

**WITH THE ROYAL ARMY  
MEDICAL CORPS (R. A.  
M. C.) AT THE FRONT**

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With the Royal Army Medical Corps (R. A. M. C.) at the front by E. Charles Vivian

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**E. CHARLES VIVIAN**

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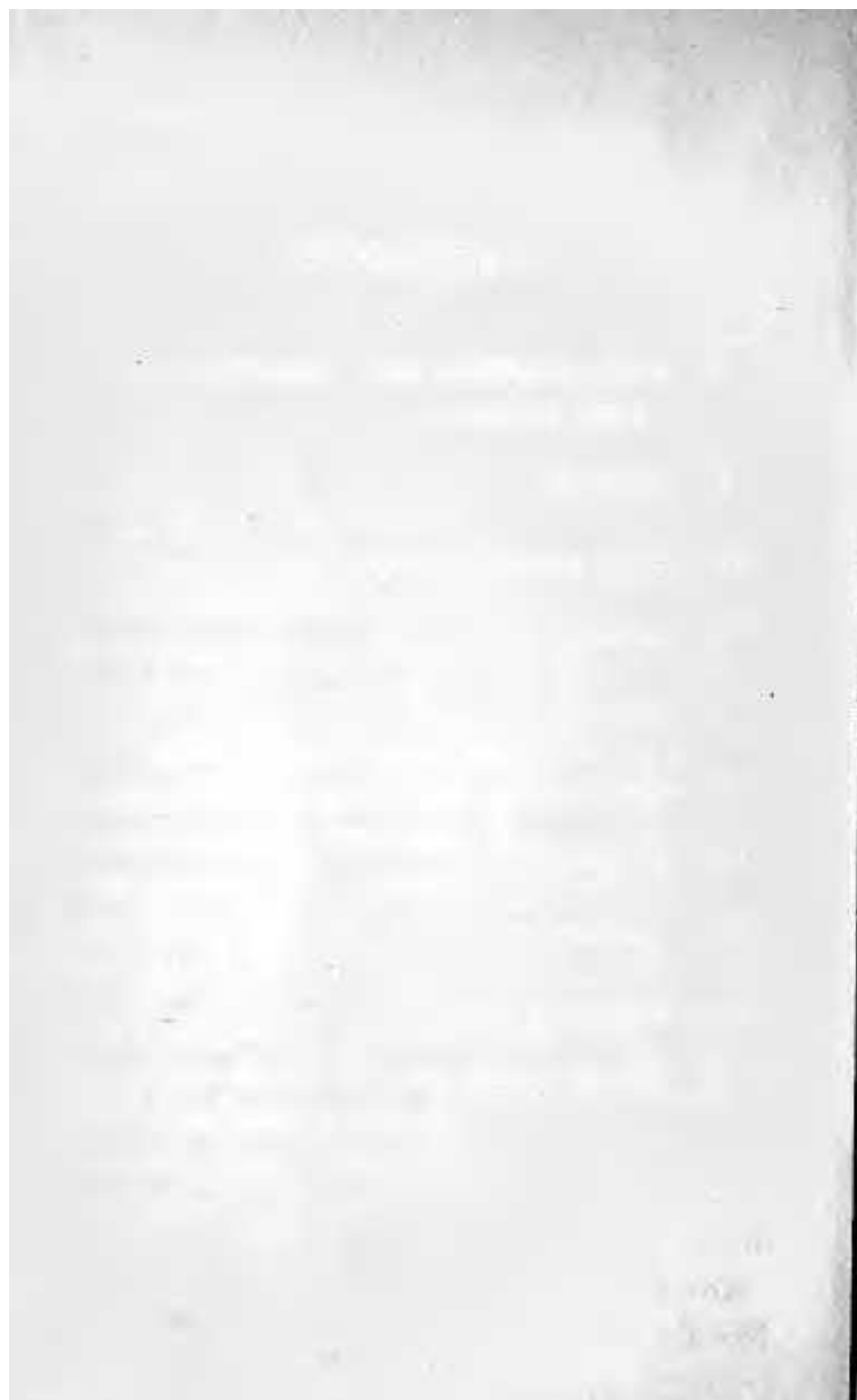
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## CHAPTER I

### THE CORPS—ITS COMPOSITION AND DUTIES

To the average British civilian, the British Army, either in peace or war, is one whole organisation; one soldier is exactly like another soldier to the man in the street, for the volunteer system of service, peculiar to British rule as far as European civilisation is concerned, has set the Army quite apart from civilian life and ways of thought. To-day, with the fate of civilisation itself hanging on the doings of armies, there are men in Britain who do not know the difference between a squad and a squadron, between a combatant and a non-combatant unit.

Most people, however, know that the Royal Army Medical Corps is a non-

## 8 The Army Medical Corps

combatant unit, made up of officers and men whose efforts are devoted solely to the care of the sick and wounded of the British Army—and of such of its opponents as may fall into British hands and need medical care. To quote the strength of any department of the Army at the present time would be impossible, owing to the augmentation which war has imposed on all branches and all departments. We must take as a working base the latest available figures, which give the total strength of officers and men of the R. A. M. C. on the 1st of October, 1913, as 4,798.

The whole medical department of the Army is administered by the Director-General of the Army Medical Services, under the Adjutant-General of the Army. The officers and men are formed into a corps designated the Royal Army Medical Corps, which replaced the old and not too well organised Army Hospital Corps of Crimean and even later days. The officers and men of the corps are charged with all duties connected with the care of the sick and wounded in peace and war, and the

## Its Composition and Duties 9

officers are responsible for everything pertaining to the sanitation of barracks and camps, water supplies, etc., and the medical inspection and approval of recruits for the Army. Among combatant units of the service it is frequently remarked that there is only one man whose word carries further than that of the general officer commanding, and that man is the medical officer. The statement is simple truth, for the order of the medical officer in any matters that come within his province—and they are many—is final and absolute, while one is at liberty to appeal against the ruling of the general officer commanding.

Under the Director-General of Army Medical Services, who ranks as a Lieutenant-General, are nine officers called Surgeons-General, who take military rank as Major-Generals; under the commands of these nine are all the officers and men of the Corps, who hold the same ranks as officers and men of combatant units, from colonel down to lance-corporal and private. The Corps is divided into thirty-five companies, which are