

# BED-TIME STORIES FOR CHILDREN

(By K.S.)

**M**Y little boy wants me to read him a story before he goes to sleep each night, but I have some difficulty in finding a suitable type of book. What do other parents do?

We started when he was two or three years old by reading simple nursery rhymes and fortunately found a uniform series of little stories graduated from different years—*The Pink Book* for tiny tots, then *The Green Book*, *The Yellow Book*, and so on—which work out better than the mixed bag in the average book. From there we went on to the Christopher Robin stories by A. A. Milne. *When We Were Very Young* we found excellent for a small child of four or five, and *Now We Are Six* is even better for a year or two later. The little poems are amusing, and deal with simple incidents geared exactly to the comprehension of children's minds. A New Zealand adult sees, of course, that they were written to fit Christopher Robin's circumstances, but the child sees nothing odd in the reference to Nannies,

and nurses, and wearing gloves and so on. (Incidentally, it was a shock to me to read the other day in A. A. Milne's latest book: "Dedicated to my son, C. R. Milne, a student at Oxford and shortly to be a sapper in the Royal Engineers.")

**ONE** day recently Richard came home from school with his eyes wide open—the teacher had told them a jungle story and it was "bee-you-tiful" (he hasn't found the word "corker" yet). "Could I have a jungle story to-night, please? I'm tired of that silly Christopher Robin." I looked through all the books on my shelves without finding anything suitable, until I remembered an old school prize of my own, *Nat the Naturalist*, by one George Manville Fenn. Across the years the story came back to me, about a boy who joined his uncle in a bird-collecting expedition to the South Sea Islands, where they lived in a sylvan glade with birds of paradise fluttering overhead, and they only had to climb a tree for coconuts. What I did not remember was the old-fashioned

flavour about it—how Nat was always blushing for shame, and calling everyone "Sir," and standing in amazement at things the modern child takes for granted. However, we read Richard a chapter each night, and he followed Nat's long-drawn-out adventures with the savages with the closest of interest, although some of it was beyond him.

**AT** first we found Bible stories almost impossible. The archaic language is a stumbling block, together with the fact that most stories are either too short or too involved for our needs. So we purchased a Hurlbut's *Stories of the Bible*, an American Bible slightly simplified, and divided into a series of dramatic stories suitable for children. Richard soon got to know and love many stories—Daniel in the Lions' Den, David and Goliath, Little Eli in the Temple—but so many others I feel are too terrifying and even too sadistic for children. An uncle gave him a couple of little booklets, garishly illustrated, but we had to put them out of sight—the ancient dresses and scenes of bloody battles merely confused the poor child. Later, we were introduced to the modern Bible

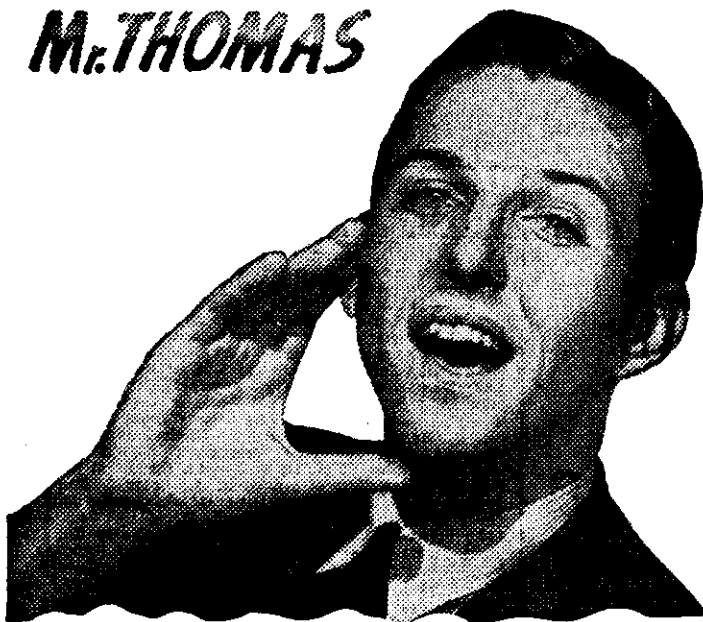
stories for children, published by the Church of Scotland, the S.C.M. people, and others, which are entirely suitable. They are clear-cut stories (of love instead of hate), with good pictures, and told so simply that children can easily read them for themselves.

**A** WEEK or two ago we joined the junior branch of the local library, and now Richard goes along proudly every Saturday morning and changes his book. To be honest, it hasn't yet worked out very satisfactorily. He chooses books of course, only by their illustrations, as he can read very little, and hence is likely to bring home a book with not much more to it than the illustrations. Then we got *Winnie The Pooh*, by A. A. Milne, and found it rather disappointing. But I feel we are on the right lines. If this practice inculcates a lifelong love of reading, and acquaintance with the deep resources of a library, it is all to the good, and meantime it does provide a cheap supply of suitable books.

So now, every night, as Richard is tucked into bed, he says: "What chapter are we up to in our library book, Dad?"

## TAKE MY TIP

MR. THOMAS



**N**OW, what do you think you're doing, Mr. Thomas! No good getting run down and "out of sorts." We've all got to keep our health—particularly nerves—in hand these days. Take my tip, Mr. Thomas. Get yourself some Clements Tonic—that famous remedy for raw nerves and general fatigue. Clements Tonic contains Phosphates, Iron, Calcium and Quinine, a combination that feeds body and nerves and brain. Clements Tonic will soon steady you—restore your confidence and vigour, give you new "pep" and "nerves of steel."

# CLEMENTS TONIC

Wholesale Distributors: Clements Tonic Pty. Ltd., Box 977, G.P.O., Wellington. 72/120

## Advice On Health (No. 11)

### HOW LIKES AND DISLIKES FOR FOODS ARISE

(Written for "The Listener" by DR. MURIEL BELL, Nutritionist to the Department of Health)



**H**OW happily the average child of to-day takes its cod liver oil! When I have said this to medical students, the great majority of these young men of 20 have made a face which indicates that up till twenty years ago, there was something wrong with the way in which the oil was given to children. Speaking from my own experience (and without referring to my own particular case as being anything but that customary for those times) my memory recalls the occasions when, for colds or sore throats, cod liver oil was forcefully administered just at a time when one was feeling so miserable that almost anything would be distasteful.

We each can remember some occasion on which we attacked the honey pot, or the coconut, and ate to such excess that we were sick; we vowed that we would never eat honey or coconut again! Or we heard an adult say that there were mites in cheese, and thereafter cheese became a repulsive article of diet until we learnt more sense. On one occasion, which I often quote, there was engendered in my own mind a perfectly irrational dislike for a good food; when I was ill with scarlet fever I was given some baked custard; the memory is still so strong of that slippery feeling that even now it lingers. That it is irrational is perfectly obvious from the fact that fluid custard made from the same ingredients does not produce any of these mental reactions.

#### Do It With a Smile

As we get older, we lose many of the fads we had in childhood, but some of them, if founded on some intense psychological experience, are difficult to eradicate.

The mother of to-day knows that she must approach her baby with a smile as well as a spoon containing cod liver oil; a child is extremely sensitive to the attitude of adults; if it hears them say they don't like a particular food, the attitude infects the child. This is often at the bottom of distastes for such good foods as milk. Conversely, a dislike is often overcome by the attitude of other children or of adults. Teachers in infant rooms often tell me that during the first week of the year there are many newcomers who say they don't like their school milk. When they see the others taking it, they follow suit; there are many ways that the teacher can use to encourage them to lose their former fad-diness, and I am told by wise infant teachers that they soon have them all drinking their milk regularly, with very few exceptions.

Forcing a food on a child when it is not hungry or when it is tired is another way to create dislikes. Or not allowing it to be independent because it smears its food too badly for its fastidious mother to behold!

By far the greatest proportion of food dislikes occur in the cases of only children. The happy companionship of other children is an important factor in the psychology of eating. And, moreover, the cajoling and persuading, and admiration, of doting parents and aunts are the very things which cause a child to draw more attention to itself by refusing food.

The rules for creating a happy attitude to foods are to give (with a smile on your own face) small quantities (quarter teaspoons) till the baby has grown accustomed to the taste of a new food—for liking comes from learning to like.

(Next week: "Droplet Infection," by Dr. H. B. Turbott.)