American Red Cross base hospital no. 38 in the world war. United States army base hospital no. 38, organized under the auspices of the Jefferson Medical College and Hospital, stationed at Nantes, France, 1918-1919, by W. M. L. Coplin.

American Red Cross Base Hospital No. 38

2-1923

American Red Cross Base Hospital No. 38 in the World War - Frontismatter, Table of Contents, and Chapter I: Introduction

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DISCARD
TO THE BENEFACTRESS OF
BASE HOSPITAL No. 38

The fairest of blooms shall pass earthward,
The brown and the ear seek the wood,
There is naught that endures past the morrow
Save the fact that our hands have done good.

The good that we do is immortal,
The rest may go down to the grave,
For He Whom we meet at death’s portal
Shall weigh up the good that we gave.

The smiles that we bring to another
Shall lighten the sorrows we bear,
Like a kiss from the lips of a Mother
That smooths out the furrows of care.

And she, who life’s sorrows could lighten,
Shall claim Heaven’s joy as her own,
And her memory here ever brighten
When the gloom of our sorrow has flown.

W. M. L. C.
AMERICAN RED CROSS
BASE HOSPITAL No. 38
in the
WORLD WAR
UNITED STATES ARMY
BASE HOSPITAL No. 38
organized under the auspices
of the
JEFFERSON MEDICAL COLLEGE
AND HOSPITAL
stationed at
Nantes, France
1918-1919

by
W. M. L. Coplin
Director
Philadelphia
1923
Dedicated
to the
Memory of
ADELINE PEPPER GIBSON
Whose munificence made possible
American Red Cross Base Hospital No. 38
Who accompanied it overseas
and
Who died in the service of Her Country
at the
Hospital Center
Nantes, France
January Tenth
Nineteen Hundred Nineteen
PREFACE

In presenting this regrettably delayed volume the Director wishes to acknowledge the invaluable assistance so freely and fully rendered by colleagues who shared in the overseas work and without whose aid nothing worthwhile could have been accomplished. Shortly after returning home a publication committee was designated and allotments of sections made. Several submitted excellent contributions but it was found that to each of us practically the same features and incidents had appeared of dominant interest and consequently, if published as received, much of the same story would have been related in succeeding chapters, often in almost identical terms; this seemed undesirable, therefore, it became necessary to rearrange, reassemble and finally to rewrite almost the entire book and in that form the result is hesitatingly presented.

That part dealing with the Medical Division, prepared by Dr. Henry and Dr. Mohler, has been but little changed; facts set forth in preceding parts have been deleted and a few statistics included which, with certain minor changes, leave the chapter quite as originally written.

The pressure of a busy professional life, and the fact that Dr. Nassau, Chief of the Surgical Division, has been impressed to perform unusual and time consuming duties in College and Hospital since his return, precluded his active participation, but he has most generously advised and assisted in many ways. The Chaplain responded in his characteristic careful and comprehensive manner; Chapter XVII is headed by his name as the only part not materially altered by revision of any kind. Many data obtained from the work of the “88” shock team at the front have been compiled largely from Dr. Tyson’s report of the special detail, and some first hand knowl-

v
edge possessed by the Director. But few additions have been made to the excellent description (Chapter XIX) of the voyage on the “Nopatin” from the pen of Frank C. Baxter of the Enlisted Personnel. George Allen Smith, also from the ranks, after much persuasion, prepared the “Reverie” (Chapter XXIV) comprising some thoughts from a member of the Hospital Corps who was with the organization throughout its service; to the original manuscript a few minor additions have been made and, to avoid duplication, material elsewhere presented has been deleted. “Recollections by an Officer” (Chapter XXIII) has been slightly extended by the addition of a few minor, unimportant details, but is left anonymous at the request of the author who strongly opposed credit which I felt he merited; reluctantly his expressed desire has been respected. Dr. Stone, during the entire period of activities, evinced intense interest in athletics and to his observations and record I am indebted for data upon which Chapter XXII is based.

The chapter dealing with the trip from Brest to Nantes is from the pen of George Allen Smith; to his excellent description only a few minor additions have been made.

Throughout the preparation of the volume I have been under the greatest obligation to Dr. Forst for invaluable assistance in compiling data, revising manuscript and helpful and discriminating criticism. Dr. Hustead, Chairman of a former Committee, Drs. Owen, Burns, Borzell, Gaskill and other officers have most kindly helped by facts contributed and time given generously. For many important data and for necessary statistics relating to “38” I am under deep obligation to Dr. Bertolet for access to his comprehensive report and for personal contact with his knowledge of the men and work concerning which his official positions of Registrar and Detachment Commander brought him accurate, first hand information.

James Reed Clark and Carlyle P. Wright have given valuable aid in preparing illustrations, arranging and preparing legends and in seeing the plate matter through press.

Statistical data, of a general character, given in many places, are official and selected from Colonel Ayers’ well-known publication. Mr. Benedict of the Phototype Engraving Company, has given personal attention to the preparation of illustrations, some of which
are from most unsatisfactory originals, with what I feel may be truly designated as very good results. To the printers, E. A. Wright Company, the organization and particularly the Director, are under great obligation for patient and accurate attention to many details.

Most quotations, blocked on otherwise blank pages, are from publications by the National Council for Reduction of Armaments.

To Mr. Richard T. Dooner we are indebted for the artistic photographs prepared for this volume.

Finally, I may here be permitted to express my personal obligation to all for patiently enduring delays that, unfortunately, have been in considerable measure, beyond my control, for kindnesses, courtesies and generosities innumerable, for fraternal assistance, confidence and amity, prized above all other things, ever stimulating to better endeavor and for which I can offer no return save enduring gratitude.

"To give, a duty; to serve, a privilege; to strive, a pleasure."

W. M. L. C.
## CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I. INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. AMERICAN RED CROSS HOSPITALS—PROBLEMS IN HOSPITALIZATION</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. HOSPITALIZATION IN THE AMERICAN EXPEDITIONARY FORCES—HOSPITAL CENTERS</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. AMERICAN RED CROSS BASE HOSPITAL No. 38—THE JEFFERSON MEDICAL COLLEGE AND HOSPITAL UNIT</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V. KENNETH J. ELLIS—A MEMORIAL POEM</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI. THE DIVISIONS</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VII. MEDICAL DIVISION</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIII. SURGICAL DIVISION</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IX. LABORATORY DIVISION</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X. NURSING DIVISION</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XI. THE SOLDIER’S EYE—OPHTHALMOLOGICAL SERVICE</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XII. THE NEUROPSYCHIATRIC SERVICE—MENTAL CASES</td>
<td>109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XIII. ROENTGENOLOGICAL SERVICE—X-RAY</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XIV. SHOCK TEAM AT THE FRONT</td>
<td>121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XV. DENTAL SERVICE</td>
<td>131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XVI. OUR PADRE</td>
<td>139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XVII. THOUGHTS FROM THE CHAPLAIN’S PEN</td>
<td>141</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XVIII. ENLISTED PERSONNEL</td>
<td>147</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XIX. THE S. S. “NOPATIN”</td>
<td>165</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XX. BREST</td>
<td>175</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XXI. BREST TO NANTES</td>
<td>187</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XXII. ATHLETICS</td>
<td>195</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XXIII. RECOLLECTIONS, BY AN OFFICER</td>
<td>205</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XXIV. A REVERIE, RECOLLECTIONS, INCIDENTS, REFLECTIONS BY AN ENLISTED SOLDIER</td>
<td>219</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XXV. ADIEU—A POEM</td>
<td>231</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XXVI. APPENDIX A—LIST OF OFFICERS, NURSES, CIVILIAN PERSONNEL AND ENLISTED MEN</td>
<td>233</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XXVII. APPENDIX B—CONTRIBUTORS</td>
<td>241</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XXVIII. APPENDIX C—CIVILIAN ORGANIZATION</td>
<td>247</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
BASE HOSPITAL
THIRTY-EIGHT
THE following pages are intended to record some facts relative to the history and service of the American Red Cross Hospital No. 38, organized under the auspices of the A. R. C. and The Jefferson Medical College and Hospital, and, after mobilization, functioning in the United States and in the A. E. F. as U. S. Army Base Hospital No. 38. Incidentally, and as part of the narrative, an attempt is made to introduce the reader to related aspects of hospitalization and to numerous phases of organization and of relief measures, particularly in France and specifically in war; throughout has been constantly borne in mind the thought that, if read at all, it will be by the uninitiated rather than by those familiar with the matters presented.

No pretense is made that the history will be found complete or in detail; that has not been the end or the aim desired. It is hoped that something broader and better has been achieved; that the “motif” is wider in its scope and higher in its purpose, possibly also in the result attained. Constantly there has been borne in mind the exalted vision of the gentle and noble woman to whose memory it has been an inestimable privilege and a cherished honor to dedicate this small tribute. She entertained no illusions concerning the transient or even the so-called enduring glories of war; it was all repulsive to
her; she held in profound contempt much of war's pomp and circumstance and poured on the flames of its horrors the boundless pity and inexhaustible generosity of a great heart. Often the writer talked with her, and knows that her wish would be best fulfilled if some master could put in deathless words the story of this abomination of abominations—war—and could lead mankind to a fuller knowledge of the suffering, devastation, brutalizing influences and the many other harrowing and repulsive qualities of martial strife; she hated it all from the first, and at no time saw glories worth a drop of human blood, or a solitary tear from a mother's heart trembling on a sorrowing cheek; as the days swept on, and as she came closer to the agony of mind and body, that bitter hatred lessened not a jot though the breadth of her sympathy and the inextinguishable fire of her will to do knew no bounds.

If in these pages some glimpse is given of the scenes she knew, if a weak, wavering and inexperienced brush has succeeded in portraying, no matter how feebly, just a little of the vastness that she envisioned, and if any line herein contained awakens in other hearts a desire to labor for enduring peace and for the end of combative strife, then has the volume, to that extent, been not in vain, and to that degree it carries forward the consuming flame that fired the depths of a splendid life devoted to charity in the truest sense, and given in full measure to a cause she held most dear.