

# Hip, Hip, But No Houray!

(Written for "The Listener" by N.M.)



I do not like thee, Doctor Bell—  
The reason why this tale will tell...

THE whole thing was your fault in the first place, Dr. Bell, because you wrote so encouragingly ("Hip, hip, hooray; gather ye rose-hips while you may") of the recipe to be had for one penny from the Plunket Society, of Useful Tips about corks (old ones needing an hour's boiling), paraffin wax, and even of Mrs. Gaskell's rose-hip jam. If only I hadn't read *The Listener* that week. . . But I did, and here is a short account of my week's activities.

**Sunday:** Planned to gather rose-hips on Monday and make the syrup on Monday night and Tuesday—taking my time.

**Monday:** Took the baby in the pram over two miles of rough country roads; it was very hot; the strap on the pram broke; I was scratched; the baby cried; I got the hips but was too tired to do anything about them that night.

**Tuesday:** Borrowed scales, after going from neighbour to neighbour with my story—that took time. Topped and tailed the hips and spent some more time taking the prickles out of my fingers.

**Wednesday:** Read directions carefully in the penny sheet from the Plunket people. Horrified at the number of boilings necessary, but carried on. Change of jelly bags a nuisance, certainly. After the fourth boiling wandered round the house looking for a suitable place to suspend the jelly-bag (a clean, i.e., a fresh one as the recipe so pedantically told me) overnight. That's difficult: dog, three-year-old daughter, and baby all to be considered. At last I found a Place and left the ungainly object with a witch-like incantation.

**Thursday:** Sterilising corks. Sterilising bottles. The corks boiled merrily for 20 minutes and all was ready, syrup hot again, when I found that one cork had a vicious brown top which had oozed out

of itself and ruined the rest. Spent the rest of the evening cleaning the saucepan.

**Friday:** Got some more corks. Sterilised them. Re-sterilised the bottles. Re-boiled the syrup. Poured boiling syrup into hot bottles, put the corks in lightly, allowing for the recipe's warning that "the corks will be sucked in somewhat during the cooling process." Cleaned the kitchen—very necessary—and came back to gaze with pride upon my bottles—corks had disappeared! Swore horribly. Put in more corks and went to bed.

**Saturday:** Confronted again by swallowed corks, two to each bottle. Tore hair. Re-boiled syrup. Sterilised fresh bottles to replace the ones from which I could fish neither of the swallowed corks. Went round the neighbours for corks with tops to them. Bottled syrup and stuck in corks dipped in boiling fat. Put bottles away in a dark cupboard out of sight.

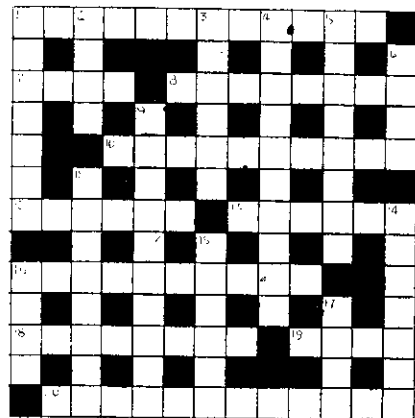
**Sunday:** My young sister arrived with a basket of rose-hips she and her friends had gathered for me.

**Monday:** Plunket nurse came. Said what a pity I had put the syrup into such big bottles as it doesn't keep after it is opened.

**Tuesday:** Read article in more recent copy of *The Listener* saying that green walnut syrup is twice as valuable as rose-hip syrup. I do not like thee, Dr. Bell.

## THE LISTENER CROSSWORD

(No. 140: Constructed by R.W.C.)



### Clues Across

1. Untie it, Cathyl! (anag.).
7. Fastidious.
8. Here we find Eric within call.
10. Violent shivering.
12. Take in.
13. Competitors.
16. Bitter soil produces these fossil crustaceans.
18. Bad imitation of a vast tyre.
19. Instrument found in 14 down.
20. Ocean rip-tide (anag.).

### Clues Down

1. I am sane, even if suffering from this.
2. Admirable quality in 1 across.
3. Looted in Spain?
4. Cream tiles rearranged for white friars.
5. Beginning with 2 down, and ending like 8 across.
6. Beat in the reverse of a game.
9. Cheer a riot (anag.).
11. Tea tunes (anag.).
14. Point with rash pen.
15. Pugilistic.
16. So long!
17. Wise men from the East.

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sure that it gets to the right camp. It is just an added insurance that private parcels find their destination."

A strenuous day in the packing rooms? Undoubtedly. But for every day spent in this way 1,600 prisoners would eventually have a parcel to relieve the monotony of their life, and 1,600 boys would know that they were not forgotten.

