

NURSING UNDER DIFFICULTIES

(Written for "The Listener" by B. RISTORI)

IT is asking for trouble to say that you will not do a certain thing. For almost invariably that is the one thing you find yourself doing. When we left Australia in 1939, neither my husband nor I had any intention of returning, but the war altered many people's plans, including ours, and March, 1941, found us in company with 400 Chinese setting off from Brisbane for a "long journey inland." We had no idea where we were going, and even when we did learn the name of our destination we could not find it marked on any map, not even on a large-scale pastoral map! We were half way across Australia before we met a man who was able to tell us that Hatches Creek was in the Northern Territory.

Because of various delays it took us two months to arrive. The railway ends at Alice Springs, so the last 300 miles were done by truck. The first 200 miles followed the old telegraph road to Birdum, but the last 95 miles followed no road at all—only old dry creek-beds. On the whole journey we passed only one building on the road. Neither did we see many animals—two kangaroos, and two emus and one wild turkey being the sum total.

* * *

IT was sunset when we arrived at our destination—a large open space with a water-bore. In the distance were low foothills—the whole scene magnificent for its vastness, but hard to visualise as a place of residence; lacking as it did all the things which one looks upon as essential for everyday life. Here we were destined to stay for two years or the

(continued from previous page)

and is spending £800,000 per annum on research, why should not this or the Geological Survey Department be prepared to check any findings. I was ready to go to the Thames at any time, and to indicate the location of quartz formations on virgin flat country, provided that experts of either of the above departments will meet me with their instruments and prove me right or wrong.

With regard to *The South African Mining and Engineering Journal*, which was founded in 1891, this publication is a recognised authority and states facts. The following extract from this journal is of interest:

In 1798, Gerboin, professor at the faculty of medicine at Strasbourg, having observed the movement of a ball fastened to the end of a string with which a child was playing, invented the dowsers' pendulum, which is generally held to give more accurate results than the rod in mineral prospecting.

Personally, I do not use the pendulum, nor am I one of the elite who divine with their bare hands.

R. LIVINGSTON (Takanini).

(Abridged.—Ed.)

"duration"—the Chinese to mine wolfram, ourselves to care for their health.

As there was nowhere for us to live, we spent our first month with Lou Bailey, son of the well-known Auckland shipbuilder. He possessed the one and only decent house on the field. But he and his man were baching, and the house really was not large enough to take in Doctor and myself, and certainly was not large enough to take in patients as well. In addition it was three miles from the main end of the field where the Chinese were camped, and with neither telephone nor car there was no means of communication.

Our hospital supplies had arrived up before us. They were not as useful as they might have been, consisting as they did largely of drugs to prevent and cure a disease which the Chinese did not suffer from and were not likely to contract. The only other drug in any large quantity was Epsom salts, which we did not need, for the water from the bore which was our main source of supply was nearly pure Epsom salts. What we needed was chlorodyne, the antidote. Optimistically we would send in orders for the drugs we required. Sometimes they would arrive, but at other times there would be a mix-up. For instance, on one occasion a large parcel marked drugs arrived, but when opened it was found to contain hundreds of shampoos for blondes. And my husband was the only blonde on the field!

* * *

AFTER a month we moved into an "enlarged meat safe." That is say, a building with a concrete floor, a corrugated iron roof, and walls made of fly wire, which gave only very inadequate protection when the thermometer touched freezing-point, whereas when the temperature was 120 in the shade the corrugated iron roof so collected the heat that the ointments would boil away merrily in their pots.

An 8ft. piece of three-ply divided this 40 x 15 building into two. We lived, and slept in one part and our patients lived in the rest. Fortunately we did not know one another's language, which did give us a slight sense of privacy.

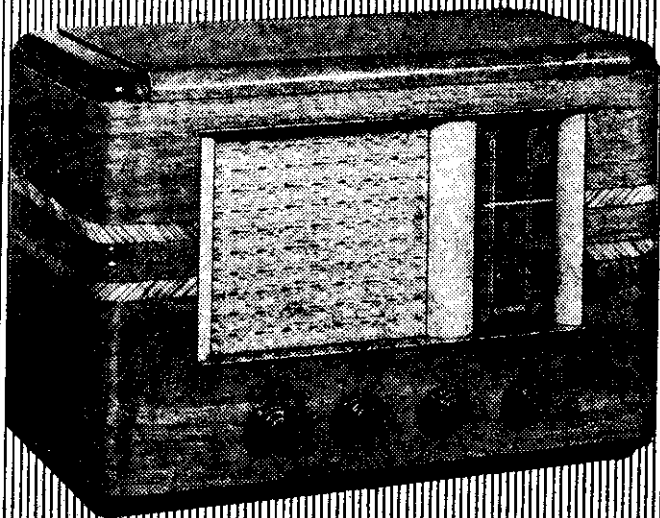
And so it went on. Promises of houses, hospital, supplies, and improved living and working conditions were made, and renewed from time to time. But for various unavoidable and avoidable reasons these promises were never kept. So in time, in addition to genuine physical complaints such as dysentery, rheumatism, and sore eyes, the Chinese began to develop a number of psychological ills which we were powerless to aid. They were the result of the isolation, the difficult living and working conditions, and last but not least, the dust and the flies. For 20 months we struggled on, then with relief we learnt that the venture was to come to an end. The Americans took over the Chinese, leaving us free to return to New Zealand. Though I should not like to repeat the adventure, I am glad to have had it. To have lived under such conditions gives one a wholesome regard for the little comforts of life which so many people take for granted.

COURTENAY

RADIO

Fulfilment of a Promise

Now you can keep that post-war date you made with yourself—that promise to see the Courtenay Radios that you knew would be worth waiting for. They're here now and they'll capture your eye, they'll please your ear and although prices are not what they were, we know you'll agree that Courtenay by comparison, still offers you the best buy in Radio. Call in and look them over—better still, let us install one in your home for a trial—you'll be glad you waited.



There is a Courtenay Dealer in your town.

N.Z.

Distributors:

TURNBULL & JONES LTD.

Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch, Dunedin,
Hamilton, Palmerston North.

Courtenay

There's no Compromise with Quality