

The Midwife.

STARTING A BABY CLINIC IN B.C.

Come with me, my former fellow-workers and readers to a lovely little gap in the "Rockies," known as the "Okanagan Valley," world-famous for its fruit in summer-time, but it is winter now and all is covered with snow—such snow, the like of which the old country never gave us a hint—and at night when the northern lights peep over the mountain tops the scene is one of supreme splendour. It is here amidst scenery of unsurpassed grandeur we come in contact once again with the "boys" we got to love over there, for eight-tenths of the settlers are returned men holding land under the "Soldiers' Settlement Board," an organization the value of which cannot be over-estimated, and with their help these men are showing us that "Peace hath her victories no less renowned than war." We see the effects of this close contact with nature in the rapid return to health of these men who stood side by side with England that she might live.

Then, too, there is "Mrs. S. S. B.," so called because a thoughtful Government knew the boys were bringing back lots of life in a strange new country, far away from friends who would advise and help them, and so they installed one of these ladies in every district. You may never see her, your home may lie far from the beaten track; but sure enough, just as you are worrying yourself stiff over the fruit that needs canning, or the pig that wants pickling, right on time comes a letter giving detailed descriptions of every branch of farm life. These wonderful letters arrive without asking, and usually every two or three weeks. The last I received told me just how to cut up my husband's old trousers to fit "little Tommy," but it is a bit previous—he hasn't come yet!

Then, too, there is the "Women's Institute," whose never-tiring committee of local ladies look after the social welfare of all; it is to these ladies that the credit of starting the first baby clinic in the district is due.

We old-country nurses, who have been accustomed to a modern, well-equipped one in each district, cannot possibly imagine how much work this entailed; the collecting of literature, the running about in order to get in touch with out-lying homesteads, enlisting the sympathy and co-operation of doctors, tradespeople, &c. At last the great day came (January 9th, 1922, from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m.), and to my great joy I was asked to assist. Just think, for one whole afternoon to be back again amongst the work I love, and mentally compare these wee Canadians with our own, and wonder who would come out top—England or Canada.

The drill-hall was set apart, we helpers arriving in time to make the necessary preparations. At last they came; the greater majority of mothers

were Old-Country girls. They came chiefly on sleighs, some heavy teams brought two or three mothers with their babies all wrapped in cosy woollies and tucked away in boxes or buggies (prams) in preparation for the long drive.

Once inside the drill-hall all was well. Great was the excitement, twenty-five babies (including one pair of twins) turned up—and a right bonny set they were. All were medically examined, weighed, measured, and found fit; the whole business was a "howling success," and not one was found in real need of attention.

What a wonderful contrast to those we meet in overcrowded cities. How I longed to be able to give the old folks at home, who had parted with their girls, a glimpse of this, the most important product of British Columbia, and just thought how proud they would be to see them.

Tea was provided, and a good warm up; by 5 p.m. all had packed up their precious bundles, and set out for their far-distant homes—a very happy and contented set of mothers and babies.

(Mrs.) KATHLEEN R. CLEARY.

THE HUMAN AND THE BARNYARD MOTHER.

Dr. Lottie G. Bigler, U.S.A., in an article on "Expectant Mothers in Rural Regions," published in "Maternity and Child Welfare," writes:—

Isolated families, some of which are seventy miles from a doctor, are the ones who present the greatest problems. Many of them depend on ignorant midwives for their care and instruction. The mothers often work in the fields up to the last minute performing most arduous tasks. It seems to me that the expectant mother in the barnyard gets far more attention and better care than the one in the house. If the barnyard-mother gets sick the whole household is upset, especially if she be a pedigreed animal. The farmer sends for the best veterinarian, possibly miles away. The State provides free courses of instruction as to how to keep the animals healthy and how to produce the strongest offspring. A man came to engage me to attend his wife who was near term. He said she hadn't been well the whole nine months. I asked him why he hadn't consulted a doctor about her. He said he didn't think there was any need, he supposed they had to feel badly the nine months—she always had during her other pregnancies. In the course of the conversation, he asked me how much I charged. I told him my fee. He said that was ten dollars more than he had paid three years before. I informed him that all fees had been raised. He said he believed he could get it done at the same price he had paid before. He said:—

"I would like to have you—you have been

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