

Model System in Great Clearing House for Sick and Wounded



COL. KENNEDY WHO IS IN CHARGE HERE OF THE TRANSPORTATION OF WOUNDED.

Coming 15,000 a Month From Overseas Disabled Soldiers Get Swift Yet Gentlest of Treatment Under Col. Kennedy's Direction at Hoboken

A SYSTEM that is kindly and humane. A system that deals in the mass and watches over the individual. There are those who might contend that there isn't any such thing. But it exists here in New York and has been functioning in such a quiet, swift and efficient manner that it was only a few days ago New York discovered it.

It is the debarkation and distribution system for sick and wounded soldiers. Of course everyone is used to seeing wounded men. They are a feature of the city life, and so much the heroic matter of fact that one gets in the habit of thinking of them as permanent parts of the town. But it may startle the average New Yorker to learn that no wounded or sick man, unless he is in too bad shape to be moved or needs treatment that he can get only here, stays in New York port hospitals longer than eight days. Generally the period is less.

Coming 15,000 a Month.

The reason for this is obvious when one realizes that about 15,000 wounded and sick men are now coming into the port every month, and if they were not handled quickly and by an excellent system the city hospitals would be so clogged that transports would be lying down the bay waiting, to unload or going to other ports. And New York has the distinction of receiving ninety per cent. of the sick and wounded who return from overseas.

The other day New York learned that a perfectly equipped hospital train was leaving the Grand Central Station with wounded men for Camp Kearny, California. Army secrecy was lifted for the first time and stories were written about this train as if it were a new thing to marvel at. A few hours before the train left, however, had left the terminal with a brass band, and nobody knew about that.

At intervals all through the day trains left from the New Jersey terminals on the schedule laid out by the medical department and the railroad officials, and they were a mere matter of the day's routine. This swift and capable handling of disabled men has been going on for months, until the army medical men of the post contemplate with some excusable pride the figure of 57,104 sick and wounded received in and transferred from New York "without scratching a man."

Col. Kennedy's Own System.

The reason for it sits in a dingy little office looking out over the Hoboken railroad yards. He is Col. J. M. Kennedy, a man whose face shows the trace of years in active army service, but whose eyes are kind and twinkling in a captivating way. He has supreme charge of every sick and wounded soldier who comes to the port. Under him are thousands of men, officers and privates, the medical staff of the port. His position is second in importance only to that of the Surgeon-General at Washington or the Surgeon-General of the A. E. F. His system is of his own construction and it reflects the man's personality.

The Colonel is telephoning to Camp Mills, one of the base debarkation hospitals of the port. A number of "walking cases" are to leave on a train for New York, where they will be transferred to a hospital train. Assigned to go with them is a stretcher case. There is some doubt about the advisability of this, for fear the transfer, unusual in stretcher cases, which usually go together in a special train, might tire the patient unnecessarily. So, according to Col. Kennedy's system, the question reaches him informally, and without the delay of an extra minute.

How is he, did you say?

"How is he, did you say?" he grows sympathetically over the wire. "Hum, well, I think you had better not send him then. Yes, that would be better."

And so the matter was settled, and Private Blank on a cot in a hospital out in Camp Mills will wait a few more minutes until more cases of his kind are going out, because the kindly eyed but extremely efficient gentleman in the Colonel's uniform doesn't want Private Blank to get so tired that it might retard his recovery.

Care for the Individual.

There may be flaws in the army medical service, but one cannot see the work in New York or talk with Col. Kennedy and his staff without realizing that so far as is humanly possible in any large organization the men who come to this port are treated

with a consideration which money could not buy.

"Of course it's a system," said one of the Colonel's chief assistants, "but you must realize that as soon as a man comes to us in a condition that calls for unusual care, or develops anything unusual that needs special treatment, he at once ceases to be one of many and becomes a highly important individual."

Col. Kennedy has made it that way. A short time ago three men came in on the Manchuria very ill with pneumonia. In the ordinary course of things these men would have been taken off the boat and transferred to a hospital, but it did not seem the wise thing to do. It finally came up to Lieut.-Col. F. J. Peirce, chief of the transport division under Col. Kennedy, the two men having served together and Lieut.-Col. Peirce having learned his chief's way of doing things, which in this instance coincided with his own wishes.

"Don't move them," was the order. There was a chance that they might reach their crisis before the Manchuria left. They did not, and when the final decision came to medical headquarters it was decided to send the three men back to France so as to give them a fighting chance for their lives. They went over and came back—well men. That is the way the system is tempered with common sense.

Two Distinct Branches.

There are two distinct branches to the medical corps of the debarkation port. One department gets them off the ships and into the hospitals, the other takes them from the hospitals and radio messages to their homes, or as near their homes as good judgment dictates.

When Col. Kennedy first came to Hoboken as medical officer it was the beginning of a debarkation port, and his staff consisted of two officers and one private. It had grown and been changed in accordance with the demands of the war. Then with the signing of the armistice the whole plan had to be switched around and adapted on a few days' notice to the receiving rather than the sending of troops. That this was done successfully, despite the handicap of eleven hospitals to which men are taken: Ellis Island, Fox Hills on Staten Island; the Greenhut Hospital, Grand Central Palace and Polyclinic on Manhattan; St. Mary's in Hoboken; the Messiah Home for Mental Patients, the Norwegian Hospital in Brooklyn, the base hospitals at Camp Merritt and Camp Mills, the Rockefeller Institute and the hospital ship Gen. Robert M. O'Reilly at Pier 45, for contagious diseases.

On the way up the bay the chief of the Sick and Wounded Division classifies and classifies the men according to the nature of their illness or wounds and the bed capacity of the various hospitals. They are landed at the dock nearest the hospital to which they are going, or if evacuation work is going on there, at the next most convenient place, and quickly transferred to ambulances.

The work of these army ambulances which will hold ten walking cases is illustrative of the whole system. They are lined up four abreast at the pier where the wounded men are debarked from the transfer boats. As the men leave the boat they are separated into

squads of ten, and each squad quickly fills an ambulance, which speeds off and comes back to the next load. In this way forty men leave in each line of four cars.

When they get to the hospitals the work of the evacuation officer, Major Kerns, begins. As soon as a man reaches the hospital his hospital record and his service record is looked over to see what he needs and where he lives. There are four liaison officers who every day visit all the hospitals and find out which cases are in condition to be removed to the hospital nearest their home or the hospital treatment they need. There are seventy-eight army hospitals in the country.

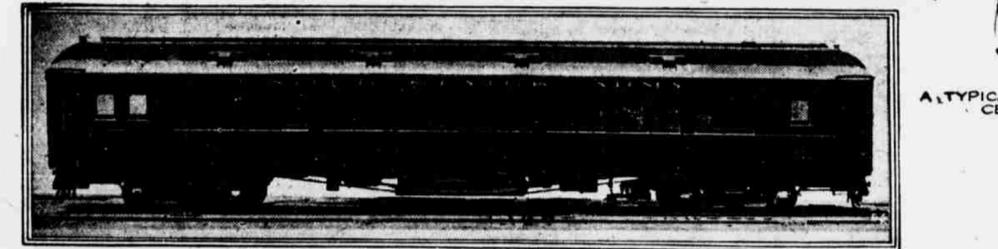
Checks Up With Washington.

After the liaison officer makes his recommendations they are sent in for the approval of Colonel Kennedy, and the office of Surgeon-General Merritt W. Ireland in Washington to get the list approved by him. This is because some patients come in through other ports, Boston, Newport News and Charleston, and it is necessary not to congest a hospital.

escaping into the outer air. I hurried to rectify my oversight, but too late, for a member of the Tobacco Squad was already clomping at my door.

She was most insultingly suspicious when I insisted that the smoke was caused by a piece of paper which had caught fire, but she was unable to discover any incriminating evidence upon examining my quarters and was therefore compelled to depart prisoner. She went so far to say she believed I had but just come from Mermaid Park, a most libellous accusation, as the place she referred to is a ribald resort established upon a large vessel which never comes within three miles of shore. As a matter of fact I have not been there for two weeks.

Jan. 10.—We are in a wonderful era of moral legislation. We have now legally done away with candy, tobacco, soda water, silk underwear and stockings, low necked waists, men's collars less than 2 1/2 inches in height, rouge, face powder, false hair, golf, silk hats and magazines contain-



ONE OF THE ARMY MEDICAL CARS.

they are slipped off the transport and onto the boat, and over to Manhattan in remarkable speed. There are eleven hospitals to which men are taken: Ellis Island, Fox Hills on Staten Island; the Greenhut Hospital, Grand Central Palace and Polyclinic on Manhattan; St. Mary's in Hoboken; the Messiah Home for Mental Patients, the Norwegian Hospital in Brooklyn, the base hospitals at Camp Merritt and Camp Mills, the Rockefeller Institute and the hospital ship Gen. Robert M. O'Reilly at Pier 45, for contagious diseases.

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A Vision of Things as They May Be Some Day

(From the Diary of Aloysius Boggs, as transmitted by Oulja Road to Thomas MacIlvaine, Jr.)

BOSTON, Jan. 1, 1925.—I am all a-flutter. I forgot that the Ice Cream Soda Act went into effect to-day and almost rendered myself liable to a prison sentence by asking for a cherry flush at the fountain on the corner. Just to think that once it was possible to find the refreshing soda water sold openly upon the very eyes of the Blue Ribbon Police.

I was positively upset following my narrow escape from incarceration and felt that I simply must smoke, although of course I am fully in sympathy with the Anti-Nicotine law. I therefore fashioned myself a "cigarette" of corn silk which I had discovered last summer. I was inhaling deeply when I saw that I had inadvertently left my sitting room window open and that consequently the smoke from my "cigarette" was

ing so-called "love stories" of unmarried persons.

I must say that the opposition to the anti-going law died extremely hard, resisting more strongly, I believe, than any of the other votaries of vice. But think of the moral victory of suppressing all the lying about scores that used to take place every weekend.

Not all theatres have been closed, those producing Biblical dramas being allowed to remain open. Some of the Bible romances, however, are taboo, as their language, if allowed to follow the original too closely, is not considered at all fit for the public ear. Miss Alva Bona, the dramatic supervisor, is most emphatic in her stand upon this point and has issued a list of those incidents which may be presented only after the MS. has passed before her eagle eye. That form of "amusement" once quaintly termed "the movies" was, of course, suppressed long ago, except in the case of educational pictures.

January 25.—There was much talk to-day at the rooms of the Ever-ward League, of which, of course, I am a member, concerning the new anti-laugh act, which becomes effect to-day. This measure provides a severe penalty for the person or persons who either "originates, prints, pictures or circulates in any manner whatsoever, any material designed to excite merriment" and is expected to abolish the unseemly displays of mirth which, in the past, one has witnessed in public.

This act, however, very nearly caused trouble for me, for when I was traversing Beedle street, on my way home, I chanced upon an exceedingly adipose police officer (the one in fact who spoiled my cornsilk smoke not long since), in the act of slipping upon an empty banana. The sight excited my risibilities to such an extent that I narrowly escaped arrest. Some day, however, I hope to achieve more perfect control.



WOUNDED MEN READY TO START HOME, GET SMOKES from the RED CROSS.

None Remains at This Port More Than Eight Days — Care Never Ceases Until Men Reach Home

are just a cross section of the country, men such as you and I have passed every day on the street before the war without a glance, but when the time came they showed the qualities of real courage that only men can show. They are Americans."

The saddest cases which the port authorities have to deal with are those of shell shock and insanity. These, fortunately, are not numerous and a study of the port figures for the year of 1918 nails two canards that have been going about with regard to our soldiers. Of course, the figures have been jumping this year, and from January 1 to March 24, 35,926 cases had been received, as compared with 25,104 for all of 1918. The increase began soon after the armistice. In December of 1918, the number received here was 10,652, while in November only 3,514 were received.

The insane patients are sent on special cars, the windows of which are barred, to army hospitals and the best State hospitals.

There have been three big problems, outside of the initial problem of organization, which Col. Kennedy and his staff have had to buck against since the war started. The first was influenza, the second the wreck of the Northern Pacific and the third irremediable gossip about the treatment of wounded men which has led to a flood of complaints.

Hard Hit by Influenza.

Influenza hit the debarkation port, as it was then, pretty hard. They had to send men, Pershing was pleading for them, and to send men without endangering their lives or causing wholesale epidemics on board transports was a problem that caused many sleepless nights in Hoboken.

Men of Col. Kennedy's staff say that if any one less gifted with common sense had been in charge, the whole organization would have collapsed from sheer panic. As it is, however, movements went on, slower than at first, but still in material volume.

Quarantine was observed to the utmost compatible with military necessity, and it was the nice combination of medical precaution and military discipline which saved the port from getting over large numbers of troops in that trying time without more fatalities.

The next bad nick in the machine came from the wreck of the Northern Pacific, when the tide had turned and men were coming home. Every man came off the ship safely, but even the Colonel's staff is convinced that there was a little cherub up aloft looking after that particular cargo and seeing to it that a bad onshore wind did not come up.

The Colonel, by the way, is a lover of the sea. He knows every inch of which he has dealings from truck to keelson and is a sailor of no mean pretensions. They say that occasionally the "old man" looks out the window, sees a puff of smoke in the distance down the bay, sniffs and says, "Well, there's the anchor, what is it? That isn't nautical precedence, what is it?"

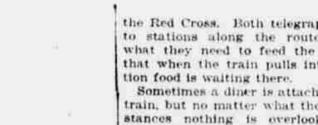
The gossip and slanders have been the worst bane of the port authorities recently. Every one remembers the lies which were spread about in the early days of the war about men going insane at Flattsburg from hypnotic practice and Red Cross nurses who came home with their hands cut off. These stories have been surpassed when the wounded are spoken of.

If there could be anything more comfortable or cleaner than one of the hospital trains sent out of New York by the port medical authorities, it has yet to be devised. On the trips from the city to some of the nearby camp hospitals, however, occasional disagreeable conditions like cold cars have been encountered, something which the department could not prevent. One of the most amusing stories started from a cold car yarn.

A complaint came in that wounded men, some of them without arms or legs, had been sent to Camp Mills in gondola coal cars on the Long Island railroad. The writer pointed out that there was no cover over the cars, no protection from the weather, no heat, and no doors, so that the men could not get out except by climbing. There were even no ladders provided.

This story was traced to a car that was not well heated because of engine trouble on the way to the camp. "Coal" evolved from "cold" and caused all sorts of trouble. It has been found that 98 per cent. of the complaints are baseless and the debarkation office keeps one officer constantly employed running them down.

A TYPICAL SCENE in the GRAND CENTRAL STATION



the Red Cross. Both telegraph and telephone stations ahead of the train, telling what they need to feed the men, so that when the train pulls into a station food is waiting there.

Sometimes a diner is attached to the train, but no matter what the circumstances nothing is overlooked that will provide the men with good food and all of it they need.

In addition to this, a wire is sent ahead to the receiving hospital telling when the patients are coming, and a day before reaching the destination the officer on the train sends a message telling when his train will arrive.

The three hospital trains are marvels of convenience. The beds are of white enameled iron, fastened to the floor, and are in tiers of two. Some of them can be converted into sofas so that men who can sit up part of the time can rest on a comfortable couch and stretch their legs in the wide aisle.

At meal time an iron tray is fastened to the side of each cot so that the man can reach his food in comfort. Each patient when he boards the train wears a tag which tells when his wound needs dressing and at what right time, if he wants it, are given into the operating car and placed on the table. If he cannot walk his wound is dressed in bed. There are one or two cots in each car fixed at a height convenient for the surgeon.

If it should so happen that only one or two patients are bound for a certain town or city they are given the same careful attention a hundred would receive. Even if only one man is bound west for home he is accompanied by a physician or surgeon and an enlisted nurse.

Of all the patients transferred the most interesting and at the same time the ones who command the most sympathy are those bound for special hospitals. Every few days, for instance, a number of face cases go out to one of the surgical reconstruction hospitals. These are men who have been so badly wounded in the face that they will have to be practically remodeled. All the amputation cases are sent first to Colonia, N. J., from which hospital they are distributed to places all over the country. Tubercular patients go to other special hospitals and nervous cases to others.

They Are Real Men.

The remarkable thing about all the trains, however, is the spirit of courage and cheerfulness which makes the Journey shorter and pleasanter than one would imagine it could be. From the time when the boarding officers go aboard down the bay until they land near their old home town, the wounded and sick soldiers show a moral courage which the port medical men cannot praise too highly.

"They are all men, that's the secret of it," said Lieut. Col. Peirce. "They