

The Midwife.

THE CENTRE.

HEADQUARTERS OF THE SEOUL CHILD WELFARE UNION.*

By Elma T. Rosenberger.

"The Centre," you say, "why call it the Centre?" Well, just because it is exactly that, the centre of Seoul. In the garden stands a weather-beaten octagonal stone, bearing signs of carving, nearly obliterated by the storms of many years. This is the "Centre Stone," placed there by King Yi Sung Kei to mark the exact geographical centre of the walled city, when Seoul was laid out as the new capital of the Yi Dynasty, about A.D. 1395.

Events of importance have occurred here. The old buildings of the original palace were erected at State

and number of departments; it is a real community centre from which activities radiate to many parts of the city; long-standing historic interests make the spot a national shrine for all Korean patriots.

The entire Centre family numbers about 2,890, included in the various clubs, classes, clinics, and extension groups for women and children, girls and boys, belonging to four departments: Social Service; Educational; Evangelistic; and Public Health and Child Welfare. It is the last-named which we wish especially to describe.

The Public Health and Child Welfare Work had very small beginnings. My Korean nurse and I started out in 1924 on a cold winter morning to visit and find our way into the homes. At first we were very discouraged because nobody understood our intention, but after a while we managed to make ourselves necessary to four homes and

one little baby followed us back to the clinic. The second day two came, and so on, until the newspapers wrote articles on this new idea—two nurses going into the homes and caring for the patients, working for the good of the mothers and the children. After that we did not need to go to the homes any more, but had calls coming to us in greater numbers than we could answer.

In the spring, thinking that a baby-show would extend our work and message, we prepared for one—doubtful enough, however, in our hearts as to whether our mothers would come or not. Since we had only sixty babies registered at that time, we put a notice in the paper about the show. Our surprise was great when one thousand babies came—each with its mother, and some with their fathers and all brightly dressed—truly a picturesque sight. But our disappointment was great, since we could of course not meet their needs; they wanted examination and attention. In our confusion we sent out and

bought all the toys in a Japanese toy-store—nine hundred in all, and gave them to the children and sent them away, having tried to examine one hundred. We thought the mothers would never come back, but, strange to say, they did, and the great opening for this kind of work became obvious.

Since then the work has grown. A year ago we organized what is known as the "Seoul Child Welfare Union." This is not an official organization, but is simply under the control of Mission Hospitals, with headquarters at the Social Evangelistic Centre, Seoul.

The programme of work is as follows:

- (1) Several clinics throughout the city; new ones to be opened as soon as funds and doctors are available.
- (2) Three central well-baby clinics.
- (3) These clinics to act as teaching centres for student doctors and nurses.
- (4) These clinics to be "well-baby clinics," *i.e.*, any ailments to be referred to private doctors or hospitals for treatment.



Children of the Seoul Child Welfare Union, who made steady gain and were not ill once through the year, with their mothers or grandmothers.

expense by King Joong Jong, who began his reign in 1504, and who built and beautified this palace for his son-in-law, Prince Koo. Persons whose names are illustrious in Korea's history have walked these halls; the rambling buildings with their old, long corridors and closed courtyards have witnessed many strange sights during these centuries. Many are the tales these walls might tell; stories of brave knights and ladies fair, of *tokgabi* (spooks) and *quisin* (spirits) and ghostly visitors which have been whispered here by the folk of long ago. Largely owing to political changes, the entire property came into the market towards the close of 1919, and those interested in the founding of a Woman's Social Evangelistic Centre were enabled to purchase it.

There are outstanding characteristics of the work which make it unique. It is a joint institution, where different Mission Boards co-operate; there are a remarkable variety

* In the *International Nursing Review* Abridged.

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