

Modern Inventions To Aid Sick Folk

Of all the admirable comforts and conveniences evolved in this day of progress for the special benefit of invalids, nothing quite equals the pivoted bed that enables even the most handicapped individual to lie flat on his or her back and enjoy all the effect of a change of position. This new invention is just an ordinary, lightly-built metal bed with a springy wire mattress that, by a touch of the nurse's hand, can be raised or lowered, tipped this way or that, giving the invalid prisoner all the delightful sense of movement and change without really altering the position in the least.

This is a blessing to persons with broken limbs and injured backs, who are hooked for an over-long holiday in bed and who dare not move as they hope to grow well and strong. This delightful bed is fitted with special springs and castors so artfully adjusted that it can be pushed about a room without ever so slightly jarring the occupant, and yet affording a constant variety in location. Even the relief of occupying different rooms from time to time is now possible, a relief which means so much in cheerfulness and strength to sick folks who have to endure a long siege of invalidism. While the pivoted bed has been made especially for those who are forced to a prolonged rest on their backs, there have been many improvements put forth lately in behalf of the invalid, who need suffer no such test of endurance and patience, but can sit up a little, for meals

Comforts for the Bedridden.

The old method in giving a patient an erect position in bed was the liberal use of pillows to form a back-rest, else a hard board, with an easel support, was placed behind the sick person, a pillow put on this and the body was propped into just the posture that threw all the strain on the base of the spine. Now an excellent appliance has been brought out that does away with pillows entirely. The new back-rest, for use in bed, is cushioned, built high enough to afford a head supporter, has tufted projecting ears, like the cosy granny chair, to cut off any draughts, and well cushioned arms extend on both sides to give the patient comfort for her elbows. Better still, this back-rest is so arranged that the invalid can sit or partially recline at any angle and govern the position herself by merely working a small lever at one side, which throws the broad supporting board backwards or forwards as the need may be.

These details in mechanism may not seem important to the strong and sturdy, but they mean everything in the comfort of a sick person, who will also find the greatest contentment in the use of the four-legged smartly ornamented meal tray that is now perfected for invalid use. There have been meal trays in use before this time, but none so cleverly provided with conveniences nor so cheerfully and artistically ornamented as those now purchasable. Really charming ones are made of mahogany inlaid with lighter woods in Chippendale patterns, others are treated with decoration done with hot irons and the design then colored, and excellent ones there are for use both as meal trays, card, chess, backgammon and checker boards.

Exceedingly pretty dinner stands are now being made of wicker, stained green, brown or a cheerful cherry red with pockets at the corners and along the sides into which the salt, pepper boxes, etc., will fit and prevent that irritating restlessness with which inanimate objects are sometimes possessed.

For the bed-ridden invalid, who creeps out to the comparative freedom of sofa life, there are possibilities of great relief in the new tufted spring couch, the long seat and headrest of which is artfully hinged to admit of many changes in the sick person's position. It can be adjusted to support a weak back, to raise or lower the head and the whole cushioned top of the sofa can be also lifted off to slip into a wheeled spinal chair that the patient occupies while stretched at full length.

Fresh Air for Invalids.

Excellent as these contrivances are they pale, however, almost into insignificance beside the value and virtue of the invalid's motor carriage. These were first built in England, but are now being made in this country. The carriage itself is built very nearly on the lines of an ample easy bath chair, or yet more nearly on the model of an exceedingly small low-swung phaeton. There is a hood to pull up protectingly above and about the invalid chauffeur, a large wool apron draws up and buttons smoothly over the knees and the motive power and steering gear are stored forward under the gracefully curving dashboard.

Enough gas or electric power can be stored in one of these little carriages to last for ten or twelve miles, and what with specially tempered springs, rubber tires and carefully considered cushions the occupant of such a vehicle is free to come and go at will about a garden or park roads without the least jolting or discomfort from the weather.

Women as "Signal Men"

When the suburban, through and freight trains which run out of the Union station, Chicago, on the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy railway fly past certain of the watch towers of "signal blocks" scattered along the way the levers controlling the semaphores which direct the train engineers how to proceed are operated by

women. Miss Angie B. Gaines is the day and Miss Teresa Drew the night operator at Berwyn, Ill., with Miss Lizzie Allen as alternate, or "extra." Miss Alice Furniss is "block operator" at Grossdale, being on duty at night. Miss Helen McKirhan locks after the telegraph key and the signals at Western Springs, and Miss Adele Wurz keeps guard at the "X" block, which is near Aurora.

The "block operator," whether man or woman, must be, above all, an expert telegraph operator. Then a rather severe and searching medical examination must be undergone before the new applicant for railway employment is allowed to "post up" for the "extra list." Women are employed by the railroad whenever this seems feasible, because the salaries they command are a little smaller than those paid to men for the same services. The new operator always begins with night duty, the day jobs, as most desirable, falling by right to the older employees. Each of the young women mentioned has passed many a long night in the lonely signal box, high above the tracks and the world of sleeping men and women. None will admit having been at all scared, nervous, or timid when in that situation. Although each girl operator works twelve hours a day and seven days in the week the year round, with the exception of a two weeks' vacation, the block operators like their work. There is little to fear, they contend, since they can and do lock themselves safely in their towers at will, and there are many advantages. Above all, they are, in a great degree, their own superintendents, and there is no one at hand to "boss."

"We are alone and comparatively independent in our own little offices," says Miss Gaines, who has been a "block operator" for over eight years, "thus being able to find a great many spare moments for reading, writing and even fancy work. We also have the opportunity of making our surroundings as neat and homelike as we please."

There are musical instruments and piles of music in several of the "block towers" over which girl operators reign; growing plants flourish in the windows of nearly all. The girl operators, in the intervals of keeping a record of all trains passing in either direction, watching and changing the signals, making notes of the numbers of all engines, "clearing" their particular section of track and performing all the other light but important and multifarious duties which fall to their share, take great pride in keeping their quarters neat.

The Northwestern railroad at one time employed women in a similar capacity, but the six women on the Aurora branch of the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy railway are the only ones now doing this work in or about Chicago.

Boston's Busiest Woman

Boston has among its citizens the busiest woman in this country, if her wealth and freedom from the necessity of doing the work in which she takes so much satisfaction be considered. She is worth a quarter of a million of dollars and made the money recognizing the direction that business in a certain part of the city was going to take.

Boylston street was a residential thoroughfare when she first became acquainted with it. After a while the idea took possession of her that business was coming in that direction. She had acquired money enough to become the owner of a house and she decided to convert it into a shop. She went to see the carpenters and builders and bought every piece of woodwork and glass that was required in making the change from an old-fashioned home to a new-fashioned shop. She inspected the work as it proceeded and paid off the men every Saturday night as they filed through her kitchen.

When this undertaking had turned out according to her wishes after some delay and trying waiting, she got another house and had that turned into smart shops with plate glass windows and every other feature to attract the merchant who wanted the best quarters and could afford to pay for them. She got a long lease on a third house after a while and altered that just as she had the others, paying the same close attention to the practical side of the work.

When all these changes were made she did not hire a janitor to look after her buildings, nor did she hand over the management of them to a firm of real estate dealers. She remained in charge so practically that to this day nobody can control them but herself. She scrubs the stairways herself, she washes the windows and she has carried the bricks from the wagon to the sidewalk they were to repair. She lives in an unoccupied basement of one of the houses and through her kitchen and dining room passes everybody who comes to the upper rooms of the house, through the basement.

Every detail of the management of the property comes under her personal control. She began to take this close personal charge of her property when her first house was altered into a business building and economy was at first her object. Later she continued the work in the same way because she found it interesting, and now that her property is valued at nearly a quarter of a million of dollars, chiefly as a result of this industry, she finds nothing



BLOUSE JACKET OF FUR.



CARRIAGE AND EVENING WRAP.

extraordinary in the fact that she should continue to work so hard.

There is no trace of the miser in her conduct and there are many instances of her generosity, which is especially likely to show itself toward her own sex. So there is no question of her parsimony, in spite of the way in which she lives. Sometimes her generosity to women in business has proved an expense to her, although she is proud of the fact that since the day she first went into the real estate business nobody has lost a cent through her.

Southern Ventures

The perusal of the following lines will furnish information to those persons in Venezuela who smile when American capital and enterprises are spoken of, says the Venezuelan Herald. Let them then know that the Moniteur Officiel du Commerce Francais says that of the 13,200 kilometers of railroad 11,400 are American; that of the 1,930 mines in exploitation, 1,500 are worked with capital of the same nation; that of the 5,300 employees of the American railroads, only 1,030 are the sons of Uncle Sam, and the others are natives of the country; that one bank in every three is American; that the commerce, which used to be monopolized by the French, Spanish and Germans, is now being fought for by the Americans. The following are the words of M. Signoret, counselor of the French board of foreign trade:

"French, English, Germans and Americans, we shall all find ourselves competing harder than ever."

"We have on our side past successes, acquired strength; the Germans, and especially the English, have at their disposal enormous capital and great audacity. As to the Americans, in addition to these elements, they have in their favor the prox-

imity of their country—five days—the facilities offered by their low tariff, their enterprising spirit and the resources which the commercial and industrial American people shower on their pioneers abroad. They have also another enormous advantage, namely, that in the United States Mexican business is sought for; this they understand, quickly investigate and execute. In France months, and sometimes years, elapse before a hearing or investigation can be obtained for a Mexican affair."

"In a word, Mexico has been made known and developed by the Americans, who, thanks to their 11,400 kilometers of railroad, have enabled the wealth of the country to be exploited. The day General Porfirio Diaz and his minister, Pacheco, gave them 120 concessions, of which only 107 have seen the light, he served his country, for he encouraged a practical people, who have sowed the land freely with gold. What Porfirio Diaz did for the Americans he has tried to do on many occasions for the French, but they have turned a deaf ear to him and have preferred the Transvaal, but they have time yet to show a little initiative."

Coming from a Frenchman, clothed with an official character, these words should cause reflection in certain government officers who believe that up to the present time the United States have not gone out of themselves nor invested their capital abroad. May these lines reproduced in the interests of their country not allow them to remain any longer in ignorance.

Living Fashion Models

Blouse jackets of fur will be a distinguishing feature of this winter's wraps. The one pictured is of superb chinchilla, with a gray crepe de chine sash and satin ribbon

to match run through big silk rings that encircle both wrists and neck.

A sensible and handsome carriage and evening wrap of long-haired brown fur, cut after the newest cape pattern and lined with yellow brocade, is shown in the accompanying picture.

Rode in a Freight Car

The crew of a fast freight train on the Lehigh Valley railroad, reaches the Philadelphia Lehigh, found a young woman on top of a box car a short distance west of Pottsville, N. J. The woman was unable to see, having been blinded by cinders that flew from the stack of the locomotive uraging the train. Crouched close to the top of the car, she was clinging to the foot-board. She was taken to the locomotive and brought to Easton. When she reached that city Detective Miller, an officer in the employ of the railroad company, placed the woman under arrest, on the charge of illegal riding.

Blinded from her terrible experience on the fast-moving train, the prisoner was thought to be demented. It was mainly on that account that she was taken to the lockup. At the station house, after she had been permitted to rest and wash the dirt from her face and eyes, the young woman gave an account of her trip.

She said her home was near Allentown and that her name was Mamee Sizer. She had been to New York and had tired of the big city. Longing to get back home and not having money to pay her fare, she decided to steal a ride on a freight train, as she had often read of men and boys doing. Walking to Newark, she climbed on a freight car. She barely had time to tie her hat fast to the short scaque she wore when the train began to move. In a moment or two more it was traveling at a high rate of speed. The wind chilled her and nearly swept her from her perch, but she clung to the foot-board.

After having learned the story the railroad officials withdrew the charge against her and she received a ticket to her home.

White House is Rickety

"In the plan for building a new house for the president elsewhere than on the present site it has been proposed to utilize the present mansion for offices," writes Colonel Theodore A. Bingham, U. S. A., in the Ladies' Home Journal. "One plea therefor has been that the historic building should be left as it is. This is certainly to be insisted on. But it is said the mansion is too pure a piece of architecture to be marred by additions. This, however, is a specious argument, since the original design contemplated side additions, and if the building in its present state were used as offices it would be wrecked in five or six years. Those who have no experience with public buildings or with this building in particular have no conception of the wear and tear on a president's office. It surpasses that on any other office in the country. The present executive mansion was lightly built, and is already expensive to keep in proper repair. Its floor beams are not strong enough to endure office use. Great difficulty has arisen in the past with the few rooms now used as the president's executive offices, and great watchfulness has to be constantly exercised. Several times the floors have threatened to break through. The stairs have already broken down, one flight being now supported by a chain. Still, to remodel for office use only, the whole interior of our historic executive mansion would be not only a very expensive matter, but would fail to meet the requirements of the case, and also, it is believed, the approval of the country at large."



HORTICULTURE BUILDING AT PANAMERICAN EXPOSITION, BUFFALO.