ADMINISTRATION OF RELIEF ABROAD

A Series of Occasional Papers

THE AMERICAN RED CROSS IN THE GREAT WAR, 1917-1919

By HENRY P. DAVISON

Edited by DONALD S. HOWARD

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RUSSELL SAGE FOUNDATION

FOREWORD

This pamphlet is the third of a projected series of Occasional Papers, under the editorship of Donald S. Howard, assistant director of the Charity Organization Department, intended to offer those interested in planning or administering relief abroad a digest of pertinent material prepared under auspices other than our own and not readily available. Some of the texts included in this series have never been published, some are out of print; since they are inaccessible to many readers, it has not been felt necessary to designate the exact pages quoted.

Restrictions upon the use of paper in the present emergency make it necessary sharply to limit the length of these Occasional Papers. The material has therefore been cut severely. Except for certain headings and subheadings, and insertions enclosed in brackets, the wording of the text is that of the original author. Only omissions within paragraphs are shown by dots. In order to give a consecutive, though curtailed account, the order of the paragraphs has sometimes been rearranged.

To the Macmillan Company and the American Red Cross the Russell Sage Foundation is deeply grateful for the co-operation which has made this pamphlet possible.

JOANNA C. COLCORD, *Director*
Charity Organization Department

August, 1943

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THE AMERICAN RED CROSS IN THE GREAT WAR[1]
1917–1919

Operations in France

It was not a matter of sentiment alone that brought the War Council [of the American Red Cross], at its very first meeting, to a realization that our duty was to get help to France; on the contrary, it was a clear business proposition to ascertain without a minute's delay just what was needed there first and to start it on its way there as early as possible. We had a sufficiently clear picture of the situation; what we needed was to measure it up, even if only tentatively, in the terms of necessary dollars.

To this end a commission of eighteen men, bent on clearing away a mountain of misery, was dispatched to Europe, and landed in France on the 13th of June, 1917.

The crying need . . . was not only to keep up the morale of the [French] soldier but also to build up and maintain the spirit of the people behind the line, —something which could not alone be accomplished by the first handful of American soldiers that went over to take the assurance to the military authorities that America was in the war. Early, it had been demonstrated that weeks and months must, necessarily, elapse before the American Army could find her place on the battlefield. So it was not mere soldiery that would serve to hearten the French people, but something that would tell them that the soul of America was, and would be, with them in all their multifarious needs, to the depth of her universal strength and the length of her great resources.

From a purely practical viewpoint it was argued that every particle of strength and confidence which America could give to the French people would be a real contribution not only toward relief but toward shortening the war. Furthermore, that all care for her sick and wounded and all relief for her destitute people would tend to reduce the number of killed and wounded among Americans in France. So, from the utilitarian as well as from the humanitarian side, the work of the Red Cross in France, in those early days, was altogether worth while.

With the American passion for reducing every project to a business formula,

[1] Excerpts from The American Red Cross in the Great War, by Henry P. Davison. The Macmillan Company, New York, 1919. 303 pp. Reprinted by permission of The Macmillan Company and of the American Red Cross, the present holder of the copyright.

During the period of which he wrote Mr. Davison was chairman of the War Council of the American Red Cross.

the Commission built in advance on the old Red Cross basis of military and civilian relief, thinking that the work would readily divide and subdivide itself under these heads for purposes of organization and development; but its calculation went for naught. What it did was to begin relief first and work out the organization afterward.

It took counsel with the men who were controlling the soldiery of France. General Pétain went down the lines and put it up to his *poilus:* "What is wanted more — care for yourselves or your families?" To a man, they answered: "Forget us — look after our families."

Care of Children. When, on July 16, word came by cable of the immediate need of doctors and nurses, especially those expert in the treatment of children's diseases, the War Council engaged at once the foremost pediatrist of the country who, with a staff of child specialists and a corps of nurses, took ship for the other side where he and others established a most extraordinary series of homes.

France, with her decline in birth rate, representing a huge net annual loss, with her sacrifice in war, with the future all black before her, could not neglect any means of saving life if she was to remain a nation and enjoy the freedom she had worked for so valiantly.

It was the effort of the Red Cross to still the cries of the children that went straight to the heart of France. If all the rest had been beyond our power, this one thing would have won for us undying gratitude. For France, the saving of the children meant their future and their world.

I do not believe America has yet any conception of the magnitude of the child problem that existed in France. . . . There was the awful accumulation of refugee children from all the departments of the north and from Belgium and the shifting fortunes of war. . . . This was the greater company, the orphaned and the destitute, those whose fathers were dead or at the front, whose mothers were gone, and who had none to care for them.

Added to all these was the army of repatriated children — including a host from Belgium — who, like the adults who came over the border, were suffering from the varied ills of malnutrition, if from nothing worse. That was not the whole story. Even the health of the children who had homes was running down. Epidemics of local character could not be checked. The average of doctors in America is one to 500 people; in France, where the call for nurses and physicians at the front had been incessant for three years, the ratio in 1917 was one to several thousand. That should tell its own story to people who have children of their own. The necessary lack of care and the scarcity of proper food made easy the progress of disease.

To accomplish results, the Red Cross had to provide suitable places for operation and get the children together to examine and sort out the tuberculous and contagious cases, to provide nurses, labor, and medical supplies,

dentists and attendants and artisans to make requisite repairs at a time and in a land where every man who could carry a rifle was needed at the front. What all of this child army needed first was to get clean and to be fed, for the vast majority of them were hungry, and food of any kind was not plentiful, — much less the kind of food they needed. In the devastated regions, the Germans left nothing! They had destroyed even stoves and water systems, so that in the districts back of portions of the lines the first desiderata of sanitary or medical activity were lacking.

Once having set out on children's relief, there was no turning back. More doctors and more nurses, more teachers and welfare workers kept coming from America. The Red Cross saw the necessity for help in some of the French schools, so work was begun in them. "Unless we can start a canteen up here," wrote the doctor who conducted the children's clinic, "in the Nineteenth *arrondissement* of Paris and give these children some food, this children's work is not going to get anywhere, because what these children need is nourishment and I can't do much till I can put something in their stomachs."

The school luncheons had been cut down, but the Red Cross dietitians figured out the calories in what was left and found that there was need for wheat and sugar, so they built a Red Cross cake and added it to the ration.

Rapidly the child welfare problem grew into one of the most extensive branches of Red Cross work. Health centers were opened in two munition districts just outside Paris, with welfare workers, Red Cross doctors, clinics, and visiting nurses who reached within a very short time three hundred families. It was very sorely needed. The population of the district had increased greatly; two hundred munition factories had risen like mushrooms overnight, with 110 new buildings erected for the workmen to live in. The congestion was terrible and the spread of disease likewise menacing when the Red Cross came to the rescue.

There was so much tuberculosis among the children, that child welfare was combined with the tuberculosis service, and children's wards were established in all the tuberculosis hospitals. In high, healthy country districts, the Director had farm schools established where weak children could be built up and taught to make things grow. The cardinal test of any project was what it promised for the future of the children and of France. Boys were taught trades and girls were taught sewing; and among the denizens of the poorer quarters were promulgated the magic of the toothbrush and the rules of health — for which dentists came overseas with all their tools.

Provision for Refugees. So they began with the children, — the most pitiful as well as the most numerous refugees, — and at Toul established a refuge for them, one of many that has been set up between that day and this. Toward the end of 1917, there were at Nesle a thousand little broken down Belgian

children under treatment, while preparations were being made for taking in other thousands to be cleaned and braced up and placed somewhere in comfortable homes. From this, the natural advance was to the refugees of larger growth. Work was started in Paris, where the congestion was most acute, and carried out into other cities and towns of the devastated departments.

For the refugees, as for everybody else, the work was done in co-operation with the French Government, which had a system of its own with which it had been trying vainly to stem the tide. It consisted of a Department Committee in Paris, theoretically with a member from each of the eighty odd departments, but actually with only two or three represented, who passed on the applications for relief and the identification papers of the applicants. The Government turned over the task to the American Red Cross, which enlarged the organization so that each of the invaded districts, whose outcasts thronged the rest of the country, had a committee at work. But at best it was hopeless to endeavor to meet such a problem. . . . There were only phantom meals to give away, the supply of clothing was not a fraction of what was needed — for these people had been practically blasted out of their homes and had hurried to the highway with German shells bursting behind them. With distress and tragedy written in their faces and their souls, they headed for the centers with the love that misery has for company, and Paris was the Mecca of the great pilgrimage. The result was inevitable. There were families of six, seven, and eight herded in one room, and thousands that had no roof over them at all save as the chance of a night might offer. By converting great public buildings and unused structures of every sort into "apartment houses," by supplying stoves and furniture and other requisites, the American Red Cross set out to move twenty-five thousand families into comfortable quarters before the advent of cold weather.

In handling this multitude of the homeless the Red Cross did not have normal people to deal with. The adults, like the children, were worn to the bone by their vicissitudes, broken in strength, in nerves, and almost in hope. A great part of them were ill, some shattered in mind, while the tubercular were an army in themselves. It was not alone the misery of these last that called for abatement: it was the menace they presented to the future of France. The Red Cross took over, by courtesy of the French Government, and also in some instances from private organizations, already established hospitals which, for lack of funds or of forces, were unable to maintain maximum operation; it completed half-finished buildings, refurnished abandoned barracks, papered, painted, and put in glass solaria and partitions to make private rooms for those victims who were near the end of the struggle; it singled out from the battalions of the homeless and exhausted many upon whom the "white death" had set its mark, and even those whose physical depletion might render them easy victims; it established for such, both old and

young, preventoria, where by careful treatment and nourishment the doom might be turned aside.

Taking the cue from the French Government, whose efforts had all been directed toward the return of the refugees to their provinces, so far as the conditions might permit, and availing itself of the consuming love of home which is ingrown in the nature of the French race, the Red Cross combined its efforts for the care of the refugees with a broad and carefully evolved plan to start them on the way to self-maintenance. To this coherent purpose it added provision for the maintenance of health and sanitation, and the instruction of its new wards in the ways of hygienic living.

The refugees from the farming country were keenest of all to go back to the home acres. And the French committees, by way of stimulating this tendency, withdrew a moiety of their assistance and promised to refund, after the War, whatever the land tillers would expend for their own rehabilitation. So the stream began to move northward into the territory the Germans had left. On ahead of them, at their side and behind them, moved the columns of the Red Cross, ready with food, with lumber, and other materials for reconstruction, with seeds and tools for the restoration of the land, with labor provided by a co-operative union with the English and American societies of Friends, who had done heroic work from the beginning of the War.[1] There are long records in the Red Cross archives in France showing in detail what roof was replaced upon this farmer's barn, what glass put in the windows of another's farmstead, and endless other repairs to fit the places for human habitation and rural industry. There was an amazing shipment of pumps, for it is well to remember that what the German apostle of Kultur could not carry away he smashed and what he could not smash he fouled.

Like homing birds, these French farmers settled down among the ruins to resume the tenor of their placid lives. The like of it could not happen elsewhere in the world! The Red Cross was with them, ready to lend a hand at anything they needed; it showed them short cuts in agriculture and rebuilding; it taught the lessons of modern sanitation. It established dispensaries, with doctors and nurses and facilities for transit, and the sections mapped off with medical routes after the fashion of Rural Free Delivery.

In September, 1917, . . . there were 275,000 Belgian refugees in France.

Of the 90,000 people still clinging to this target [free Belgium — the 500 or less square miles which still remained free from invasion] that they called home, more than 10,000 were children, and from this district the Belgian government, circumscribed as it was, had already taken away six thousand imperiled children and placed them in homes in Switzerland and France, viz., in Paris and in the *Colonies Scolaires* north of Paris, and others in the

[1] This work of the American Friends is described in Rufus Jones's A Service of Love in War Time. A condensation of this report constitutes one of the Occasional Papers on the Administration of Relief Abroad, published by the Russell Sage Foundation.

departments along the coast of the English Channel. At this time, however, burdened as they were with a multiplicity of problems, they had come to the vanishing point of their resources; so they asked if the American Red Cross would not help to remove and furnish shelter for some six hundred more who were in the area of greater danger.[1]

These toddlers had seen their mothers, fathers, brothers, and sisters blotted from the earth beside them in a whirl of sand and not gone mad. They were the soul of Belgium!

The refugee problem was distributed over a large area. But in it all the work was simplified, first by the keen organizing sense and the intense devotion of the leading people, both men and women, among the Belgians, and second by the habitual industry of the working folk. It was speedily found that a great number of these were nearly or almost self-supporting. . . . The Flemish refugees from Belgium in the year 1917 tilled 60,000 acres of land in France, and helped to feed the Belgian Army at the front. The Red Cross and the Belgian organizations made systematic effort to place the refugees; and lace makers, jewelers, machinists, and men and women proficient in many lines were soon permanently and profitably established. . . . The French government, likewise, with all the multitudinous loads of its own to carry, was giving to a great many of these Belgian wanderers a small allocation or allowance to guard them against want.

In Havre, — where the population had increased by sixty thousand and never a new house had been built, — the situation was most acute. Here the Red Cross and the Belgians took over and equipped a group of vacant barracks and also leased a number of apartment houses, thus providing shelter for several hundred families. With the *Famille Belge* the Red Cross organized a chain of co-operative stores, such as are in vogue in Belgium, and cut down the high cost of living to the refugee families.

To assist in maintaining the health of the Havre colony a 250-bed hospital was presented to it, which was managed by the Minister of the Interior and included in its personnel the Red Cross staff of doctors and nurses. Health centers were established at Havre and Rouen with infant clinics and *pouponnières* for the care of abandoned babies. The operation of these shelters was taken in charge by a group of prominent Belgian women.

To relieve the situation in Havre the Red Cross gave $600,000 for the construction of a village of temporary cottages. The site was prepared by the Albert Fund, with paved streets, water supply, and electric lights. Each of the hundred cottages soon boasted a laundry-shed at the rear and a garden neatly fenced in. There were two schoolhouses with Belgian teachers, a church with a Belgian priest, and the inevitable co-operative store, without

[1] Editor's note: For further details about these children's colonies, see Chapter VI of Ernest P. Bicknell's With the Red Cross in Europe, 1917–1922. The American National Red Cross, Washington, D.C., 1938.

which the Belgian would not feel at home even in Brussels. There was also a town-hall for meetings and administration use. The rents were nominal. As a matter of fact the whole project was characteristically Belgian.[1]

Aid to Repatriates from Germany. Someone has called Evian les Bains the "Gateway of a Hundred Sorrows." It was here, as the war wore on and the food supply began to dwindle, that Germany, balancing up her efficiency schedules, turned back into hungry France the sorry army of French and Belgian civilians who had been taken from the devastated country in the north in the first onrush of 1914, and since held in bondage. In the summer of 1917, this wretched jetsam of the German war was herded over the frontier at the rate of a thousand or more a day. Daily, for a long time, two trains, morning and night, rolled in from the German border.

From forty to sixty per cent of these cast-offs were children, by far the greater part of them under twelve years of age. A great number were dying from tuberculosis, many far advanced; but all were unutterably dirty, half clad, worn to emaciation with sorrow and hunger and slavery. They were moribund. Germany could wring no more unpaid labor from them. They had given to the uttermost pfennig's worth. The people beyond the Rhine picked out those who seemed past hope and sent them to France to be cared for. They were a multitude,—and these children were not riffraff. Many of them had known luxury and the tenderest care.

It was all one wretched, miserable story after another; and yet, from the gray monotony of it, two cases seem to stand out in the memory of those who saw them for the reason that they proclaim more clearly than others, perhaps, two salient phases of German brutality: one was a wisp of a girl, just turned fourteen, who bore in her arms a year old [German] . . . baby; and the second, only a little older and marked with tuberculosis, had for three years worked twelve hours a day in a German coal mine.

[1] Editor's note: Of this same housing project, Ernest P. Bicknell has written:

"In Le Havre, where families of from four to eight persons occupied a single room, the [ARC] Commission for Belgium, following the survey by Dr. Park [Edward Park of Johns Hopkins Medical School] and Miss Wilcox [nurse] undertook a building project which is not without interest. A tract of land, agreeably situated on a hill in the outskirts of the city was taken. . . . This village consisted of one hundred cottages, each of three or four rooms.

"The population of the village consisted of families selected from the worst quarters of the city, but no family which had less than four children was granted a cottage in the village. The cottages were rented fully furnished for thirty francs (six dollars) per month. If any occupant of the village could not pay the rent, the payment was made from some charitable source, but no cottage was given gratuitously. The income from the rent of the one hundred cottages was supposed to meet all the expenses of keeping up the streets, attending to the plumbing, lighting, cleaning and repairs.

"It was planned that the village was to be a transplanted bit of Belgium. Not only were the people to be Belgian, but the schools Belgian, taught by Belgian teachers. A Belgian priest was to look after the moral welfare of the people and Belgians were to have charge of the administration. When the war ended the cottages which were all of the demountable type, were to be taken down and shipped into Belgium there to be set up again in some of the destroyed towns of that unhappy country." —*Ibid.*, pp. 86–87.

When the train wound its way up the grades into the famous old watering place there was a band playing the Marseillaise, and the French and Belgian flags were waving. There was the Mayor and half the town crying welcome to them — welcome back to France — and still they did not smile. French and American stretcher-bearers boarded the trains to take out those that were too crippled or too weak to help themselves, and there were Red Cross ambulances there to carry these helpless ones away to the old Casino, which had been converted into a hospital. There were these heartbreaking processions every day, at morning and evening, hundreds of children and aged people at a time, ambling on toward rest and kindly care, with faces haggard and drawn but singing out of numb hearts their homeland songs; and men and women with hearts torn at the picture, stood in crowds by the wayside with tears raining down their faces at the misery and the glory of it, and were not ashamed.

Mothers and children met there who had been lost to each other ever since the Germans surged over Belgium. . . . There were children who came to Evian, marked for death in a thousand ways, but who, through the ministrations of mercy there, will go singing their way on to the end of their poor little blasted lives.

By January 1st, over fifty thousand . . . people had passed through the little station, and Evian had become not only a tragedy but a real menace to the health and future of France.

The plaintive picture of these broken people at Evian does not at first blush suggest anything of military value; they could not operate artillery or machine guns nor charge trenches, but there were deadly injuries which, properly utilized, they might inflict upon their own country. Germany figured that the unloading of these people on France would make a serious draft upon physicians and nurses, money, hospital supplies, clothing, and transportation. In all of these France was seriously reduced. [Finally,] . . . the more serious purpose, was to undermine for all future time the strength of France by weakening her child population and distributing throughout her borders the carriers of disease.

France could not know the extent of Germany's supply of this deadly ammunition. . . . There was no means of estimating how many had died, how many remained to be used as an instrument against the welfare of France. And the reserve forces for meeting it at this time were in the worst possible condition.

The French Government, the Comité de Service des Rapatriés d'Evian de Thonon d'Annemasse, and the Comité de Secours aux Rapatriés de Lyons had worked out a system of caring for the repatriates, which was prosecuted with what vigor and thoroughness was possible. A physician boarded each convoy train at St. Jingolph, on the Swiss border, to single out such of the

company as were too ill to be taken from the station to the Casino. Upon the arrival of the train these were removed at once to the hospital, those badly exhausted to the rest-house, and the remainder were taken either on foot or in ambulances to the Casino. The first effort at Evian was to restore the repatriates to a mental state which would facilitate the work of their handling and distribution. After being fed and cheered up, they were arranged in the great hall in alphabetical groups, and full personal details taken. An elaborate system of card indexes was established for the purpose of fixing the identity of each man, woman, and child, residence, remaining family, so far as known, and their whereabouts.

Telegraphic inquiries were instituted to ascertain if the repatriate had friends or relatives remaining to whom he could be sent. If there were none, he was forwarded to some *préfecture* in the center, west, southwest, or southeast, to be located permanently by the *préfet*. Houses vacated by the war were used for this purpose, as well as for housing of refugees, the government making an allowance for maintenance. A system of colored tags such as is used in America for immigrants, was employed to facilitate distribution. Only in some such way could these swarms be handled. The sick were housed according to the nature of their illness, and on recovery the children whose friends could not be found were sent to institutions, chiefly those near Lyons. Old persons, not claimed, were dispatched to formations created by the Ministry of the Interior.

It was obvious, however, that with the continuance of these deliveries, the facilities for their disposal would soon be overtaxed, and the repatriates would become what Germany had intended — an unbearable burden and a menace both to France and to our Army.

So the Red Cross set about assisting the French in the development of further hospital facilities and transportation for patients, and the provision of dispensary service at the Evian Casino, so that every repatriate could receive prompt medical inspection and care; also, of the establishment of convalescent hospitals for those recovering after treatment. A large hotel was converted into a hospital, and then the beautiful Château des Halles was taken over from the city of Lyons, to which it had been given by its owner for use as a children's convalescent hospital.

The dispatch of the tuberculous was attended with some difficulty but was soon satisfactorily adjusted. Meantime, largely through the aid of the Lyons' committees, the expansion of the convalescent system was continued. The people of Evian objected to any permanent hospitals in their neighborhood, particularly for the tuberculous. Evian was, and remained, a clearing house in which the whole solution of the repatriate problem of France had its center.

With the advent of the Red Cross forces came a great increase in the speed

and efficacy of the work at Evian. The medical service was combined with social welfare work, and repatriate mothers, who awaited children under treatment, were organized into a working force. What impressed the French was not alone the rapidity and thoroughness of the American staff in handling their cases, which quickly ran into thousands, but the range of their efforts. When a sick repatriate child went out of Evian, he had not only been far advanced toward cure of his ailment, but every physical tendency had been charted, his teeth fixed up, his dietary and exercise prescribed, and his mother instructed in the essentials of hygiene and sanitation and provided with a manual of simple instruction. The new and, obviously, vital factor in all this work, as shown in the French Committee's report, was the tact and sympathy of the American workers, from the doctors down, but the system was severely thorough. At the request of the French authorities, parents were permitted to visit children in isolation hospitals, but they were supplied with caps and gowns, and were compelled to wash their hands and faces in antiseptic solutions before leaving.

If there be any doubt concerning the contribution that the American people has made through its commission to the Red Cross, Evian with its correlated hospitals and rest places, its competent medical work and its correlated demonstration of the value of hygienic methods among the French working people, would be sufficient to dispel it.

Among the many hospitals and refuges which were established all over France to receive this wreckage, there are several in the vicinity of Lyons. . . . Lyons is a child town; and the Red Cross, with a broad idea of starting in France a general movement for child hygiene, selected it for the scene of its first child welfare exhibits. . . . In the week that it was in progress more than 100,000 persons between eight in the morning and ten at night crowded into the hall. There is no doubt it was an American show; but by the same token it had at its opening session twelve hundred doctors, lawyers, government officials, founders of hospitals, and the best citizens of Lyons. For the first time in the memory of man there sat on the same platform the Cardinal Archbishop of Lyons, the Préfet of the Rhone, the Military Governor, and the Mayor of the town. Neither Church nor State could shut its eyes to the patent fact that here was the path to the salvation of France. And it was a great show! It was a veritable field day for the toothbrush, and an American dentist operated while his assistant preached the gospel of dentifrice.

Medical Care Behind the Line. All up and down the districts established behind the lines, away to the valleys and sloping mountains of the Vosges, the Red Cross set up dispensaries to do the work of the village doctors who had gone away to war. There was scarcely a community in France that had not suffered in health, and for the good of all concerned, particularly of the American Army that was to come, it was imperative they should have the

ounce of prevention. In fair and foul weather these American doctors and their assistants traveled the roads of France, visiting the villages and holding office hours in some public building or going from house to house where more serious sickness existed. There were maladies of all sorts, and in some cases incipient epidemics.

Co-operation with Other Agencies. Numberless little charities, organized by nuns or by kindly women who were heartsick at the spectacle of so much misery, were trying in the cities to do something to stem the tide. To these, the Red Cross made haste to lend aid. . . . These charities were chiefly in the cities. But along the highways and in the little towns there was great need and no ray of hope.

[In Havre, where many refugees had crowded in, particularly those from occupied Belgium,] it was the aim of the Red Cross in all its work of relief to co-ordinate by means of needed assistance, monetary or otherwise, all the scattered agencies and enterprises that were trying to cope with the situation, organizing them all into sections under the direction of a government official. There was a host of them, too, for clothing, for layettes, for the families of Belgian soldiers, for emergency relief, for mothers and children, for housing, for hospital service, and for tuberculosis. By means of monthly conferences with delegates from each section, however, all the work was correlated and widely extended, and co-operation was maintained through a system of weekly inspection with all governmental and private agencies of relief, both French and Belgian.

It was providential that there already existed in France so many relief organizations whose members were familiar with the field and its difficulties. With each of these, when possible, the Red Cross promptly struck partnership in the common cause; and lacking at first personnel sufficient to handle the mass of detail, that so vast a problem presented, it shared in the burden of their work. By November, 1917, it was financing and assisting seventy-five of them.

The Collection and Distribution of Supplies. Early in 1917 the Red Cross sent representatives to find out by personal investigation what surgeons and nurses in army hospitals wanted in the way of hospital supplies; and what size sheet was best for the regulation bed; also what length nightshirt fitted the regulation patient, and what form of surgical dressings came most readily to hand in the operating room. They also went from station to station behind the lines to learn what kind of clothes refugees liked best to wear. Their findings, coded and crystallized in exact directions and patterns, were later in every Red Cross workroom. Number 453 became precisely the same thing in Evian and Palestine and Akron, Ohio. Every American worker knew that the awkward, [unbelievably] . . . ugly garment she fashioned would be beautiful in the eyes of some refugee, a familiar link with the past,

a tiny balance wheel in a life wrenched from its moorings and adrift in the backwash of war.

The lack of everything was so intense, the Atlantic so wide, the ships so few compared with the huge load there was to carry of munitions and inter-Allied supplies, of advance materials for the housing of our Armies and the building of the transportation system, that the Red Cross Commission accordingly found it wiser to buy in France, Spain, and England the many thousand-and-one commodities that were instantly required, than to wait for the long process of purchase and shipment from the United States. It was supplying the French Army with hospital appliances and drugs; to the refugees it was furnishing caps and pinafores and other articles of children's wear; to the societies in the devastated region went clothing, implements, and even animals; and to the organizations in Paris the multitude of indispensable things for making homes. Buying in advance of requirements the Red Cross enumerated on its sheets 470 standardized classes of articles, many of them with numberless sub-classifications.

Woolen caps, mittens, coats and capes, scarfs, condensed milk, jam, sugared cocoa, meat juice, cheese.

Tapioca, lemons, checkers, backgammon, croquet, playing cards, face towels, kitchen towels, bedside tables, bedcovers, armchairs, chaise longues, bowls, candles, candlesticks, undervests, woolen socks, house slippers, woolen pajamas, phonograph records.

Books (Dumas, Verne, Hugo, Daudet, Mérimée, Loti, Anatole France).

Galoshes, blouses, underskirts, stockings, sabots, finger bandages, beans, hams, sugar, canned meats, wool, posters, roller toweling, serum, drugs, folding beds.

Blankets, pillows, sheets, wardrobes, stock pots, saucepans, enamel saucepans, small dishes, basins, roasting pans, children's blankets, eider-downs, straw mattresses, dust cloths, tea cloths.

Earthenware, hot water bottles, wash-basins, sterilizers for milk, sheeting, bath toweling, flannelette, calico, white flannelette, apron print, gray wool for stockings, flannel.

Soup ladles, tablespoons, butcher knives, peeling knives, kitchen knives, chopping knives, large coffee pot, roasting pans, graters, flat pans, serving pans, black sateen.

Girls' drawers, stockings, handkerchiefs, shoes, stove to cook for sixty persons. Assorted boxes [of] clothing, nightgowns, shirts, part wool, long drawers, girls' bloomers, boys' pants, shirts, girls' dresses, woolen sweaters.

A diversified business, such as this fragmentary list indicates, called for sheltering places. Facilities for handling and shipment were imperative, and there was always the bogie of future growth in volume, which it was now clear would be swift and enormous. The warehouse of the American Relief Clearing House was soon outgrown, even for existing business. Three more of much larger capacity were at once secured with railroad connection, and the Red Cross cleaned up and installed modern equipment. One establishment was leased, cleaned, altered, and ready for business in forty-eight hours

despite the fact that labor was the scarcest thing in Paris. The Red Cross employed soldiers on leave: French, red-fezzed Moroccans, and Indo-Chinese; with them as laborers a system of transportation was built up of light and heavy trucks which balked at no burden of traffic to any part of France.

But to return to the [wide range and variety of needed] items. . . . There is purpose and use for them all. In the distance that you travel between adding-machines and yolk-powder you can see the whole panorama of war and of the people whom it has made forlorn. . . . An entry of "ambulances and automobiles" brings into view with photographic clearness the ancient French and Italian highways, cluttered with the impedimenta of war and scarred with the ruin which the Germans left behind them. The long list of "agricultural supplies," formerly itemized under "farm-machinery, tractors, farm-tools, seeds, and fertilizers," reveals the French peasant — sturdy women, men broken on war's pitiless wheel — trying with new American methods to restore the lost food production of France, or the unbending Serbian working out his own victualing problem again on the rich acres that the Austrians could not hold.

In planning its work for the territory back of the lines, the Red Cross had a . . . perplexing problem. . . . Any day some change in conditions along those northern sectors, held jointly by English, French, and Belgian troops, might send a final stream of refugees rolling down into France, calling for shelter and for instant supplies of food and clothing; or, a German retreat might release new areas whose inhabitants wretched after long periods of German rule would create an even more stringent condition. There would be a great and instant tax on the Army supplies, the Red Cross stores and the foodstuffs gathered for the remaining occupants of free Belgium. With an impossible condition of transportation and a paucity of food to begin with, it was plain that any diversion in the Belgian sector of the front would make trouble, and failure to meet it would be fatal.

It was here perhaps that the Red Cross performed its most important task in the Belgian field, although the crisis which it was devised to meet never arrived. In the fall of 1917, twenty barrack-houses, each twenty by one hundred feet, were contracted for. . . . Nine of them were first erected by Army labor on sites convenient to railway lines, highways, and canals, in order to provide prompt distribution. Arrangements were made with the Friends' Ambulance Unit and the British Red Cross for the use of their trucks in case of need. In addition, Paris Red Cross Headquarters agreed to place from twenty-five to fifty loaded cars in the Belgian region on demand, within twenty-four hours. Canal boats were placed under charter, in order to make use of the network of canals running all through the districts. With these provisions made, the Red Cross Commission set about the purchase of $2,000,000 worth of emergency supplies, such as food, clothing, blankets, to

supplement the great stocks in the Red Cross warehouses in Paris, which could be drawn upon at short notice.

An idea of the nature of the food supplies laid up in these warehouses against the day of need may be got from this list of goods shipped in for the first of the buildings that was completed: 500 cases condensed milk; 310 sacks of rice (50 kilos); 40 sacks of rice (100 kilos); 7 sacks of macaroni (100 kilos); 60 sacks of dried peas (100 kilos); 190 sacks of lentils (100 kilos); 914 cases of salmon (50 lb. to case); 913 cases of corned beef (50 lb. to case); 120 sacks white beans (100 kilos); and 600 boxes biscuits (4½ lb. each).

All this was simply a gamble on the chances of war, an insurance against the horrible possibilities which the lack of these supplies might cause. What happened in Italy, what happened in Belgium itself at the beginning of the war might easily be repeated, and in the depleted condition of the country after four years of war the possibilities were awful to contemplate.

"The danger from the beginning has been recognized," observed the Red Cross Commissioner at that time, "and we have resolved to take no chances. We prefer to lose part of our goods rather than to be caught napping. . . . A high officer of the British Army told me that he had been in command of troops which took possession of a sector of French territory, and that if his soldiers had not been double-rationed the civilians would have starved to death before any help could have reached them. The world will never forgive," he emphasized, "the American Red Cross if it does not run the risk of losing some property for the sake of saving lives."

Operations in Italy

The Red Cross men appeared [in Italy] as the first visible evidence of the sincerity of America's pledge that she would devote every man and every resource to winning the war. German propaganda had been extremely active in Italy; one of its endeavors had been to discredit America's sincerity by the assertion that the United States was growing rich out of the war, that she was willing to prolong it by supplying the Allies with money and munitions but that she would never send her men. The men and women of the American Red Cross in Italy served as living refutations of that German lie; moreover, it soon became known to the Italians that these men and women were not merely the advance guard but that they had come to Italy as volunteers, leaving behind homes and positions in order to share the lot of the Italians and side by side work with them in the great common cause.

Services to Refugees. The immediate problem to be dealt with was the feeding and housing of the hundreds of thousands of refugees from the invaded districts. Few nations in modern history have been called upon to face a more serious problem than that with which Italy was confronted: from the two northernmost provinces the civilian population had come in a great flood

that overflowed the roads and swept on over the fields toward the south. . . . Women trudged along with children in their arms; the bedridden were carried in wheelbarrows and on stretchers. Fleeing civilians were inextricably mixed in with the retreating soldiery: abandoned guns, trucks, ammunition wagons, ambulances, and automobiles clogged the roads. Daughters were separated from mothers; little children were swept away from their parents — some of them to be united months later in American Red Cross homes, others never to be together again. Women trudging along barefoot in night-dresses; many walked until they fell, weak with hunger. In the midst of this great military disaster and the future of the Kingdom at stake, Italy, already suffering from privations, with every resource strained for the transportation of fresh supplies of munitions to her troops, was thus called upon to transport a civilian army of half a million or more souls, to find new homes for them, to feed them immediately, and to supply them with clothing and food for their journeys to other already burdened localities.

The way in which [Italy] . . . met the problem and solved it won the admiration of every American in the Red Cross who saw the conditions at close range. The American Red Cross co-operated with the Italian authorities and Italian Relief Societies, bringing carloads of foodstuffs and clothing from our storehouses in France, buying other necessaries in the open market, distributing food to the refugees in trains who journeyed often for days, establishing homes and, as the destitute homeless women reached the destinations assigned to them, providing work for them that would occupy their time and afford a small remuneration. Asylums were opened for the children where these war ophans could be taught, fed, and clothed. Soup kitchens were inaugurated to give simple, sustaining food to those who, still laboring under the influence of that nightmare of panic-stricken flight, were trying to adjust themselves to their new environment.

When the permanent Red Cross Commission arrived . . . they took up the work begun by the Emergency Commission, extending it until it had reached all parts of Italy.

Multiform as were the activities and urgent as was the need for haste, — for with the enemy threatening always in the north not a moment was to be lost — a clear, consistent purpose ran through it all. Everything that was done became the expression of the spirit of the American people in their consecration to the common cause for which Italy had suffered. To Italians, whose deep love for their children is a national characteristic, the American Red Cross became in a very real sense the great mother. Many thousands of children whose fathers were fighting for liberty were taken under the shelter of the American Red Cross schools, homes, and day nurseries. Nearly all of these children were suffering from undernourishment, the slow starvation that renders the young an easy prey to disease. They were supplied with milk

and wholesome food from America. Some of the older girls were taught lace making; the boys were taught the rudiments of carpentry and shoemaking. To mothers, whose husbands or sons were soldiers, the opportunity was afforded to supplement their meager pensions by work in shops where garments were made out of cloth from America, and these garments, together with the contents of the Chapter boxes that came in great quantities from the United States, were used to clothe the children of the soldiers at the front.

Those whom war had deprived of their natural means of support were enabled to become self-supporting by work that went toward the winning of the war, and the spirit on the part of Americans and Italians engaged in the work was the spirit of co-operation, of mutual helpfulness, of sympathetic understanding, and of fraternal friendship. Without the effective, complete, and cordial co-operation of the Italians, indeed, the work could not have achieved the measure of success which it did.

The result of this widespread activity became evident very quickly in the changed spirit of the troops.

In all more than 300,000 families were aided in this way in the short space of a month; and from these 300,000 families word went at once to their men at the front that America was actually and actively in the war, for they had seen with their own eyes and had received with their own hands the pledge of America's faith.

Aid to Repatriated Prisoners of War. With the signing of the armistice following upon Austria's utter defeat there was thrust upon Italy a new problem of large proportions — the problem of feeding, clothing, and transporting Italian prisoners of war released by the cessation of hostilities. Austria — anxious to be freed of the burden of their care — turned these men loose without direction, without system, and without preliminary arrangements. They came from prison camps by tens of thousands, making their way south, as best they could, on trains as far as the trains would go, then on foot by road and field and mountain pass, a hungry, half-clad, ragged army, weak from long confinement and insufficient food. Over the Alps and down upon Trieste at the head of the Adriatic and upon the devastated, suffering redeemed districts they poured, straggling into the cities and towns.

As fortune would have it . . . a Red Cross "rolling kitchen" with two Americans had followed the troops from the Piave far to the east, and in the first hours of the armistice pushed on through the Austrian lines, and skirting the sea, reached Trieste overland with a stock sufficient for, perhaps, 2,000 rations of soup. These men at once took up their station in the . . . camp [of returned Italian prisoners], and while one of them served the soup the other got on board a torpedo boat and went to Venice for more Red Cross supplies. Our Venice representative with a deputy commissioner from Rome arrived in Trieste the same day and made arrangements immediately to co-operate

with the military authorities. From that time on until the men were reformed and disposed of — a period of about one month — the Red Cross, working always with the approbation of the Italian authorities and aided for a time by a committee of Trieste ladies, relieved the situation. By camion overland and by sea provisions were sent from our warehouse; other provisions were brought by the British Red Cross. Clothing was brought and the army of the repatriated, crowded, sick, and hungry, in that provisional concentration camp by the sea, began to emerge from its long nightmare of Austrian prison camps and to experience once more the joy of liberty and life among people of their own nation and its allies who, in spite of the urgent need among themselves, had the spirit and willingness to provide for these soldier sons of Italy who had come back home again in the hour of victory.

General Relief Program. While attention was centered on the territories liberated by the victorious armies and while effort was concentrated there, the work went on throughout all Italy of caring for the women and children who were sufferers from the war. New activities were added. One entire new department began its work during this period: the Department of Tuberculosis, consisting of experts sent from America by the Red Cross to co-operate with the Italians in combating the ravages of the disease which, through conditions attributable directly to the war, has become of even greater menace.

The cessation of hostilities brought about a change in Italy, as elsewhere in Red Cross work. . . . Wherever possible and advisable the activities of the Red Cross were turned over to the Italian authorities and to duly constituted Italian societies — a process made easy of fulfillment by reason of the close association in the work between Italians and Americans; moreover, nearly all of the children's institutions established by the Red Cross were being carried on by Italians, as wherever it was necessary, provision was made for these institutions during the period of adjustment. . . . Even though our personnel are to-day no longer on the ground mingling with those who had come to be their friends, nevertheless the spirit of the work is going on, providing a lasting bond between our two countries.

Operations in the Balkans[1]

Rumania. When in 1917 the American Red Cross went into Rumania, its army was holding with grim tenacity the Moldavia boundaries, but machine guns could not block the progress of the invisible legions of disease. Every condition in the overcrowded, underfed remnant of Rumania, that still was free, was a standing invitation to this most deadly of the forces of war. At first came pneumonia, then typhus with a toll alone of 1,000 lives, which was followed by recurrent fever and smallpox, all traveling with fatal swiftness

[1] Editor's note: Further details about American Red Cross operations in the Balkans are presented in Ernest P. Bicknell's book referred to previously. See especially Chapters XIV through XIX.

through the crowded thoroughfares of Jassy and other towns, and along the country roads where the little villages joined one another. The uncomplaining, half-clad refugees, huddled like animals in their dugouts, struggled to keep the cold from pinching their lives out. They were consumed by vermin, the chief and efficient distributors of pestilence. In these wretched retreats the dead lay with the living, and hunger, the last executioner, waited at the doorway for such as might by miracle escape. There were two feet of ice and snow through that awful winter, and children, whose covering consisted only of a single cotton garment, went up and down crying for food until the clutch of the cold at last strangled their crying and put an end to their hunger. The dead were everywhere in the Jassy streets; in the wards of civil hospitals patients were frozen to death. This was the price the Rumanian people paid for casting their strength into a cause that seemed to promise a united nation, living its simple life with work in a place of freedom.

The people in the villages back of the lines had no shoes and no stockings; the refugees slept in the fields, exposed to the pitiless winds.

There was little left to sustain life nor medical care to sustain what there was of it, for the doctors were in the army or had succumbed to disease. A fortunate hamlet here and there had bread twice a week, while others had none at all. There were people in these miserable districts who subsisted like the beasts, by gnawing the grass and roots of the fields.

In Beltiu, a village in the district of Putna, our Red Cross visitors reported the most gruesome conditions. They found in one house three children whose father was at the front and the mother had died from typhus. A girl of ten was trying to care for the other two, one of whom lay on the floor dying of starvation. The third had only a ragged shirt which partly covered her and whose little body was no more than a framework. There was no one to help them — three little souls flickering out.

By the time the Red Cross Mission which was dispatched in August had traversed the long way to the scene of its labors, Rumania had become a tragedy, the more heartbreaking because it was played out in stoical silence and with unwavering faith. All know that in our devotion to the niceties of surgical science we demand the perfection of sterilization; but the wounds of soldiers in Rumania, torn by German missiles, were being dressed with whatever was available. Rumanian children swarmed the streets with stomachs and feet swollen from dropsy; pellagra claimed its victims by thousands.

To reach Rumania, the Red Cross Mission was compelled to journey by Vladivostok and cross the long reaches of Siberia.

In this light, it is not difficult for me to understand why the Red Cross Mission was ushered with all politeness and the greatest possible expedition into Rumania but thereafter could secure almost no transport for the material of relief. There was no access to the suffering Rumanians after the

reverses of 1916, save over the endless roads of Russia, with the invisible German clutch upon them all.

It was the program . . . of [the] first Mission [to Rumania], to make rapid and thorough canvass of Rumanian needs, and after a few weeks to return and outline a broad general plan of action. When it came to Jassy, the Mission brought with it only the smallest of supplies. In that land of desolation and want they vanished in a day. It was not a question of studying the needs of Rumania; the need of Rumania was a nightmare. Its voices were never silent. It stared in the streets; it prayed from the cadaverous faces of that misery-marked populace; the sick, the naked, and the starving were on every hand and winter was at the door.

"But there was only one thing to do," wrote the chairman of the Commission. "To get food, medicine, and clothing from any source and in whatever quantity possible, in order to save what lives we could before disease and starvation and the winter should outstrip the German armies in the ruin of the land. . . ." Fortunately the [Red Cross Commissioner to Rumania] had some funds which had been placed in his hands for such casual use as might be required, and he requisitioned this for obtaining food.

It was not, of course, a dietetic question. The need was for food — anything that would sustain life. . . . With all possible haste agents were dispatched to every corner of Russia, where starvation had already set in, to pry out from its hiding place whatever food the magic of money might discover. . . . In Moscow they found flour and beans; in Odessa they bought tons of dried vegetables; in the North they found five thousand barrels of herrings, and all these and other things they drove forward over the congested and disorganized Russian railways through districts whose populations were even then on the verge of civil war, with guards riding the "wagons" to fend off the hungry mobs in towns through which they passed.

When the food train rolled into Jassy, there was a storage house ready for its cargo, and in the heart of the city adjoining the national theater, a canteen was opened and equipped. All that were there unite in saying that it was indeed a sorry coterie — some five hundred and odd persons who came on the first day merely to satisfy their curiosity. For the Rumanian, near neighbor to the hard trading East, had little faith in the story that these strange Americans would give away food for nothing. If it were true, they told themselves, then such people must be seen anyway, for such a phenomenon would never happen again. On the second and third days, however, the number increased until on the fourth day the American canteen was feeding two thousand people who without it would have died of starvation.

By the New Year our Red Cross, in co-operation with the British Red Cross and Queen Marie, was feeding ten thousand people in Moldavia, and awaiting with such patience as it could the arrival of supplies which we had

shipped to them. By good fortune the Director of the British Red Cross had in storage a quantity of condensed milk which he contributed for the feeding of infants; while on our part attention was given to the alleviation of the misery of the soldiers at the front. At Roman in the hospital the Red Cross gave something the patients had never dreamed of seeing—an American Christmas. Evergreens were brought down from the mountains, and candles were found in all sorts of places for their illumination. There were little gifts, such things as the workers of the Commission could find or manufacture; there was food and songs to sing, and as if in despite of the misery that hung like a pall everywhere, there was the spirit of the Christmas over it all. To brighten the sky for a multitude of unhappy refugees, the Chairman of the Commission cabled us that he had given to the Queen just before Christmas for distribution the sum of 250,000 lei (about $20,000). Food of every sort and in lots both large and small was purchased wherever obtainable.

There was a distribution two days before Christmas in Sascut of dried fish, sunflower oil, and cornmeal. Two hundred and sixty-eight families carried away supplies of food and plans were made for further dispensation through a committee of the Commune, the Notar, the village priest, the schoolmaster, and the chief of police, who were to furnish lists of the needy. A Belgian sugar refiner in the district and his wife attached themselves to the Red Cross and gathered every available scrap of old clothing and other supplies; they established a Red Cross sub-depot in their house and visited the people of the surrounding country three or four days each week. They organized a company of young Rumanian women as relief workers, and when the first of March came, they were ready on the coming of spring to carry on the work on a larger scale. Through January the Red Cross had started to lend a hand to the government work for orphans. These constituted a large problem in themselves. The casualties of war and the ravages of disease had raised this menace to a terrifying proportion. Schoolhouses were secured which, formerly, had been used as Army hospitals and in which during the preceding year hundreds of men had died from typhus. . . . The relief work in Jassy and many of the outlying districts was well organized though hampered by the fatal lack of supplies. . . . The Red Cross . . . was feeding 40,000 people and turning out from its relief station clothing that saved unnumbered lives. It had reached through a sea of difficulties the firm ground of organization where it was ready to handle a great work of relief.

From America, in November, there had come two carloads of hospital supplies and one of food. . . . This single shipment was all that ever reached Rumania of the supplies which were sent forward by orders of the War Council in Washington.

The winter was now at its height, but the clothing problem had in a measure been relieved. From various places in Russia the Commission had se-

cured some 400,000 yards of cloth, 100,000 spools of thread, 50,000 needles, half a carload of buttons, and 50 sewing machines. The Red Cross Canteen at Jassy was operated in connection with a public *triage* – a bathhouse and disinfector; and having cleaned and fed and restored to animate interest in life some thousands of starving women, the Red Cross opened in conjunction with the canteen a clothing department. There women, as soon as supplies were obtained, were set to work in the hurried manufacture of simple clothing to save threatened lives. Thousands of garments were manufactured, the Queen herself distributed many of them in the small country villages and, in addition, the utter lack of shoes was overcome by making simple moccasins from canvas and burlap, which proved a most satisfactory substitute. There were, at least, fewer frozen, bleeding feet in the streets and highways of Moldavia. The records show that at the relief station in Jassy where now food, clothing, disinfection, and medical attention were dispensed, 1200 persons were cared for daily from the date of its opening on February 25 up to March 9, when the Commission was forced to leave Rumania by the imposition of the German peace.

Now that the suffering had, in a measure, been modified, every hand in Rumania was called into service. Widows and orphans and crippled soldiers joined in the work, carrying Red Cross assistance to the needy when their own government was powerless. The American flag and the Red Cross emblem in every district were the signboards pointing the way to help. . . . There was no such thing in all Moldavia as public charity, for no one had anything to give away. They had lost it all. Charitable organizations, which had been amply endowed for whatever relief was necessary in peace times, were hopelessly crippled by the terrific strain of war. Commercial stocks of food and clothing had vanished and there was no hope of replacement. The greater part of the factory installation in Wallachia had been left behind in the retreat; those in Moldavia were destroyed to save them from German hands. There was no oil for machinery, no cows to furnish milk for babies, no Russian ally.

In the desolate villages behind the front it was counted good fortune for a peasant family to get the entrails of an animal that had been slaughtered for the Army. The wretched people boiled this offal and made soup to keep the breath of life in them.

Serbia. In Serbia proper the Red Cross centered its refugee work in Vodena, a city half-way between Saloniki and Monastir, in which about 5,000 refugees had found shelter. The first act of the Red Cross was the setting up of a 50-bed hospital in a building supplied by the Greek Government; later, a second one of twice the capacity was established at Banitza, sixty-five miles from Saloniki.

The villages about Monastir were crowded with homeless people who

would not be dragged from their shattered firesides. To pamper this home-clinging spirit the Red Cross constructed a number of adobe houses on frameworks of wattles, a type of dwelling peculiar to all the Mediterranean countries and the Near East. In Saloniki, forests of tents were laid in the suburbs . . . and milk was distributed regularly to the children. Clothing, shoes, and staple foodstuffs which they could not give to the penniless strangers within their gates, were purchased from the local shops; and, in this way, the hungry were fed, the naked clothed, and the Red Cross became the wonder-worker of the East.

The last bitter campaign was marked by great suffering among the troops. There were no women nurses, no anaesthetics, no surgical dressings save the pitifully small amount the Red Cross was able to supply, for the transportation problem was always an uncertain factor, one on which wagers could not safely be laid at any time. Tonnage was more precious than the jewels of a Rajah, and when it came to the loading of a relief ship there was always a debate as to which should be given preference—food, clothing, medical supplies, or surgical dressings, each item being needed as badly as the other. If some were clothed, wounds were neglected; if wounds were dressed, backs went bare or stomachs empty. Over $600,000 was spent for relief supplies in Serbia, and even then, the Red Cross task was only half done.

Greece. The rôle of the Red Cross in ancient Hellas was confined almost entirely to civilian relief work, although this does not mean that its field there was a narrow one or in any way circumscribed. The hordes of destitute Greeks could not have been greater nor more forlorn had there been a wholesale enemy invasion of the Hellenic peninsula. Thousands of Greeks, living outside of Greece in Bulgaria and Turkey, became the objects of cruelest oppression and persecution when, at the beginning of the war, it was decreed that every Christian should be driven from Islam at the point of the sword.

At the time of the appeal to the American Red Cross, Greece was a sad, tottering, hungry land, with swarms of her own people knocking at her gates for admittance, demanding shelter and food that she could not give.

Countless stories have come from out of the East in regard to Bulgarian and Turkish atrocities, of hordes of women and children driven naked across the land, forced to march without food, clothing, or shelter under the pitiless desert skies—of young girls carried off into slavery, of massacres in the silent depths of Asia Minor, of Greek children kidnapped by the Bulgars and forcibly denationalized, and of countless other cruelties too numerous and too terrible to relate. Our task there was to salvage the unhappy remainder that knocked at our doors, faint with hunger, burning with fever, or driven insane by their experiences.

When, at the close of the year 1917, the Greek Red Cross appealed for aid, an American Red Cross representative was sent from Saloniki to Athens to

consult with the Greek Government and the Red Cross, while only a small commission was sent through the interior to look over the field. Of course the usual quota of relief supplies was in order: food, clothing, surgical dressings, and medical needs, as well as hospital equipment, sewing machines, and uncut materials, hospital bedding, towels, linen, and ambulances.

There were 50,000 Greek refugees in the islands of the Aegean Sea.

In the homeland, the mobilization of the [armed] forces had left the same economic problems behind as it did in other lands. After the Saloniki fire, still more homeless ones thronged the streets, while the civilian hospitals were being emptied to take care of the wounded.

In the early emergency, fifty tons of general supplies were purchased from the Serbian Commission for use in Macedonia, and at the end of September, 1918, the special Commission for Greece set out with a personnel of seventy. By that time, the whole situation in the Balkans had changed for the better. . . . This, of course, was very close to the end of the war. . . . A good-sized appropriation was set aside for the rehabilitation of Greek refugees, while arrangements were made for the shipment of 320 tons of foodstuffs monthly for a period of three months, coming from Italian ports to the Piraeus and the Island of Mitylene.

In the city of Athens, the children became the special charge of the Red Cross as they have always been wherever the Red Cross has gone. Centers for the care of children of employed mothers were opened, and a daily milk ration provided for; while sewing rooms were opened not only in Athens but on the islands of Chios, Samos, and Mitylene in the Aegean Sea and in Serres, Kavalla, and Drama, the Macedonian centers of Red Cross work. In addition to this, a number of Greek women were given special training in care of children and home hygiene — after the manner followed in France — and by which the trained women in the rôle of visiting practical nurses could take the child welfare idea into the Greek homes.[1]

Operations in Palestine

So in March, 1918, the special Red Cross Commission for Palestine sailed from New York with hundreds of tons of supplies and complete traveling and camping equipment. The route was long, for travel in the Mediterranean was still hazardous and they went around the African continent . . . so that it was June before the Mission arrived at the port of Beirut.

Although housing and sanitary conditions in [the Holy Land] . . . had never been ideal, according to occidental standards, there was, fortunately, a

[1] Editor's note: Vivid accounts of relief work done in Greece by the Near East Relief and the League of Nations Commission for the Settlement of Greek Refugees are included in Greece and the Greek Refugees, by Charles B. Eddy, and Story of Near East Relief: An Interpretation, by James L. Barton. Condensations of the latter volume will appear as part of the Russell Sage Foundation series of Occasional Papers on the Administration of Relief Abroad.

more substantial background on which to build than there had been at other relief points; for one thing, the British engineers were engaged in intensive sanitation work in Jerusalem itself, and after the fresh waters from the hills had been brought down to the city by means of modern plumbing and pumping, the water-skins, filthy though picturesque, disappeared from the streets for the first time in two thousand or more years. Indeed . . . the work of the Red Cross in Palestine was made largely possible through the generous and benevolent attitude manifested by the British authorities in the occupied enemy territory, and by their marvelous and rapid organization and control of the civic functions.

In the city of Jerusalem fifteen hundred women — Moslem, Jewish, and Christian — were employed in the industrial workrooms instituted by the Red Cross, and engaged in spinning, weaving, knitting, dressmaking, basketry, rug making, mattress making, embroidery, and lace work. The Red Cross custom of helping the refugees to help themselves has always made for contentment and satisfaction in the subjects of our aid, giving work to impatient, idle fingers and, thereby, assuring them of the type and character of clothing they preferred — a factor to be considered if they were to attain any measure of happiness. It was familiar things they wanted, things to which they had been accustomed, things they had known through all their dark, narrow lives.

Following the opening of the American Red Cross Hospital in the city, there also was established a series of clinics for children and adults in the city and in four outside centers.

For all this work, including food, medical, surgical, and sanitary supplies, salaries and expenses, the War Council of the Red Cross had appropriated by October 1, $558,479. In addition to this, a monthly contribution of $50,000 is made to the Red Cross by the Armenian and Syrian Relief Committee for the work among the civilian population.

The end of the war, however, does not mean the end of want or the end of suffering or disease in the Holy Land. It is a land sunk deep in tradition and superstition and into which the light of modern science or modern thought has not penetrated; it is a land that has long suffered oppression and cruelty and misunderstanding, where the spirit of the peoples has been shrunken and terrified by persecution. But in this land the Red Cross has set a bright lamp, and we hope it will shine forever, bringing light and hope and good will to the old, old lands of the East.

Operations in Russia

Arriving at the port of Vladivostok, late in the month of July, 1917, the [Red Cross Commission in Russia] . . . was met by representatives of the Russian Red Cross, which had come through the months of turmoil a sorry

wreck. . . . The remnants of that organization were to form an important liaison between the Russian people and the foreigners who had come to help them. . . . In a land as strange to Americans as Russia, the need of such assistance was obvious and the desire for co-operation unquestioned.

One of the most urgent needs was for milk in the cities. The infant mortality in those congested spots was increasing each day. There were 150,000 homeless, destitute children in Petrograd that winter. The food situation was acute, although it was largely a matter of transportation rather than actual scarcity. However, it became necessary to send food to the Russians in the Murmansk district for the reason that hungry Petrograd would permit no food to go into that barren, frozen land.

Suffering increased and the cities, though in the midst of plenty, were still in the grip of famine—the peasants refusing to give up their grain at Government prices, when they could sell it in the open market for its weight in gold. Food commissions, created by the Soviet Government, were sent into the farming regions, there to wrest the food from the peasants by force, if they could obtain it no other way. Children from the breadless cities were sent into the country, thrown upon the charity of the peasants for their food. Some months later 1,200 of these "lost children of the Urals" were corralled by the Red Cross in Tumen and Irbit and brought back from savagery to normal life. The number of children who died in the wilderness will never be known.

From the beginning, the purpose of the Red Cross was to help the people of Russia without regard to political situations, and with utter indifference to the policies of the political party that happened to be in power. Its aim was to keep clearly before the Russians the fact that the United States, through the Red Cross, wanted to help them.

Unforeseen emergencies constantly arose, apparently insurmountable barriers continually presented themselves. Difficult enough is the work of relief in time of calamity and of war when the affected population is ready and able to co-operate, but in Russia, menaced by the constant threat of invasion from the west and the revolutionists that placed every possible obstacle in the path of law and order, it became a question of helping Russia in spite of herself; and never had the Red Cross endeavored to carry out its purpose in the midst of such adverse circumstances.

Peacetime Responsibilities of the Red Cross[1]

The peace efforts of the Red Cross . . . despite any opinion to the contrary, must be regarded as scarcely second in importance if not more difficult

[1] Editor's note: For additional details about the peace-time rôle of the Red Cross see Chapter II of Part II, of Ernest P. Bicknell's book With the Red Cross in Europe. See also The Red Cross, by Max Huber, A. Kundig Press, Geneva, [1942].

than those of war. As a matter of fact, it is becoming every day more and more apparent that our foreign problem, and our home problem as well, not only did not end but rather began when the bugles sang truce across the battlefields.

The armistice left the great organization [of the American Red Cross] intact, with all its energies a-tingle, and all its unspent resources free.

But, be that as it may, consistent with the results aimed at, there followed a cutting-down of production and a gradual diminishing of Red Cross work in the actual war areas; while an appreciable reduction took place in the personnel everywhere, particularly in the ranks of the volunteer war-workers who, naturally, were compelled to return to their vocations as soon as possible.

But all the while that this transfer from a war-time to a peace-time basis was taking place, not a few of those who had followed Red Cross effort during the war were deeply impressed with the idea that it was their duty not to suffer the slightest diminution of the humanitarian spirit which the war had aroused in the American people for their fellow-beings throughout the world; that it was nothing more nor less than an obligation on the part of the American Red Cross to make certain that the results of its experience during the war should be placed at the disposal of the other Red Cross societies of the world, and vice versa.

Hence, when I presented the idea of adopting a peace-time program of Red Cross activity to President Wilson, president of the Red Cross, he grasped at once its vast importance and asked me to concentrate my efforts toward formulating some plan which would accomplish the purpose so much to be desired. Accordingly, soon after this interview I went to Europe where I called into conference the Red Cross societies of the more important countries with a view of developing a plan of co-ordination and co-operation. It did not take them long to recognize how vitally important it was for the future of the world that the Red Cross should have a peace-time function; yet nowhere, I am glad to say, was this more quickly and clearly realized than in the council chamber where President Wilson, M. Clemenceau, and Premiers Lloyd George and Orlando met daily to draw up the final treaty. They saw, as did every student of the situation, that there could be no peace until the peoples were able to enjoy peace of mind as well as peace of body; that no set of men could establish with pencil and paper a peace which could endure unless the distress throughout the world could be relieved. And so it came about that in the revised Covenant of the League of Nations there was inserted the following paragraph as Article XXV:—

The members of the League agree to encourage and promote the establishment and coöperation of duly authorized, voluntary, national Red Cross organizations having as their purpose the improvement of health, prevention of disease, and mitigation of suffering throughout the world.