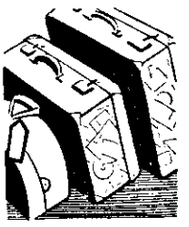
DID YOU HEAR THIS?

Extracts From Recent Talks

What is Wanderlust?

WHEN I was asked to make this travel talk, I fell to wondering about the essential ingredients for that heady spell called wanderlust. I tried to think out what it was that made one desire so ardently to suffer the discomforts, the expense, the inconvenience of travel. And it seemed to me that we very often deceive ourselves and our friends in this matter. We say we have always longed to see the Mona Lisa in the Louvre, but what we really long to see is a French porter hurtling our suitcases about the wharf at Calais. We talk of Versailles but we think of a chair on the boulevards. We grow solemn about the outline of Table Mountain from the harbour, or about the thousand valleys beyond Durban; but are enchanted by the small coloured boy who grimaces on the wharf, and the Kaffir stevedore who wears a bowler hat decorated with a pair of Edwardian stays, with the laces tied under his sweating chin.



Lost Civilisations

There are many instances of far older nations than New Zealand, of whole civilisations in fact, which have been wiped out and have disappeared as the result of unchecked soil erosion. There is an increasing volume of evidence to show that soil erosion has been a potent factor in the decay of empires—in North China, in Mesopotamia, Persia, North Africa—and that soil deterioration has similar results in Central and South America. Where nations flourished in Asia and North Africa, desert now rules, and despite the fact that there's been no significant change of climate. It's especially to all the "New Lands"—to all those areas into which Europe has overflowed in recent centuries—that the menace is very great. The threat here is a very real one.—(From Winter Course series: "The Use and Misuse of Our Soil," 3YA, June 12.)

It is not so much the sight of Colombo from the sea that enthralls us, as the sudden jabber of native voices just outside our cabin. Perhaps it is arrogant in me to suppose that all travellers respond, secretly, more to these smaller impressions than to the grand set pieces; but with me, at least, it is so; and, if I may, I should like to give myself the fun of recalling some of them.—*(Ngaio Marsh, "Remembered Trifles," 3YA, June 20.)*

High Wages and Low

IT is well to remember that it is only the business that can make a profit that can continue in business and this is no defence of a high or excessive profit. Capital should be paid a fair market rate for the risk it runs and, if there is anything left for industry in proportion to the service given, employees from the management down to the boy should receive a further share. At the same time it has to be remembered that the employee's share comes first. His wages are the first charge, not on the profits but on the takings, and if wages are not earned, no matter how low they may be, there can only be one end to their continued payment and that very soon. High wages are not as some would have us think, the dread of an emplover, it is the unearned wages that cause the worry. There is no limit to the wages that can be paid in industry so long as production is given in an equal quantity, provided of course the product is saleable.—*(F. Campbell, "Industrial Relationships," 2YA, June 17.)*

House-Proud Women

WE often hear the saying, "A woman's work is never done." This can be true if we allow ourselves to become slaves to our homes and families, but does it pay?

I have in mind one middle-aged lady who practically spring cleans the house every day. If visitors should pop in, which is very seldom, because she hasn't time to entertain, she follows them up with a broom and a duster making them feel so uncomfortable that they wish they hadn't come. She has made her house her idol to the exclusion of everything else. Her only child is married and away and she is left a friendless woman without the ability, because of her constant grind, to enjoy some of the pleasures of friendships she could have had. Her house is just perfect, but at what a cost. She has postponed the enjoyment of life and friends so long that now she has forgotten how to appreciate them. Don't let us postpone play, no day ought to go by without some moments of diversion.

Play a game, have a bit of a chat with a neighbour, do something useless each day, it will keep you young in heart.—*(Hazel Duggan, "The Postponement of Life," June 19, 4YA.)*

Pearl Diving

TWO divers generally go out in their catamarans and the only gear they put on is a pair of heavy goggles which are watertight. They then slip over the side into the water, and take a very deep breath, turn a kind of somersault, and down they go. They also take four or five receptacles to put the oysters in. Some of these men are very expert indeed, and quite a number of them can stay underwater for 3, 4 and in some cases up to 5 minutes on end. They work with the tide quite a lot, and take advantage of the change of tide to have a spell. Some of the best boys have been known to go down as far as 20 fathoms, but that is exceptional. The deeper they can go, the better the oysters in most cases.—*("Just a Job of Work—Trading in the Pacific," 4YA, June 21.)*

Defences Against Erosion

NEW ZEALAND has natural conditions highly conductive to accelerated erosion. Amongst these are steep slopes, very heavy rain in very short periods, concentrated downpours. (The occasion at Tutira when over 20 inches fell in under four days —on two of which the rain gauge ran over and failed to record the full amount—is no unique example); severe and frequent night frosts in the South Island interior; strong and desiccating winds and sharp earthquake shocks. All those features of the New Zealand environment are ideal agents of erosion. Against them nature has concocted for its soil especially protective covers of vegetation—extremely dense and tangled bush to counter excessive slope and excessive rain storms, and a steep grassland of tussocks to resist drought, frost and wind. All these elements of the New Zealand landscape were new experiences for the immigrant farmer. He frequently either scorned or ignored them.—*(From Winter Course series, "The Use and Abuse of Our Soil," 3YA, June 12.)*

The Joys Of Travel

This talk is meant for those of my listeners who love the murky look of railway platforms at night, the acrid smell of engine smoke, the ghostly and cadaverous reflections of sleeping faces in the black windows of a train that hurries them through unknown countries during the small cold hours of the morning. I speak to those of you who, though you may never have felt it, would like the chilly dawn wind that blows in your face if you lean out of your cabin porthole before sunrise, who would find satisfaction in the companionable throb and quiver, the small creaks, of a great ship's progress across a lonely ocean, and to those of you who would be deeply pleased by the giant whisper of a night sea breaking against the side of your ship, close beside you as you like in your bunk. I have never yet met anybody who, believing he will love travel, is not disappointed in this or that landfall, disillusioned by one or the other Famous Sight, but he will never find himself betrayed by the smaller inescapable sensations of train or steamer or find any stimulant to equal those of setting out on a long journey or arriving at a strange destination.—(Ngaio Marsh, "Remembered Trifles," 3YA, June 20.)

Crime Detection

THE value of making casts of footprints was well illustrated during the Arlosoroff murder trial in Palestine in 1934. In this case the casts helped the accused—not the police. The prosecution stated that certain footprints were those of the murderer, but it was proved by the defence that they had been made by a mounted policeman—who at the time was on foot—while searching for the murderer. The proof lay in demonstrating on the casts of the footprints unmistakable impressions that had been made on the sand by the spurs worn by the police. No detail is too insignificant to be of some possible importance. It may save a man from the gallows or—perhaps send him there.—*("Science in the Detection of Crime," 1YA, June 20.)*

Guns Have Fingerprints

THE firing pin on the hammer that explodes the cap of the cartridge makes an indentation that usually reproduces not only its own shape but also the minute irregularities on the surface, such as file marks and pitting, *which differ for every striker.* Thus, for instance, the marks made by the two strikers of a double-barrel gun are not the same. So that even a gun has a fingerprint. The shape and condition of the nose of the striker are only examined satisfactorily by the microscope, and are best shown in Court by means of photomicrographs. In a recent murder trial, the marks left on the cap of an empty cartridge case found on the scene of the crime were very characteristic and were matched by those on the striker of the rifle of the accused person.—*("Science in the Detection of Crime," 1YA, June 20.)*

The Country Lawyer

"NOBODY," says the author, "knows better than the country lawyer how little people can live privately in a small town. If you want to be private you must go to the city. In the country you DO care about your neighbours. You WANT to know who they are and what they're up to."

"Local gossip," he says, "does not often take on the elements of slander until it passes through the mind of a person who is scheming or malicious."

In a recent Home paper, readers were asked which books had most influenced their lives. One young man wrote, "The two books which most influenced my life have been my father's cheque book and my mother's cookery book." I think our country lawyer would have liked that answer and laughed heartily. —*(From a review of "The Country Lawyer," 3YA, June 4, by Miss G. M. Glanville.)*