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Sensible Shoes for Teen-age Girls

I OVERHEARD a conversation on secondary schoolgirls' feet.

The mothers were comparing shoe sizes of their generation with those of modern adolescents. While in their day the mothers thought sizes 4 or 5 were on the big side, nowadays they have to buy sizes 7 or 8 for their girls. Now there's nothing to worry about in this increasing size of modern children, especially as regards feet. It's all to the good. The ideal foot is the policeman's—large and supple. Why? Because the foot has two functions, to provide a pedestal to stand on, and to act as a lever to send the body forwards.

I've already told you how to choose toddlers' shoes. It was a long while ago, but I guess you remember—flexible, straight innersides, three-quarter inch longer than the foot to allow for growth, good depth of blocking to house the toes, and snugly fitting heels. Your good work in watching toddlers' and primary school shoes can be undone at the high school age. This applies to the girls in the main. When it comes to shoes for your adolescent girl, you'll probably have to put your foot down. Fashion will be drawing. Bang will go 14 to 16 years of keeping growing feet shapely and strong, if you allow your high school girl to have her own way. Six months of a smart but badly-fitting shoe can ruin the feet at this stage. The bones are still not fully hardened—lime is still going into them, firming them up, until the teens are left behind. A great many New Zealand female feet are pushed out of shape at this age. An X-ray picture of the feet of a school of secondary age girls would provide you with some "shockers." You have no realisation of the damage that can be done by bad shoes until you've seen such pictures. I have—hence the subject.

Let's consider heels. If too low, they strain the long arch; if too high, there's trouble in the fore-foot. The experts say the Cuban heel of 1½ inches is the limit to which the schoolgirl, or girl

This is the text of a talk on health broadcast recently from ZB, YA and YZ stations of the NZBS by DR. H. B. TURBOTT, Deputy-Director-General of Health

who has just left school, should go. This type of heel, they say, gives good poise, helps to avoid fatigue, adds spring to the walk. It will not tip the foot forward foolishly and start off corns on the toes. Really high heels of two and a half inches or more should be a fashion luxury, worn solely for social occasions. You see, high heel shoes must be of the best design if the foot is not to slip down into the toe cap and cramp the toes. The weight of the body should go squarely down through the heel. This means the shoe should be level at the heel, not sloping all the way from heel to toe so that the foot slides down, but sloping only from the arch under the heel. High-heeled shoes are very tricky. Let Miss Adolescent keep them for parties, and stick to not higher than 1½ inches for constant wear.

Now, about size. While size 6 was considered large in the twenties of this century, sizes 7 and even 8 are commonplace in the fifties. Your girl's foot will be in proportion to her build and it would be a tragic mistake to let your daughter mould her foot into a smaller size than she should have. A beauty mistake, too, for carriage is a graceful part of total beauty. A shoe too small makes the walk unnatural, spoiling the free grace of the gait.

If the feet are long and thin, with narrow heels, such a girl will require a very snugly, firm-fitting shoe at the heel. Shoes with short, central pointed toes are "out"—they must cramp the toes. The pointedness of the shoe may only be such that it doesn't push the big toe further than it naturally is towards the outer side. A survey a while back showed 57 per cent of adolescent girls possessing corns, bunions or hammer toes. Now, mothers, you've looked after toddler and primary school shoes. Put your foot down on too much fashion in adolescent years.

A NIGHT AT THE ZARZUELA

A SPANISH youth, humble but determined, leaves the sea-coast village where he was born and sets off for America in search of gold to offer the young girl to whom he has secretly pledged his heart. An old, old story with the simplest of plots—that's *Los Gavilanes* or *The Sparrow Hawks*, but, set to music which is romantic, sentimental and deeply and exuberantly melodious, it has become one of Spain's favourite operettas. New Zealand listeners will be introduced to *The Sparrow Hawks* in a programme from the ZB Concert Hall series, in which a recent recording from Spain of this operetta will be broadcast.

Spain has a thriving and virile lyric theatre tradition which is virtually unknown outside its own borders. Spanish zarzuelas (you pronounce it as though you had a lisp) or operettas are as characteristic of that country as those of Gilbert and Sullivan or Edward German are of England. In *The Gramophone* recently Lionel Salter had this to say: "Fully to appreciate them, one needs to have a slight acquaintance with the his-

tory of the Spanish lyric theatre, and certainly to have seen at least one typical performance from the vast repertoire. Like any other continuing art-form, the 'zarzuela' has established its own traditions and the English listener has to approach it, not with any preconceived ideas taken from French or Viennese operettas, but as a distinctive style of its own, in which little emphasis is laid on the intricacies of plot but much on true local colour and on the folk dances which are invariably introduced."

The Sparrow Hawks is based on an old story by José Ramos Martin and the libretto has been set to music by one of Spain's most prominent lyric theatre composers, Jacinto Guerrero. The first performance of the operetta was at the Teatro Zarzuela in Madrid on December 7, 1923, and since that date it has become the most played piece in the Spanish lyric repertoire, both in Spain and Latin America.

Los Gavilanes or *The Sparrow Hawks* will be heard at 9.0 p.m. on Sunday nights in ZB Concert Hall, from 22A on September 19, 12B on September 26, 22B on October 3, and 32B on October 10.

N.Z. LISTENER, SEPTEMBER 10, 1954.