MOUNT SINAI RECORDING

"THE STORY OF TWO HOSPITALS"

by

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THE STORY OF TWO HOSPITALS

This is Robert St. John, NBC War-Correspondent.

I'd like to tell you about two HOSPITALS I've run-across in my wanderings.

The FIRST is a LITTLE hospital, off in the town of Argos, in that ancient land of GREECE.

We got-into Argos in the middle of one terrible night in April—that month in 1941 when the Germans were driving the British out of the last-CORNER of Europe.

Argos (before Nazi BOMBS and Nazi GUNS started killing-off the population) was a town EXACTLY the size of Scarsdale, New York.

In our flight from the Germans (down through the corridors of Europe) we headed for Argos because we were told that THERE we would find one of the best hospitals in all of Southern Greece.

In the dark of the night, it LOOKED like quite a SIZEABLE building.

When we got INSIDE, we found that it was JAMMED-to-the-doors with patients...MANY of them on the point of death. They occupied EVERY bed! They filled the CORRIDORS! They lay on the floors! The OPERATING room was FULL-of-them! Some were Australian and New Zealand soldiers...badly-wounded by German bullets. SOME were Greek CIVILIANS...with limbs torn-off, by the BOMBS of the Germans.

That whole hospital—full of men, women, and children was being cared-for by a SINGLE nurse.

Two of us war-correspondents had picked-up some Nazi steel, in our LEGS, during a brief encounter with a straffing plane. We asked if a doctor could do a little work on us. We were told that Argos no longer HAD any doctors. They'd all been KILLED...OR...they'd gone-off to WAR...and PROBABLY wouldn't be BACK!
The next DAY, we saw that hospital blown-to-bits... and the WRECKAGE, set aflame, by incendiary bombs.

LATER in the day, we saw towns-women, (under the trees), ripping their dresses into bandages, to tie around the wounds of their husbands and children.

We saw LIMBS being amputated, without benefit of anaesthetics or surgical instruments.

There was only ONE WORD to describe Argos that day...PRIMITIVE!

I shall NEVER forget that hospital...the ONE nurse...the patients, who...didn't have a CHANCE!

And then I came HOME...to AMERICA! ...AMERICA...the HOPE of the world! ...America with its skyscrapers...and its factories—which will NEVER be bombed...and its magnificent hospitals!!

Then it occurred to me, that we in THIS country have an AWFUL responsibility...quite-APART from our MILITARY obligation.

We have the task of keeping the TORCH ALIGHT!!

In MUCH of the world, civilization is being obliterated.

Today, in a DOZEN countries, piles of rubble mark the locations of great libraries, and universities, and museums and hospitals.

Before 1939, men journeyed from far-corners of the world, to STUDY science...medicine...surgery...in places like Leipzig, Vienna, Paris and Berlin.

Maybe SOMEDAY...(when sanity returns to the world)...it will be that-way AGAIN! But not for GENERATIONS!

Over THERE...the BUILDINGS are gone! The MEN are gone! LITTLE remains!

But here in AMERICA, we not only HAVE the buildings, intact, but we have the MEN! ...men of our OWN...and many a REFUGEE scientist, doctor, scholar, surgeon...refugees from Hitler's persecution!
SO...one BY-PRODUCT of the war is that America IS...(or has the CHANCE to be) the Scientific Center of the WORLD!

And that leads to the SECOND Hospital, I would like to tell-you about. This SECOND hospital bears little RESEMBLANCE to that inflammable structure of plaster and wood which once stood in the heart of the town of Argos, in Greece.

It's a TREMENDOUS place...here in NEW YORK CITY...called Mt. Sinai Hospital....acres and ACRES of buildings...nearly a THOUSAND beds. In a single year, 50 or 70 THOUSAND men, women and children...of all colors and creeds...are cared-for. HERE nine HUNDRED physicians and surgeons serve the public...administering to those able to afford private rooms...and LIKewise to those who queue-up in the clinics to pay what they CAN...OR...to receive EVERYTHING FREE...from boxes of pills to operations which may...

...SAVE THEIR LIVES ! !

THIS hospital is a far-cry from that LITTLE hospital in Argos, Greece, and yet there IS a connection...a VITAL connection.

HERE...(at Mt. Sinai)... the TORCH is being KEPT alight !

Men in laboratories ...(some of them refugees)...are working over test-tubes, searching for the cure of diseases which TODAY are wiping-out great SEGMENTS of the population, back there in GREECE !

From THIS HOSPITAL...(here on Manhattan)...physicians are graduated who go-off (with a bright, crusading LOOK in their eyes) to REMOTE parts-of-the-world...to battle pestilence and plague.

someday SOON, our MILITARY forces will probably be sweeping-up through Greece. And WITH the steel-helmeted soldiers will go men bent NOT on DESTRUCTION, but on RE-CREATION ! !...men who will be trying to restore CIVILIZATION (they that CAN) to towns like Argos;
...to countries like GREECE...to that whole, benighted continent called EUROPE !

Maybe they'll HELP to set-up ...(in the town of Argos)... a NEW hospital, to take the place of the one I saw DESTROYED.

IN that Army of RE-Construction, will go doctors and nurses. SOME of them will be from this great New York Institution, known as Mt. Sinai.

ALREADY seven HUNDRED Mt. Sinai men and women are in one branch or another, of the Armed Forces. They're serving in every CORNER of the world ...ministering to victims-of-war...AMERICAN boys and foreigners-alike...in Africa...Sicily...Italy...Britain... and off on remote jungle islands, in the Pacific.

In AFRICA there's a great, United States MILITARY hospital, with several THOUSAND beds, manned by doctors and nurse from Mt. Sinai.

To ME...(fresh from the horrors of war)...this New York institution seemed to be one of the HOPEFUL things, for the future.

In the midst of an era of destruction such as the world has NEVER KNOWN...HERE is an institution (with hardly an EQUAL, ANYWHERE) dedicated to the SAVING of life !

HISTORY is often DULL, but NOT the history of Mt. Sinai Hospital !

I've seen pictures of the little, brown-stone building on 28th Street, where it all BEGAN ! Women in bustles passed-by on the stone-sidewalk ! Victorian rattled over the cobbled street-stones.

THAT...was almost one hundred YEARS-ago !

Mt. Sinai was the FIRST Jewish hospital in America ! In fact, it was CALLED..."The JEWS' Hospital".

But within TEN YEARS to prove how completely NON-sectarian it was ! THAT was when wounded soldiers started pouring NORTH, from the battlefields of the CIVIL War !
THEN... (as NOW) ... patients were given the BEST the hospital had to offer, REGARDLESS of color, race, or creed !

In the years which have flown-by... Mt. Sinai has GROWN... (building by building)... until NOW it's a small-city in itself ! SEVENTEEN great structures of brick and stone... with SPACE, for MORE ! And with a NEED for more !!

If you went on a TOUR of the place, you might say to yourself:

"This is a PERFECT plant... complete in every detail !! Why... it even manufactures--on the spot--the million and a half pounds of ICE it needs each year ! And there's a LAUNDRY which washes ten THOUSAND pounds of linen every day of the WEEK ! And diet-kitchens, which turn-out SIX thousand meals-a-day !! And a dental department. And a convalescent-home! And roof-gardens, where patients can get-well in PLEASANT surroundings. And game-rooms, for convalescent CHILDREN !"

Oh... (laugh)... I could-go-on for a couple of HOURS describing the WONDERS of this City-Within-a-City, which they call Mt. Sinai.

Did you know... (I didn't !!)... that long before most Americans had ever HEARD of blood banks and plasma, here in Mt. Sinai they started collecting blood for the British Red-Cross ? THIS hospital sent more blood plasma abroad... (to save the lives of bomb-wounded civilians in Britain)... than any other hospital in the WORLD !

But more important than THAT ... since WE got into the war, many a confidential piece of war-research, has been undertaken by Mt. Sinai. (THERE is a story !! which will make flaming HEADLINES, some-day, when it can be TOLD, in all its details. (But for NOW... most of THAT-chapter (of the hospital's history) must remain... a well-guarded "military-secret".

I DO have permission to tell-you (however) that in the Mt. Sinai laboratories they've developed a GUAZE, impregnated with one of the
SULFA-drugs, which is going to rather REVOLUTIONIZE the future treatment of
BURNS! Your life or mine may someday be SAVED...by this-ONE bit of research!

But there's ANOTHER side to the Saga of Mt. Sinai.

And it isn't so PRETTY a picture!

With the world crying-aloud for science to alleviate the suffering of
war and to help create a better life for millions.(after the shooting is all over)
...Mt. Sinai hospital finds that it has VERY inadequate facilities for research-
work.

They have the MEN!!...bright young Americans, from all parts of the
country, full of eager enthusiasm...and OLDER-men, with a wealth of experience...
and FOREIGNERS, too!!...refugees from the great schools of EUROPE...DOZENS-of-them
...some of the brightest scientists in all the world!!

YES...Mt. Sinai has the MEN!!

But those men are laboring, now, in the cellars and basements of the hospital
...in laboratories WHOLLY inadequate!!

They're HANDICAPPED...at a time when NOTHING should stand-in-the-way of
work like THEIRS!!

In the PAST, great public benefactors (by their generous gifts) have
provided NEW equipment and NEW facilities for the research department.

But lately...new inventions have opened up new VISTAS, for science...
the Electron Microscope...color photography...to mention just-two-of-them!!

New DISEASES have been detected!!

WAR has created new PROBLEMS for medicine!!

And SO...

More SPACE is needed by these men who work with test-tubes and
microscopes.

More EQUIPMENT is needed...better facilities.

With the great medical centers of Europe now being obliterated from
the world-picture, hospitals like Mt. Sinai MUST carry-the-torch!!
This famous hospital ALSO needs a Maternity Pavilion...something it's never had!

It's one of the few hospitals in New York WITHOUT such a department, and therefore...it's an INCOMPLETE hospital!

It's House-Staff graduates can't QUALIFY for LICENSES in many nearby States which require obstetric -training-during-internship.

It's student nurses must go ELSEWHERE (at the hospital's EXPENSE) for THEIR obstetric training.

Fortunately...so far...we've gone through quite a bit of war without any epidemics on the HOME Front (as we had in the LAST war).

But there HAS been one epidemic!

We're in the MIDDEN OF IT...NOW!

An epidemic of BIRTHS!

And that's the ONE epidemic Mt. Sinai is UNABLE to help-with.

Mt. Sinai's far-seeing trustees ADMIT these shortcomings, as readily as they swell-with-pride over the hospital's great ACCOMPLISHMENTS!

They have a PLAN for REMEDYING these...defects. They call it...

"A Plan for the Future".

The men who drew it up seem to ME to have GREAT VISION!

For example...they want to build ONE new building which would house a ONE-MILLION-VOLT, x-ray machine.

Such a machine releases the same amount of ENERGY which would be given off by one thousand GRAMS OF RADIUM. One thousand grams of radium would cost 25 MILLION dollars...IF...there were that much radium to be purchased. But there isn't HALF that much radium in the entire WORLD!

An x-ray machine of THIS kind would do WONDERS in the treatment of long-suffering men and women (here in New York) who are the victims of deep-seated tumors.
And here’s ANOTHER of their… Dreams of the Future !

YOUNG-doctors…(you know)….after spending all their money acquiring a GOOD medical-education, often have GREAT difficulty finding the funds, to start in PRACTICE… the funds to open offices of their OWN. For MANY… THAT—problem would be solved by Mt. Sinai Hospital, because ONE of the new buildings would contain suites of rooms which could be RENTED, by young-doctors. Each suite would contain a waiting-room, an examining-room, a consultation room and an office. These suites, would be COMPLETELY equipped, with all those facilities, which so MANY doctors are unable to acquire until they’ve been in practice for YEARS ! The young-doctor would RENT such-an-office for...perhaps... TWO HOURS a day. DURING those two hours, it would be … HIS-office. HIS NAME would be on the door. Patients would call-on-him JUST as if his office were... well... say over a hardware-store. THEN... when HIS two-hours were over.... some OTHER young-doctor would take-over the suite and HIS name would go up on the door !

A DREAM OF THE FUTURE !

But it’s a dream which someday (through the generosity of public-spirited men) will…come TRUE !

In a period like THIS... a period of CHAOS in so MANY parts-of-the-world... a period of DESTRUCTION, bloodshed, suffering, hate, violent-emotion, it’s a HOPEFUL sign... it’s a FINE... SYMPTOM... of the good-in-our-country... that men ARE dreaming-such-dreams !

Pray—God that SOMEHOW a way will be found, to translate such dreams into ACTUALITY... into brick and stone and mortar... into laboratories, and life-saving, x-ray machines... and into facilities, for unselfish men who serve-the-world as physicians and surgeons.

The little hospital, in the town of Argos, in Greece, is GONE! It’s doctors
and NURSES are gone!

NOTHING remains but a heap of rubble and... a memory!

But HERE... (here in New York)... a GREAT-hospital, grows GREATER by-the-year!

...through the wisdom of its trustees, and the generosity of OTHER, Men-of-Vision.

Thank-you... for listening to... My Story of TWO Hospitals.