## I'he Desert

Written for the "Record" by The Rev. J. R. Blanchard

down, but he smiled at Reece.

"'You don't mean to say you're this parson we've heard about?" asked Reece.

"'Why not?' creaked Flynn.

"'You're a sticker.'

"'We are like that."

"'H'm,' said Reece. 'A parson is a rare bird out here, but you'll do. Come, and I'll put the billy on."

SO did this young Australian camel-pad it through the Inland, winning his way into the hearts of those who fought their grim fight there, dreaming his dreams and sticking to them though they all thought him "dippy"—to use their own word, though shorn of decorations-and sticking to them until he made them come true.

There were certain things which he saw in this Inland which made him dream his dreams, and which made him feel that God had put him into this world and into this particular bit of it, to make that dream materialise. Flynn had seen such things as these:

A blue-eyed youngster suddenly taken ill, with the near est doctor 200 miles away! Flynn knew of the fearful drive through day and night to get that child to the doctor: the change of horses at the station, then day and night again; the overturning of the buggy down a black ravine; the cry of the mother as she groped for the child.

When the horses dropped, the parents walked.

It was a terrible journey over rock and sand with the smell of dead animals in the foetid water-holes that they passed. At last they saw the glint of roofs' away down there in the tiny outback hamlet. Only one more hour to go-but the child was dying in the

mother's arms.
"It was not fair," Flynn grumbled to himself as he dreamed. "The child should have lived; and would have lived if only the doctor had been near."

ONE day, again, he came to a bush home down among the hills. They were quiet folk, the brown-bearded husband and the wife with brave, grey eyes. dren were more quiet than shy, even though they only saw a visitor once in a year. a tired sigh.

"Oh, well," he said, "I won't stay any longer. You have no need of me."

stations.

And they took him down into the paddock where, under a prefty tree, was a wee mound with creepers already

After lunch, Flynn rose with

"Yes, we have," said the

flowering upon it. "There was no doctor," said the man. "We did not know what to do."

Flynn read the service; and passed on, dreaming grumbling as he dreamed: "It was not fair. The child should have lived; and would have lived if only the doctor had been near,

SO he went through his parish, seeing the

tinent; rain-flattened mounds under coolabah and gum; wind-scoured mounds under desert graves creeks that seldom held water; grasscovered resting-places of the plains, and graves by the billaand resting-places bongs; resting-places of children and mothers and breadand winners who had fal-

So many lives could have been saved. could now be saved, if organised help, quick in action, were sta-

JOHN FLYNN will speak for the NBS at 4YA on April 6 on "The Mantle of Safety—The Story of the Flying Doctors in Australia," and

len by the wayside.

tioned within a radius even of 300 miles. His dream was of how to save those lives by organised help. He was only a lone camel-man with nothing in his pocket. What could

he do? He would rouse his Church to do something. But what could he suggest that his Church should do?

There for a time his mind came to a full stop, and he went on camel-padding it through the Inland, dreaming and dreaming of what could be done, drawing maps of the centre of Australia in the sand as he camped at midday or in the moonlight, locating on those maps where people lived, brooding over the long distances that separated them and the nature of the country that lay between, and of the spots of habitation that

at 1YA on April 26 on "Australia and New Zealand: Resemblances and Contrasts." Mrs. Flynn, his wife, speaks from 3YA on March 28 from the women's point of view. The NBS hopes to take a recording of John Flynn's talk on "The Story of the Flying Doctors," so that it may be heard from all its

would be most central in given areas.

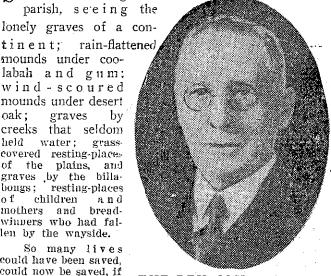
 $\mathbf{G}^{\mathrm{RADUALLY}}$  he evolved a plan. He would have a chain of nursing homes through the Inland, each establishment at a centre as reasonably accessible to everybody as That would be something where, at present, there are. And Flynn came in from the interior for a was nothing. season to stir up his Church to that work.

The story of how he carried that through and of the splendid work those nursing homes have done, and are still doing, is too long a story to tell just now. But as Flynn went camel-padding in connection with the founding of these homes, and with the superintending of them, he saw that even they were quite inadequate. There was the problem of how to got the side and the injured to those bornes. lem of how to get the sick and the injured to those homes.

Camels and horses were terribly slow in that terrible country. Motor transport was swifter, certainly, but in a land of gibbers and sandhills most uncertain. The long, rough trip would kill the patient before he got to the nursing home! Some better means of transport must be devised.

NE day, as he dreamed on this problem, from his lurching seat on the back of his camel under a blazing sun, he thought: "The wings of death are swifter than camels or horses, or even motors." "The wings of death!" The phrase stuck in his mind. "Wings." Aeroplanes!

That word crashed into his mind. Aeroplanes! Winged ambulances! Flying doctors! Flynn had his vision; that was enough. What did it matter that the Old World was still only experimenting in aviation at that time! They would succeed, Flynn said to himself. They will perfect flying and the Inland must have flying (Continued on page 40.)



THE REV. JOHN FLYNN.



MRS. JOHN, FLYNN.