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"DON'T EXPECT ME TO KNOW THINGS"

SMALL, very feminine, and mouse-quiet, Miss Kathleen Hall is easily overlooked in a crowd. But talk to her personally, and you get a different impression. Her permanently sun-tanned face lights up and her replies come with a concrete conciseness of one accustomed to action and decision. She has been in China as a missionary for 20 years, the last two of which she has spent working with the Chinese Red Cross.

And what experience she has had!

"Don't expect me to know things," she modestly warned a member of the *New Zealand Listener* staff who met her casually on his holiday. "Remember I am only a nurse, and when I trained in New Zealand 25 years ago, nurses were not supposed to need a very high standard of general education."

"But at least in your own work you noticed differences between China and here."

"Yes, even then Union Medical College in Peiping (Peking), was better equipped than any hospital in New Zealand is to-day. But that was because the Rockefeller Foundation had just endowed what was originally a missionary college and hospital. You will realise that all medical work in China has been started by missionaries, and even now is greatly helped by them. But of course for the last 20 years there have been numbers of very able and gifted Chinese nurses and doctors with whom we worked; and these numbers are increasing all the time. As the years passed, and I got out into the country, I saw dirt and disease and ignorance and malnutrition and poverty such as I had never believed possible—scores of millions in our single province alone living as Europe did in the Middle Ages."

"And was nothing being done for them?"

"Gradually—very gradually. There were only us to help in those days, and we were very few and very poor. Personally, working under a Chinese doctor, I had a hand in pioneering several country hospitals. The two of us would start by hiring one room in a village house and then as nurses came for training, we could expand. When the hospital was well staffed with our own graduate trainees, and doctors could be got, we could go on somewhere else equally needy and untouched. We brought the nurses up to the Government's 'Registered Nurses of China' standard, and it is a high one."

"Then the Government gave help?"

Home Industries for Security

"Well, no, only *that* sort of help. Because through most of these years there was no Central Government. Rival armies swung to and fro through our area—starving peasants without prospects, who had nothing left but to join some bandit group. We fought disease and ignorance in our small corner year after year, and often felt utterly hopeless and wasting our time in the

general anarchy. You see, simply healing patients was not nearly enough. To tackle disease we had to tackle everything else as well—living conditions, house hygiene, elementary education, and village industries under the leadership of James Yen. Young Chinese trainees have made far-reaching and most helpful experiments in mass education work. By encouraging home industries we helped the peasants in their struggle with the debt system. And I



They worked together: Miss Hall with Dr. Jean Chiang, who was in charge of Red Cross units on the Northern Front

was desperately feeling the urge for us Christians not only to preach the Gospel but to *live* it. When Chiang Kai-Shek came up from Canton and unified Central China, we had less banditry, and a feeling of some progress. And then later the "New Life Movement" that he and Madame started cleaned up the local government amazingly, and gave our area for a while a governor who stamped out opium and heroin instead of himself profiting by them. And then the Communists, who marched four thousand miles round the edge of Chiang's territories when he drove them out of Kiangsi, came and occupied our area."

"Their coming must have greatly restricted your activities."

"To our very great relief."

"Relief?"

"Indeed. Try and imagine how it felt for a tiny group of us who had been struggling against such odds of dirt, vice, ignorance, and debt, as well as disease, to see whole villages going to school, sanitation introduced, local industries built up and all unused land brought into cultivation as State property for the poorest. We could at last drop everything else and concentrate on our proper medical work."

"But wasn't there a—what shall we call it?—ideological clash, Communists with their own hot gospel to preach would hardly let you go on instilling The Opium of the People."

"In our practical work there was no clash. Once they have seen what Christian missionaries are really doing, most of the Communist generals have actually got in behind us. As a matter of fact, I had had several helpful discussions both on practical matters and our

(continued on next page)