



If you've a Baby

Give him the gentle, safe aperient used by mothers for 100 years—Steedman's Powders. They keep habits regular and bloodstream cool during teething. For children up to 14 years.

"Hints to Mothers" Booklet posted free on request.

Give STEEDMAN'S POWDERS

FOR CONSTIPATION

Van Staveren Bros. Ltd., Taranaki St., Wellington

IN DEFENCE OF MOTHERS

By One Who Isn't

WHEN guns are blazing we don't hear crackers. So when the bombs were exploding in Pearl Harbour no one noticed that something was happening in a printing house in Binghamton, N.Y., that would in due course send ripples round the world. Or almost no one. If the New Zealand Country Library Service had not heard something the rest of us would have slept on too. But there were ears to the ground in the Library; or it may have been eyes on the sky or a nose tilted into the wind. I don't know how they become aware of world-shaking books; all I know is that Dr. Leo Kanner's "In Defence of Mothers: or How to Bring up Children in Spite of the More Zealous Psychologists" left the Vail-Ballou Press the week of Pearl Harbour, and reached New Zealand within six months. Now anyone who applies through the right channels may get it—once the twenty thousand other applicants who have applied first have been served.

In short, it is a book that every independent parent should read; but since so few will get a chance of reading it before they are grandparents at least, here are a few samples to go on with:

YOU have heard of those mothers who spend their time trying to prevent something in their children—colds, malnutrition, capriciousness, walking on wet grass. Dr. Kanner has heard of them too:

"You have heard of the many mothers who must prevent constipation. They go after the bowels with laxatives and special diets from above, with suppositories and enemas from below. Fierce battles are fought daily. The child's stools are watched with sacerdotal solemnity. The attention of a whole

family converges on a chamber pot. And what is the result? The intestines never get a chance to develop their own regular routine. Constipation is forced upon them by the methods intended to avert it."

That might have been written at Rawene. And take this as a picture of a home in which everybody rules but father:

"Picture, if you can, Home Sweet Home with its inhabitants engaged in a war to the finish between a little bully and one or more big bullies. No strategy is wasted in that battle. The belligerents line up their allies, try to win them over to their side. The *enfant terrible* uses heavy artillery. He can yell, vomit, thrust himself on the floor, upset his glass of milk, refuse entry to his food at one end and exit to his bowel contents at the other end. The elders, known for their nice company manners, forget them in the heat of battle. They parry every blow. They hit, threaten, lock in the closet, pour food into one end and enemas into the other. The contestants have one weapon in common: their lungs. It is a case of: I holler, you holler; he, she or it hollers; we holler; you holler; they holler. You may add the past and future tenses. But the walls of Jericho do not collapse from all the noise. Neither party ever wins this exquisite struggle for hegemony. There is an all-round survival of the fittest. Never mind what becomes of those youngsters in the future. Some emerge unscathed. Others do not. But think of the turmoil, hubbub, and silly antics in an otherwise civilised home!

"I Don't Believe It!"

Have you ever met one of those mothers who say, "Of course I don't believe it, but still . . ." and then look anxiously into space? The baby has been born with a caul, or with teeth; it has cut its teeth wide apart; it has seen itself in the mirror. The mother refuses to believe that it will therefore be lucky or unlucky or become a great traveller. It is all nonsense, she keeps telling you, all superstition. But . . . Well, what is Dr. Kanner's "but"?

"But Nature's proverbial horror of a vacuum has provided substitutes. New superstitions have taken the place of the old. These would have no truck with folklore. They claim nobler parentage. They consider and introduce themselves as the offspring of science. . . . Sometimes this sort of fallacy has even crept into reputable scientific literature. The Germans, who of late have been prolific in the superstitious exploitation of heredity for wicked political purposes, have outdone everybody else in this respect. A German psychologist has insisted on the inheritance of fear! Can't you just visualise the little chromosomes shaking in their pants?"

The Fatal Years

And you know, too, about those fatal years which, when you reach them, dom-



inate you for the rest of your life—the years beyond which effort is useless? If you have not been "too old at forty" you have certainly been too far gone in sin at some younger age—smoking or eating chocolates or biting your nails or drinking ginger beer—to have had any hope of escape. Well, Dr. Kanner has heard of you, too:

"The belief that some one item fixes a person's lot in life for him is one of the things which the old and new superstitions have in common. What are growth, training, ability, opportunity, the thousand and one big and little experiences as compared with a forbear's foibles, a trivial incident during the mother's pregnancy, or the position of the planets at the hour of birth? Heredity, pre-natal influences, constellations are relied upon to fix the course of events from the beginning. And if they don't do the trick, there are many other 'fixers' to fall back on. Age is one of those fixers. The yarn runs as follows: when a child reaches the age of six, seven, eight or nine years (pick your own number; there are different versions), then his habits are fixed for better or for worse. There is nothing you can do about it afterwards. Nobody knows when, where and why this superstition made its first appearance. It is of fairly recent vintage. It likes to present itself as a quotation from some book or article on child rearing. But to date bibliographic research has failed to verify this claim."

Billy's Complaint

And if you were a doctor and were consulted by Mrs. Jones, what disease

would you detect in Billy? Here are the symptoms:

"The Jones family sits down to a quiet meal. Soup is served. Billy declares, 'I don't want any soup.' Father says sharply, 'Are you fussing about your food again?' Mother pleads, tenderly, 'Now be a good boy Billy, and eat your soup. You want to grow up and be a strong man, don't you?' Billy is in a bargaining mood. 'If I eat my soup, do I have to eat my carrots, too?' Mother is a diplomat. 'We'll see about that later. Now eat your soup.' Billy seemingly yields. He cautiously dips the tip of his tongue into the spoon and withdraws it quickly with an expression as if he had tasted the strongest brand of vinegar in existence. Mother tries another form of strategy. She invites Billy to a speed contest, to see who will finish the soup first. After two spoonfuls, Billy announces that he is all filled up. Mother remembers previous tactics. Would her darling have one more spoon for his mother? Billy obliges. Now just one more for daddy? And one for Cousin George? No, he won't take one for Cousin George. So Mother starts telling him a story. Then she promises him an ice-cream cone. Meanwhile Father has lost his patience and becomes irritable. Mother gives up in despair. The same procedure begins all over again as the next course appears on the table."

No matter what you think, Billy's complaint is *anorexia*—food capricious-

(Continued on next page)

May Belle "Kozinit"

FLEECY LINED FOR WARMTH WITH STYLE