

DID YOU HEAR THIS?

Extracts From Recent Talks

Hardy Was a Zmart Veller

JARGE: Weel, ye zee 'e 'appened to be a zickly child, vor zure the doctor thot 'ee was too weake to live and left 'im vur dead, but thick vorman, mid-wife they called her, thoit she knew better and nursed 'im and brought 'im round and gave 'im the chance to live up to 'iz neame (Hardy).

GILES: What 'appened to 'im after thick?

JARGE: 'ee wasn't really vit vor the rough size ov life, but 'ee was a zmart veller, and tuk to learnen like a duck takes to weater, and was zoon head ov all 'tother children in village. I've 'eard that 'tother village lads and lasses used to get 'ee to rite their letters for 'em. 'E must have got some vun riting their love letters. Do ye mind 'ow it coomes out in one ov 'is books, "The Mayor of Casterbridge." Mother Cuxsom speakin' to Richard Newson said, "Lord, d'ye mind Richard, what vools we used to be when we were younger. Gettin' a schoolboy to write our love letters for us, and givin' 'im a penny. D'ye mind not to tell other folks what 'ee put in 'em. D'ye mind it zeemed as iv thease were is virst lessons in ritin'? Look zee, it's likely 'ee began very early to show likin' for ritin'."—(From a tribute in Dorset dialect to Thomas Hardy, by H. J. Poole and Rev. F. J. Usher, 2YA, June 2.)



accurate methods we have just described. Next we may note that it is about sixty or seventy million years since mammals became the chief animals on the land, replacing the huge reptiles which had dominated the land during the preceding hundred

"The Hungry 'Eighties"

In the 'eighties we repented of our foolishness in sack cloth and ashes. Soup-kitchens appeared in the towns and swaggers on the roads. The slump acted as a very wholesome purge. Farmers were forced to pay attention to management, manuring, and all the other aspects of scientific cultivation. The 'eighties saw the beginning of agricultural education and heard the first murmurings of irrigation. They called them the "hungry 'eighties." The 'eighties, gentlemen, were good—good for the country and good for the land. They taught that farming was a profession requiring a high degree of specialised knowledge. It was the discipline and hard-thinking of the 'eighties which made possible our later prosperity. Unfortunately, the lesson was soon forgotten. The generation that lived through the halycon days between 1900 and 1921—for whose sins we are now paying in more ways than one—took even greater liberties with the land and the capital with which it is worked.—(From "Into New Zealand: The First 100 Years," in Microphone Roundtable series, 3YA, May 22.)

Water, Water, Everywhere

THE hens were up the trees and in the coalhouse, and the ducks were floating round and round in their yard, in the height of enjoyment. . . The water was a solid block under the house. I watched the



front door. My mother met the water with a broom at the back. "Do you think this will do any good?" she said, and made a sweeping movement. They put the table on four syrup tins, and the settee on top of that. They brought in a stretcher and set the armchair on top of that. They raised the piano on boxes and lifted linoleums and carpets.

Then we sat at the fire, with covers on our shoes, then with gumboots on. Finally my mother and I, with the bedding, went into the attics, which we had recently arranged to have removed, as being old fashioned. My stepfather had on waders, and our guest seated himself in the easy chair on the stretcher. There he sat enthroned until the morning. The fire went out. A haystack ran into a power-pole, and the lights went out, but my stepfather had thoughtfully provided himself with a storm lantern that afternoon. We, upstairs, heard the urgent gurgling sound of the waters in our home; the men packing the furniture higher as the flood demanded and the means allowed. They spoke low and earnestly and measured the tide on the wall of my mother's best room.—(From "The Flood in Lower Taieri," by Miss Theima Smith, 4YA, May 24.)

Man's First Appearance

LET us then note a few of the age estimates made for some of the interesting events in the world's history. The first appearance of modern man may have been about fifty thousand years ago, while his man-like forerunners, which were not his direct ancestors, may have been in existence for something over half a million years before. These two figures are not put forward with any claim for accuracy for they cannot be based on either of the fairly

million years. It is about ninety million years since the chalk which forms the famous white cliffs of Dover was laid down on the sea floor, or the older coal seams in New Zealand were made; about a hundred and thirty since the first birds appeared, two hundred since the most important coal-seams in Australia were formed, and about two hundred and thirty since those of North America, and of Europe were laid down; three hundred million years since the fossiliferous rocks near Reefton in New Zealand were accumulated as shelly sediments on the sea-floor, and almost four hundred million years since there were deposited the oldest of the fossiliferous rock in New Zealand, those at Preservation Inlet.—(From "The Age of the Earth," by Professor W. N. Benson, 4YA, May 28.)



Gentlemen, the King!

THE King is much more than King of Great Britain. He is King of the British Dominions beyond the seas. He is the political link between Britain and the Empire or Commonwealth overseas, and there could be no other link so satisfactory. The masses of India, the soldier in the Indian regiment, look to the King-Emperor as their chief. They could not feel the same way about a President of a Republic. The people in the Crown Colonies have the same feeling of being governed by a definite personage, who inspires loyalty and affection and embodies British power and justice. To the peoples in the Dominions the

King is the chief symbol of union. Their governments govern in his name and derive their authority from him. The King receives the loyalty of his overseas subjects, and to them, as to his people at home, he stands for British authority, strength and ideals. The Sovereign is an institution they can revere. So we may say of the Briton overseas as of the English-



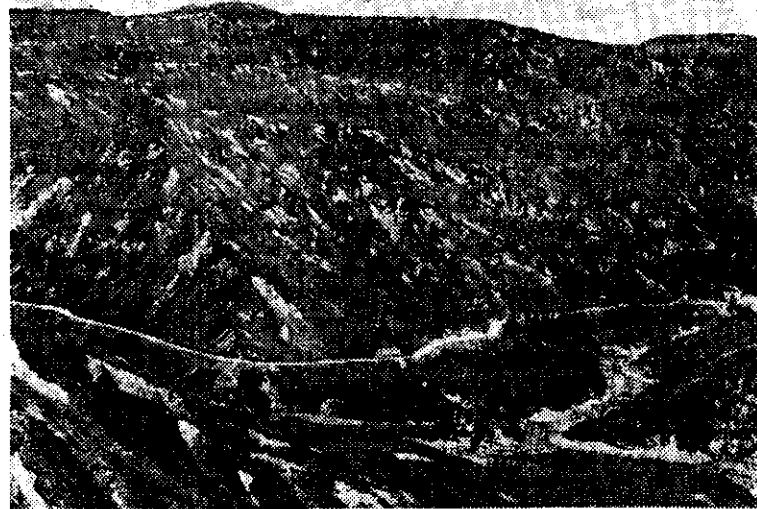
man, that to him the King stands as the embodiment of national or Imperial greatness—British achievements and British hopes. In this attitude there is a religious element. The divine right of Kings is no longer put forward as a serious political proposition, but the Briton feels that there is something divine about the King's office. At any

rate he holds that office in affection and reverence, worships it indeed, because he feels it to be part of what is the best constitution for his country's needs, and he sees in it the embodiment of what is strongest and most enduring in his nation or union of nations.—("The King," 2YA, June 3.)

The Cost of Destroying the Forest

FIRST we have the unfortunate effects on forest bird life. It would be expected that a decrease in numbers would occur with the destruction of the forest. Actually it was disproportionately greater, for destruction of habitat was only one of the many adverse factors of which the direct attacks of predacious, alien mammals was the most serious. To the attacks of cats, rats, stoats and weasels, may be attributed the scarcity of birds in areas of forest to all outward appearance in its virgin condition. Quite apart from their scientific and aesthetic interest, these forest birds are of vital economic importance acting in a three-fold way, pollinating flowers, distributing seeds, and assisting to control insect pests. . .

Then immeasurable as it may be in money terms, the influence of the forest upon stream-flow and soil stability is none the less real. It is only a minority of the farming community which continues in sufficiently long occupation of any one area to appreciate fully the slow but sure effects of forest devastation, whether by saw-miller or settler, to watch land-slides develop one by one, to find springs reducing their flow or ceasing altogether, and to see the rivers aggrading their beds and wandering across the rich bottom lands, carrying the best soil out to sea. All are long-term effects and it is the exception to connect such occurrences with the odd scrub and forest fire, the devastation of the saw-miller or the destruction by deer.—(From "Using and Abusing Vegetation" in Microphone Roundtable series, 3YA, May 29.)



EROSION: A common scene in New Zealand, as described in the paragraph above. The photograph is from the Forest and Bird Protection Society