

no tears and consolations. Mickey knocked himself out to keep the pace fast, too fast for Red to think of anything but the show. Mickey shouted and kicked, pantomimed, and called Red names. The result was a hilarious show.

Now THAT Red had learned to control his emotions, he could help Richard lead a happier life.

Unknown to his son, Red cancelled personal appearances with his latest film, RKO's "Public Pigeon Number One," as well as other commitments that would take him away from home.

A family vacation to Europe also was called off, but the Skeltons went ahead with preparations to visit Hawaii again with their children, because that is what Richard wanted.

There were still problems, of course—Richard's future relationship to other children, for example. Keeping apart from friends might shield him from inadvertent but cruel remarks; Red feared, however, that isolation would have a worse effect. Besides, the attitude of his ten-year-old daughter Valentina proved that youngsters often have a greater understanding than they get credit for.

Valentina was just as conscious of her brother's illness as the rest of the family. And like them, she refused to accept the doctor's verdict as final. She played with Richard as before; her concern showed only in her nightly prayer, when she asked God to help her brother. With such assurance, Red and

Georgia decided to let Richard mix with other children, as he had done before.

Two weeks after Richard left the hospital, he returned to school. He became a Cub Scout, went to the movies, and took part in moderate exercises.

Once the initial shock had worn off, the Skelton household settled down to normal activities. Red and Georgia had time to look at the medical question more realistically. They decided against consulting more physicians. The attending doctors, they realized, were in the best position to evaluate any future discoveries. Sending the boy all over the country in search of miracle cures would only make him tense and more aware of his condition.

Besides, there was plenty to do at home. The news of Richard's illness brought nearly 50,000 letters of sympathy to the Skeltons from well-wishers, some as far away as Milan, Italy, and Yokohama, Japan.

Red has set up a staff of 12 secretaries to help answer the mail, much of which he reads and all of which is answered over his personal signature. Every letter and phone call is carefully catalogued and screened, and the merest suggestion of a possible cure is turned over to UCLA for further action.

Judging by the letters he has received, Red has won not only the sympathy of millions but also their respect for the way he has carried on under the strain.

By simply giving inspiration to his own family, this husband and father has given inspiration to thousands of other families faced with similar crises.



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