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STA-BLOND
THE BLONDES OWN SHAMPOO

INTERVIEW

NURSING UNDER FIRE

"THEY seem to want to keep me here, but I'm doing all I can to get back," said Sister Hitchman.

We were sitting in the living room of her home at Oriental Bay, and through the wide windows we could see the Wellington wharves and the ships alongside them, difficult to distinguish even at that short distance because of the faint morning mist and the cunning of modern camouflage.

"It's surprising that there are so many kinds of camouflage," said Miss Hitchman. "The transports that took us from Greece to Crete were painted in stripes."

SISTER M. G. HITCHMAN, who was recently invalided home from Egypt, was among the first nurses to leave New Zealand with the Expeditionary Force. First came the journey on a luxurious transport (Sister Hitchman's own phrase) to Scotland, and then down the coast by train to a military camp in England. Here she and the other New Zealand nurses remained for some months before proceeding to Egypt, and from Egypt to Greece.

Like New Zealand

"I loved Greece," said Miss Hitchman. "It reminded us so much of New Zealand. It has the same hills and valleys and streams, and winding mountain roads. And the latter, like their New Zealand counterparts, aren't so



SISTER M. G. HITCHMAN
She wants to go back

beautiful when it comes to driving lorries up and down and round them. During the evacuation, our lorry crashed on to a concrete parapet, and that explains why I am now home on leave.

"I was six weeks in Greece and four days in Crete. The continual strafing and bombing we suffered in Greece and the consequent necessity of moving up and down the hills gave us plenty of experience in establishing emergency hospitals.

"From Athens, we made for the Corinth Canal. On the way we suffered a severe strafing. The boys were tired out. I don't know how they carried on, for they had had no sleep for days. We were fortunate in having two drivers in our lorry, one of whom could doze for a time while the other carried on. At Argos we spent a day with our noses grinding against tombstones, knowing that the slightest movement would mean bombardment.

"You can't imagine the feeling of relief we had when we at last found ourselves inside the steel walls of the destroyers. Actually I suppose it wasn't much safer—but we felt so secure after rocking from side to side in a lorry for so many days. The Navy boys arrived with plates of hot bacon and eggs and steaming coffee. We had been living on tea and bully beef for as long as we could remember.

Touch And Go

"When we were transferring from a small boat to the destroyer there occurred an incident which I shall always remember. It shows up so well the courage and self-control of the British nurses. Their uniform was different from ours, consisting of a heavy overcoat and a gored skirt which does not allow the same freedom of movement as our pleated one. The sea was fairly rough and we were being transferred from the small boat to the destroyer. The roll of the ship plus the tightness of her skirt caused one nurse to slip between the two vessels. The natural impulse would be to scream, but remembering the need for absolute silence she made no sound, though she was in imminent danger of being crushed between the two boats when the swell brought them together again. The moment she disappeared came the whispered order 'Feet up!' and two sailors, by sheer muscular strength, kept the boats apart while a third dived down to rescue the nurse. The whole thing was done in complete silence.

"When we reached Crete we set to work to establish hospitals for the boys coming from Egypt. Four days later five or six thousand of us left for Egypt in seven small fishing smacks, guarded by twenty-one destroyers. A boat that normally held a hundred now transported up to a thousand of us.

Egypt Was Like Paradise

"Egypt is not normally a pleasant place, but it seemed like Paradise after Greece and Crete. But rescue is not an occasion for wild rejoicing unless everybody is rescued. In our own security we couldn't help remembering the men we had left behind. Many of them were unconscious, and they would awake to find themselves in enemy hands. But it was some consolation to know that they were being looked after by Greek nurses and by the men of their own units. I am sure that the Germans will allow our men and the Greek women to continue their care of our British, Australian and New Zealand troops. So I would like the wives and mothers of those of our boys who are still in Greece and Crete to know that they will be well looked after.

(Continued on next page)

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STYLE

THAT MEETS SPRING HALFWAY

Matchless

SHOES

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