

Editorial Notes

A DOCTOR'S LIFE IN WESTERN CANADA

The country doctor at home—and, in fact, all members of the public health service—often have to do duty under difficulties, but they are as nothing compared with the experiences of men out in the great wild west of Canada. It was our privilege the other day to see a letter from one who has spent about fifteen months in an isolated station, and we think some account of his work will be of interest. The writer says:—"Often in the course of my practice in the country I have many weird and peculiar experiences, and I think some of my old professors and doctors unfamiliar with anything other than city work would look askance at some of the things I have to do, especially in my obstetrical work, of which I do a considerable amount, as the Westerners are very prolific. Many times I have to be nurse and doctor and get my own meals. Among the German and Russian settlers, who live in small shacks, sometimes only one room, I have some funny experiences. Some of the families cannot speak English, and my knowledge of German, etc., is very limited, and the motions I have to go through would make one think I was a Jew. However, they are very grateful as a rule, and one gets some almost helpless cases, as they try everything in the calendar first before sending for a doctor. I have some very long drives to make sometimes; will drive forty or fifty miles on one trip. Of course, during the summer it is not so unpleasant, as I drive a car, and the roads and trails, when they are good, are unsurpassed. But now, since winter has set in, with the mercury hanging around 30 degrees and 40 degrees below zero, and a blinding blizzard on, and the trails obscured, believe me when I say, it is awful. It seems that when the weather is roughest and the nights coldest and darkest, then do I have the most work to do."

The "night bell" at home is not a welcome sound to the tired practitioner after a hard day's work. Yet few get such experiences as the following:—"A few nights ago I was called out to a case in the country—a very cold night. The road was scarcely broken; I was feeling tired and anxious to go to bed. It was midnight when the call came in. I got my team and sleigh and got out to the place; luckily it was only a few miles. I had to remain there for two or three hours, leaving there about 4 a.m."