

## THE STORY OF MRS. BEETON

"I HAVE always thought," wrote Isabella Beeton, "that there is no more fruitful source of family discontent than a housewife's badly cooked dinners and untidy ways."

Mrs. Beeton followed this observation with more than half a million closely-printed words of sound advice, plus 500 wood engravings and 50 coloured plates. She perpetrated such sage but irritating admonitions as "A place for everything, and everything in its place," but she also taught several generations of women how to make a house into a home. Since 1861, when it first appeared, *Mrs. Beeton's Book of Household Management* has sold steadily, and been friend, guide and mentor to hundreds of thousands of brides and wives. Such is the author's

fame that she has even been extensively misquoted. Mrs. Beeton did not introduce a recipe with "First catch your hare," or "Take a dozen eggs." She was, in fact, always conscious of the need for economy, even to the extent of recommending the serving of suet pudding before meat "as in this case the consumption of the latter article will be much smaller than it would otherwise be."

As one of a family of 21, it was hardly surprising that Mrs. Beeton should be interested in domestic economy and harmony. She was the eldest of four children of Benjamin and Elizabeth Mayson. Elizabeth was widowed at the age of 25, but later married Henry Dorling,

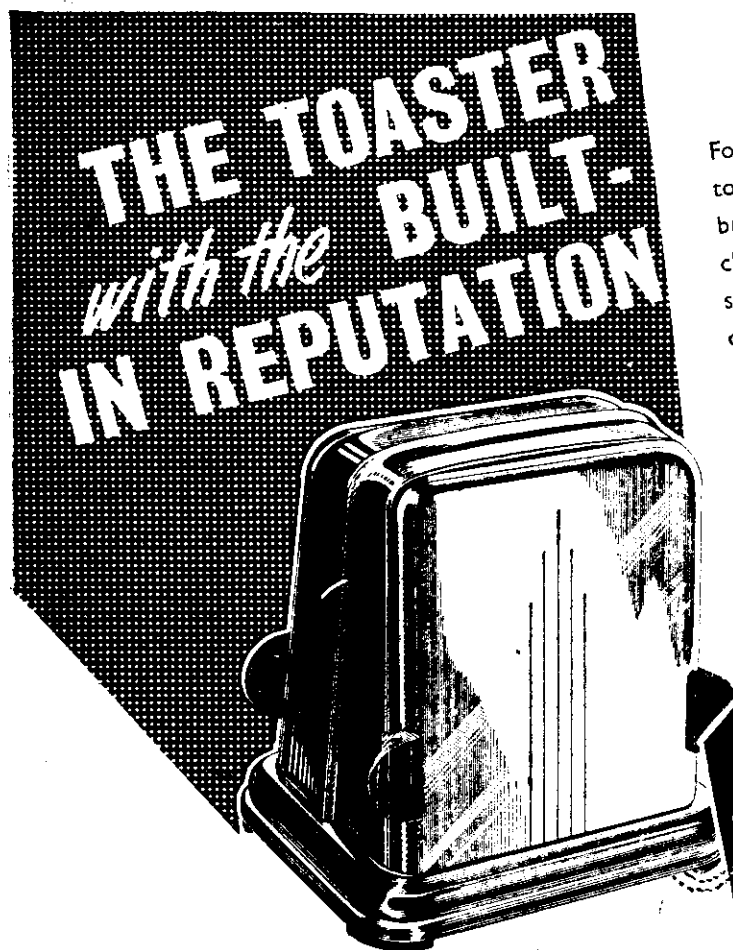
himself a widower with four children. Together they raised a further 13.

At the age of 20 Isabella Mayson married Samuel Orchard Beeton, a young, but already successful publisher. Beeton had been concerned in the first English publication of Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, a venture which proved highly profitable for him in every respect. He was also one of the first to recognise the need for a women's journal and the publication of *The Englishwoman's Domestic Magazine* was the first of several successful ventures in this field. Isabella's career as a writer began with contributions to this magazine. She wrote the notes on household management and originated a section known as "Our Practical Dress Instructor" which consisted of paper patterns which could be cut out and used for home dressmaking. This was the beginning of today's huge paper-pattern industry. Her cookery notes formed the basis for the great book that was to make her name literally a household word. No recipe was ever included that she had not tried. The result was such that the great Conan Doyle once paid this tribute: "Mrs. Beeton must have been the finest householder in the world. Therefore Mr. Beeton must have been the happiest and most comfortable man." From all accounts Doyle was right, but the idyll did not last. Isabella Beeton died at the age of 28 in giving birth to her fourth child.

*The Beeton Story*, an account of the life of the Beetons and of the times in which they lived, will be broadcast from 1XH beginning at 3.30 p.m. on Tuesday, March 30. It will be heard later from other stations. The feature was produced in London by Grandison Films with a cast headed by the young British actress Janette Scott.



MRS. ISABELLA BEETON, at the age of 21—from a contemporary photograph in the National Portrait Gallery



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## Special Assignment

MAX MALLENSON, Foreign Officer undercover agent and "man of many faces," is the central figure of *Special Assignment*, a new adventure serial now playing from 2XA and 2XG. Perhaps the best-known of his faces is that of Richard Davies (below) who plays the part in this Australasian Radio Production. As Mallenson he crops up in various parts of the globe doing a kind of Superman job in the cause of British diplo-



macy. In the first of the self-contained three-episode stories of the serial he crops up at a "Tavern in Tangier." His alliterative progress makes him later a "Banker in Bangkok," a "Sailor in Shanghai," a "Playboy in Paris," a "Gambler in Genoa," and, of course, a "Beggar in Berlin." Both stations broadcast the show at 7.30 p.m., 2XA on Wednesdays and Saturdays and 2XG on Mondays and Fridays.

N.Z. LISTENER, MARCH 26, 1954.