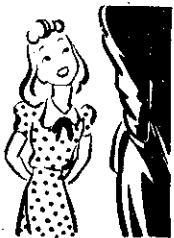


Michael is not alone in his ingenuity in finding himself playthings. We went into the boys' dormitory and found signs of inventive characters on the tables beside the beds—a book on handwork and carpentry, a small weaving frame, a stamp album, a crystal set; and in the balcony cubicles where the older boys sleep we found a couple of strangely-stocked workshops. Terry had a very old radio set rigged with a highly complicated and mysterious wiring system, Dutch to me, involving such items as a rusty bike lamp, two or three rubber bands, a set of earphones, the keyboard from a morse set, three cotton reels, an electric light switch without its wall . . . For all I know it could be a whole broadcasting station complete with its notice PRIVATE NO ADMITTANCE of which we took no notice.

THE girls' dormitory had no such elaborate gear. On the surface, at least, it appeared that the boys were hoarders and the girls were not. Two girls of 12 and 13 years were in the dormitory when we called, one sitting on her bed sewing—coloured embroidery on stamped linen, she said she did a lot of it—and the other lying face downwards writing a letter home. Both were pretty and both were shy and both seemed to me quite ordinary mortals. When we left I asked Mr. Knight about them.

"Well, Ngaire is all right now, that's the one who was sewing. She had a compulsion when she came here—kept on washing her hands. She'd lock herself in the bathroom and go into a coma. Now she does a normal amount of hand-washing and is pretty well right. If she gets a fright or is worried about anything she'll still show signs of the trouble, but she hasn't gone into a coma for a long time."



A nice child when not irked

"And the other one?"

"Oh, Myra. Hum. Myra's trouble is thieving. We found her with a packet of cigarettes yesterday. It took a long time to find out where they came from. She's clever too. Pick your pocket and you'd never know. Her mother told me she used to take her mother's handkerchiefs and hide them in her pilchers when she was four months old."

I looked my disbelief.

"No, really. That's what her mother told me and her mother's a Christian woman. It's hard to believe—but still, she must have had a lot of practice to be as nimble as she is now."

He admitted that it was going to be quite a problem dealing with Myra.

THEY'VE had a few adventures at the hostel, one way and another. But they've never had any accidents, Mr. Knight says.

"Although there was the day I was standing at the 'phone in the study talking to the insurance agent about employees' insurance," Mr. Knight recalled. "He had just asked me if we ever had any accidents and I had just told him that no we didn't ever have any accidents when something whizzed

past my head and over the balcony. The insurance agent and I said goodbye politely and I rushed as calmly as possible outside. Look—a seven-foot drop to the terrace, then those three concrete steps on to the lawn, then the width of the lawn; over there by the hedge Sparks was just picking himself up. It was Sparks that whizzed past my head through the french doors. Why didn't he break his neck? Well, the only thing that saved him was that he was a sailor before he came here as house-master. He must have rolled himself up like a hedgehog. Who pushed? We had a young person here named Hazel, strong as a calf. Something irked her and she made a rush at him and butted him through the french doors and over the balcony with a final kick. A nice child, when she wasn't irked."

"Perhaps we're all nice people when we're not irked?"

"Yes, that's about the answer to the whole thing. That's our job in a nutshell—to help these children to adjust themselves to be nice people whatever the circumstances. Social adjustment. Sounds just a small job in a nutshell, doesn't it?"

—J.

Items From The ZB's

"GREAT DAYS IN SPORT," a series of radio reconstructions of outstanding sporting events, is being produced at 1ZB and will be presented shortly from that station. Early on the list is the test match in 1905, when Wales beat New Zealand. This was the only defeat recorded against the All Blacks in their tour of Great Britain that year. Carbine's win in the 1890 Melbourne Cup race has also been dramatised for the series.

"THE SINGING COWBOY," heard now from 1ZB, 2ZB and 3ZB, is scheduled to start from 4ZB on August 18, and from 2ZA on August 25. This feature is in episodes, action stories being interspersed with what might be called "outdoor" music.

IMPRESSIONISTIC sketches of famous New Zealanders are being presented every Wednesday night from the ZB stations at 7 o'clock. The subjects include Lord Rutherford, Katherine Mansfield, R. J. Seddon, Sir Truby King and Dr. A. H. Cockayne.

BRYAN O'BRIEN, who is heard every Sunday evening from the ZB stations in "Story-Time," has published one of the songs, "Shoes," from a cycle which he composed under the title of "Songs of Mischief." Recently he presented the cycle over the ZB network. The other songs are "The Baby Over the Way," and "Fair Warning."

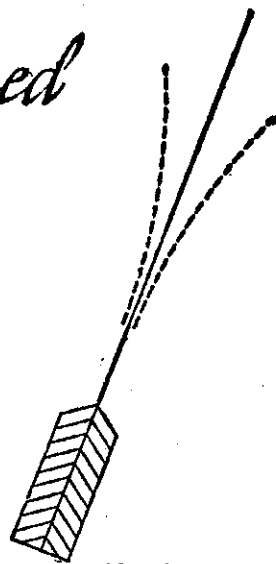
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