

THE CANADIAN BABY

In a few days, the Conservation Commission is to hold a Session at Ottawa, to consider the Conservation of Canadian Men and Women. They will also consider the question of the Conservation of the Canadian Baby. This article is dedicated to the Grand Men and Women who will attend that Conference, in the hope that it may help them in their discussions.

By MAIN JOHNSTON



THIS is the age of shows. There are horse shows and automobile shows, cat shows and dog shows—all the time! It is only at long intervals, however, that there is a humanity show. It is probably for this reason that the Baby Show at the Canadian National Exhibition on Labour Day created a lively interest, which has not died out yet.

There have been a few somewhat similar events before, but none on such a scale as this. Over three hundred babies were on exhibition, many of whom came from widely separated points in Canada. There were naturally many funny incidents in connection with the show. You cannot bring three hundred babies to one place without having lots of excitement. There were the nervous mothers and the boasting mothers, the quiet babies and the crying babies, and, on every side, the crowds of interested spectators, to whom the whole affair was better than a circus.

The amusement passes, but the permanent results remain. The Baby Show proved to be a distinct encouragement for those interested in Canadian social problems. It proved without a doubt that it is possible to bring up children in the cities of Canada, who will compare favourably with those anywhere in the world. The six babies who won the main prizes were all from the city of Toronto, and not from country districts.

Every one of the eight doctors who acted as judges agreed that the standard of excellence was remarkably high.

"It was simply a revelation to me," declared one of them.

"I have had experience with babies in Great Britain and Europe, but I have never seen such a good average. The muscular development in the majority of cases was really surprising, and, as a concomitant of this, there were signs of a healthy mental state. The eyes were bright and keen, and revealed a quick brain within."

It might be objected that these babies were "hand picked," so to speak, and that it is not fair to base judgments upon them. In one sense, they were chosen, of course, for no mother would bring a baby who was suffering from a disease. On the other hand, a mother's opinion of her child is often an exaggerated one, and she, in her fondness, might think her baby perfect—but the doctors quite possibly would hold a different view. For example, she might rely on its prettiness or its rolls of fat, which are not always a proof of health.

These children, however, came from all classes of the community, and in such numbers that it might be expected reasonably that some of them would be decidedly mediocre or worse.

In view of these facts, the doctors' unqualified praise is all the more significant.

Another feature of special interest is the fact that the majority of the front rank babies were the children of mothers who had come here from Great Britain. The doctors remarked upon this at the time, and the writer followed up the suggestion by asking the mothers of the six prize babies, where they themselves had been born.

Replies were received from five of them. One had been born in Berlin, Ontario; the other four had come from Great Britain, three from England and one from Scotland.

"There is a reason for that," declared one of the medical men, "and one which it would be worth while for Canadians to consider seriously. The majority of Old Country women are not as 'sophisticated' as our mothers here. They live more simply, and they do not spend their time in reading baby books, and consulting the clock to know when to give the child its next bottle of baby food."

"Without one exception, every one of the particularly fine babies at the Exhibition had been fed from nature's fountain!"

At any rate, wherever the babies or their

mothers came from, they are all Canadians now, and it has been demonstrated that healthy children can be reared in the cities. The Baby Show will, in all probability, be an annual event hereafter at the Exhibition. It will doubtless do much good. If it is considered important to watch the development of horses and dogs, surely it is of far greater value to consider the question of the children. Unfortunately, all babies are not like those at the Show. Many of them, as everyone knows too well, are weak and sickly.

There is no problem more vital to any country than the health of its children. If the Baby Show attracts attention to this element of the population, if it does anything towards the rearing of bright, laughing, well developed boys and girls, it should receive every encouragement, not only in Toronto, but throughout the country.

None But the Brave

By ALICE LUCILLA FAIRWEATHER

From Miss Polly Morton of New York to her friend Grace Fletcher, of the same city.

At Sea, January 17th, 190—

Dearest Grace,—Such an indefinite address as the one mentioned above, and yet it is all I can tell you of our "whereabouts." We have been out four days and have had very rough weather. The wind has tried to see in how many ways it could blow, and the result has been much unhappiness among the passengers. Mrs. James has not left her cabin, and Susy's sole conversation consists of groans and resolves never to go on board a ship again.

I am fortunate in being a good sailor, (remember our last trip across) and have been making the acquaintance of some of my fellow-passengers.

There are the usual types of people that one invariably meets travelling—The old man and his young over-dressed wife—the fussy man who complains of the food—the talkative woman who has taken the trip before, and wants to tell you all about it. At the table I am placed beside a very young man who, so far, has not ventured a single remark, even the weather.

Oddly enough, there are two men I know on board. One is George Baxter, a college chum of cousin Fred's, and the other is Mr. Campbell, who I met two years ago in Boston. You may be sure I am thankful for two such nice companions. Some of the ladies are very kind, but there are so

many ways a man can make himself useful on board ship, and these two do not neglect any opportunities. I will write again after we leave Cuba.

Lovingly as always,

POLLY.

Somewhere in the Tropics, February 27th, 190—

Dearest Grace,—You have seen all the wonders of these Islands, so I won't waste time describing scenery. Mrs. James and Susy are enjoying the trip at last, and Susy looks much better, though she is far from strong yet.

I have been well looked after by Mr. Campbell and Mr. Baxter. I don't know which I like the better of the two, and my dear, it has reached that point where I shall soon have to decide. Why will men propose on board ship? It is so awkward. It is a help to write to you even though you can't reach me to advise me. You see I like them both so much. George Baxter appeals to my ideal of manly strength, both of body and character, while Mr. Campbell seems to understand and sympathise with my thoughts and ambitions.

Next day.

My dear I have decided, or rather *the rat* decided for me. After an exciting night and morning, I will try to tell you all about it.

Last night I had just got to sleep, when Susy suddenly awakened me by saying, in a weak voice, "Polly, I know there is a rat in the room." You know how terrified I am even of a mouse, but I pretended to be brave, and lighting the light, I chased out, with the help of an umbrella, a horrible rat. All was quiet for a few minutes, and then, from the next state room, where my two lovers were, came sounds of canes rattling and boots being thrown about, evidently the rat had visited them. Presently, through the curtain I saw Mr. Campbell, fully dressed, standing in the passage, and in our door rushed the rat once more. Susy and I shrieked, "Oh, come and kill it," and what do you think he said, "I'll go and get a cat, Miss Morton," and off he went somewhere. I should not care if I never saw him again. A second later the rat ran into the passage, George killed it with a heavy cane, and peace was restored for the night.

I could not tell even my dearest friend all that happened next morning, but George says he will never forget what a picture I looked in my pink kimona, and I know I could not refuse when he asked me if he might always look after and protect me. I shall never say I hate rats again.

Your very happy

POLLY.



Prize Babies and Proud Mothers at the Toronto Exhibition