

DID YOU HEAR THIS?

Extracts From Recent Talks

Of Mice and Men

I FIND in considering this very representative collection of "Modern Humour" in the Everyman series that our humorists have rather a poor regard for people, but a high respect and affection for animals. Take, for instance, Ruth Pitter's sympathetic portrait of the kitten, Bogy Baby, dreaming before the fire of future conquests on the rooftops:

*What mortal dame, what merely mortal she,
What strong enchantress could thus honoured sit;
What maid could draw her suitors on like me,
Sing such a tune and get away with it?
What charmer could men's souls so nearly touch?
What nymph, I ask, could do one-half so much?*

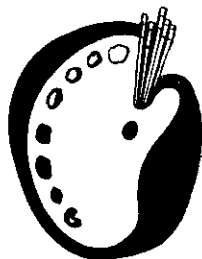
And compare this with the devastating judgment on the human race passed by Sir Walter Raleigh, who from the cloistered quiet of the old universities looked out upon humanity and found it somewhat repulsive. So much he confessed in "The Wishes of an Elderly Man":

*I wish I loved the Human Race;
I wish I loved its silly face;
I wish I liked the way it walks;
I wish I liked the way it talks:
And when I'm introduced to one,
I wish I thought "What Jolly Fun!"*

—(Book Talk by John Moffett, 4YA August 28).

Painting is Popular

I SHOULDN'T like to go so far as to say there are more artists now than there were a hundred years ago, but there certainly are more people painting. A short while after the last war there were, in Paris, 80,000 persons doing some form of art work. Up to the end of the 19th Century, and especially in England, painting seemed to be the prerogative of a few, but in this century it has become the delight of an increasingly large number of people. Just two years ago I was painting on the banks of the Thames at Custom House Quay in London. . . I hadn't been working long when a gentleman came up and asked if I would like to see an exhibition of pictures. He was the secretary of the society that was holding the show. Now it may surprise you to learn that the Art Society in question is made up of employees of the Customs Department. It was an annual exhibition I was invited to. Several of these big corporations in Paris, also, have their art societies. The railway men have theirs, the underground men theirs, and the Police Force have theirs. Perhaps I should say had, for Hitler has put an end to all art, I expect. They are what has been styled week-end painters, men and women who find that their greatest joy in life is in doing some kind of creative work in their spare time.—(Sydney L. Thompson, "Things as Seen by a Painter," 3YA August 28).



G.O.M. of British Science

SIR OLIVER LODGE has died in his ninetieth year. He has been called the Grand Old Man of British Science, and with good reason, for his achievements ranked high among those of his age, his speculations ranged far and wide, he was a man of the highest character and the span of his activities was exceptionally long. It was a lecture by Tyndall, one of the great Victorian men of science, that fired Oliver Lodge with a desire to be a scientist. As a popular lecturer, Lodge explained the telephone and the phonograph when they were brought to England, and that is a long time ago. He was one of the pioneers of wireless telegraphy and its offspring, broadcasting. In the 'eighties he was on the track of those epoch-making discoveries that led up to the success of Marconi. Indeed, an invention of Lodge's

New Zealand "Neutrality"

The chapter on Vogelism is the highlight of the book "New Zealand in the World," by Prof. F. L. W. Wood, for it covers, so far as external policy is concerned, the most dramatic period of our history—1870 to 1885. We had learned to walk, and sought external paths to explore. Constitutional questions arose as to our rights and obligations as a part of the Empire. We pressed for the right to negotiate our own commercial agreements with foreign countries. We were apprehensive that British policy over which we had no control might expose us to destruction by a country with whom we had no quarrel. New Zealand then made the interesting but novel suggestion that our neutrality might be recognised in wars caused by British policy. How strange and unreal that sounds to-day! (J. H. Luxford, S.M., in a review from 2YA, September 5.)

helped along Marconi's work. The discoveries of the German scientist, Hertz, in the field of electric waves added a term to the language of Science—Hertzian waves they were called. Oliver Lodge had made similar discoveries independently, and in 1894 he demonstrated a method of signalling by means of these waves. Oliver Lodge was therefore one of those research workers who made it possible for this talk to be heard by you this afternoon. This tribute to his genius is paid in his own coin. (Tribute from 2YA, August 25.)

He Talked Too Much!

OTTO STRASSER, who with his brother Gregor, and Adolf Hitler, were among the very first Nazis, makes an interesting revelation in his book, "Hitler and I," which was recently published in London. He throws new light on the origin of Hitler's bible, "Mein Kampf," which seems to have hypnotised the greater part of Europe until Britain unkindly upset some of its prophecies. Hitler and the Strasser brothers were imprisoned together in the Landsberg fortress after the failure of their Munich rebellion in 1923, and Otto relates how, while they lived quite comfortably, the only drawback was Hitler's incessant speechifying, which bored the others to distraction. One day Otto had the brilliant idea of suggesting to Adolf that he should write his Memoirs. Adolf positively leapt at it. The others then had a long period of peace while the first draft of "Mein Kampf" was being written. Some years later, at a meeting of the Nazi leaders, out of prison this time, someone asked which of those present had read "Mein Kampf." Not one of them had. "Goebbels," Otto writes, "shook his head guiltily, Goering burst into loud laughter, and Reventlow said he had not had the time." (George Bagley, "Personalities and Places in the News," 3YA, September 3.)



Hidden Heroes

SOME time ago I read an article by a reviewer in one of the English papers. He was feeling very sorry for himself because nine out of every ten books he was sent to review were about crime or violence. He said that really it was beginning to warp his whole outlook on life. He had begun to feel that everybody was evil or capable of evil. There were moments, he declared, when as he looked across the breakfast table at the wife he adored, he had his

qualms of uneasiness. What did that sweet face conceal? What evil thought lay behind that calm brow? Actually, he wondered whether she was not feeling tired of him, wouldn't she be glad if he was out of the way? From that, it was only a step to wondering whether the coffee tasted quite right. . . . A little bitter, perhaps? They said that arsenic tasted bitter. . . .



I think there's a good deal in that idea of his. Perhaps we are all having rather a crime wave and it might be good for us to begin chasing virtues instead. (Mrs. Mary Scott, "The Morning Spell: Find the Hero," 2YA, September 14.)

Ancient Fascism

BY this time the chaotic conditions in Rome after Philippi, which are of such complexity that it is impossible to speak of them in any detail, had resolved into a duel for power between M. Antonius (Shakespeare's Mark Antony) and Augustus, Caesar's heir. There was a temporary truce: a division of spoils, Augustus took the west and Rome; Antony the rich East. Augustus proved the wiser. In Italy, by propaganda, violence, intimidation, he created something more than the semblance of an Italian nationalism. A ready comparison would be the rise of German fascism. The statement of Augustus: "All Italy of its own accord swore an oath of allegiance to me and chose me as its leader in the war of Actium," has to us a strongly reminiscent ring. There is a curious parallel, too, in what was one of the strongest planks of Augustus's propaganda against Antony. Hitler appeals to race hatreds against the Jews: Augustus did much the same in stirring up the latent opposition of West and East. The person of Cleopatra was the focus of his propaganda. It is sufficiently established that Cleopatra, under whose influence Mark Antony was popularly supposed to lie, was neither young nor beautiful, and Egypt's wealth and supplies would have provided the soundest motive for Antony's basing his armies there, had no Cleopatra existed. But, of course to Rome, suitably primed by Augustus, she was a monster, and the occasion of her death in 30 B.C. was marked by national thanksgiving and patriotic rejoicing. Our poet Horace celebrated the occasion with an ode. *Nunc est bibendum*, he cried: now is a time for mirth and drinking and festivity, for the *fatale monstrum*, the foreign queen is dead. (Dr. K. J. Sheen, "Horace and the Augustan Age," 4YA, September 10.)

Boots to Chemistry

THE transition of Joseph Mellor from a boot clicker in a factory in Dunedin to the rank of world authority in the realm of chemistry reads like a romance. Born in Huddersfield (England), he came to New Zealand as a boy. While working as a boot-clicker he dreamt of greater possibilities. Taking up the study of chemistry in his spare time at Otago University, Joseph Mellor, under the tuition of Professor Black, forged ahead. Winning an exhibition scholarship enabled him to proceed to England where he studied to such effect that he became a noted authority on chemistry. His talents were secured by the pottery industry, and several of the leading firms in England engaged him as consulting chemist. During the last war some of the things connected with the industry were unavailable as they came from Germany. Dr. Mellor stepped into the breach and provided them. Some conception of his vast knowledge may be gathered from references to a stupendous work of his entitled, "A Comprehensive Treatise of Inorganic and Organic Chemistry," in 13 volumes. The Journal of the Society of Chemical Industry said, "If there are giants left in the world, surely Dr. Mellor is one of them." Dr. Mellor died about two years ago. ("N.Z. Brains Abroad," by Bernard Magee and Major F. H. Lampen, 2YA.)