

DID YOU HEAR THIS?

Extracts From Recent Talks

Growing Pains

AFTER having considered adjustments to the opposite sex, let us turn now to the second set of adjustments that the adolescent has to make—adjustments, or better readjustments, to his own relatives. To some extent the adolescent is outgrowing the narrower world of the family. I am not suggesting that he has to break right away from the family group. But undoubtedly his relations with his parents have to be readjusted. I have already mentioned the fact that there is a tendency for the adolescent to turn to the parent of the opposite sex as the object of affection. The boy, that is, often turns to his mother and the girl to her father. There is nothing abnormal in this, but the parents have to realise that at this stage the adolescent is seeking a new kind of companionship here. He is groping towards a new relationship. He is feeling his independence, and seeks to meet his parents more as an equal than as their inferior. Up until this stage his parents have stood for the final authority on most things; even now he often has a highly idealised picture of them. But there is, as well, a tendency to be more critical of things that he has accepted for years. He ventures to question the authority of the home; he does not always agree with what is said. He begins to realise, even if he has not found this out before, that his parents do not know everything. It is not always easy for parents to accept what is going on. Years of watching and guiding the boy or girl have got parents into the habit of regarding this developing being as still a child—still the little being who has to be helped over the rough, ascending path to adulthood. They cannot realise that now he wants to do some of the climbing for himself. If this parent-child relationship can be re-formed on the basis of mutual respect—on a basis more of equality—it will be a lasting influence for good. But (and it is a big but) lose the confidence of youth at this stage, pry unnecessarily into what he is doing, treat him with suspicion, besmirch his fine dreams and his healthy companionship with the other sex by your baseless suspicion—do these things, and you may easily lose his confidence, or, worse still, even set him doing the very things you seek to protect him against.—(A. B. Thompson, "The Adolescent Child: Social Problems of Adolescence," 1YA September 12).



Books for Boys and Girls

AN excellent example of a select bibliography has just been issued by the New Zealand Library Association. It is called "Junior Books: a recommended list for boys and girls," and has been compiled by Dorothy Neal, who is well known for her work in charge of the children's section of the Dunedin Public Library. Miss Neal has based her selection "almost completely on the use and popularity of various titles in the Boys' and Girls' Department of the Dunedin Public Library," so that it is distinctly New Zealand in flavour. In a spirited introduction she suggests the crying need for such a list and deplores the "sentimental attitude towards children's books" that persists "long after parents and adults generally become realistic in regard, for instance, to the food and social habits of children. Parents' vague memories of their own

Most Honourable Dogs

One of the oldest breeds of dog known to mankind is the Pekingese, whom we find called sleeve-dogs, lion dogs, and wow-wow dogs. The dog-loving Chinese Emperor Ling Ti thought so much of them that he conferred high rank on many of them, but it was not until 1860 when the English and French raided the Imperial Palace in Peking, that this breed found its way to England. The Pekingese is oh, so dignified, courageous and very loving, and as they require little exercise, make excellent house-dogs.—(Phyllis Anchor, "Speaking Personally: Our Friend the Dog," 2YA September 12).

childhood reading, frequently coloured with a certain nostalgia, are still strong enough to outweigh any pronouncements which seem inconsistent with those memories. It is easy to forget the realities of a changing world and an ever-extending field of children's literature. The parent's idea that children won't read about this or that usually exists merely because the parent himself didn't as a child read about this or that, and often it was simply because appropriate books were either not available or not attractive enough. The fact is that to-day there is a real body of 'children's literature' as opposed to mere 'children's books.' Within this field of genuine children's literature all the usual demands of children on fiction are catered for—adventure, fun, mystery and fancy. The difference between 'children's books' and 'children's literature' is that these demands are satisfied without falsification of life and without cheapness.—(Book review by John Harris, 4YA September 11).

Patrons of Art

THOSE who are with love for works of art are generally without money enough to buy all that they need before works of art. Those who are with money enough to buy all that they need, and more than all that they need, are generally without love, in the least, for works of art. Patronage of art in New Zealand is confined—necessarily confined—to the wealthy, who are, in ways peculiar to themselves, practical. They think habitually in terms of money. That is why they are wealthy. They assess the value of a painting by calculating what it would fetch at an auction sale. What is the size of the painting? Whose is the signature? If the size is approximately twenty inches by twenty-six inches and if the signature is that of a man whose work, for a very long time, has been accepted, by a great many persons, as good—if the signature, this is to say, is that of a man whose work is in the style that was generally admired by the gentlemen of England in the time of Victoria—the painting is worth bidding for. They fail to recognise, these practically-minded patrons of painting, that art, true art, is representative of the place and of the time of its origin; they fail to recognise that art in New Zealand to-day, such of it as is verily art, is representative of this place and of this time.—(L. H. Booth, "Things As Seen By An Artist," 3YA September 18).



When Politics Were Impofite

A: The Provinces had to go, but they had served a good purpose. Politics would have been much duller without all those little Parliaments.

B: They took themselves seriously, and what rows they enjoyed—I think the right word is "enjoyed."

A: And so did the local Editors who took sides. One of the Marlborough papers wrote of its rival "vomiting forth a quantity of venom on to a white sheet."



B: And the rival could hit back equally well?

A: Of course. I've kept a cutting of the answering leading article. The brightest bit—let's see, here it is—This Editor retorted: "Our pity is like that one naturally feels for a filthy intoxicated specimen of humanity who appropriates the public kennel for the purposes of a bed."

B: Good heavens! Where was the law of libel in those days?

A: Nobody observed it.

B: Neither in the Press nor in debate judging by the violence of the current language?

A: That's so, but in the provincial Parliaments they took themselves seriously, and ran affairs as nearly as possible on House of Commons lines. Quite a pompous lot, from what I have heard.—(Prof. Leslie Lipson and C. E. Wheeler, "Background of New Zealand: Politics and Statesmen. A Discussion in 1876," 2YA September 16).

Changing One's Mind

WHY is it thought wrong for you to change your mind—a sign of weakness and stupidity if you don't always think the same? Why should people be strong-minded—simply because they have remained of the same opinion about most things from the cradle to the grave? I don't think there's anything to boast about in that. I think we lose a lot of fun. You know there is a great deal of nonsense talked about not changing your mind. I have a friend who is interested in every new shade of thought, every religious faith, every political creed. She loves to learn and—although she is not at all young now—she is always learning. For that reason, she sometimes alters her mind. I once heard someone accuse her of it: "Oh, but you are always changing your opinions; I remember you thought quite differently last year." That was an accusation—it meant in other words—you're fickle; it's no use attaching any weight to anything you say. But my old friend didn't mind a bit; she just laughed and said, "Of course I alter my mind. Why not? What else are minds for? Why, how dull I should become if I never moved with the times." She was quite shameless about it. That's an interesting point of view, you see—she has the adventurous type of mind that likes to experiment here, try this new idea, and that, have a go at anything. I think it's a very good type of mind. I am sure that all this adventure and change keeps my old friend young.

On the other hand an old man I know was very severe about it; he said, "It's a pity Mrs. O. is so changeable; always hankering after new ideas, always altering her opinions. Now that's a thing I'm never guilty of; if I make up my mind about a thing, I very seldom see any reason to change it." See any reason? That's just what he won't see. You could tell that by looking at him—for he is a very dull old man. After all, living with the same ideas and opinions all your life would make you dull, don't you think?—(Mrs. Mary Scott, "The Morning Spell: Changing One's Mind," 2YA September 28).