

## Christchurch Nurses' Experience in China

As the present state of China is a subject very much before the minds of the public, I thought readers of "Kai Tiaki" might be interested to know some of the experiences of two Christchurch nurses while in China.

Nurses Bargrove and Brunt have spent the last three and a half years in Hangchow, China, as Missionary Nurses, in the largest Mission Hospital there, and their experiences have been full of interest.

Last October both nurses developed typhoid fever, and were seriously ill for some weeks. In December it was decided by the medical staff of the hospital to get them away from Hangchow, so that they could recuperate in Hongkong. The following account of their journey to Hongkong is taken from letters written by Nurse Brunt.

Hangchow, December 18th, 1926.

We are living in thrilling times! Two days ago, at 3 p.m., Dr. Thompson, Principal of the Hospital, came to us and asked if we could be ready to leave for Shanghai on the following day at 12.15. Well, this was very sudden, but when he explained that the Southern troops were making for Hangchow, and if we didn't beat a hasty retreat it would be too late, as the railway line would be cut, we quite understood. It wasn't long before kind and willing helpers were here getting our belongings into trunks. I didn't sleep much that night, my mind was too full, and when one is weak and a cripple one is inclined to make mountains out of mole-hills.

The morning dawned cold, wet and dismal, but with the light of day and the thought of getting away from the confines of one's bedroom and seeing the world again, one's spirits rose. Finally, the last odds and ends were put into trunks, and the coolies came for them, and away they went! We had an early tiffin, and at 11.45 a.m. we donned our hats, coats, etc., and waited to be carried downstairs. Suddenly came a bolt from the blue, in the form of one of the nursing staff who said, "The line is cut!" We

were too late. Then presently in came Dr. Thompson, who is the essence of resourcefulness. "Can you be ready at 1 p.m., we have arranged for you to go by another route?" Yes, of course we could be ready, and so we awaited events. This journey would be a very trying one, as one has to make so many changes; still, we were prepared for anything. Good-byes were said and we thought we were really off, but not so! "You are blocked again!" came a report. The Northern troops were pouring into the city, and had commandeered every car. So the rest of that day passed, and we waited rather dubiously for the events of the coming day.

At 10 a.m. the next day one of the staff appeared at my door and said, "You can set your heart at rest, you can't go." That was all, and I couldn't find out why for a long time. Then our good friend Dr. Thompson came and explained that as there were so many hundreds of soldiers about the city he felt it was unwise for us to remain where we were. That happened yesterday, December 17th, and now we don't know from day to day when we shall be ordered to leave.

The Chinese are very frightened, and many left the city last week. All our medical students, save a few, went off some days ago. We were very much relieved, when after many meetings, the male nurses decided to "stand by their guns" and face it out, even though they had such fears, i.e., the Northerners are afraid of the Southerners.

Shanghai, December 19th, 1926.

You will be greatly surprised to see that I am writing from Shanghai. Well, just as I was finishing the last sentence, Dr. Thompson came in and said there was a gang of coolies repairing the cut in the railway line, and in all probability we should be able to get through that day! Our boxes were still packed, so it just remained for us two invalids to sit and await orders, while our many friends bustled about making arrangements for getting us off as comfortably as possible. Thank God for friends!