

FROM OUTPOSTS OF EMPIRE.

We always read eagerly letters and articles which appear in the Nursing Press from Outposts of Empire, and have ventured to quote the following letter from Baffin Land, which appeared in *The Canadian Nurse* for March.

FROM BAFFIN LAND.

Through the courtesy of a personal friend of Miss Prue Hockin we are permitted to publish these interesting extracts from her letters. Miss Hockin is nurse-in-charge of the Anglican Mission Hospital at Pangnirtung, Baffin Land. The white population is composed of a physician, the missionary and his wife, the hospital housekeeper, members of the Royal Northwest Mounted Police and officials of the Hudson Bay Company. Mail is received and sent out once a year by the steamer which brings in supplies. Miss Hockin is a graduate of the School of Nursing of the Children's Hospital of Winnipeg; she has "signed up" for a period of five years and two more years must elapse before she comes home on furlough. —Editor.

Although we have no actually dark days, from about the middle of November to the middle of February the sun does not rise high enough to shine down into the valley, though we see it shining on the hills opposite. Early in May we start getting twenty-four hours of sunlight and this continues until the end of July. However the ice does not go from the fjord until the end of June. Only on very dull winter days do we need a light for dinner. It isn't so terribly cold, not more than about 48° below zero. This is the place the wind is made and when it blows it moves everything movable, including the snow. The hospital is quite warm, except the floor. In very cold weather we have to wear our fur boots in the house, and of course we wear our woollies. I've only worn my fur kooletang a few times, my woollen one, which is made of duffe (just like a blanket), has been enough. These garments look just like a big middy with a hood on it. A second one, made of tent canvas is often worn over the woollen one as a wind break, then in spring it is one's spring coat. My spring one is trimmed with green and blue braid and my duffe one has bead work around the bottom and wolverine fur round the hood and cuffs. We have gauntlet mitts made of caribou; they are the hugest things you ever saw. Our boots have caribou legs and bearded seal soles (nothing on earth smells just like bearded seal), and the soles are like moccasins with the fur legs all in one piece and a draw-string round the top, just below the knee. Inside these we wear caribou socks just above the ankle, fur side in.

On one occasion the doctor in charge of our hospital went out with his native to the mouth of the fjord to fish for sharks through a crack in the ice, so we went too. It was a lovely sunny day, no wind and the thermometer just above zero. Arrived at the crack we put up a small tent and made tea on a primus stove, and had biscuits, frozen butter and cheese. We then proceeded along the crack with the doctor. We let down sixty fathoms of line but did not catch a shark. When we returned to our tent we found four other teams there, native families returning from their winter camps with their furs and household goods aboard. We all came back together and it was surely good fun. Another time we were gone all day on a sealing trip. The seal nets are about fifty feet long and twenty feet wide and have meshes big enough for a seal to get his flipper through; sometimes he manages to get his head through too. Two corners at one side are weighted so that the net hangs straight up and down in the water while the top is floated with corks. One end is anchored securely to the reef. We enjoyed the trips and thought nothing of

coming back with a boat load of seals, and usually an "oojuck," which is the big bearded seal; they weigh from 800 to 1,000 pounds and are much more "fragrant" than the others. While going from net to net we watched for seals and sometimes they were all around us. They just stick their heads up, look around and then down they go, except when they come right up and turn a flip. One day we chased an "oojuck" for over an hour but he got away. If these seals are killed with the first shot they sink and are lost so they have to be only wounded until one can get the boat close enough to harpoon them.

The people all come in to assist with the whale drive and it is a wonderful sight to see the tiny skin tents spring up over night. Very often our population increases over night from 50 to 450, and the dog population increases in proportion too. The drive is for white whales and is made at the head of the gulf where the tide rises nearly five miles. The men go off with their sail boats towed by the Hudson Bay Company and the police motor boats. The women stay here. When the hides come in, the women work cutting the fat off the hides and cutting it up to go through the machine that turns it into oil. The hides are also sent out. The meat is cached for winter dog feed. They got 400 whales this year. We had a busy time suturing cut fingers and attending the women who had fainting fits during the time they worked. Nearly all our patients begin by having a real good sleep. Of course during the summer they are up most of the time. Children play outside any time until 6 a.m. and then sleep late in the morning unless there is any excitement to keep them awake. The babies are fat, good natured things but it is rather a shock when one offers to take a nice looking baby all dressed up in its party clothes to find that it has no "didy nor nothing." Most of the babies wear a sweater or skirt made of flannel, a caribou skin coat which covers their body, a caribou bonnet and boots up to their knees. The women have full backs on their kooletangs to carry the baby in and a tight waist line so that they won't fall through. When they turn their hoods up the babies are out of sight. All the women over ten years of age have their kooletangs made this way whether there is any prospect of them having anything to carry or not. It always amuses me to see the women bend over and shake the babies out of their kooletangs, yet they never drop them.

We now have a Nurses' Auxiliary of the Christian Medical Association of India as well as the Trained Nurses' Association of India (the latter in affiliation with the International Council of Nurses). Our group here has just given a contribution to the India Committee of the Florence Nightingale Memorial Foundation. So in our small way we are linked up with this world-wide movement to honour our Founder, and no doubt we shall realise the value of our sharing in this effort to promote the highest ideals of nursing education. I enjoyed getting further news of the Memorial in *The Canadian Nurse*, and seeing Queen Mary's message, which I will pass on to my nurses.

MARGARET COLTART, U.C.C. Mission,
Banswara, S. Rajputana, India.

INTERNATIONAL HOSPITALS ASSOCIATION.

The Hon. Secretary of the British Hospitals Association has received a draft of the revised Constitution of The International Hospitals Association, and submitted to its Council, which Council is of opinion that advantage should be taken of this opportunity by all those organisations entitled to membership of the I.H.A. to review the situation in its constitutional and financial aspects. As The International Hospitals Association meets in Rome from May 5th to 12th, 1935, the opportunity for investigation presents itself.

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