take the breast well. I gave a bottle for alternate feeds which altered matters, and she was a good little girl by the twelfth day, and the mother having made good progress was allowed home.

The date after the admission of the eclampsia case another maternity was admitted, in labour, but with uterine inertia. She was given a hypodermic of morphia, gr. \(\frac{1}{4}\), and slept all night. A fine boy was born at 5 p.m., to the joy of parents and grandparents. Ferdinand Joshua, the proud grandfather, came gratefully thanking me and beaming upon me as if this most wonderful event were my own working.

He came to take prayers in Eskimo, because four were Eskimo patients, and we had hymns and prayers every evening at nine until Marta Joshua was discharged.

At three o'clock one morning my dog aroused me, and I found an anxious father at the door. Johanna was bad. I sent him on with the maternity bag, dressed hurriedly, snatched up the torch, and followed, literally, in his footsteps. The snow was drifting and slippery over the smooth pathway trodden through the village. Twice I sat down during my trudge to the hut at the other end of the village; however, laughing to myself, I made haste slowly, arriving just half an hour before a son and heir was born to Peter Brait. Returning at 5 a.m., and finding myself in need of a cup of tea, I lit the fire in the kitchen, made tea, and as an extra treat, gave cups of tea in the ward. The patients were awake and eager for news. Calling my native help at 6 a.m., I retired for an hour, awakening to find a tray by my bed with breakfast. Susie had given breakfast in the ward and had let me sleep two hours.

One day when the weather was cold but sunny (March 13th), an Indian woman came in with word that one was ill at the encampment. I sent her to the Missionary, who arranged for a sledge to take me to the tents. It was heavy going over the trail, and the Indian woman who had come with her husband, made it all the heavier for him as he ran beside the sledge with his three dogs. We had fourteen dogs, but a heavy komatik (sledge). I wore three pairs of stockings, vamps (blanket inner-shoes), skin boots, and two jerseys beneath my sillapak (native outer garment), also tweed knickers under my skirt. With the hood of the sillapak over my woollen cap I kept warm, although the wind was keen crossing the lake. After a three mile run, during which the other komatik was always within two or three yards of us, we saw the tents in the distance. Entering the tent of duck, covered in places by deerskins, I found a stove in the centre, a floor covering of spruce boughs, and under some skins, the patient. She was in her eighth month, but very unsettled, and on palpation I could feel the limbs of a child. Leaving her a sedative and orders to send for me when labour started, we began our return journey.

The dogs were not so slow, knowing they were returning home, but suddenly the leader darted at right angles, the pack following suit. As we were going downhill it turned the komatik sharply, but I held on and helped to put on the brake by digging my feet in the snow. We returned to the Hospital about seven p.m., very hungry, of course, but having enjoyed the trip despite the cold wind. Some three weeks later a message came from the husband, but as the weather was particularly bad, snow drifting and windy, I was not allowed to respond to the call until the following day. Arriving at the tent, which had been moved about a mile away across the lake, I found a bonny boy covered with sawdust and wrapped in skins. baby needed attention, but certainly not the mother, who was sitting up as if nothing had happened. I was thankful to be able to leave them tea and biscuits, and after a talk with them—they were wearing crucifixes—(these Red Indians are nominally Roman Catholics), I left, asking

her to come into the village later. This trip ended without mishap, except that I fell off near the Hospital. Feeling myself slipping I rolled over and was sitting up by the time the komatik had stopped, with the men shouting "ai, ai." I do not like a box on the komatik, but sit Turkish fashion, holding the sides; the bag is strapped on with my bearskin and the cushion I sit upon.

Early last month (August) word came that a man was ill with pneumonia, and a motor boat came in from Gravevard Tickle. No patients were in Hospital, so it was decided that I should visit him. Leaving Nain at 1.30, with my help and her father and brother, our boat passed close to the mail schooner on her way to Nain. Later the engine broke down, and the other boat towed us for a few miles whilst the engine was overhauled. A head wind made quite a loppy sea, but this was not too unpleasant. I took the tiller for a time; it was easy to follow the other boat. However, when one can see rocks beneath the water, it makes one think what might happen in a fog, but remembering One Who walked upon the sea we felt safe in His Hands. Graveyard Tickle was reached about 8 p.m., after passing many fishing stations where one could see the crews of the schooners at their work. Hauling codfish seems a successful work this summer; the crews work early and late. The patient was in a tent, but in an exhausted condition. After having given him the necessary medicine and instructions, I visited the other families, giving cough tablets, as colds were very prevalent at this station. A schooner lying in the bay was being loaded, and hearing that a nurse had arrived, one man came across for treatment. Luckily I had what was necessary in the bag.

The fog began to drift in and against the wishes of the people we commenced our return voyage. I did not wish to be away too long, having a prospective maternity case waiting. We safely passed a bad shoal, when the fog closed in around us, making it very difficult to keep our bearings. At eleven o'clock, the wind rising, it was thought advisable to anchor, and we stole into a little bay between rocks, dropping two anchors to moor the boat. To my joy a sleeping bag was put ready for me, and I crawled in with my help. A rug and sails were flung over us by her father, who made tea and called us to tea and biscuit with sausage. Quite a picnic! And being hungry I enjoyed it. Unfortunately it was too cold for sleep, but I dozed at intervals. At 4 a.m. we hauled up anchors, nibbled a biscuit, and waited patiently for the kettle to boil. dipped my handkerchief overboard, and had a wash, and then took charge of the tiller for a while. Two grampuses were seen and fired at, but we did not stop. The mailboat was seen in the distance coming from Nain, and thankfully we rounded the point to catch a glimpse of home at 6.30 a.m. At seven o'clock we were close enough to see smoke issuing from the Hospital chimney, and glad indeed we felt to return to find its cheery warmth and hot coffee awaiting us, also a huge mail. My dog nearly ate me, he was so pleased. So ended my first night out in a sleeping bag.

The out-patients come in good time now, they have learnt that from 10 to 12 is their time. But the ailment is the last thing that I learn, and that only after much questioning. The children call me "The little Doctor," but I cannot write the word they use. To-day a little patient has been admitted with pleuritic pain; she is writing the word for me, "Aniasiutiagulak."

"The whole trend of modern medicine is towards the prevention of disease and to do this the beginnings of disease must be understood. This means that the laity have to be let into some of the secrets of medicine. Therefore, it is of infinite importance to be able to observe the beginnings of early phases."

previous page next page