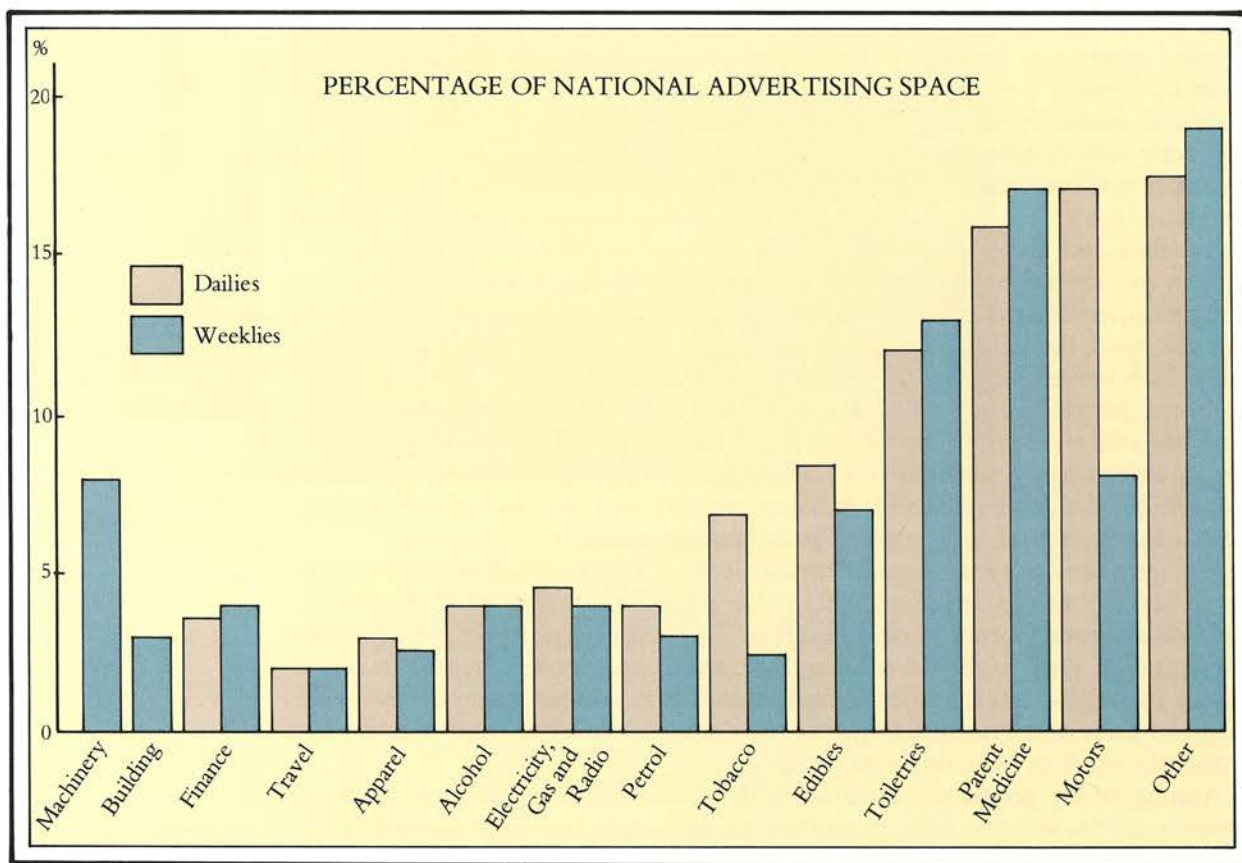


population, convinced that they had to withstand increasing modern pressures. They were interested in peace of mind, restoring the body, postponing ageing. Pain-killing medicines, pills and powders, and preparations designed for specific organs were presented as just the tonic they needed.

Smoking, they were told, was an excellent way of combating the nerviness that attended modern civilisation. 'Tobacco ...', wrote 'Hygiea' in the Brisbane *Courier Mail*, 'soothes the nerves that are stimulated to irritability, and are hypersensitive under the rush of modern life, and its almost overwhelming demands on eye and ear and brain'. Filter-tip cigarettes, which had appeared in 1936, promised to make smoking even more soothing. W.D. and H.O. Wills introduced its Garrick brand with the slogan 'The Scientific Cigarette for Sensitive Smokers'; Godfrey Phillips marketed its filter-tipped De Reske with 'Cleans the Smoke, Soothes the Throat'; Du Maurier simply announced that 'Luxury Costs Less'; and Craven A was pictured soothing the throat of a poised young woman who seemed incapable of care.

People devised other ways to keep calm: Wrigley's chewing gum, a cup of tea or a Bex promised weary combatants the courage to face the world again. Aspirin, under the trade name Aspro, or combined with phenacetin and caffeine in Bex, Vincents and Bayers, was considered especially effective in treating headaches and sleeplessness, but advertisements also suggested that these preparations equipped people to perform their daily tasks more effectively: 'If I go to town for a day the noise and bustle always gives me a severe headache ... but one day I tried taking ASPRO before I left home with the result that I did not have a sign of headache!' Successful people understood that there was really no need to suffer. A pause and a pill or two made the day pass much more comfortably.





'SMOKING AS A FULL TIME JOB. Father and Son, Mr. G.E. Marks, tobacco research officer (left) and Mr. G.H. Marks are professional smokers.' They were pictured in the laboratories of the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research where they tested sample cigarettes. The work of the council had resulted in a remarkable improvement in the quality of Australian tobacco and its protection from attacks of plant diseases. 'Australia Produced Last Season 6,500,000lb. of Tobacco. The crop was 1,000,000lb. greater than that of the previous year, and represented about one quarter of the total amount of manufactured tobacco, local and imported, processed in Australian factories.' Pix, 25 June 1938.

MAGAZINE PROMOTIONS

Many Australians believed such advertising. The nation's per capita consumption of the world's legal morphine and heroin supplies was probably 'higher than in any other western nation', and Australian women took on average 300 aspirin tablets each a year. 'Self-drugging' was ritual.

Tonics were also supposed to induce general well-being. They worked by restoring exhausted bodies as the necessary step towards preserving healthy minds. Exhausted bodies, it was said, were commonly caused by the stress of modern civilisation. But modern 'medical science' might yet win the race against pain and debilitating illness; indeed, to judge from the advertisements, one of the chief undertakings of medical science was to prepare tonics. Bidomak, one of the most popular, promised 'scientific treatment of the bloodstream' with 'vital minerals' which were guaranteed to 'banish nerves' and bring 'weak, run-down, depressed individuals back to the pinnacle of good health and happy spirits'. An illustration showed a person in a laboratory coat delivering an illustrated address on how Bidomak worked. Under another heading, 'Doctor tests *Bidomak*', a group of patients with a history of nervous disorders had their red corpuscle count taken with the help of a haemocytometer. Most could manage a red corpuscle count of only 3 000 000 per cubic millimetre, but a six-week course of Bidomak brought an 'astonishing improvement in the condition of their blood'. There were two testimonials, one from a 'nervous wreck' of twenty years' standing, another from the mother of a four-year-old 'walking shadow'. Bidomak cured Mrs Horne's low blood count, horrible nerve rash and aversion to housework, while Marie Ryan, once an irksome little person with the fidgets, was turned into an obedient child with a good blood count. Bidomak helped people acquire a new personality.

Indeed Bidomak worked miracles. After 25 years of public speaking, organising and bustling around, George M. Henry suffered a nervous breakdown. He had hospital treatment and medical attention, but it was Bidomak that wrought his



This advertisement for 'Ardath Specials', the Virginia cigarette in the distinctive box, was designed to attract the man and woman of sophisticated taste. Man, Aug 1937.

miraculous recovery, changing him from a 'nuisance' into 'a virile man again in the pink of physical and mental condition'. In other testimonials people who felt 'wrecked' or 'broken down' told of their amazing restoration to good health and spoke of new order and purpose entering their once disjointed lives. After the stresses of war and depression many Australians may indeed have entered middle life feeling buffeted and worn down. The makers of Bidomak understood their consumers well.

In 1888 a 'nervous disorder' had been a discreet euphemism for impaired sexual performance. That implication was still there, but nervous disorders now included a broad range of personal problems including tiredness and feelings of inadequacy. 'Nerves' needed special care, for only while they remained healthy, advertisers explained, could people maintain an optimistic outlook on the future. Nerves took on an almost independent existence. They were rested, taken on holiday and built up with soothing preparations. For their sake, people were warned to guard against 'mineral starvation', caused by deficiencies in modern diet, and 'night starvation', for which Horlicks, a malt milk drink, was the answer. A Horlicks advertisement told of McTavish, a professional golfer with a problem. He 'foozled' his drives and cursed his caddy apparently without cause. He was off his game: 'Dinna ken for why—but things just rattle me—feel tired—done up even when I start the day'. His doctor diagnosed night starvation and recommended Horlicks. McTavish went on to win the club championship.

Most tonic advertising aimed at less well-to-do people. Hutuwai, 'The Wonderful Natural Tonic that Everybody's Taking', featured the story of Frank Clark of Girraween, New South Wales. He had been discharged from the AIF in 1917 suffering from neurasthenia—literally nerve weakness—sometimes called shell shock when it affected soldiers. In 1936 he had collapsed while working as a ganger on the roads and was put into hospital. Rheumatoid arthritis set in and his neurasthenia returned. Clark was at death's door when his wife decided to try him on a course of Hutuwai. It worked 'absolute wonders'. His pain disappeared after four bottles and his nerves became steady enough for him to thread a needle. Twenty-five bottles later he was doing odd jobs about the house and taking walks morning and night, much to the amazement of those in his neighbourhood who doubted that he would ever walk again.

There were sufferers like Frank in Callan Park, a hospital for the mentally ill. One, identified only as James B, was aged forty-three. After doing well at school and finding secure employment, he had gone to the war where he was 'gassed and blown up' in 1917. Ever since he had had great trouble sleeping and had ended up a 'paraldehyde addict'. Harry W, 46, stated that his mind was 'full of his war experiences' and that he was still tormented by terrible dreams. John V, 51, was described as a 'heavy alcoholic' at the time of his admission in February. His wife wrote, 'I attribute the onset of his illness to his nervy ways and his horrible cough which left him exhausted on innumerable occasions'. She believed that he drank alcohol mainly 'to relieve himself of his sickness which was caused by the war'.

Even without the war, said advertisements, there would be failures of mind and body. Forty was the age at which bodily decline was supposed to set in, although the makers of Harrison's Pills warned 'that rapid decline in health, comfort and power ... often starts even before the age of 30', and that 'Medical science proves "Life-line-Decline" starts near 40'. Uric acid was the problem and kidneys were the organs most in danger: 'Seventy-five percent of poison wastes and uric acid deposits are filtered by the kidneys in too concentrated a form. The over-burdened cells cannot stand the strain. Congestion occurs, forcing back into the system poisons which should be expelled'.

Australian women's weekly, 15 Oct 1938.

LOST NERVES
AND DEPRESSED FEELING
FOUND ROMANCE

NERVES
and most Constitutional Disorders are
CAUSED BY MINERAL STARVATION

BIDOMAK

PROOF POSITIVE

MONEY BACK GUARANTEE TRIAL OFFER

The Best of the Best in "Nerve Restorer" — 100% PURELY NATURAL — 100% GUARANTEED EFFECTIVE

Harrison's Pills advertisements worked on desires to feel younger and live longer. Those extra years could be crucial, for 'who knows what further astounding marvels of rejuvenation science may devise?' Similarly, an advertisement for Dr Morse's Indian Root Pills warned that the 'Foolish Forties Are Sometimes Serious'. Only a few sensible people adjusted their habits to suit their new condition. The foolish majority either pretended that they were still youthful or became melancholic. Indian Root Pills could not teach people to be sensible, but they played a vital part in maintaining 'the first essential to health and happiness in the forties ... proper elimination'. Maintaining the correct number of bowel movements through the foolish forties was essential to vitality, but it also helped keep severe, perhaps fatal, diseases at bay.

Other patent medicine advertisements tried to convince readers that certain products could postpone ageing and restore youthful vitality. The kidneys, the bowel and the liver were said to be especially critical in the ageing process. Age was physically and socially unattractive. Youth had a magic appeal. It was remote but still attainable, free from worry, pain and the sense of failure.

Again the message suited the times. For those in their forties, youth belonged to a golden world before the carnage of 1914–18. In comparison, the modern world was sick and disordered. In January the Sydney *Publicist* announced that about 60 per cent of the Australian population could be considered decadent and listed 60 symptoms of modern decadence, all of which it said were thriving in Australia. In March the *Medical Journal of Australia* published Dr John Bostock's 'How civilization manufactures neuroses: a survey of 200 consecutive cases'. Lionel Lindsay, the artist and art critic, and *Smith's weekly* both saw modern art and the Jews as evidence of a modern malaise, and even in sunny, quiet Perth the director of the Armstrong Health Institute insisted that 'modern conditions of living ... place a heavy strain upon the nervous system by an inevitable accompaniment of noise and speed'.

In 1937 Billy Hughes, federal minister for Health, told parliament that the nation faced a crisis:

We inherit the appetites of our ancestors, but our lives are ordered to a very different pattern. They lived a life in the open-air and earned their living literally by the sweat of their brows; their skins were active, ridding the body of its waste products. Now things have changed ... We, the descendants of one of the most vigorous, active and adventurous races, lead sedentary lives, take little corrective exercise and live on devitalized food.

Hughes prescribed not Bidomak but funds for health research, to be administered by a newly created National Health and Medical Research Council. The first grants were approved late in 1937, and in 1938 the council endorsed a series of resolutions about national fitness. It noted the increasing complexity of the international situation, the worrying implications of a declining birth rate, particularly in the cities, and lower standards of personal and national efficiency than were consistent with self-respect. The council remarked also that the British were 'no longer the unchallenged premiers in any field of physical or related activity'. Before the year was out the National Co-ordinating Council for Physical Fitness had been created at the council's urging. The foremost medical body in the country had declared that Australia was trying to maintain its place in a competitive world with a jaded, maladapted and inefficient population. Here was an imposing problem for medical science.

It was also an imposing problem for Frederick J. Thwaites, one of Australia's most popular novelists. Thwaites described the disordered nature of the modern world in ten novels he published between 1930 and 1938. In *The broken melody*, a



To prevent
Strained Nerves
Drink delicious
OVALTINE
—it is supremely rich in
nerve-restoring nutriment

TRILLI SAMPLE: A generous trial sample of "Ovaltine" coffee or milk (not supplied) will be sent on receipt of 10 in stamps to cover cost of packing and postage. See address below.
PRICES: 1/9, 2/10, 3/-. At all Chemists and Stores.
A. WANDER LIMITED, 1 YORK STREET NORTH, SYDNEY, N.S.W.

Bulletin, 5 May 1938.

The FOOLISH FORTIES
Are Sometimes Serious.

When we reach the forty-year mark, many of us are inclined to be pessimistic about it. We may think "Oh dear! Forty!" and often be haunted by the idea of old age.

But the average person who follows such a line of thought, does not realize he is likely to keep young by doing the things that will do it. He may be old in years, but he can be young in spirit, by following the principles of health and vitality, and by taking the proper care of his body.

It is the same with the mind, even the visible part, do not forget the great power of the brain. The mind is the most important part of the body, and it is the only part that can be trained. It is the only part that can be made to do anything that it chooses to do.

The key to health and happiness is to live in a way that is natural and normal. The mind is the most important part of the body, and it is the only part that can be trained. It is the only part that can be made to do anything that it chooses to do.

Dr. Morse's Indian Root Pills are a natural and normal way of living. They are made of natural ingredients and contain no harmful substances. They are the only pills that can be taken by anyone, at any time, and in any place.

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DR. MORSE'S
INDIAN ROOT
PILLS

MADE IN AUSTRALIA
For Sale: Chemists and Medicine Shops

Bulletin, 9 Mar 1938.

harrowing story typical of Thwaites, Francis Jenkins was the ageing owner of Nullabeen station and 'a big man of the bush, clean straight and fine'. His only son, Ted, was rounding off his education at an expensive school in Sydney before returning as new owner of the station. Ted, 'the last of the old stock', was a vital link with the past, for the property had been in the Jenkins family since the middle of the previous century. But Sydney and bad companions got to work on Ted. He was drawn into 'snow-sniffing'—using cocaine—and, unable to break the habit, was expelled from school. He returned to Nullabeen a shadow of his former self, and his contemptuous father called him 'a miserable dope-fiend, a weakling, a sap ... you, the last of the Jenkinses'.

It is a story of bush virtue and city vice, of youthful vigour corrupted and betrayed in the callous modern world. The novel is full of images of dislocation and the imminent collapse of a respected family steeped in a tradition of pioneering vitality, although in this case a cured Ted Jenkins finally returns to claim Nullabeen from his dying father. In most of Thwaites's novels a doctor is on hand to point the moral. One of the least long winded of them declares, 'The world has gone crazy for pleasure living today, forgetting about yesterday, not heeding tomorrow'.

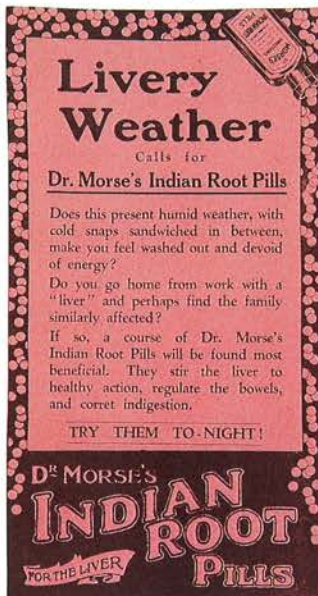
The decline of the race is more explicitly developed in Eleanor Dark's *Prelude to Christopher* (1933), which begins with a car accident and ends with a suicide. In between the novel's middle-aged protagonists look back on lives engulfed by modern events. Dr Hendon's experimental community has been swept aside amid the patriotic passions of the Great War, while his wife's mind is more slowly but no less certainly destroyed by a hereditary affliction, remorselessly described but never explained. She was 'a creature over-complicated, agonisingly over-perfected by civilisation, trained beyond bearing, educated beyond endurance, damned by inheritance beyond all hope of redemption'. Moments before her suicide she asks: 'What is happening to the cells, the molecules, the mysterious tissues of my brain?' and is answered, 'Infection-disease-rottenness—creeping and invading ... A brain slowly and surely decomposing'.

Disorder, decay and breakdown of mind and body were widely perceived to be fundamental tendencies of the age. On 15 January a medical diarist in the *Courier Mail* observed that, unlike a doctor of twenty years ago, he met regularly 'the illness of middle and old age ... and, of course, mental states of various seriousness and abnormality'. Increasingly the sufferers were women. Thwaites's readers met a ghastly procession of crumbling females, with dishevelled looks and wild features. He saw in women's work left undone the sign of a mind gone wrong: an untidy pile of ironing, an accumulation of dishes in the sink, or the dirty face of a neglected child all suggested that madness was not far away. Persil advertisements played upon a version of this anxiety, showing just how unsatisfactory it was for women to be anxious, domestically incompetent creatures whose wash always fell short of Persil brightness. A labourer whose 27-year-old wife had entered Callan Park also assumed that inadequate performance of domestic duties was a sign of mental disturbance:

my wife became real bad on the 2nd February and she complained to me that she had not been too well during the day and would not get my tea ready ... up to 2nd February my wife was in her usual state of mind and used to do her domestic duties about the house in a very efficient manner ...

Concern with female insanity was reflected in a changing pattern of admission to asylums. In 1888 the dangerous rural labourer was the most likely candidate for an asylum; by 1938 the troubled suburban housewife had displaced him.

Bulletin, 12 Jan 1938.





"We Pay More Attention to The Breeding of Pedigreed Cattle Than We Do To The Rearing Of Children." . . . Safeguarding the health of mother and child ought to be a first charge on the national budget. This eager child is taking her cod-liver oil, to be followed by milk at a Sydney Kindergarten. Doesn't every child need this?" Pix, 23 Apr 1938.

As with the mind, so with the body. Even tooth decay was encouraged by modern civilisation. One local expert thought Australian children had the worst teeth in the world, and an American dental authority declared: 'I have seldom, if ever, found whites suffering so tragically from evidence of physical degeneration, as expressed in tooth decay and change in facial form, as are the whites of eastern Australia'. The Dental Health Education Department, an offshoot of the Australian Dental Association, described dental disease as 'the commonest affliction of civilized man at the present time', and the state of Australian children's teeth a 'national calamity'. The Commonwealth Advisory Council on Nutrition found that nearly 8 per cent of food items consisted of sweets. The Primary Producers' Union and the United Australia Party both urged the New South Wales Education department to increase the number of dental clinics visiting schools, and during the year school dental clinics in New South Wales doubled to eighteen. Other states had similar programs. In remote districts the school dentist may have been the only one many children ever saw, and even on the outskirts of Melbourne, whenever six-year-old Doreen Coupland of Reservoir got toothache, her parents gave her a glass of water and an Aspro.

Diet was only beginning to be thought important to health. Western Australia's Mary Farrelly had won the right to address state schoolchildren on diet, having already achieved a revolution, she believed, in persuading some West Australians to consume wholewheat bread. She contended that modern methods of flour milling destroyed much of the nourishment in wheat, so that now 'We see rickety children, enfeebled parents, . . . dentists traversing the land, extracting bad teeth and providing artificial sets for quite young people . . . iron tonics, nerve strengtheners and all manner of mineral foods . . .' Farrelly believed that her reforms would help create 'a strong and vigorous Race to carry on the Work of this great Commonwealth' and her influence may explain why, at a well-attended meeting of the Federated Association of Australian Housewives on 18 March, governments were urged to



'A HEALTHY Staff is a HAPPY Staff.' The Myer staff doctor, Dr Kate McKay, told employees of Melbourne's largest department store: 'Take a pint of milk per day and help keep the doctor and dentist at bay'. Myer store news, 22 Sept 1938.



Keith McCance outside the Cottage by the Sea at Queenscliff on Port Phillip Bay where he was sent to convalesce from his attack of polio. 'It was actually [for] underprivileged children but a friend of ours had a hand in getting me admitted there and I was very well looked after. That was one of the happy times of my life. The essence of recovery [was] good regular meals and swimming in the sea. A lot of soldiers from the fort at Queenscliff used to come and entertain us regularly with the piano and violin. They used to take us down to the fort and we'd go through various interesting places with them. Some of them became like uncles to me and the rest of the patients. I think generally I was probably so busy I didn't take too much time to be lonely.'

K. McCANCE, 1938 COLLECTION

take more interest in preventive medicine, and ministers of Education were asked to promote 'education on wholemeal (whole wheat), milk, raw salads, fruit, bran, etc., in schools'.

What people ate was investigated by the Commonwealth Advisory Council on Nutrition, which concluded that while on the whole Australians were well fed, there was 'much ignorance' in the community about diet, and in town and country there were people either too poor or too remotely situated to obtain essential fresh foods. In New South Wales state schools 1.3 per cent of children suffered from malnutrition, and six times that number were suspected of having the disease. Children from the northern coalfields were especially deprived, but welfare officers found that 'parents generally are not appreciative of receiving advice which concerns domestic management, including suitable dietary treatment for their child or children'.

In November a dietary reformer, L. Milverton, wrote to the New South Wales minister of Education claiming that over 25 years he had inspected thousands of schoolboys' lunches. Sandwiches of tomato sauce seemed to predominate, he thought, followed by pickles, bananas and sardines. He did not report on girls' lunches, but in the evening 'stews, saveloys, frankfurts and general fatty foods' topped children's eating lists, and at the Easter Show children ate mainly pies, chocolates and condiments. At the Industrial Pavilion sweets and soft drinks, the most prominent exhibits, were consumed in heroic quantities. 'Night after night', he wrote, 'I hear dialogues "over the air" relating to particular kinds of tonics, headache powders and the like all designed to restore health' to people indisposed by wrong diet. This dietary sleuth had a proposition to put before the minister of Education, but there is no record of what it was or how it was received.

The minister had plenty of other problems, among them preventing a recurrence of the infantile paralysis epidemic that had broken out in 1937. Almost half the notified cases had occurred in Victoria, and Western Australia was least affected. The Victorian epidemic began in the last week of June 1937 and spread to Tasmania early in November, to South Australia late in the same month, and to New South Wales and Queensland in the new year. In Victoria it caused 116 deaths between June 1937 and May 1938, mostly of children under sixteen. Thousands more were crippled.

Near Hamilton in Victoria, William May's mother tried to ward off the disease by sending her children to school with sulphur in their socks. In Melbourne nine-year-old Keith McCance, son of a secondary schoolteacher, knew something was wrong when his limbs began to stiffen. For eight weeks he was virtually immobilised by infantile paralysis at the Infectious Diseases Hospital. Then he began a gentle regime of exercises and warm water baths and was transferred to the crippled children's home at Queenscliff, where he spent six months, an enjoyable break from school. But there was no mistaking the alarm his illness caused: 'a number of people in our street actually painted ... creosote on their fences to avoid the evil of the polio germ'. In January Mrs Enid May Burtland-Hales returned to Sydney from Victoria with 'quite a little knowledge of the disease' which she was keen to share with the minister of Education. She had two main findings: hatless children seemed susceptible and those with thick skulls were afforded some protection. She also reported that a doctor had told her that camphor hung round the neck prevented the infantile paralysis germ developing in the throat.

Everyone was advised to keep well clear of poliomyelitis victims, a policy which, in the summer of 1937-38, affected all New South Wales teachers who planned to travel in Victoria. They were required to supply the Education department with



'TOES AS GOOD AS FINGERS. Allan is seven years old and an infantile paralysis patient at the Royal Alexandra Children's Hospital in Sydney (NSW). His arms are totally paralysed but he has learnt to replace his hands with his toes. With his well-trained toes, he can write, read books and comics, comb his hair and eat without spilling. Hope that he may one day be able to use his arms again is held by the hospital doctors. In the meantime, Allan cheerfully and bravely continues to use his toes in "finger fashion".'
Pix, 26 Nov 1938.

their proposed itinerary and report to the department on their return. The governments of New South Wales and South Australia had failed to persuade the federal government to quarantine Victoria, but by late 1937 both states let in from Victoria only children bearing certificates. All others were turned back by what the *Sydney Morning Herald* called the 'Paralysis Patrol'. The restrictions were not lifted until April and May respectively, when the worst of the epidemic had passed.

The cause and treatment of the disease was unknown, and a subject of bitter controversy. A 52-year-old Queensland nurse, Sister Elizabeth Kenny, had opened a clinic in Townsville for treating it in 1934, and by 1938 eight Kenny clinics were operating in Queensland, Victoria and New South Wales. Her methods were outlined in a book she published in 1937, *Infantile paralysis and cerebral diplegia*, and ran counter to orthodox treatments. She deplored the immobilisation of patients,

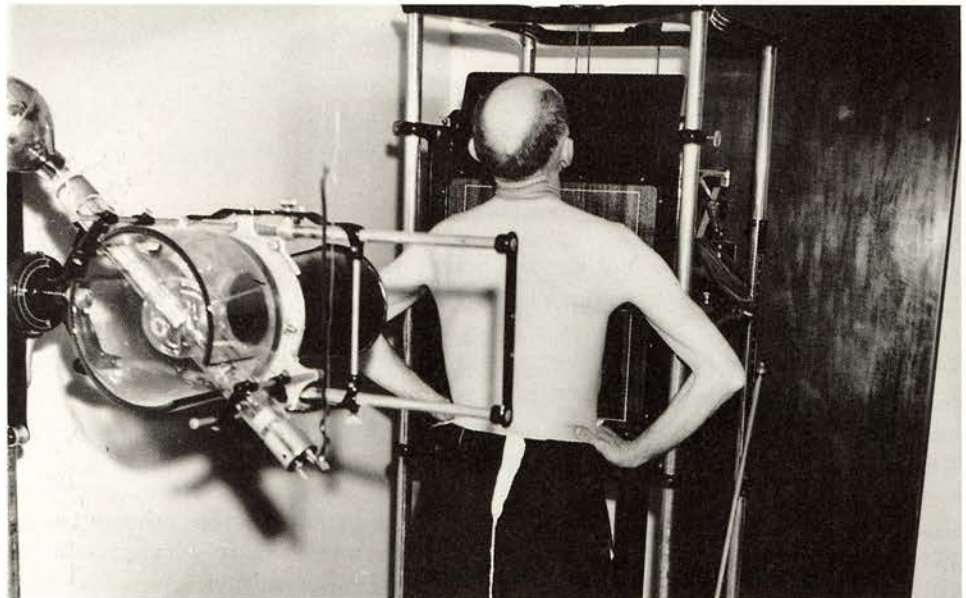
urged hydrotherapy and remedial exercises to maintain some muscular function, and stressed the importance of instilling in patients a conviction that their condition was curable.

New Year's Day found Sister Kenny in Melbourne at the invitation of a state government rattled by the scale of the epidemic and prepared to give her methods a try. On the following day she was handed the findings of a Queensland royal commission into her methods. The commissioners, all medical men, criticised her in almost every respect. But the Queensland premier backed her and she continued to receive some government support in Victoria and New South Wales, and considerable popular acclaim, for many saw her as a victim of medical conservatism. 'I have seen results that would make one's heart ache', a *Courier Mail* correspondent wrote, 'and I say, "Good luck to Sister Kenny" ...' Whether Kenny's methods were effective was unclear, but they were certainly no worse than orthodox treatments and doctors quietly borrowed most of her ideas as their own failed.

Doctors, nurses and hospitals were a last resort. Whenever possible parents coped with ailments at home. Aspros, castor oil and bile beans were common items of home medication. The castor oil taken for colds and flu was ghastly and, once the sugary coating dissolved, bile beans were no better. For William Morgan, one of four children living on a grazing property near Stawell in Victoria, mother's medication was a regular event. 'Mum was a great one', he recalls. 'Every weekend out came the castor oil bottle, or senna pods, or senna tea, or a dose of salts; like we got this every Saturday morning.' Blocked noses or sore throats sent Mum in search of her hand-shovel on which she would burn some sulphur, and the fumes were then inhaled. As a cure-all seven-year-old Margaret Devenish at Peak Hill in central western New South Wales had to eat a date with a senna leaf inside it, but she disliked it intensely and became skilled at disposing of it without her mother knowing. In Dorothy Krause's Queensland home, eucalyptus, castor oil, Epsom salts and Scott's Emulsion were staple remedies.

Larky Weise, the oldest of three children, grew up in Sandgate, Queensland. Her mother virtually nursed the neighbourhood, because there was no-one else and few could afford the doctor's fees. She lanced boils, set a dog's legs with indifferent

HOW SCIENCE WAGES WAR ON T.B. Patient Being X-rayed at Waterfall Sanatorium. Those who have had attacks of T.B. or who suspect it, should present themselves for examination, to include an X-ray, every year. Health Department and doctors advise this.' Pix explained: 'Once known as the "White Death" and regarded as incurable, tuberculosis is being conquered, slowly but surely, by science. Seven people still die every day from the disease in Australia. But during the last 25 years the death rate has been reduced by more than 50 per cent'. Pix, 7 May 1938.



results, repaired a chook and was an unpaid nurse for the neighbouring Russell family. Larky remembers that the Russell children

used to come to my mother's place once a week because their bowels hadn't moved and their mother would be upset and ask mum would she given them an enema. Well one day she said I'm sick of the Russell kids' bottoms, I am sick of looking at them, so she said this will be the last time. So she made them all a cup of tea and she made them real sweet senna tea. So not only did she relieve their constipation right then but they had a real good dose just about of diarrhoea the next morning and everytime they ever came near her she gave them another cup of tea . . .

Kerosene was an important weapon in her medical arsenal: 'If you had a sore throat . . . Mum and Dad would go down and grab a chook and pull one of its feathers out and sterilise it and dunk that in kerosene and that would go down your throat and knock all the spots off that you had there'. A saltwater gargle was a less drastic remedy. And every September Larky's blood was cleansed, perhaps with Bidomak.

Skin complaints were common and the usual explanation was that 'the blood was out of order'. Leonard Scott, who lived in Charters Towers, north Queensland, remembers that the mango season and boils seemed to go together. His tiny brother was bedevilled by the things, having had over sixty boils lanced by the time he was six weeks old. Heat, poor diet, overcrowding and inadequate bathing facilities no doubt took their toll.

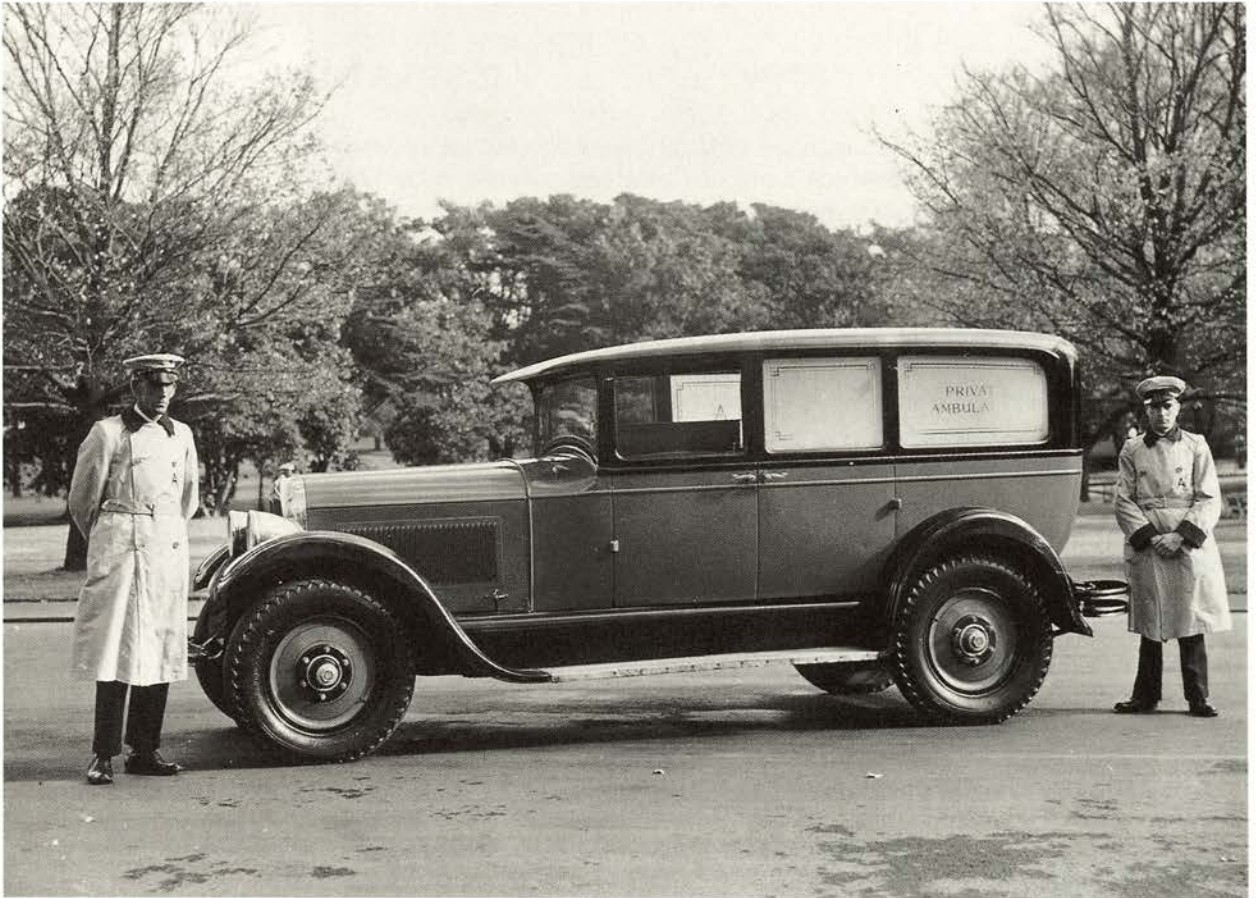
Sometimes home preparations went wrong. Clement Booth grew up with eight brothers and sisters on Mohunga station in Western Australia, where his father worked as a station hand. When nits infested the family, his mother resolved to strike back. On wash day, when the family took turns to bathe in the clothes water, she added sheep dip to the large tub in the outhouse. As always, she had the first bath herself, and the dip burnt her hair and skin badly. Father's methods were more direct. It was normal monthly practice for him to cut the boys' hair with his horse-clippers. He removed all but a tuft of hair at the front, making things hard for the nits.

When outside medical assistance was required, the chemist was often preferred to the doctor, because he was cheaper. Sixteen-year-old Frank Toby grew up in Clovelly in Sydney with his parents and four brothers and sisters. His father was a fitter in the tramway workshops at Randwick. Their local chemist, a 'quite brilliant man' with a 'very good grasp of medicine', was always on hand with some preparation or other when the children were sick. Jack Neighbour, who sometimes worked for a chemist, remembers 'an enormous amount of people' seeking his advice. When an 'opposition' chemist started to attract too many patrons, Jack was sent off to do some industrial espionage. He discovered that the rival chemist had acquired a torch which he shone down throats and into ears, with results that seemed to convince the locals that he was on to something. Jack's boss felt put out: 'Oh! Is that his racket? I'll have to get one'. Jean Vincent's mother, who had lived very parsimoniously since the death of her husband in 1916, always saw the chemist, 'a wonderful fellow' who knew everybody. The doctor cost more than the family could afford.

Patent medicines and popular home remedies—some simple and effective, others bizarre—played an important part in the lives of Australian families. For some, doctors and orthodox medicine were simply too expensive or too remote; others felt a nagging worry that the whole basis of modern life, at once sedentary and stressful, had created new maladies which needed new remedies. Some people doubted that it was possible to live healthy lives in the modern world.



Aspro year book, Melbourne 1938.



This 'private ambulance' was used by Melbourne funeral director, John Allison, to transport bodies from house or hospital to his funeral parlour. The drivers were described as ambulance men.

R. ALLISON