

## I for Illness

I'm covered with red spots. My head hurts. I must be very poorly as Dad has brought my bed downstairs. There's even a fire in the front room grate. I lie still in the dimness. Mum says we have to keep the curtains closed because the light will hurt our eyes. I don't feel like tap-dancing today. Usually I use the front room as my dancing room and the black-out curtain, on a pole which keeps out the draughts, covers my stage. With a high kick, dance and prance, my red tap shoes make a satisfying clicking on the brown patterned lino.

- Fairy Flatfoot- my dad calls me.

Now Richard has red spots too. He's in the same bed as me. We're both too hot. John stands up in his cot, screaming for mum. When I start to feel better, Mum gives me a pile of comics that Donald, in my class at school, has left for me. I can lose myself in the adventures of 'The Bash Street Kids' , "Corky the Kat" or "Cardew the Cad".

The whooping cough was worse than the measles. The bed had to come downstairs again and the Doctor came to the house to give me penicillin injections. Doctor Wertheim is an Austrian Jew, my Nanny says. He escaped from Hitler and came to live here.

When we start to feel better we have Lucozade as a special treat. I save the yellow cellophane in my treasure box. I like to peer through the paper as it changes all the colours.

Because I have been so poorly I have to go to the School Clinic every week for "Sun Ray Treatment". We have to take off all our clothes except our knickers and we sit in a circle on little stools, wearing thick rubber goggles. I have one of Dad's big handkerchiefs tied around my neck. It is dark in the room until the lady switches on a big lamp which looks like the sun.

"-it'll build you up", my mum says, as if I am a Meccano model." If you take your cod liver oil we'll soon have you right as rain-

We all have to take a spoonful of cod liver oil every day. I have my nose held to make me take a spoonful of Virol. It's all thick and sticky but my brother loves it so much that he licks everyone else's spoon too. If we haven't been to the toilet that day we also get a dose of California Syrup of Figs.

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