

THE AMERICAN NATIONAL RED CROSS SOCIETY.

A MODEL ORGANIZATION.

By FELIX J. KOCH.

Hundreds of thousands of well-meaning American people, in tens of thousands of American post offices, each winter purchase millions on millions of the familiar Red Cross "seals," gumming these to their letters and packets, with little more than a passing thought of what becomes of the money paid for such, except that somehow, somewhere, it goes "to do good!" Incidentally, it's a far, far cry from the humble cross-roads post office there at Rushville, where Jack Roosa invests in seals such as these, to the blood-soaked battlefields of Europe, or the little peasant hamlets where women and children are starving, while the men are being mowed down by the cannon and Zeppelin bombs at the war; but thousands of dollars, hundreds of thousands of dollars, in fact, gleaned by the Red Cross, America over, are doing its errand of mercy just there.

Mr. Austin Cunningham, director of publicity for the Red Cross, gives us some interesting data as to its work in this war.

"On the outbreak of the European War," he announces, "the American Red Cross offered to the several countries involved, surgeons, trained nurses, surgical equipment, including bacteriological and sterilizing outfits, and hospital supplies. This offer was gratefully accepted.

"At that time the sailing of all the ocean steamers was so uncertain that, at the suggestion of the Hon. Robert Lansing, Counsellor of the State Department and Chairman of our Red Cross International Relief Board, the War Department was asked for the loan of an Army transport to carry the *personnel* and supplies.

"The pressure on the Government to provide transportation for American refugees was so great that the Department was itself negotiating for ships and reserving the transports for such use, so that this request could not be granted. Congress therefore passed a special Act, permitting the Red Cross to charter a ship, fly the Red Cross and American flag, and to receive temporary American registry. By this means, and under the protection of the Treaty of The Hague, the American Red Cross appealed for a suitable vessel. Only two were offered, and of these the former was accepted, and chartered for sixty days, at the cost of \$1. The war insurance on ship and cargo cost

\$10,000. The vessel was officered by retired American naval officers, and carried 156 surgeons and nurses, surgical equipment, and very large quantities of hospital supplies for their own use, and for the use of the American Ambulance Association in Paris. The Servian unit of fifteen went by a Greek steamer.

"As they were about to sail, unexpected objection was made on the part of the British and French Governments to the *personnel* of the crew. A change of crews became necessary, involving delay and expense.

"To send 171 Red Cross surgeons and nurses abroad; to buy them proper equipment, with uniforms and other necessities, to pay their travelling expenses by land and sea, both in the United States and in Europe; to pay their salaries for six months, and to bring them home to the United States will cost about \$1,200 *per capita*, including the cost of the Red Cross ship. Additional surgeons and nurses are also being equipped to send.

"There is no doubt that, had the Red Cross waited two weeks, it could have sent its surgeons and nurses and its hospital supplies to Europe by regular steamers. Everyone must, however, recall the confusion, uncertainty, and danger which prevailed at the outbreak of the war. No one knew or could predict when regular trans-Atlantic service would be resumed. The United States Government itself, wishing to send a party of fifty men with the ten million dollar gold fund to Europe, to help American citizens, sent two warships instead of waiting for merchant steamers.

"Up to the end of November, the American Red Cross has purchased 232,800 lb. of absorbent cotton, 67,800 lb. of non-absorbent cotton, 485,400 yards of absorbent gauze, 10,000 yards of starched gauze, 46,300 lb. of bandages, 20 surgical instrument equipments of U.S. Army standards, including bacteriological and sterilizing outfits, 4,800 lb. of chloroform and ether, 10 cases of drugs and chemicals, 40 gallons tincture of iodine, 5,000 typhoid vaccine treatments, and many cases of surgical supplies, such as ligatures, rubber gloves, clinical thermometers, hypodermic syringes, extra instruments, adhesive plaster, ice-caps, alcohol, disinfectant, vaseline, &c., most of which have already been shipped to Europe.

"Scores of boxes, containing stretchers; thousands of hospital garments, sheets, pillow-cases, blankets, towels, &c., have also been sent. The Red Cross has forwarded some 7,500 pairs of blankets for Belgian refugees. For the American Ambulance in Paris it has purchased and shipped 264,440 lb. of absorbent

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