

A GALLANT BAND OF NURSES AND THE FLOODS.

Mrs. Breckinridge, R.N., LL.D., Director of the Kentucky Frontier Nursing Service, gives us, in the *Quarterly Bulletin* of the Service, just received, a vivid description of the floods caused by the rivers and creeks, all of which have been on a rampage worthy of the Ohio and the Mississippi, which they feed.

"When the rivers," writes Mrs. Breckinridge, "rise to past the fording stage for horses, and then rise on until they are too swift to use the little boats with safety, we cross on the swinging bridges; this flood has washed away every one on both rivers.

"The one section, the heaviest losses on both the Red Bird and the Middle Fork lay on the lower reaches of the rivers, where about four out of five homes were inundated and a number washed away. The bedding and home-canned foodstuffs of the people in the flood-swept homes were completely destroyed; many barns with all the hay and feed, miles and miles of fencing were washed on down towards the Gulf of Mexico; stock and chickens were drowned.

"As far as we have been able to ascertain, there has been no loss of life. Our people are early risers, and most of them were up as the water began creeping into their homes in the darkness of the winter morning. Of course, they helped one another. Old Josh Whitehead knew that Shelby Asher's wife and baby were alone in their cottage that night. When the water reached his own house he struggled down the bank, while his house and everything in it were washed away, and rescued the wife and baby of his neighbour, although he could not save their supplies.

"At Big Creek, Aunt Ann Napier, 83 years old and ill, had a doubly tragic experience. There were 10 ft. of water in her home. She was carried out and transported by boat to neighbours. This new place stood higher than Aunt Ann's house, and although the flood dampened it, nobody had to move away. However, in order to dry the place out, extra large fires were built and it burned down. Again Aunt Ann had to be caught up from her bed and rushed outside.

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"So many boats were carried off that rescue work was doubly difficult. Several of the men had to swim. Everywhere we get reports of gallantry and good humour, as well as friendliness.

"All of our nursing centres are built high above the rivers, but even so the water rose 5 ft. at the gate of the Possum Bend Centre at Confluence, reached the cow barn, and got into the cellar of the centre itself. At Wendover the orchard was flooded, and the water came 20 ft. up through the garden gate. It flooded the Hurricane bottom so that we were marooned from all communications from the outside. The telephone lines were swept away, mail was completely disrupted, and travel is still so difficult and dangerous even for horses that our nurses have been scrambling out on foot to the flood babies.

"At the Clara Ford nursing centre, above Big Creek, on Red Bird River, the senior nurse, May V. Green, took in three entire refugee families from the flood that night. The hospital at Hyden is, of course, hundreds of feet above the river, and its only difficulty came from the driving rains, which have badly damaged the lower retaining wall, and disconnected the pipes bringing the water supply for the hospital from the reservoir tank. The hospital was without water for 24 hours, surrounded by a sea of water! Hyden, itself, like Big Creek, was hard hit, but in both communities men whose homes were flooded joined in the work of rescue of people in other homes, as soon as their families had been laced in safety. Our senior nurse at Hyden, Vanda

Summers, was out on a delivery at the mouth of Short Creek the night of the flood. When she got back early the next morning, she took our car and used it to help in the rescue work as far up Rock House as it could travel.

"Typical is the report of Eya Gilbert, who writes from Bowlingtown that the water came to the second loft of the store on Mrs. William Barger's place; that the Will Bowling house had water to the ceiling of the first floor; that the Hannah Barger place had water to the mantel; that nearly 3 ft. of water came into the Floyd Bowling House, where she had a two-weeks' old baby; that one family, with a new-born baby, got out in time, but that the house was completely turned round by the flood. She was troubled when she wrote because she had not been able to get to one of her expectant mothers, with high blood pressure, because of the mire and the quicksand between. Another distressing situation was that of Mrs. Oscar Begley, whose house, with everything in it, burned to the ground before the flood. Mrs. Begley grabbed her 10-day-old baby and the next older child and ran out with them in her bare feet, into the wet and cold.

"The rise of water varies on different parts of the rivers, with estimates as high as 35 ft. on the lower reaches. On Red Bird, Aunt Jane Ledford, who has lived in the same house for 60 years, says that the flood was higher by some feet than any tide she had ever seen. On the Middle Fork, between Wendover and Hyden, Uncle Jess Bowling has kept 'marks' of tides since 1861. The flood is 3½ ft. beyond any previous 'mark.'"

The composure of the mountaineer was well illustrated by old John Feltner, a peg-legged man in his seventies, and sick in bed. He had lived in his home on Red Bird River all his life, and when he was told that the water was rising all around him he said that he knew from experience it wouldn't get into the house, and he refused to be moved. Again and again members of his family came to him and begged him to let them move him, but he wouldn't. Finally the muddy waters reached his bed, and that convinced him. He yelled, "For God's sake, take me out quick."

It is a hard and dangerous life always. Accentuated when such floods as that described above devastate the countryside. But to Mrs. Breckinridge and her gallant band of helpers it is a full and satisfying one. They are happy in the knowledge that their work brings comfort and safety to thousands, many of whom would otherwise suffer unnecessarily, and maybe die, for lack of skilled care; and that is the most precious reward to the true nurse.

COURAGE.

Courage is the price that life
 Exacts for granting peace.
 The soul that knows it not
 Knows no release
 From little things;
 Knows not the livid loneliness
 Of fear,
 Nor mountain heights, where
 Bitter joy may bear
 The sound of wings.
 How can life grant us boon of
 Living, compensate
 For dull gray ugliness and
 Pregnant hate,
 Unless we dare
 The soul's dominion? Each time
 We make a choice, we pay
 With courage to behold resistless
 day
 And count it fair.

Amelia Earhart, 1934.

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