

First Woman on Stuart Range Opal Field.

Mrs E. Halliday writing to The Advertiser states:—Being the first woman resident on the Stewart Range opal field, I thought I would write a few lines about my journey up. Before leaving I was called mad; by others brave; but I consider if it is good enough for my husband, surely it is good enough for me. So I am wondering what I really am. Leaving Port Augusta by the East-West express at 10.10. I arrived at Kingoonya three hours later. The mailman, Mr Norton, took me to a boarding house, where we got a good breakfast. I stayed, and had dinner. We left there at 1.40, reaching Bon Bon about 4.45. We had a lovely cup of tea and I had a good deal of teasing being told not to be surprised if I saw some of the men peeping behind bushes, while others would run like rabbits, because some of them had been so long without seeing a woman. In fact, if I was met with a tin-kettle band to welcome me I must not be surprised. We went on from there to Mount Ebor, arriving at 7 o'clock. I camped the night and was made very welcome. Leaving about 9 o'clock, we reached Teal Water Hole in time to have grilled chops right off the ashes, and billy tea, for dinner. We had 60 miles more to do. The road is supposed to be rough, but I can't see it. It is certainly bumpy, but a far better road than between Oodnadatta and Charlette Waters. There are no big stones to go over. We reached The Jungle at 9 o'clock. My husband was very glad to see me. Most of The Jungle men were there to meet me, and welcome me on the fields. Next morning Mr Oliver brought polished stones and I was to have my pick from them. Mr Chester also brought me

them. Mr Chester also brought me a large piece of rough opal, and Mr Reilly made me a present of a Ford motor seat (no, not car) for a lounge, and something comfortable to sit on, and I can assure you it is a real comfy seat. So you see, even so far out back the gentlemen think of the ladies' comfort; and really, I think it is out-back where you meet the real gentleman. One thing I was disappointed in was the Stuart Range. I expected it to be like the Flinders Range, but it seems to me more like dumpty little hills dotted everywhere. The country all along is looking a picture and in places like a waving crop. The climate is lovely, and I have not felt it any hotter than anywhere else. Of course, the flies are bad, but that is because we have no wire doors and windows in our camps. My camp consists of a tent for bedroom, a bough shed for a general room, and a dug out to sit in when very hot and keep the eatables cool. I think it would be hard to find a more hopeful camp of men, and we ought really to be named "We of the Never-Know-When," for we never know when any of them are going to strike a big haul. I am hoping to see more ladies come up to their husbands now I have made a start. I had no idea it was such hard work to get opal. Needless to say, I do a little grubbing, holding a miner's right, I feel bound to.

In the report of the Stirling concert which appeared last issue the name of Mrs Martin, who received a double encore, was inadvertently omitted from the programme.