

DID YOU HEAR THIS?

Extracts From Recent Talks

Giving and Taking

WE all hear a lot about the cheerful giver nowadays when giving is so necessary. One of the great consolations about a time like the present is that people are so generous. They give so much and they give so cheerfully. They seem to be really acting up to the Biblical remark about its being more blessed to give than to receive. More blessed? Why, of course it is—particularly when the giver is a cheerful one. But there's one point people sometimes overlook; if it's more blessed to give than to receive, it's also a great deal easier.

Oh, yes—giving is great fun. But it's not half so much fun receiving. I think that's where most of us have a struggle. Not in giving. Whatever people say, most of us are fairly generous. But having to be a taker—that's much harder. It's a real struggle for many of us. "I'm not a good taker," we say—and we think that excuses us. But it is really a very serious fault. It's just as much a lack of generosity not to be able to take as not to be able to give. (Mary Scott "The Morning Spell: The Cheerful Taker," 2YA, September 7)



Misleading Words

THERE is the same danger in a misleading and inadequate way of talking as there might be in a misleading and inadequate method of map-projection: a man who tries to map our spherical earth on a flat surface necessarily runs into problems and puzzles which are not due to the object he is representing, but to the way in which he is representing it. An intelligent child might well be puzzled, for instance, as to why New Zealand appears twice over on the ordinary Mercator maps of the world. Are there then really two New Zealands though we are

only familiar with one? Obviously such a question, and many other similar questions, would never arise if the child had learnt its geography on a spherical globe and not on the flat pages of an atlas. Is it not likewise possible that some at least of the intractable problems of life and the universe may be due, not to anything peculiarly obscure and recalcitrant in life or the universe themselves, but merely to something inadequate or misleading in our mode of representing these through our language? Is it not conceivable that some of the questions with which we torment ourselves may be unanswerable because they are wrongly framed, because they wouldn't have any sense in a language more simply adjusted to experience? I, for one, do not believe that all the ghosts that have haunted the minds of philosophers can be laid by such simple procedures, but I am persuaded that some of them can certainly be laid in this manner, and that it is worth while considering very carefully whether any problem that vexes us is not really of this kind. (Prof. J. N. Findlay, "A Philosopher Surveys Scientific Methods," 4YA, August 27)

Painting—Now and Then

HAVE you ever realised that the materials used by the artist are precisely those used by the house painter—just finely powdered colours mixed with oil. Of course, the artists' colours receive very careful treatment in the various processes of manufacturing. This makes them permanent. In the case of water colour paints, these are mixed with a little gum arabic to make the colours adhere to the paper. A distinguished Royal Academician we used to meet in the South of France more than once complained to me about the excessive price of one oil colour in particular—ultra-marine blue. As he said, "It is only washing blue, ground in oil." Now don't you think it is remarkable that with these commonplace materials the painter of pictures has expressed so much. Beauty, passion, nobility, dignity—in fact

there is little that painters haven't been able to express. But the evolution of painting has been a slow process. The kind of picture you have on your walls and those seen in exhibitions to-day have taken many centuries to evolve. The first known paintings were done some 12,000 to 30,000 years ago. It is thought that they were a kind of oil painting, for they were

executed with earth colours ground in marrow fat, and thinned down with a liquid which cannot be mentioned in polite society. The colours used were first red earth and black, and later, red, yellow and brown earths, and black. The black used was made from soot or burnt bones. They were painted on the rock walls of caves in France and Spain, and represent bison and reindeer for the most part. (Sydney L. Thompson, "Things As Seen by a Painter," 3YA, August 28.)

Dare-Devil Exploits

COMMANDER Frank Worsley's dare-devil exploits have often been flashed over the cables to New Zealand, where as a boy he acquired his passion for the sea in the old sailing ships of the New Zealand Shipping Company. Later, as Chief Officer of the old Government steamer Hinemoa and commander of the auxiliary schooner Countess of Ranfurly (trading to the Pacific Islands), his ambition for a life on the ocean wave and a home on the rolling deep received fresh stimulus. Worsley crowned an adventurous career when, as master of Shackleton's vessel, the *Endurance*, on the ill-fated Polar expedition of 1914-16, he made the epic voyage from Elephant Island to South Georgia, a distance of 800 miles, in an open boat. Nothing daunted, he was again with Shackleton in the 1921-22 Antarctic expedition as chief navigator of the

SEA SMELLS

After some trouble I got a berth on a twelve-ton cutter; a poky little cabin it was, about six feet square, with a few thin battens separating us from the hold. There were three other passengers in with me, and what with the four bunks round the wall and the table in the centre, we just about had to form single file every time we moved. There was the stench from the fish oil lamp swinging about our heads, a good assortment of odours from the cargo in the hold, and every now and then I got a most unmistakable whiff of poultry-pens. But when we got out to sea and the bilge water got shaken up a bit, well, that was the last straw. It took us ten days to make the trip—it's a little over a day's run in fine weather—and we had to run for shelter twice, and passed a dismal forty-eight hours at anchor on the lee side of an island, pitching and tossing in a south-east gale. ("Background of New Zealand—Sea Transport," prepared by F. Lingard, 2YA, August 26).

Quest when Shackleton died at sea. His war record as commander of mystery ships and association with many expeditions of an adventurous nature since has kept his name before the public. One of his daring exploits was when the motor auxiliary schooner Katherine Anne was wrecked in a gale on the Orkney Islands. Worsley jumped with a rope from the bowsprit into the raging sea in the darkness and struggled ashore, thus saving the lives of all the crew just before the vessel went to pieces. Then doubtless many listeners may recall that very ambitious Arctic expedition organised by Captain Alarson Algarsson in 1925. Here again we hear of Frank Worsley being appointed to command the vessel, *The Island*. On this occasion we also find another New Zealander, Gordon Burt, a native of Dunedin, as chief engineer. This expedition intended to go as far north as possible by ship and then make an aeroplane dash for the Pole. Things did not go at all well, and the expedition failed in its objective. The two New Zealanders, even in their disappointment, never forgot their country, for when the ship had reached its farthest north point, Worsley and Burt landed on the ice, mounted a pole on a hammock and hoisted the N.Z. flag, the latitude being the farthest north the flag of our country has ever been. ("New Zealand Brains Abroad: A Review of Our Achievements," by Bernard Magee and Major F. H. Lampen, 2YA).

The Not-So-Merry Monarch

THE best scene in the play ("In Good King Charles's Golden Days") is the last, when Charles, his wig—the symbol of his position in society as the Merry Monarch—put aside, has returned to talk things over with his wife, Catherine of Braganza. There is true tenderness and sympathy



in the portraiture here. This is where Charles confesses that his job of retaining his head upon his shoulders is not the easy, flippant task he pretends to make it, and that he finds the English a proud, difficult race. It is not required of your book reviewer to declare whether he considers Shaw's picture true or false. The case is pleaded eloquently enough to send me to

the other historians for another side to the picture, and that is always a good thing. And looking at Macaulay's biting portrait, I do feel that it is not Shaw who is the caricaturist. A more interesting commentary, so far as the character of a rather misunderstood king is concerned, may be found in the Earl of Mersey's statement. When Charles was eight, Mersey declares, Lord Newcastle advised him "to be courteous and civil to everybody, and to be very civil to women, especially great ones." From these precepts, Mersey adds, Charles Stuart always profited. (John Moffett, in a review of G. B. Shaw's play "In Good King Charles's Golden Days," 4YA, August 28).

Politicians of the Past

There were some great characters in the House in those days, but with all due respect to various Prime Ministers and other important people, the two I remember best are Sir James Carrol and Albert Edward Glover. Sir James could talk like a wizard about nothing in particular, and hold the House and galleries spell-bound with his wonderful voice and his great gift of oratory. He was once asked by a great admirer why he didn't speak more frequently. With his bland and charming smile he replied, "If I spoke once a week, or even once a month, no one would listen to me. Speaking, as I do only very occasionally, no sooner am I on my feet than the word goes round 'Jimmy's up,' and the House and galleries are immediately filled." He liked an audience did Sir James, and he knew how to get one, and what's more, he knew how to hold it, too. And I can never forget Mr. Albert Edward Glover, the kindest of men, who, at the end of every session invariably made the same speech which he called his valedictory. "Some of us, Mr. Speaker," he would finish up in a voice trembling with emotion—"Some of us will go to the North, some of us will go to the South, some to the East, and some to the West, and some of us to the interior of our country, while some of us, Mr. Speaker, may perchance pass to that bourne from which no traveller returns." Some member would then call out "Speak up, Albert, we can't hear," and he would at once repeat his peroration in a loud defiant shout. (Talk to Women by "Margaret")