

ALL ABOUT MICHAEL AND THE PIXIE PATH

HAVE you met Obadiah Oswald? Or Caesar the Crab? Or Agnes the Hen? And have you travelled with the pixie-eared Michael down the Pixie Path? And do you remember the quaint musical waddle of the Penguin, the Penguin who, "with another one, built a nest and had a son"?

But, just in case you think we've been reading too much Barrie and A. A. Milne, and have come all over whimsy, it should be explained that Obadiah Oswald and Caesar the Crab, and Agnes, and Michael and the Penguin were all characters in "Down the Pixie Path," the children's fantasy which the National Broadcasting Service featured during children's sessions from the YA stations recently.

EXCEPT for a special broadcast by Grace Adams East, American trumpet player, "The Pixie Path" represented the first time the NBS had ever introduced a feature into its children's hour on a national scale.

Seven-year-olds, and their parents as well—it's a known fact that just as many parents as children listen in to children's hours—will remember "The Pixie Path" for its delightful story, its good fun, and, above all, its songs and verses.

There's quite a story to "The Pixie Path," and it really began when Mrs. Mary Hamilton, of Island Bay, Wellington—she was Miss Mary C. Hall, living in Sydney, and contributing verse to Australian and American papers at the time—met a man who had pixie ears and second sight.

What? You've never met a man with pixie ears? Many people have them—no lobes, rather furry, and pointed at the top. And, if you have pixie ears, according to Mary C. Hall, you're a very lucky person. All sorts of exciting things may happen to you.

Well, the man with pixie ears, whose second name was Michael, became, whether he liked it or not, the hero of a little series of adventures in verse into fairyland. And he kept on meeting so many nice

people that the verses grew and grew.

They were written at all sorts of odd times, some of them in England, and many of them were published.

Enter The NBS

THEN one day in Wellington Mrs. Hamilton took her book of "Pixie Path" verses, all neatly typed and bound, into Tommy Kirk-Burnnand, who is musical adviser to the National Broadcasting Service, and told him she had a suggestion for a children's session.

Mr. Burnnand was immediately impressed by the verses, and as his chief spare-time hobby is composing, it wasn't long before Michael was set to music.

Then a narrative was written. Mr. Roy Hill, well-known Wellington tenor, was engaged to sing the songs; another NBS executive came along to provide incidental noises, and a series of recordings was made. (That loud motor horn you heard was the result of a motorist getting bad tempered just outside the studio window, and doesn't really come into the story of "The Pixie Path.")

What is the exact story of "The Pixie Path"? It's much too long to tell here, but briefly, it tells what happens to Michael of the pixie ears when he travels down the pixie path. There are little songs about the people he meets, songs which are the most amusing part of "The Pixie Path."

Obadiah Oswald

FOR instance, there's our old friend Obadiah Oswald, to whom we referred previously.

*Obadiah Oswald is a prickly little beast,
With a rather trying temper if
you tease him in the least,
He's a serious young fellow and
he never wants to play,
He keeps his nose upon the
ground and walks a funny
way.*

*Obadiah Oswald is a baby porcupine,
And although he is so prickly I
would love him to be mine.*

And then Caesar the Crab ("I have two little nippers, though I have no wife").

*Caesar the Crab lived under the
ledge
Of a rugged rock by the water's
edge.*

*He'd a greeny-brown shell on his
greeny-brown back,
And his legs were deep pink, and
his eyes were deep black.*



—Earle Andrew Photo.

MARY C. HALL, who wrote the "Pixie Path" verses, is really Mrs. Hamilton, of Island Bay, Wellington. Here she is with small daughter Susan.

*His moss-covered home was not
lonely or drab,
And a handsome crustacean was
Caesar the Crab.*

The secret about Obadiah Oswald and Caesar the Crab is that they are real people, says Mrs. Hamilton. She once knew the most prickly sort of person, and also a rather crabby man, who always seemed to be walking sideways.

The Music

MR. BURNNAND'S music is suited perfectly to the verses, Mr. Hill interprets them well, and although (to coin a

phrase) comparisons are invidious, "The Pixie Path" is well up to the standard of any similar recordings which have ever come to New Zealand.

Next step will be to have the words and music of "The Pixie Path" published. Mrs. Hamilton is making inquiries about that now. Without a doubt there should be an immediate success for the book.

Mrs. Hamilton also has another collection of verses, "Seven Songs for Sixpence," which, besides being a bargain, is just as amusing and delightful as "The Pixie Path." Quite possibly they, too, will be broadcast some day.

3ZB ANNOUNCER GETS A BIG RISE

("Record's" Christchurch Reporter)

FOR quite a while "Chiv" (E. A. Chivers), of 3ZB, Christchurch, had been looking for "a rise." He got it the other night when he presented what must be one of the most unusual broadcasts ever put over by a New Zealand radio station.

For a long time he had been casting announcer's eyes at a crane dominating Cathedral Square, Christchurch, and wondering just how a relay from the top of a 200ft. mast would go. Negotiations were slow, but eventually the station linked up with the Post and Telegraph Department, and the contractors, and it was agreed that somebody, at his own risk, should go aloft.

FOR many months the huge gantry used in the building of part of the new post office has been a striking silhouette on the skyline, and thousands have wondered what it would feel like to make an ascent.

Station 3ZB chose a Friday night for the job and Mr. Chivers, suitably clothed, was the man who climbed it.

Before the relay could be commenced, however, two members of the technical staff, Jim Younger and Roy Kennard, had to climb skywards to fix the microphone cable, and they made a good job of it.

Just before the relay started Jack Bremner interviewed the contractor and told listeners a few facts about steel work, concrete work and such-like—all extremely interesting.

"Chiv" then climbed up to the platform from which the gigantic crane is worked, and was then carried in a box-like arrangement to the top of the mast. He told me later that Madame Cara (one of 3ZB's excursionists into prophecy) had assured him that he would get a rise this year, and he hoped the Cathedral Square job would not be the only one!

At anyrate up went "Chiv" to 200ft., accompanied by a workman who chatted about "the job" on the way. "The view of the city was magnificent and, in fact, more detailed than that from an aeroplane," Mr. Chivers told the "Record."

"Motor-cars and tramcars looked like toys, and people like midgelets. Was I frightened? Well, I admit I had the wind up a trifle, specially when I realised that the shingle-

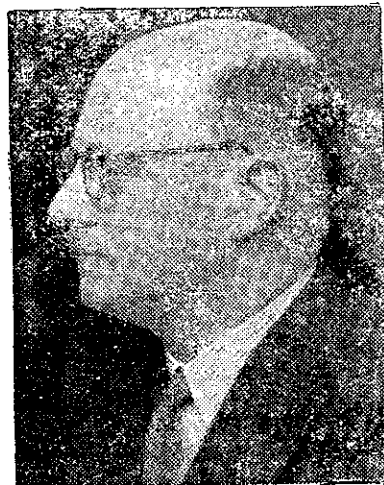
box in which we were being hoisted had only three solid sides. It was all very eerie."

Large Crowd

MEANTIME a large crowd had gathered in Cathedral Square and Hereford Street asking each other "What's to do?", while three powerful spotlights were focused on "Chiv" in his little cage.

It presented a weird scene at 9.40 p.m. And so "Chiv" talked blithely about this and that, with particular reference to his height and his sensations.

The thousands listening received a further thrill when, after the announcer had described what might be his fate if anything "gave," they heard a distinct crack, and the relay went dead. There was no dull



E. A. CHIVERS, who carried out an enterprising broadcast for 3ZB.

and horrid thud, however; 3ZB merely crossed over to the studio.

Actually all that happened was a break in the transmission cable, which became caught in the steelwork as the cage was coming down. Mr. Chivers was aloft for about ten minutes on this job which, for novelty, has only been equalled by Lionel Skeats's climb up Speights's tall chimney in Dunedin.

The nastiest part came for the workman who had to retrieve the broken cable by climbing up the gantry through the framework; but such people do that kind of thing before breakfast, just as an appetiser.

All told, it was a very snappy piece of work.

Are Christchurch Folk Shy?

VISITING stage companies find Christchurch audiences a little frigid on opening nights, and occasionally become apprehensive. But they generally discover that once the people of the city get warmed up, their enthusiasm knows no bounds.

This city trait of shyness was mentioned the other night when members of the local publicity committee of the National Physical Welfare Campaign expressed doubt whether theatre audiences would even hum a tune relevant to the fitness week during the intermissions.

Mrs. G. G. Lockwood, wife of a well-known Christchurch sportsman and athlete, put forward the idea that a song should be screened.

The chairman, Mr. A. C. Maxwell, however, said flatly, "They won't do it." Somebody else remarked that the New Zealand troops at the Great War had been known as the "silent troops" and had been very reluctant to sing.

Mrs. Lockwood held to her point, and declared that when folk-dancing was staged in Cranmer Square, 7000 people attended and quite a few entered into the spirit of the occasion.

As Christchurch holds something of a record for its community singing activities in aid of distress, there is little reason to suppose citizens will go all dumb during the welfare campaign.

At anyrate, theatre managers are to be asked for their views on the shyness or otherwise of their patrons, en masse.