

DID YOU HEAR THIS?

Extracts From Recent Talks

Healthy Gold

BUT how, you may ask, was the transformation of metals into gold related to the cure of disease? The connection was this. Gold is the only metal free from disease. Tin in cold weather crumbles into dust; it gets what is called tin plague. Iron rusts. Copper tarnishes. Only gold does not suffer from disease. The search of the alchemists had a dual object, the cure of metals and the cure of men, and the astrological thought of the time made this connection a very strong one. So we find that the procession of the mysterious powder of philosopher's stone which would transform common metals also guaranteed its owner a long life. The philosopher's stone gave wealth and health, and when you consider how truly terrible was the danger of poverty and illness in the Middle Ages, you may understand



Discovery and Use

The time lag between discovery and use is being ever shortened. It was 300 years between the discovery and preparation of ether and its use in 1842 as an anaesthetic by Dr. Long of Georgia. Sixteen years elapsed between the preparation of chloroform by the chemist Liebig and the discovery of its anaesthetic action by Dr. Simpson in 1847. Cocaine was first isolated in 1860, but it was 20 years before its value for local anaesthesia was recognised. To-day the co-operation between chemistry and medicine is much closer, and much less time elapses between a discovery and its utilisation. (Professor F. G. Soper in the Winter Course series "Chemistry and Medicine," 4YA, June 25.)

the driving power behind the objects of alchemy. I have a quotation here from an alchemical treatise: "Everyone must try to get two things, eternal bliss and earthly happiness. The former is granted by the Kingdom of God, which is taught by the theologians, while the latter is granted by the philosopher's stone of the alchemist."—(Professor F. G. Soper in the Winter Course series, "Chemistry and Medicine," 4YA, June 25.)

Jumping Jack

ALL the seafarers, as well as passengers, on the Wellington-Nelson run, looked on Pelorus Jack as a dear friend, and the stewards particularly would always be about when Jack was on his usual visits, and woe betide anyone if they were detected in attempting to injure him in any way whatsoever. Passengers coming aboard at Nelson, Picton and Wellington, always inquired from their stewards the probable time that Jack was likely to appear, and even if it was late at night or early in the morning, they would be called in ample time to view Jack going through his usual frolics. I have been called many times at all hours of the night and early morning. Jack was a wonderful sight at any time but after dark he was truly brilliant. If you can visualise a mass of phosphorescent fire 14 feet in length travelling through the water with the greatest of ease, then suddenly leaping into the air, the spray and water dripping from him, giving one the impression of innumerable flashes of electricity, you

will get some idea of what Jack looked like.—(From "Nelson's Pelorus Jack," by "Bo'sun," 4YA, June 24.)

England : 1832

THE main point that impresses me—speaking as a Londoner in this year of grace, 1832, is the widespread discontent in the land. Who is satisfied in this England of ours? The merchants and manufacturers cry out that the late wars have ruined trade. Taxation is crushing. Small farmers are being crushed out by rates which are exacted for the relief of the poor and by the Enclosure Acts. Add to that the appalling conditions of labour; the low wages and long hours. As for housing conditions, in the factory towns they are unspeakable. The Englishman feels that living conditions are unprecedentedly bad. Writers of the calibre of Cobbett keep him constantly aware of the fact. In consequence he feels, and with reason, that matters should be remedied. To some extent he believes that political reform would help. But another way, and perhaps a faster and surer way, is emigration.—(From "The Background of New Zealand—No. 1: Emigration," 2YA Wellington, June 24.)

In the Mines

AT the present time (100 years ago), children as young as five years are working in the mines, at light tasks, certainly; but they are there at the bottom of the pit, while children only slightly older are dragging trucks of coal all day.—(From "The Background of New Zealand—No. 1: Emigration," 2YA, June 24.)



Valleys of Flowers

THIS little old city of Grasse (on the French Riviera) is where the world's most famous perfumes are brewed, and all the country round grows and harvests the flowers for its making. It is not difficult to visualise the smooth fields of tulips in Holland. But Grasse is not like that. In winding valleys, sheltered from the wind, but facing the sun, among the rocky hills, this fragrant harvest is reaped. Just as they grow rice on the terraced paddy fields of Java, here the plentiful stones edge the little terraced plots. It is indeed intensely cultivated. Imagine, if you can, a whole valley filled with roses, planted like grape vines in regular rows. Think of the scent of it on a summer evening, heavy on the still air. And the riot of colour. Another valley grows only jasmine, a sweet, cloying perfume, but very highly prized. Farms of violets, fields of carnations, not beds of blossoms, but acres of them; valleys of them. Here, too, are the orange trees, but not for fruit. They are robbed in full bloom as their petals yield an expensive essence. This essence is sold to the famous perfume firms, who break it down, blend it, and retail it under their own name and trademark, in fancy bottles at extravagant prices. But don't forget that it takes five tons of petals to make a quart of perfume essence, but a

quart of essence fills many bottles of marketable size. The essence itself is much too over-powering to use alone.—(From "Shoes and Ships and Sealing Wax," by Nelle Scanlan.)

English and American Law

IN introducing the book the author has a paragraph on the difference between English and American Law Courts. I will read it: "It is necessary that the reader of this book should realise that the position of the lawyer in America differs in many respects from the position of lawyers in England. We have the solicitor and the barrister, the solicitor confining himself more to office work, acting, one might say, as the legal agent of his client on a wide range of affairs, and introducing him to the barrister, who concentrates more on questions of law



and court work. In America there is one and only one brand of lawyer—the attorney-at-law. He starts as a law student, satisfies a board of examiners on his knowledge and ability, and a tribunal on his moral character, and then is called to the bar; that is, he can now practise as an advocate in the High Courts. But the attorney-at-law may do any kind of legal work, from drafting a will to taking an appeal to the Supreme Court. He is barrister, solicitor, notary, and commissioner rolled into one. The J.P.s preside over the state local courts, in which the country lawyer of this book chiefly practises. They are elected by the people, and, like English J.P.s, need no legal training. But these justices, although unqualified, can also practise outside the courts as lawyers in competition with the fully equipped attorney-at-law."—(From a review by Miss Glanville of "The Country Lawyer," by Bellamy Partridge, 3YA.)

Insect Pests

WITH the clearing away of the bush and the sowing down of large areas with grasses, clovers, and other cultivated crops, an appreciable change was bound to take place among native insects. Two of our most destructive pasture insects to-day are grass grub and Porina caterpillar, native forms which were, and are, adapted to open, unbrushed country. In early times when open country was limited in amount, those two insect types must have been severely restricted in their range. All they had to do was "multiply abundantly and people the land." The army of worms soon began to play havoc with the crops and the early settlers quickly realised what was happening, so they started to discuss ways and means of dealing with the problem.—(From "Microphone Round-table," 3YA, June 19.)



PELORUS JACK