

EVEN YOUR BEST FRIEND WON'T TELL YOU

How's YOUR Breath To-day?

YOU may be guilty of halitosis (bad breath) this very moment and yet be unaware of it, the subject is so delicate that even your best friend won't tell you. That's the insidious thing about this offensive condition; you yourself never know when you have it, but others do and some may snub you unmercifully. Don't run this needless risk. You can be sure that your breath will not offend by merely using Listerine Antiseptic, the remarkable deodorant with the delightful taste. Rinse the mouth with it every morning and every night, and between times before business and social engagements. As it cleanses the entire oral cavity, Listerine Antiseptic kills

outright millions of odour-producing bacteria. At the same time it halts the fermentation of tiny food particles skipped by the tooth brush (a major cause of odours) then overcomes the odours themselves. Remember, when treating breath conditions you need a real deodorant that is also safe; ask for Listerine—and see that you get it.

If all men and women would take the delightful precaution of using Listerine, there would be fewer waning friendships in the social world—fewer curt rebuffs in this world of business. The Lambert Pharmaceutical Co. (N.Z.) Ltd., 64 Ghuznee Street, Wellington.



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BOOKS

READING IN BED

DO you read in bed, and if so, what? Some people don't, and are apt to be rather superior about it. "Bad habit! When I go to bed I put my light out immediately, and I'm asleep as soon as my head touches the pillow." Others have become so accustomed to a book in bed that they can't do without one. A commercial traveller I knew, who worked one of the New Zealand provinces, an exceptionally well-read man, became such a slave to the habit that one night in a country town, having no book with him and finding nothing in the hotel, he took a directory to bed.

Many of us know what it is to have a mind that will not follow the lead of weary body. The very first poem in the collection before me * is Shakespeare's sonnet,

Weary with toil, I haste me to my bed,
The dear repose for limbs with travel tired;
But then begins a journey in my head
To work my mind, when body's work's expired;
For then my thoughts, from far where I
abide,

Intend a jealous pilgrimage to thee . . .

Can we minister to such a mind with the printed word? Are there books that will put us to sleep, or in the words of this editor, who seeks to avoid both keeping the reader awake and sending him to sleep—"compose the mind"? Often we do not define the purpose so clearly to ourselves. We just want to read, and, like my friend with the directory, at a pinch anything will do. We may be those fortunates who can sleep when they wish. Choice, of course, depends largely on taste and bent. I knew a doctor who, having from his schooldays retained his keen interest in mathematics, sometimes took a textbook on algebra to bed with him. He assured me it gave him real pleasure, and I could not allow my own life-long incompetence to shake my belief in his veracity. Mathematics, I am told, are closely allied to music, or some varieties of it.

Is it a Compliment?

Can we therefore generalise about bed-books? Some years ago a famous English house issued a series with the straight-out title of *Bedside Books*, and Professor Walter Murdoch, noticing the first six, wrote this:

I am not at all sure that I should feel flattered if anyone told me that a book of mine was a good bedside book; for the phrase certainly does suggest certain sedative or soporific qualities; it must not be so interesting as to keep you awake. If a man troubled with insomnia murmurs to himself—"I'm out of aspirins again; dash it, I'll have to fall back on St. Augustine!"—he pays the fiery bishop a doubtful compliment. "Avoid bromides; read *Cranford*!" would be a neat enough advertisement; but what would Mrs. Gaskell say about it?

The six books were, besides St. Augustine and *Cranford*, a selection of Boccaccio's tales; a complete sequence of the Falstaff scenes; *The Life and Death of Socrates*, and *The Parables and Sayings of Jesus*. These, I suggest, give us a line to follow. They are all exciting aesthetically; three of them are so morally—Jesus was the most exciting moral teacher the world has

*AND SO TO BED: An Album compiled from his BBC feature by Edward Sackville-West. Phoenix House, London. Our copy from the British Council.



"Sometimes I lie awake and wonder who did it and whether boy gets girl"

known. But they do not convey excitement in the general sense of the word. When they tell a story they tell it without thunder and lightning. The tales are smooth. You have a choice of humour. There is tragedy, but no passion erupts. There is no mazy coil of violent action, no long pattern of intrigue. If we wish to, we can move on the deepest waters, but they are still.

The suggestion is therefore that a good bedside book, something that will "compose the mind," should provide a measure of tranquillity and serenity. This rules out a large proportion of fiction as bringing to the mind too much of the world's disturbance, accentuated maybe by the writer's imagination. I must confess that I don't follow this rule, but roll and plunge and vibrate myself towards sleep by reading detective stories and thrillers. I know from experience this is not the best preparation for the night; sometimes I lie awake and wonder who did it, and whether boy gets girl. This may be rated the least admirable approach to the "death of each day's life," "the baiting place of wit," "the season of all natures"—sleep.

It is also questionable whether the continuity of a book that takes you upon a journey is good for bed reading. One is too apt to want to know what happens next—whether in narrative or argument—and read too long. That is why dipping books are popular for reading in bed. Edward Sackville-West's *And So to Bed* is this sort of book. Compiled from a BBC broadcast feature of five-minute poetry and prose extracts, it seeks as the original did, "to provide a few minutes' quiet reading for those who are neither too tired to submit themselves to the enchantment of poetry, nor too disturbed in mind to hope that sleep will quickly follow the laying aside of the book." There is reading here that might soothe those who are so disturbed. This declared intention mentions specifically "the enchantment of poetry," but Edward Sackville-West uses "poetry" in its widest sense as including prose that has poetical content. So we have bits of prose from Montaigne, Jeremy Taylor, Ruskin, Byron, Treherne, Gerard, Manley Hopkins, Cobbett, Southey, Hudson, Virginia Woolf, and others. It is well to have it indicated occasionally how close is the affinity between the two methods of expression.

There are three patterns in the collection. There is a division into four sections—Winter, Spring, Summer and