which the child from the crowded tenement derives from this country vacation—nothing could quite take the place of that season of freedom on the mountains or seashore—but he feels most strongly the need for giving the city child, especially those with tubercular tendencies, fresh air to breathe all the year round, and there is no question in his mind that this can be accomplished if only the wherewithal to do it is forthcoming.

### Off on a Stationary Cruise To the Land of Health

Shall we go aboard the old red ferry-

boat? The gangway is steep and the old craft rocks a bit from the waves which are made by the passing of a big Sound steamer, but the superintendent standing in the stern assures us that she is securely fastened to her moorings and we need have no fear.

We are first taken into the superintendent's office, a comfortable steam-heated room in the stern of the boat, containing, besides the usual office furniture, a round dining table, a sideboard and six dining room chairs; for the room serves a double purpose—not only is it the private sanctum of the nurse in charge, but it is the dining room for the nurses and teachers as well.

Across the narrow passageway we get a glimpse into the kitchen, where a man and two maids are busy clearing away the remnants of the midday meal which the children have just finished eating. Beyond the kitchen, in what was in the old days the lower deck saloon of the boat, there are two rows of tables covered with white enamel cloth, where the children eat their meals.

The superintendent regrets that we did not arrive in time to see the children at dinner, "for," says she, "they had succotash to-day, and how they did enjoy it! There is nothing that they like better."

"Roast mutton," she continues, "boiled potatoes, succotash, rice pudding and plenty of milk and bread and butter was the menu, and they ate like ravening wolves. You would never believe that when they first came to the camp many of these children had to

be coaxed and even bribed to eat anything at all."

"Is dinner the only meal that they are given on the boat?" I asked. "Oh, dear, no! They have their breakfast shortly after they arrive at 9 in the morning. This consists of a soft-boiled egg, milk and bread and butter, and just before they leave in the afternoon they have their 'after-school lunch,' so that they will not get

### What Ho—For the Lessons on Deck!

After breakfast and a few minutes'

recreation the children adjourn to the schoolrooms for lessons. Unless the weather is too inclement, the decks are used as schoolrooms. The teacher, in a big fur coat and a cap drawn over her ears, faces a class of boys and girls bundled up to their noses in mufflers and other woolen garments and with warm blankets wrapped about their legs. They look anything but invalids, with their round rosy cheeks and sparkling

eyes, and how they love their outdoor schoolroom! Only actual rain or snow will drive them inside, although the second deck saloon makes an exceptionally good indoor schoolroom, and has the added attraction of a piano. Dinner is served at 12 o'clock, and then the children are tucked up on the old ferryboat seats that line the walls of the saloon for an hour's rest before beginning their afternoon studies. At 3 o'clock school is over for the day, and there is an interval of recreation for the little ones and a short health talk or a class in sewing or basket-weaving for the older ones before the "after-school lunch" is eaten, and they are started on their homeward way.

### A Visiting Nurse and the Doctor Among the Crew

Every child is under the most careful supervision. Three times a week they are examined by a physician from the Health Department in the little white



Fresh air and three square meals a day will discourage any germ

Photos by Paul Thompson

## A Mellow Old Age Spent in Saving Children

ing in a room where there is plenty of fresh air, and so on.

The "visiting nurse," by the by, is one of the most important factors in the success of the experiment, for the object of the camp is twofold. It is intended not only to benefit the individual children who spend eight hours out of the twenty-four on its well-worn decks, but also to carry the gospel of wholesome living and eating and sleeping into the homes which shelter these same children for the other sixteen hours of the day. And the visiting nurse is the connecting link between the two.

The health talks which are given periodically on such simple subjects as baths, fresh air, the care of the teeth, etc., and on which the children afterward write compositions, are also a help from the educational standpoint.

### When the School Floats Out to Sea

But pleasant and picturesque as its life isn't all "beer and skittles" on that old red ferryboat. There are days when the river is rough, and the old craft rocks so much that some of the children suffer from mal de mer. There are bitter cold days when the pipes freeze up so that the steam plant is put out of commission for days at a time, and, most serious of all, on two different occasions the old red boat has slipped away from her moorings and started merrily on her way toward Hell Gate, to the great delight of the children but the utter terror of the elder of the voyagers.

From which you must realize that a stationary building firmly planted on the dry land would, after all, serve the practical needs of the camp much better than the quaint old ark which is its present home. Dr. Harris hopes as the next stage of his experiment to establish a camp where the children can spend their nights as well as their days, where they will be under medical care and supervision not only for eight hours in the day but for the entire twenty-four.

No active cases of tuberculosis are taken into the camp; there are, in fact, no real invalids among the children there. The camp is first and foremost a preventorium, and certainly if ever there was an evidence of the truth of the old saying that "an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure" it is to be found on the decks of that old red ferryboat that gently rocks at her moorings in the East River.

# Women Help Uncle Sam to Find Jobs for Men

By BESSIE R. JAMES

THE Sailors, Soldiers and Marines' Club of the National League for Women's Service, at 261 Madison Avenue, extends hospitality daily to an average of 500 men, and this made it the logical centre for a branch of the United States Employment Service where men discharged from the army and the navy are helped to find jobs. The bureau is operated jointly by the United States Employment Service and by the league, the latter organization undertaking the work as part of its after-the-war industrial programme. It supplies the office and the volunteer women for the clerical work and canvassing of the city for positions. In addition, the league has circulated among its New York City membership of 10,000 or more an appeal for each member to be responsible for the obtaining of one job for a soldier.

As compared with the several hundred-odd branches of the United States Employment Service in New York this branch bureau is not large. Neither does it hold a record for the largest number of applicants a week, nor for the greatest number of placements; but because of the many volunteer work-

ers the league has been able to provide perhaps no other branch can boast of giving more time, more attention or satisfaction to each applicant. Because of their previous experience in war work they are well equipped to canvass employers for jobs and follow up the case of every man until he has a position or is left more or less satisfied. They are the women who during the war went from one Liberty loan campaign or one organization drive to another. When such a campaign was being planned the organization telephoned the general service division of the league and asked how many volunteers the division could depend on to supply. For one drive the league has loaned as many as 500 workers. And now the experience of days past is being diverted and utilized in a new field.

### They All Want to Live in New York

During the four weeks the bureau has been doing business only one man has asked for a job outside of New York City. Half of the men who apply for work do not belong in New York City, and they are the great problem



of the bureau. Before the war these men were miners in Colorado and California, or book salesmen in Louisiana and Oklahoma, chauffeurs in Wisconsin and Georgia, machinists and draughtsmen in Minnesota and Utah. The war having helped to sever the home ties, they want to stay in New York. To them this is an opportunity to make the great change, a change they have dreamed of for years, but have lacked the courage to make. You can argue with them for hours, but they won't go back to their old jobs and help lessen New York's great problem of the unemployed.

And so, what is the job in New York City for the miner from Colorado? And what can you do with an interior decorator from San Francisco, late a sailor in the United States navy, who says he will stay in New York and land a job, even if he has to starve? According to the records of the bureau, the war has noticeably increased the rate of chauffeurs, while almost every other man to apply wants to be a salesman.

### From Bacteriology To Baseball

The man who wanted to leave the city is an Armenian, married and has two children. He was in France with

the army for nearly a year, and somehow during that time he acquired a knowledge of forestry, which appealed to him immensely. He applied to the bureau for the position of forester. His case was so unusual in that he desired to get away from New York that even though the position was difficult a few of the women in the bureau put forth their best efforts and found the Armenian a forest and a substantial salary. Before enlisting the forester had been a bacteriologist employed by the Brooklyn Rapid Transit!

In the early days of the bureau, that is, the first two weeks, the would-be salesmen were a problem, but one of

the volunteer canvassers made a fortunate discovery, and this situation has been relieved for a while. The canvasser discovered a manufacturer of a new brand of sausage, and he was in need of many salesmen to introduce his goods. Accordingly, so far, he has accepted practically all the men the bureau has directed to him.

One man who had been a butler came back from camp to find an old man in his place. "I'll have to get a new job," he told the women, "because I cannot ask my former employer to discharge that old man." They found him a butler's job in a large club.

From bacteriology to baseball is quite a range, but the bureau has covered it. Every effort was made to find the baseball player a position, but the season being yet several months off, the bureau was unsuccessful. As the baseball player had served during the war in the engine room of a battleship, he was qualified for the job of furnace man in a large apartment. He accepted this work cheerfully, and now is waiting for baseball time, when he will go South to a training camp with one

of the teams, another ex-soldier "back on the job."

### Two Trades Are Better Than One

"We find that in many cases the war has taught a man two or three different trades, whereas before he could hold only one kind of job," said Mrs. Alexander Kohut, the industrial chairman of the league, who is directing the work of the bureau. "Take the case of the baseball player. As he is not a very good baseball player, he doesn't make enough money during the season to carry him over the winter. Now the navy has made a fireman out of him and he has his trade and salary for the winter months. This is typical of other cases. We may have a man come to us who before the war held a clerical position, but possibly while in the air service or some other branch of the army he has learned mechanics. Right away his chances of getting a job are twice as good. But, of course, we realize there are not enough jobs at present to go around in New York City, and at times we are at a loss to find openings for these men from other towns who wish to establish themselves in New York. Only in a couple of instances have we been able to persuade the men to go back to their home towns."

# ∴ Greenwich House Practises Chinese Medicine ∴

By MARGARET MAR MOSES

TO KEEP well babies well—that is the object of the Baby Feeding Clinic which Greenwich House has opened for the newest comers to the neighborhood.

And the babies lend their approval to the undertaking. They attend in state, wrapped in warm blankets and gayly colored shawls, and followed by an admiring train of relatives.

Mrs. Ida Carpenter Perry, who is in charge of health work at Greenwich House, plans to make it a mothers' club as well as a clinic. Mother is invited to come early and have a chat with other mothers over a cup of chocolate. But mothers are not the only ones who like to come.

Often it is "big sister" who toddles in under the weight of the youngest member of the family. Even father puts in an appearance when he has been "laid off."

### Baby Goes Over the Top

After chocolate the performance is on. Baby is registered and his history re-

corded, and then he goes to the scales before an expectant audience. For each mother is anxious to see how much each other mother's baby has gained.

"Eight ounces for Tony this week; that's fine, Mrs. Ferro," the attendant announces. Tony's mother beams and the other mothers crowd up with their babies, eager for a turn at the scales.

Next, baby must be examined by the doctor. Sometimes she resents this. One little girl of two sat with tightly

closed mouth, adamant to the pleas of doctor and attendants to "open mouth and say 'ah,' there's a good girl."

Finally big sister was summoned. Her treatment was simple, but effective. She seized baby by the chin. Automatically the little jaw dropped and doctor could insert his paddle.

"This baby is doing well," says the doctor, examining a fine little boy. "Do you keep him out of doors?"

"I no understand. She speaka de

English," says the mother, thrusting the omnipotent big sister forward.

"Tell your mother to bathe baby every day and keep him outdoors," the doctor explains to the proud possessor of the family's English. And big sister passes on the advice in voluble Italian.

### A Family of Lightweights

But, although they are not sick, some of the babies who attend the clinic are

sadly undernourished. Now the doctor is examining a poor scrawny little thing, while the look of pity deepens on the faces of the mothers of plump babies.

Mother herself is proudly explaining what a strong child little Becky is. To be sure, she is four months old and weighs only four pounds and fifteen ounces. "But the whole family is skinny like that. You should see this baby's father, doctor."

"Well," says the doctor, "she has a

fine healthy cry, anyway. Try feeding her whole milk with a little barley water. Then bring her next week and we'll see whether she hasn't overcome her heritage."

Whole milk—how is the mother to get it at 14 cents a quart, I thought. But Greenwich House has looked after that, too. In the very next room to the baby clinic "multisified milk" has been sold at 12 cents to a long, waiting line of children. Mother can bring a can with her

And if there has been a case of influenza in the family, and nourishing foods are needed, she can obtain milk and eggs free. This is a special emergency work undertaken by the Board of Health during the influenza epidemic.

### An Ounce of Prevention

"Preventive measures—that is what we want to insure," said Mrs. Perry. "The regular clinics look after the sick babies. We want the mothers to learn how to keep their babies from becoming sick babies."

"It is the visiting nurse who can best do this. The epidemic has demonstrated more clearly than ever how much she is needed to go right into the homes and show mothers how to feed and care for their children.

"Of course, ours is a small undertaking, and we have no nurses—so that all our visiting must be done by volunteers. But if all the separate health agencies would get together it ought to be possible to cover every home in New York City."

ELIZABETH B. ROGERS, Danbury, Conn.

# Another County Heard From—On the Eight Hour Day

REFORMERS are crying for an eight-hour day for home workers whose present hours are from 6:30 to 7:30 (since folks must have both breakfast and dinner), but whose work is comparatively light; certainly it is not heavier than that of many college bred women who, in addition to home work, are rearing children and doing their own sewing. Why does not some one investi-

gate the hours and work of the nurses in our hospitals?

Here is a letter received by the mother of a nurse who has just completed her probationary course:

"I am sitting up in the sun on the porch and resting at the same time. This is what I did this morning—a pretty good morning's work: Eight patients in the ward, five had baths; their beds to make, dust the ward. Make them all either cocoa or orangeade. Clean a small kitchen and bathroom; answer

bells in between. Then go for dinner trays, twenty-one of these, then out to my dinner at 1:20. Nothing left but two sausages and a half slice of cake, so I ate bread and butter and drank some milk. Just one busy day. I am not complaining, and like the work all right. Just thought you would like to hear about it."

The compensation offered is board, lodging, laundry, training and \$8 a month. In addition to the work required there are classes and lessons to fill up any unemployed hours. The lessons for probationers were in bacteriology, nurs-

ing ethics, practical nursing, nursing theory, dietetics. In addition to work and studies there is the question of making both ends meet (for many nurses look for very little assistance from their families), and the nervous shock of learning of heretofore unknown evils and often the sorrow of seeing a patient pass on.

Volumes have been written recently on the nobility of trained nurses and their vital importance to the community. Why, then, is it necessary to break them down with such long hours filled with

hard work? There is nothing like it in any other occupation or profession.

For thirty years, or since the first trained nurse came into my home, I have wondered why physical endurance is the first and highest test for an occupation that calls for so many higher and finer qualities. Surely, there is reform called for, shorter hours and greater compensation in this fine profession.