

SAFEGUARDING THE LIVES AND HEALTH OF MOTHERS & YOUNG CHILDREN IN KENTUCKY.

The Kentucky Committee for Mothers and Babies of which Mrs. Mary Breckinridge, R.N., of Hyden, Leslie County, Kentucky, well known to many of our readers, is Director, has just published its third "Quarterly Bulletin" from which we reproduce the accompanying illustration. The purpose of the Committee is to safeguard the lives and health of mothers and young children by providing trained nurse-midwives for rural areas where there are no resident physicians — these nurse-midwives to work under supervision; in compliance with the Regulations for Midwives of the State Board of Health, and the law governing the Registration of Nurses in Kentucky; and in co-operation with the nearest medical service. Right well does the Committee appear to be fulfilling this purpose.

We read that the work in Leslie County during the past quarter has been hampered but not held up, by rough weather. From the first snowfall in October on through the winter, the nurses have worked under difficulties, with what Galsworthy calls "nature with a small n." Miss Rockstroh came in one night literally frozen into her clothes and onto her saddle. It had rained and wet her through, then on her homeward ride it sleeted. The men had to lift her off the horse, her hat was prised loose, and her poncho, stiff as a board, lifted over her head. So, loosed from her bonds, she emerged every inch a nurse.

Several times the river has frozen hard except at the rapids, near which one commonly finds the fords. The horses crashed through the icy banks to the open stream often with bleeding hocks, and sometimes a way was made for them by a chivalrous mountaineer with his axe. More than once the fords were too high for fording and the horses swam over with nurse, saddle bags and all. Upon one such occasion a kindly woman ran down to the bank to meet Miss Logan on her return saying, "The river's dangerous, let me carry you over in my boat and my man will take your horse."

When the "tides" came the river was impassable on horseback, but the nurses met the calls from "yon side" by crossing a high swinging foot bridge, subject to collapse if its pillars loosened, and getting a stray mule, or else footing it in the storm. No weather arose during which the calls of the sick and the midwifery cases, of which thirty-nine have been registered to date, were unmet.

One of the most enduring things, says the "Bulletin" open to a remotely rural service like this is the liaison it can effect between the needs of the rural section, and the hospitals and specialists of the cities.

Instances are given of a four year old boy, terribly burned a year before who, when found by the nurses, had his right arm grown to his side like a wing. He was carried over the twenty-five miles of mountain trail from his home to the railroad, and then the night's ride by train to Lexington. There he occupied the free room endowed by Dr. Barrow in memory of his son at St. Joseph's Hospital, and Dr. Rankin released the little imprisoned arm, and grafted skin over the ruined tissue. After weeks of hospital care he returned to Camp Creek.

Mrs. M., on another creek of that far country had ulcerated legs, and other undesirable symptoms. She was taken to Lexington where the doctors worked out her diet, and taught her to give herself insulin. Now she is back in the home where she is adored, and with the help of the nurses follows the prescribed treatment, gives herself her own hypodermics of insulin, and instead of facing coma and death lives to rear her younger children and leave behind her a brood as intelligent and gallant as herself.

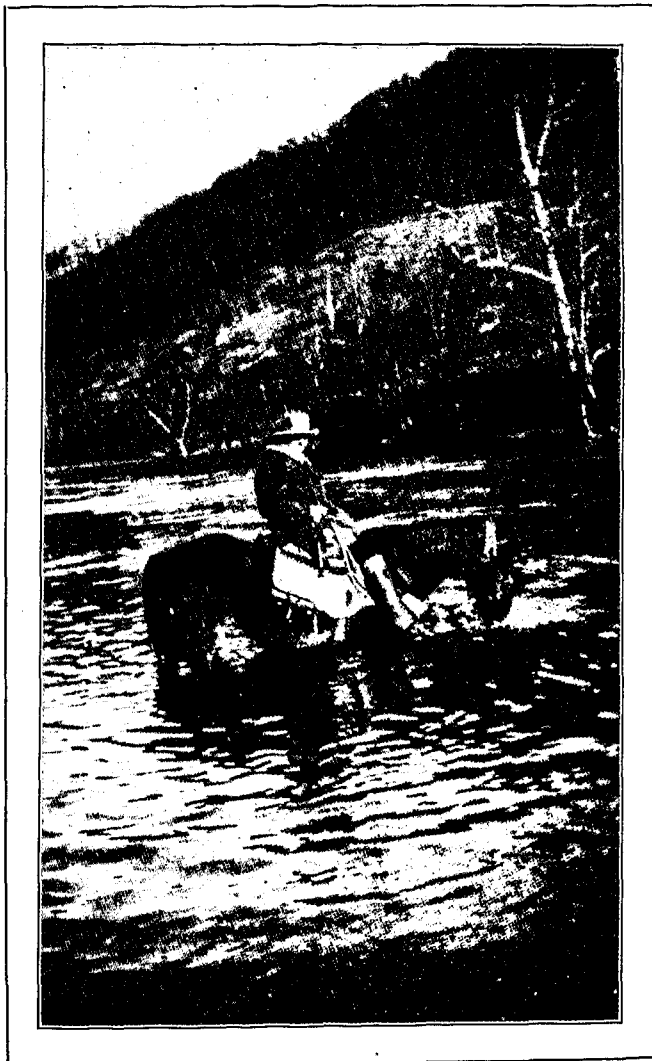
John J., of Hurricane Creek, aged sixteen, came to the nurses with a crushed right hand. They hurried him down to Lexington. At first amputation was thought essential but curetting and deep drainage under Dr. Massie's care, have saved the right hand and John is back again on Hurricane Creek, where he uses it powerfully and to some purpose, felling timber and preparing "rafts" to float down the river on the "tides."

Denny, aged ten months, came from Coon Creek, and it was not thought he would live through the ride down on a pillow on the pommel of Miss Rockstroh's saddle.

The Children's Hospital at Louisville, received him, but later Mrs. Henning carried him out to her spacious place in the country and kept him there for six weeks with a special nurse. Dr. Bruce handled his case. He was covered with carbuncles, "utter Lazarus, heel to head," his torture patiently borne with old sad eyes. Now Denny is a radiant toddling baby—

"God's sunshine asleep in his tresses
God's glory a-gleam in his eyes."

There has been no occasion yet to send out a midwifery case because of threatened complications, but Miss Caffin has three women whose motherhood has proved difficult



Nurse Fording the Middle Fork of the Kentucky River.

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