CHAPTER 8

Archives, Paratexts and Life Writing in the First World War

Hannah C. Tweed

The chapters in this collection have demonstrated a range of ways the phrase 'medical paratext' can be conceptualised, and particularly the interactions between medical practice, medical texts, and their writers and readers. Focusing on the diaries of Canadian nurse-writers in the First World War (particularly the work of nursing sister Clare Gass and VAD Alice Lighthall), this chapter proposes that paratext can demonstrate the contemporary archiving and historiography of the authors' experience, and support their claims to authoritative writing—as military historians, as medical practitioners, and as women operating within male-dominated environments.

Nursing already occupied a contested space in war narratives; Margaret H. Darrow describes the VAD as 'the best example of the pervasive unease with any connection between women and war' (Darrow 1996: 82), and many French nurse-writers' accounts of the war disappeared after limited print runs (e.g. Noëlle Roger's *Les carnets d'une infirmière* (1915))—particularly if the authors focused on their experiences over those of the soldiers they nursed. Darrow suggests that the French

H. C. Tweed (✉)
University of York, York, UK

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volunteer nurses of the First World War had 'the best chance to create a story of [French] women's war experience, [and] the fact that no such story entered the culture is significant' (Darrow 1996: 84). While the nurse-writers discussed here are French Canadian, Darrow's comments on dominant, male-centric narratives during and in the immediate aftermath of the war provide a potential explanation for Matron-in-Chief Margaret Macdonald's inability to find a publisher for her history of the Canadian Nursing Services—with contributions from a range of nurses' diaries, memoirs, and recollections of the First World War (Mann, 'Introduction', xxxvi). Meanwhile Andrew Macphail's official history of the Canadian medical services was published in 1925, but made little mention of nursing or VADs. Similarly, an officially-sanctioned volume commemorating the work of the No. 3 Hôpital Général was published in 1928, edited and compiled by R. C. Fetherstonehaugh, with a foreword from 'His Royal Highness the Duke of Connaught, K.G., K.T., K.P., G.C.B., G.C.S.I., G.C.M.G., G.C.I.E., G.C.V.O., G.B.E.' (frontispiece), and supported by the Department for National Defence and the Medical Faculty of McGill University (vii, xi). The text features two images of nurses (out of thirty-eight), and no single chapter is dedicated to the work of nursing sisters or VADs.

There are obvious exceptions to this neglect of nurses' writing—Mary Borden's *The Forbidden Zone* (1929), Ellen La Motte's *The Backwash of War: The Human Wreckage of the Battlefield as Witnessed by an American Hospital Nurse* (1916; repr. 1934), and Vera Brittain's *Testament of Youth* (1933), to name but a few. However, firstly, the majority of these texts were published—or, in La Motte's case, reprinted—in the second wave of war memoirs and writing that explicitly criticised the narratives of glorious war. Secondly, Borden, La Motte and Brittain self-identified as writers before the war, and both Borden and La Motte socialised with modernist writers and society; according to her letters, La Motte 'met a lot of interesting people through the Steins—Gertrude Stein has had me to lunch, and dinner and tea, and has given me her books, two of them' (31 October 1913, The Ellen N. La Motte Collection).[1] Finally, a sizeable majority of the nursing memoirs, diaries and biofictions published in the aftermath of the First World War were written by the women who worked together in Mary Borden's self-funded L'Hôpital Chirurgical Mobile No. 1—a field hospital that Christine E. Hallett refers to as 'not only a centre of healing, but also […] a cauldron of literary creativity', particularly for nurse-writers (xi).

This latter factor should not be lightly dismissed: in contrast, Clare Gass, the best-known Canadian nurse-writer, is remembered not as a diarist, but for having recorded the first copy of John McCrae's 'In Flanders Fields' (1915), several weeks before he submitted it for publication. Gass's diaries, spanning work in No. 3 Hôpital Général and No. 2 Canadian Casualty Clearing Station from 1914 to 1918, were only published in 2000, edited by Susan Mann. Gass's war diaries, as with many writings of nursing sisters, detail a combination of the everyday, the personal, military history, and a detailed record of medical treatments (numbers of patients, types of injuries or illness, attempted treatments).

In contrast, Alice Lighthall's diaries and collected writings have yet to be published; an exhibition by McGill University Rare Books and Special Collections, 'The Lighthalls: A McGill Family at War' (26 Feb.–15 June 2015) was the first public display of Alice Lighthall's papers. While the archival status of these texts does not lessen their significance, it does highlight the deliberate nature of Lighthall's use of paratext: the loose-leaf insertions to her diaries were meticulously dated and identified (in some cases several years after the end of the war), and explicitly recorded as part of her military and medical service. For example, one of Lighthall's poems, 'I Found Him in the Forest', inserted into the diary entry for its date of composition (29 September 1918), is inscribed on the back with 'Written while on service at No. 5 Hospital, B.E.F., Rouen, France. Alice Lighthall, V.A.D.'. These statements of authorship indicate both Lighthall's military position (part of the British Expeditionary Force in Rouen) and her medical responsibilities (as a serving member of the Volunteer Aid Detachment). Lighthall uses marginalia and peritextual insertions throughout her papers to add authority and accuracy to her observations and writing, and adds clarifying notes on military and medical acronyms, in a manner that indicates an intended audience—even if the papers were not published in her lifetime.

Writing about the professionalisation of historians at the turn of the twentieth century, Elise Garritzen comments on the significance of paratexts for female scholars: how, to signal their professional status, 'women used title pages to demonstrate their qualifications, either by pointing out previous studies they had written or, as Liisi Karttunen once did, inserting their academic degree on a title page' (Garritzen 2012: 413). While Garritzen's analysis of gendered paratexts does not engage with medical practice, both academia and medicine were similarly limited in terms of female access in the early twentieth century—and the dominance of male accounts of the First World War in the period immediately after its conclusion. Despite the

lack of public readership for Lighthall's papers, as archival holdings there remains evidence of an intended audience and attempts at the signalling of knowledge and authority discussed by Garritzen. These signals are primarily evident in Lighthall's self-archiving of the papers, both as she wrote within the five-year diary format, and the inserted notes and page-markers listing key battles and significant points in the development of the war. Significantly, in terms of paratext as indicating authorial historiography, Lighthall's diaries were compiled using a 'Walker's "Year by Year" Book', that encouraged the author to write entries for up to five years on each dated page, and compare their present experiences with those of the past (see Fig. 8.1). Lighthall used this format throughout her war service (and earlier, in her teenage diaries), and also preserved a range of ephemera as loose-leaf additions to the diary. I refer to these collected writings and collection as 'the Lighthall papers' and 'Lighthall's diaries' throughout this chapter, considering all of the material Lighthall included as part of the wider text. I argue that this marginalia and ephemera constitutes—and should be viewed as—a self-conscious archiving of Alice Lighthall's war experience, with paratexts employed as a means of demonstrating the different strands of Lighthall's experience: military, medical, and gendered.

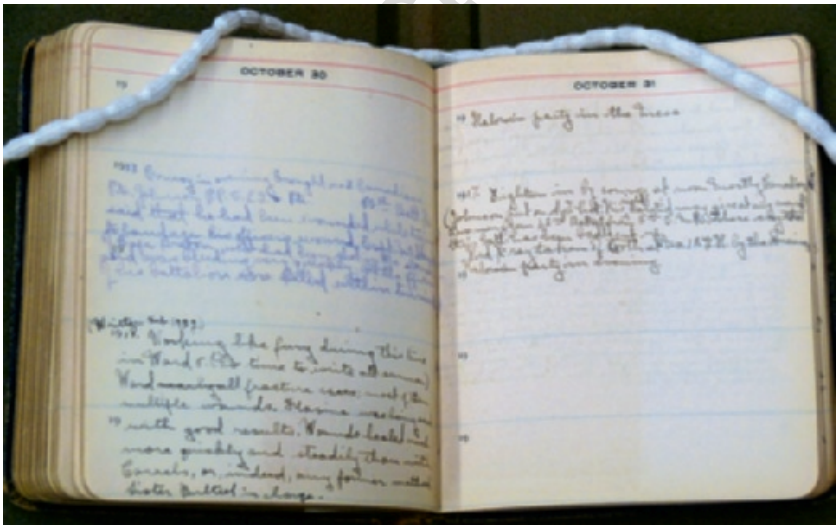

Fig. 8.1 Lighthall Papers, October 30th–31st

Alice Lighthall joined the Volunteer Aid Detachment (VAD) in 1916, from Montreal, Canada, and served as a VAD nurse at the No. 5 Royal Army Medical Corps (RAMC) General Hospital in Rouen from 1916 to 1918. Prior to signing up, Lighthall was a 'partial student' of the Arts as part of the women's programme at McGill University (Quiney 2017: 89), and a member of the Montreal Junior League, a philanthropic organisation for young women (Chenier 2009: 693). As a wealthy upper-class VAD Lighthall was simultaneously of higher social standing than many nursing sisters, and of low medical and military rank—especially in comparison to university-trained nurses like Clare Gass, who signed up for war service via the Canadian Army Medical Corps (CAMC) and in recognition of the increasing professionalisation of nursing were given officer status as lieutenants. As a VAD, Lighthall's position was particularly liminal in terms of the lines between the professionalisation of nursing and the social acceptability of upper-class volunteering. Many medical professionals, including nursing sisters, viewed VADs (who had minimal medical experience) as potentially damaging to the reputation of the nursing profession. Dr. C. K. Clarke, the director of the Canadian National Committee for Mental Hygiene, argued again the inclusion of VADs in hospitals, as 'the unqualified woman is a nuisance' (Quiney 2017: 39), while Matron-in-Chief Margaret Macdonald refused to accept VADs as part of CAMC military nursing at the Front (Quiney 2017: 8). Lighthall's diaries reflect these concerns over medical experience, class, gender, and her status as contested historical observer.

Both the content and the form of Lighthall's diaries are significant. The five-year diary is a development of the nineteenth-century pocket diary, which Sandro Jung describes as essentially conservative in form—compact, with illustrated pages, but a form that 'did not offer women the opportunity to promote their own work until the mid-nineteenth century', even though pocket diaries were marketed explicitly at women (Jung 2012: 29). One might, in the *Le Souvenir, or Pocket Table* (1842), a popular pocket diary, have 1–15 August on one page, with an illustration of Borrowdale, in the Lake District, at the top of the page (Jung 2012: 38). Women, presumably, did not need more than one line to write about their daily activities and experiences—just a few key words. Both Gass's and Lighthall's multi-year diaries feature entries where the page became a palimpsest when space was at a premium, as well as short epigrammatic entries; writing up as well as across the page and the central divide, in an attempt to convey their experiences beyond the space given to them (e.g.

Lighthall, 14 August 1918, or Lighthall, 11–12 November 1918). The pages also swell with inserted ephemera—handwritten music scores from Herbert Howells' 'Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis' in E (20 July 1918), Lighthall's poetry drafts, bookmarks indicating major battles or medical events, and newspaper cuttings memorialising colleagues. Nancy Martin describes the diary as 'defy[ing] the traditional structural forms of narrative. Focusing generally on the immediate present, it is serial, open-ended, often repetitive and contradictory' (Martin 2015: 1248). Martin details the attention to preserving minutiae in First World War diaries; in particular, 'photographs, a lock of child's hair, flowers from the family garden […] sketches of weapons, open fields, destroyed buildings, and trenches' (Martin 2015: 1248). Items such as those described above fall squarely into the category of paratext, particularly if they have been preserved within archival contexts, and they are found in both Gass's and Lighthall's work (Gass preserving photographs—taken illegally, with her own camera—newspaper articles, and botanical cuttings in her diary).

First World War diaries have been commonly presented as 'a private, self-reflective form', that demonstrates the actions and emotional states of individual men and women (Martin 2015: 1245). Martin argues that diaries provided a space in which the soldier-diarist could 'reevaluate his newly militarised identity', even as the government 'worked to recode (and control) the wartime behaviour of its citizens' (Martin 2015: 1247)—whether by drawing on military metaphors and classical allusions, or by presenting fragments of narrative, as with Mary Borden's *The Forbidden Zone*, her 'collection of fragments' that reflected 'a great confusion' (Borden 2008: 8). If one extends Martin's arguments across to the multi-year diaries used by Lighthall and Gass, I would suggest that as well as negotiating their identities as women and medical professionals (with varying degrees of training and authority) operating at the Front, Lighthall and her contemporaries—particularly those who, like Lighthall, joined up part-way through the war—also demonstrate a negotiation of their self-conscious status as historians, as well as witnesses and participants. More than simply representing self-reflective writing, these diaries indicate an awareness of the significance of the authors' status as both witnesses and medical practitioners.

While I describe Lighthall and her contemporaries as participants, both in terms of medical service and writing, these diaries are also curiously distant from more confessional forms of autobiographical writing. Leigh Gilmore, in *The Limits of Autobiography: Trauma and*

Testimony (2001), suggests that individuals who are narrating trauma frequently distance themselves from autobiography. She argues:

> Because testimonial projects require subjects to confess, to bear witness, to make public and shareable a private and intolerable pain, they enter into a legalistic framework in which their efforts can move quickly beyond their interpretation and control, become exposed as ambiguous, and therefore subject to judgements about their veracity and word […] although those who can tell their stories benefit from the therapeutic balm of words, the path to this achievement is strewn with obstacles. To navigate it, some writers move away from recognizably autobiographical forms even as they engage autobiography's central questions. (Gilmore 2001: 7)

This description holds true for both Gass and Lighthall. Instead of metaphorical or emotive language, emotional affect is conveyed by both diarists via juxtaposition of subject matter—the everyday and quotidian alongside the horrific and bloody, with no explanatory comments linking the two. For instance, Gass wrote on 27 October 1915 of overseeing blood transfusions, and on 30 October 1915 of receiving 'a big convoy of patients […]. Capt Burgess opened up a new line of Hubert Neilson tents to serve for his ward for the present. Miss Eastwood & I went there this morning […] We are still able to get lab roses for our dining tables. It has been a wonderful summer of Poppies & Roses' (75–76). Given that Gass then transcribed McCrae's 'In Flanders Fields' (with some differences in punctuation and indentation) immediately after this entry, there seems a deliberate irony to the juxtaposition of the medical and the pastoral. Similarly, on 25 March 1918, Lighthall wrote: 'Went to dell in the forest for flowers, found wood anemones and primroses. Got back to find the ward turned surgical. First convoy of rush in. Dressing till 10.30pm.' The frequently jarring juxtaposition of subject matter in these diaries (part personal travelogue, part medical and military history) is even more pronounced when entries for multiple years are compared simultaneously, as the war developed.

This use of form to provide reflection and highlight significance was part of the intention of the publishers of the multi-year diary (albeit probably with more domestic spheres in mind than war hospitals). 'Walker's "Year By Year" Books', according to their prefatory material, 'set forth an altogether new and novel idea and one that is eminently useful' (iv). The preface continues as follows:

> It means little and much: little recording and much satisfaction.
>
> Many have neither the time nor the inclination to keep a full Diary. But out of the multitude of matters that crowd the experience of each day, there is always something that intelligent people desire not to let slip, but seek to hold 'to awaken memory' in days to come. What a record of experiments such a book may be made! – things accomplished, things attempted, successes, failures, joys and sorrows.
>
> For just such a record this book is designed, and it is so planned that each day may be compared with the corresponding one in any year for five years. Five years hence, if you have kept your record faithfully, you will undoubtedly be deeply interested and delighted to open the book anywhere and see how wonderfully the web of your life has been woven. It will be a complete story, for you will come to rejoice in briefly expressing what you wish to record, and treasure it in proportion to its brevity, easily recognising and sifting the important from the comparatively trivial. (iv)

Furthermore, the format also provides the reader with a greater variety of reading options than is typical. The Walker prefatory material continues:

> To illustrate how it should be used. You may commence any day of the year, but suppose that you begin January 1; under that day, in the first space, add the proper figure for the year. On the next day, January 2, do likewise, and so on throughout the year. When the year is ended begin again under January 1 for the second year, add the appropriate figure in each of the second spaces, and so right on through the remaining years. (iv)

As a result of this system, Alice Lighthall's war diary 'begins' (for the reader) on 3 January 1919, with what are chronologically her last two entries. Paratextually, the first entry details Lighthall meeting a friend at Bridgwater railway station, Somerset, at the end of the war, before sailing home to Canada. To begin a war diary with the author's discharge from military duty, holidaying in England, is atypical (although there is a certain symmetry with Lighthall's chronological first entries, when she visited a series of friends in Montreal and London before beginning her training as a VAD). The abrupt contrast with the entry for 11 January 1917 (which mentions 'rumours of zepp. [zeppelin] raid', is clear. Such a format also encourages the reader to approach Lighthall's text repeatedly, and from multiple directions. Should one read each entry chronologically, by calendar composition? Does one start on 1 January, and read each date page, comparing multiple years at a time? Similarly, how should the reader respond to authorial restructuring of diaries? Clare Gass thriftily re-used

her 1915 diary to incorporate her observations during 1916, altering the days as 1916 was a leap year (Mann 2000: xli). These are also questions for the publisher and editor: Susan Mann, in editing *The War Diary of Clare Gass* (2000), explicitly states that she chose to follow a chronological, entry-by-entry system in publishing Gass's diaries—cutting out the multi-year structure entirely. Mann summarises this editorial decision as follows: 'I have chosen not to impose [Gass''s] practical but idiosyncratic and occasionally confusing format on the readers of this publication; I have also checked her sign-posts to ensure that the two years are distinct' (Mann 2000: xli). While this choice makes for a simpler and more coherent reading experience, I suggest that nonetheless it alters a key element of the paratext, and thus the content of Gass's diaries.

I have described both Gass's and Lighthall's diaries as concerned with military, medical, and personal experience during their respective service in France. In Lighthall's papers, examples of this combined content includes her early account, on 19 February 1917, of the funerals of a VAD from No. 9 General Hospital and a nursing sister from No. 11 General Hospital:

> Funeral of V.A.D. […] and an Australian Sister […] both of whom had died of spinal meningitis. Buried in our part of the cemetery here. Saw graves of several Canadians there, among them Major Moss, 3rd Battalion. Mostly from Langemarck [Third Battle of Ypres], or the push last autumn.
>
> Rush began today. Convoys in continually from now on. Ports closed, so none out. Most cases surgical. Five tressles [sic] put down in each ward.

The references to specific diagnoses and cause of death—spinal meningitis—are characteristic, as is the reference to 'tressles', or how overcrowded Lighthall's ward was, with additional stretchers placed on trestles in the aisles in lieu of beds. A subsequent entry on 21 February 1917 refers to how Lighthall 'was to have had half-day, but "convoy" blew during second lunch hour, so that was off. Seven patients received in 15. Six extra tressles [sic] ordered raising our capacity to 42. All of patients and two admissions put on tressles.' This pattern of brief narratives of limited medical supply (precisely detailed) and human injury continues in Lighthall's entries for March and April 1917, tracking the medical development of the war, with a 'suspected case of Scarlet Fever in 15', where the soldier was 'isolated in side-ward, and taken away […] in evening', before the ward was placed under 10 days' quarantine (3 March 1917). The double-spread for 11 and 12 April 1917 details 'surgical convoys

nearly all day. 17 admitted to 15. Heavy cases and light mixed. […] 15 Ward completely filled. Operations and dressings all day.' In terms of the history of disease and infection in the First World War, cerebro-spinal meningitis and sepsis were common causes of death (with epidemics of meningitis across Europe and North America during the First World War), and scarlet fever was prevalent. Most significantly, in terms of medical and world history, Lighthall describes the outbreak of Spanish Flu, which would kill over 20 million people worldwide (Weitzman 2001; Ash 2014):

> Largest death-toll tonight that the hospital has ever had. More convoys of the new 'flu', almost like Pneumonic Plague. Starts with head symptoms […] then develops into violent pneumonia, with infamous and wild delirium. Temps turn 104 and 105 for a day or two, then death follows. 3 Ward is to be taken over for it next. All the medical side is crowded with it, also Wards 1 and 2. Gas marqhees [sic] busy. (Smith moved there.) All wounds where it is are isolated, nurses wear gauze masks.
>
> Unofficial news tonight that Austria has surrendered unconditionally. Can it be true? No more drafts from here being sent at the time. (1 November 1918)

The description of a flu 'almost like Pneumonic Plague', and the increasingly detailed accounts of symptoms and medical responsibility are particularly jarring given the earlier entry, from 1 November 1916: 'Went to the cemetery, and put fresh flowers on the graves of all the Canadians I could find (Major Moss […] the only officer among them.) All the French graves wonderfully decorated, and people making pilgrimages to them.' In the 1916 entries, Lighthall had the time and inclination to visit the graves of her countrymen; in 1918, not only had she had 'no time to write all summer' (20 October 1918), but her entries are markedly less likely to mention the class of her patients, and the proportion of officers to privates and NCOs in the ward. Instead, Lighthall's comments are focused on medical precautions, and brief speculations on the development of the wider war effort.

A similarly contrasting pattern is seen in Lighthall's diary entries for late March. In the same double-paged spread, Lighthall refers to:

> [The] ward filled to overflowing. Extra bed put in, five stretchers put down centre of ward. Dressing all day, up till 9pm. More refugee sisters arrived. Sister Blades told me it was wise to be ready to pack up at short notice, because we might possibly have to evacuate if Amiens falls. (28 March 1918)

Meanwhile, on 29 March 1917:

> Wild discussion broke out in the ward among English, Scotch and Australian men, about who were the bravest soldiers in France. They gave that honour to the Canadians, as having held the hottest front of the British line longer than anyone else. McGeachan told me about the 2nd battle of Ypres, and of how the Canadians lost their guns, and then won them back again, and immediately turned them on the Germans. He said that was the only time the Germans had used a gas […], as it proved too dangerous to themselves.

The uncomplicated patriotic fervour of Lighthall's entries for 1916 and early 1917 do not feature in her chronologically later entries, as her responsibilities and the death toll rose. While a shift in perspective is hardly uncommon in war diaries and accounts, this contrast is rendered particularly striking and obvious by the multi-year format of Lighthall's diaries. The relative optimism of the chronologically earlier entries, and the narrative significance of the multi-year form are most obvious in the short double-spread of 15 and 16 November:

> 15 Nov 1918: Put in application to have my contract cancelled.
>
> 16 Nov 1916: Signed on for the next six months, or the duration of the war, whichever terminates first.

Writing about VAD narratives and personal writings, Linda J. Quiney comments how in addition to Governmental censorship, 'hospital convention imposed its own censorship, well understood by the nurses and impressed upon the VADs, that they were not to discuss the private details of the patients or procedures' (Quiney 2017: 9). Quiney summarises many of these self-censored narratives as 'a cheery letter home to family or friends describing the delights of an afternoon outing with colleagues or the beauty of the French countryside, with no mention of the stresses or tensions of the hospital ward' (Quiney 2017: 9). While some of Gass's and Lighthall's writing does conform to this 'cheery' description, there are also longer narrative pieces and poetic extracts to both texts—and their self-editing is historiographically significant. Lighthall's main entry for 14 August 1918 reads as follows:

> Air raid last night shortly after eleven. I hadn't gone to sleep, though Bundett had. Both had to get up and dress and go out to our trenches. Could hear machines plainly for a long time right overhead. Barrage was

> lively, especially machine guns just across the road. Dropped an incendiary bomb which lit up the whole place. (Heard today that it hit the Rue Verte station.) Trenches very uncomfortable. Word came after everything had been quiet about 15 minutes to get out of them. Went up, only to be sent back by Matron. Then someone fainted further along, so in about twenty minutes we were bellowed to come out to go to our rooms. Told to go to medical wards if another alarm.
>
> Second alarm about half-past twelve. Machines close at hand again. Got up and went to Ward 13. (Bundett wouldn't come then.) Found Bundett with a flash-light, very nervous, patients sleeping quietly although the noise outside was terrific. Soaked a blanket under kitchen tap in case of fire. Both the day orderlies were there […] We all went to sit in the bunk until the noise stopped. Nothing seemed to be hit near us. Heard Capt. Lang ordering his patients to "stay where they were until the 'All Clear' blown". They seemed to be in the trenches outside 11 Ward. Went home about one mostly dead with sleep. Found everyone else had come back earlier.
>
> Third alarm blew about half past two I think. Dressed again, but didn't go out. Machines further away. Barrage not heavy. "All Clear" blew in about half an hour.
>
> [Written up the spine:] Heard today that the [illegible] Hospital was hit, also the theatre in the Rue de la République. Bombs dropped in R. de la R. and Rue Verte besides.

In addition to the framing of these air raids as a fleshed-out first-person narrative, Lighthall's focus on patient outcomes as well as personal experience is clear. Elsewhere, Lighthall mentions a colleague's account of air raids at the No. 8 Scottish General Hospital, where 'patients, barely able to walk themselves, helped to get the wounded out, and carry them to cellars', and in the aftermath of three weeks of bombing 'some of the VADs were shell-shocked, and [were] sent home on leave' (28 October 1917). These air raids were evidently an episode that Lighthall revisited—firstly, in a pencilled note in the margins of her entry for 14 August 1918, that 'Think this was the Rive Gauche [Left Bank] station, which was wrecked', with an arrow pointing to the hospital named in the main entry. Additionally, Lighthall inserted a bookmark into page spread for 15 and 16 August, marked '1918 Air Raids' (see Fig. 8.2). Such additions, far from damaging the original text, demonstrate a self-conscious desire to present a historically accurate personal account. Evidence of careful and deliberate archiving is evident elsewhere in Lighthall's papers: in the entry

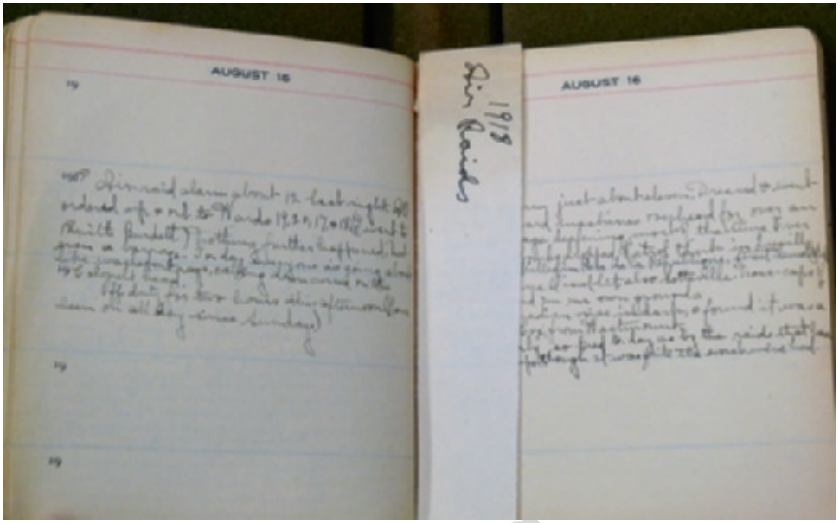

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Fig. 8.2 Lighthall Papers, August 15th–16th

for 8 April 1917, Lighthall wrote 'See May 8. Mistake in dates'—presumably with an audience other than herself in mind, and a desire for a coherent narrative.

These bookmarks are the final point of paratextual control in Lighthall's diaries—seen in the entries for 14–16 August 1918, but also throughout the text. Functioning as historical and personal chapter divisions, they include titles such as '1918 Amiens Push' (25 March), '1917 Passchendaele/1918 Ward 5' (6 August), '1916 Departure' (17 September), '1916 Arrival in France' (18 October), and 'Armistice Day' (11 November). Gérard Genette categorises this kind of material as '*intimate epitext*'—or 'any message bearing directly or indirectly on an author's own past, present, or future work which the author addresses to himself, with or without the intention of publishing it later' (Genette 1997: 387). I suggest that while these bookmarks—and, indeed, all of the paratextual material comprising Lighthall's self-archiving and editing of her papers—can be considered in these terms, there is something more political to the act of self-archiving, for both Gass and Lighthall, and their contemporary nurse-writers. In clearly presenting their work as the account of nursing practitioners, observing and participating in military

and medical history—both masculine-dominated zones—their careful attention to paratextual detail indicates authorial recognition and control of the significance of their narratives.

Both Gass and Lighthall operated within a context that undervalued their work and viewed their writing and medical practice as socially problematic. As such, it is not surprising that few nursing diaries were published in the aftermath of the First World War. However, the continued archival and publishing neglect of war nursing diaries also raises the question of whether we are still ill-prepared to publish the paratextual features that complicate these texts. Digitisation offers one solution to the paratextual problems of publishing war diaries and their associated insertions and additions; but, as Robert McLean discusses in chapter "Medical Marginalia in the Early Printed Books of University of Glasgow Library" in this collection, the politics of prioritisation for both cataloguing and digitisation remain an issue.

Note

1. With thanks to Alice Kelly for directing me to these letters in the La Motte Collection.

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