

DID YOU HEAR THIS?

Extracts From Recent Talks

The Original Ferdinand

HERE is the first of another series of questions that have been put to Autolycus. I must confess that this one had me sorely puzzled. It was so cryptic and laconic. Just listen. "What was the matter with Ferdinand?"

I could not make head nor tail of it and was about to throw it in the waste-paper basket, when over the radio I heard someone warbling the song about "Ferdinand, the Bull." That supplied the clue. This inquirer apparently was much puzzled by Ferdinand's alleged behaviour. Well, you know, Ferdinand had a prototype about fifty years ago. Perhaps Ferdinand was a descendant of the particular bull I'm thinking of. This bull, Lechuzo, was reared to be a fighter and a very good fighter he was. On his first appearance in the arena, he cleared it of matadors and picadors so quickly



Not So Cheap

The small sums paid by these early settlers for their leased land is often commented upon by the present generation, but it must be remembered that the land they took up was largely swamp (hence the mosquitoes!), flax, or manuka country, which required much labour and money to turn it into its present condition. In addition the transport of stock in the absence of roads was not only costly, but so difficult that only stout hearts would attempt it. Finally the runholders risked much in taking up these native leases, for their tenure was not backed by the Government. ("Pioneering the Wairarapa—Explorers and Settlers." Talk prepared by Mrs. N. A. R. Barrer, 2YA, July 14.)

and efficiently that the spectators demanded his freedom. The people who owned him, knowing they had a good thing refused to part with him. Time and again he was triumphant in the arena. However, one day at the height of his fame, this bull, Lechuzo, suddenly got fed up. He was driven into the ring. He sat down and gazed benevolently at the crowd and all the picadors, etc. Then he got up, trotted over to the wall, jumped over and made his way out into the public square. Here he proceeded to graze quietly on the grass and shrubs. The crowd watched him in amazement. A wealthy gentleman bought him and took him to his estate, where Lechuzo spent the rest of his life as a kind of family pet. He wandered at his sweet will about the estate, and behaved much in the same way as "Ferdinand" of the song. ("Do You Know Why?" by "Autolycus," 4YA.)

Women Pioneers

WOMEN with babies and young children also took this trail over the mountains, long before the conveyance by vehicle was possible. When Mr. and Mrs. R. Iorns and their young family left Wellington in February, 1855, to cross the Rimutakas to Masterton along the newly cut bullock track, their belongings were placed in a bullock cart in which the children rode, and the adults in turns. They led a young heifer in milk with a pack on her back, and she furnished a dairy all complete for the children on the journey. The Hutt River had to be crossed

on a punt. The cart and baggage were put aboard, but the bullock refused to embark. So he, with the heifer for company, was made to swim the river.



The travellers were favoured by the weather and made good progress, for the second night saw them as far as Mangaroa. There two pack bullocks awaited them. In the morning these were loaded, the quieter carrying the two boys — on one side William Iorns, aged five years, and on the other Joseph Iorns, aged 3½ years. The smaller boy (who died in Masterton in December, 1938, at the age of 87) was weighted to equalise the load. Both boys sat in cases lined with pillows. Mary Ann Iorns (afterwards Mrs. A. W. Cavel), though only seven or eight years old, walked the whole distance over the Rimutakas as far as the Waiohine River. The youngest child, Sarah (now Mrs. Cox of New Plymouth) was an infant of only nine months. Her mother carried her in a picanniny fashion, on her back in a shawl. In addition, Mrs. Iorns went first leading the heifer. Behind her came her husband with the two loaded bullocks, one fastened to the other with a long leading rope. ("Pioneering the Wairarapa—Epic Journeys"—Talk prepared by Mrs. N. A. Barrer, 2YA, July 7.)

Horses and the Irish

THERE are still many old estates in Ireland, not always prosperous, by any means, the houses perhaps a little shabby, everything rather run-to-seed, but the Irish gentry still continue to carry on their ancient traditions, and chief among these seem to figure horses and hospitality. Hunting, fishing, shooting, racing, sport of every kind claim a lot of attention in Ireland—in every part of Ireland. If the Irishman has one ruling passion, it is for horses. There is something in the soil which enables them to breed some of the finest racehorses and hunters in the world. In late summer and autumn, when the London season is over, there is a drift towards Ireland. After the Dublin horse show, one of the most famous horse shows in the world, house-parties begin to gather for shooting and fishing. It is part of their education to know the points of a horse, and the squire's lady, the parish priest, the yeoman farmer, the tradesman, the doctor, the village boys, all appear to speak with authority on the subject of horses. (From "Shoes and Ships and Sealing-Wax," by Nelle Scanlan.)



Parents are Essential

THERE certainly were some extraordinary ideas in the old days. One was that frogs and reptiles could be produced out of mud and slime. These old ideas die hard. For hundreds of years it was thought that a swarm of maggots that appears when anything is left to decay was directly generated from the putrefying material. Some of the flies produced in this way were mistaken for bees, and Virgil even gives directions for producing swarms of bees from the carcass of a dead ox. As soon as people really began to look at animals, it became obvious that these flies and similar creatures were hatched from eggs which their parents could be seen laying. If no eggs were laid, no maggots appeared. When the microscope was invented, however, it disclosed countless numbers of minute animals, and these did seem to appear spontaneously in suitable materials. For instance, soup soon goes bad if exposed to the air for several days, and is then seen to contain vast numbers of living things. But Pasteur was able

Compromising With Nature

All I have to say about forest policy could be summarised in a very few words, namely, "We must be prepared to compromise with Nature." Over a period of three months, we have been discussing the effect of European man's impact on New Zealand and it has been an account of a destructive civilisation. I do not claim that we have said anything new—as a matter of fact I have just been re-reading a little book in which everything we have said was said by Professor Crossman of Auckland University College. Now that book was written in 1909—over 30 years ago. The very fact that we have had to say it all again indicates that New Zealand has not yet learned the lesson necessary to perpetuate her resources. ("Microphone Roundtable: New Zealand's Second Century Prospects," 3YA, July 10.)

to prove that even in such cases spontaneous generation had not occurred. He took soup and thoroughly sterilised it by boiling, so that no living things could be present in it. Then he sealed it up so that no microbes or their spores could get in from the air. When this was done the soup did not go bad, however long it was kept, but as soon as it was opened it went bad in the usual way. The whole of the huge tinned-food industry depends on this fact. But, to answer the question about the truth of spontaneous generation. It has been shown that it does not take place even among the smallest and simplest animals which we can see. There are, however, still smaller living things, too small to be seen even with the most powerful microscope. The idea of spontaneous generation has not yet been disproved as far as these are concerned, but from everything we know at present it seems to be very unlikely that living things ever arise nowadays except from living parents. (From "Growth and Development of Animals"—Miss M. L. Fyfe and Professor B. J. Marples, 4YA, July 9.)

Keeping Animals in Check

TODAY, New Zealand has a large fauna of deer, opossum, rabbit, hare, hedgehog, and other mammals. To attempt the extermination of any one of these animals would be a Herculean task and would almost certainly end in failure. Wherever extermination of large animals has taken place, it has been very largely achieved through closer settlement of the country, or persistent persecution due to the animal having a high economic value. But owing to the extremely rugged nature of this country, the factor of "close settlement" is not likely to act very severely. With the exception of the opossum, the high economic value of the animal is unlikely to effect its extermination. The aim to be achieved, I believe, is not extermination but the prevention of undue increase. ("Microphone Roundtable: New Zealand's Second Century Prospects," 3YA, July 10.)

Motto for Singers

NOW for a little story that has nothing to do with Robert Schumann. Year ago the singer Fraser Gange, toured New Zealand with his wife, Amy Evans, who was also a magnificent singer. Mr. Gange was walking up a certain street in a certain city not a thousand miles from Petone when he saw a Chinese laundry. The thing that struck him about this laundry was the sign, which amused him very much. The name of the proprietor on this sign was unintentionally a musical one—it was Sing On Kee, which is not a bad motto for all singers. (Talk by "Ebor" on Robert Schumann, in Children's Hour, 2YA, July 15.)

