

DID YOU HEAR THIS?

Extracts From Recent Talks

Children from Britain

OUR first responsibility will be to help these children in every way possible through the difficult time of getting used to a new life and to new ways. It is well to remember that a child naturally clings to everything that means home to him, and it is not wise for us to try to change his habits all at once. For instance, country people in England who took children evacuated from the big towns just after the outbreak of war found that the children would not at first eat the good country food provided for them. They wanted the food they had been used to eating at home. Children will naturally try to hold on to all that means home to them. So even if a child's ways are not your ways, it is wise not to try to change them all at once, but rather to be very, very patient and let him grow used to the new life gradually.

One of the problems that is sure to crop up will be how best to keep these children mindful and proud of the homes they have left.

There is probably no need to remind you that these children, particularly the older ones, will be constantly anxious about their parents in Britain. It will be part of our job to reassure them and ease the strain. The best way of doing this is to keep quite calm and cheerful ourselves and at least give the children a serene and unworried home life while they are here. Another of our responsibilities is towards the parents of the children. We shall need to remind ourselves sometimes that the parents in Britain will want the same children back after the war. They won't want their children changed. We shall have to remember always that the child belongs not to us but to a home in Britain and we are only temporary guardians. It is part of our job to keep the child in touch with his parents, and we can do this by writing to them and telling them all the details of his daily life—you know all the thousand and one things parents like to hear about. Sending occasional photographs and snaps would be a great kindness. We must never forget our responsibility to keep the child linked to his real home in Britain to which he will have to return after the war. — (Mrs. Peter Fraser, "British Children," National Stations, October 14).

Was His Face Red?

IT was found necessary to send down a whole British regiment to the Moplah country to restore order. The season of the year was the hottest of the hottest, so most of our marching was done at night, just as well perhaps, as it helped to hide my blushes on this particular occasion. I was in charge of the advance baggage guard at least a mile ahead of the main column. We were in friendly country. Coming to a bend in the road, I saw by the lights of some torches that the road was blocked. I made haste to see what had happened. Getting closer, I was greeted with the most diabolical sounds. Eight native priests each armed with long, home-made trumpets, sounded a fanfare in my honour. No tune of course—just noise. They salaamed in greeting—placed a garland round my neck, and sprinkled rose water liberally over me. Then one spoke a welcome, of which I didn't understand a word. I replied briefly in English, which in turn they didn't understand. The next stage in the welcome was a present of some very sweet sort of cakes and two green milk coco-nuts prepared for drinking. Have you ever tried drinking the contents of a fully-grown milky coco-nut right off without a stop? It's a lovely thirst



quencher, but it's not easy to do. Multiply this by two, and you can appreciate what I had to do in the interest of good manners and native etiquette. Day was just breaking and I could hear the main body approaching, and then there was a voice at my elbow whispering to me in perfect English, "Are you the Commanding Officer?" I whispered back, "No." He suggested something to the effect that I'd somewhat spoilt the party, so I took the hint and made myself scarce while the going was good. My adviser was an English Police Officer who had appeared on the scene from nowhere and realised that I had stolen the thunder of the Commanding Officer; in fact I had done everything wrong, even to overloading my tummy with the milk of two coco-nuts.—("Just Welcomes," by Major F. H. Lampen, 2YA October 10).

"Shooting" Birds

IN the year 1892, when the late Cherry Kearton was a young man of 19, he and his brother (who was nine years older) photographed a thrush's nest in a wood near Enfield. That seems a simple thing nowadays. But it was very important because up to that time books and articles on natural history had always been illustrated by drawings. The photograph has been very much improved since 1892, and is always used for such books to-day. It is interesting to learn how the Kearton brothers came to be interested in photography. They had learned to love the secrets of the open air from their father, a keen field naturalist and yeoman farmer. Then they had become familiar as boys at Cassells with natural history books. Last of all, in 1889, Cherry bought a second-hand camera and altered it to be able to photograph birds. The result was the appearance of their book on British birds' nests. As Cherry later said: "A science, which began with a picture of a thrush's nest in a wood near Enfield, has grown until every living creature has sat for its portrait to the photographer or cinematographer."—("Ebor" in Children's Hour, 2YA October 7).



The Road Through Kurdistan

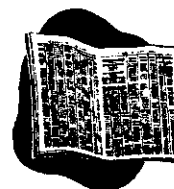
AFTER the last war a lot of road building was necessary to open up Irak, and its neighbour, Iran, the now official name for Persia. One of these roads was designed to give Persia a new outlet to the Mediterranean. A New Zealander, A. M. Hamilton, a graduate of Canterbury College, assistant Public Works Engineer in Irak in 1928, was put in charge of that section of the road that presented the greatest difficulty. This section had to traverse the Rowanduz Gorge, down which, tradition says, the wild men of the north swarmed, overthrew ancient Babylon and established Nineveh. Mr. Hamilton began his task at Arbil, the Arbela of the Bible, and had to excavate a million tons of rock. Snakes and scorpions and brigands were a few of the incidentals with which he had to contend. His overseers were a Kurd, a Turk, an Iraqi Christian and a Turkish colonel. The workmen were Persian and Arab coolies and these all had to be taught how to handle the new machinery. Major-General Rowan-Robinson paid a glowing tribute to our New Zealand engineer and his work. Here is an extract: "Mr. Hamilton was at once the leader, the father, and the mechanic. . . New Zealand may well be proud of the work of one of her sons upon a distant border." Moreover, Mr. Hamilton not only built this road, but wrote an excellent book about it called "The Road Through Kurdistan." — ("New Zealand Brains Abroad," Bernard Magee and Major F. H. Lampen, 2YA).

The Russian Scare

"The Cruise of the Kaskowski," by D. M. Luckie, was a good story. In Auckland they sold many copies of the "Southern Cross" the day it appeared—in 1873. People forget that it was not written for the fun of a hoax. Luckie was deeply concerned about the state of our coastal defences, and to wake the people up he ran a yarn about a Russian warship which, the night before, had sailed into Auckland, exacted a ransom from the city, robbed the banks and kidnapped leading business men. Strange to say, people would hardly believe the evidence of their own eyes that it was a hoax. There was something approaching panic. One poor old washerwoman buried her tub so that the enemy couldn't get it. Some people actually fled from the city. The Russian scare was real then. You will have heard of the "Have-lock Guardian's" threat: "We have repeatedly warned the Tsar."—(Dr. G. H. Scholefield, "Background of New Zealand; The Press," 2YA, October 7)

"The Rag Planters"

THERE is a romance to be written about the small papers in New Zealand. That was real pioneering when the rag planters—as they were called—hurried along from one new settlement to another with a handpress and a hatful of type and started a paper. In his early days Sir George Fenwick was one of these; after much thought he settled down in Dunedin. When he found that his paper in Lawrence didn't pay, he packed up his formes and drove through the night to Cromwell, where a few days later he issued the "Cromwell Argus." Joe Ives is said to have started 45 papers in Australia and New Zealand. His nearest rival was Thomas Elliot Wilson. J. H. Clayton was another, and finally there was J. H. Claridge. He is still alive, and so are the eight papers he established. Actually we have over 100 newspapers in New Zealand in addition to the city dailies.—(Dr. G. H. Scholefield, "Background of New Zealand: The Press," 2YA October 7).



Butter as Barter

JONES: That reminds me of the little Chinese gentleman who virtually saved the Taranaki farmers. You may have heard of him, a fellow called Chew Chong?

ROBINSON: Yes, he started the trade in tree fungus, shipping it to China where it was considered a great delicacy. He was certainly a godsend to the dairy farmers, they found it more profitable to gather fungus for Chew Chong at threepence a pound than to make butter they couldn't sell.

JONES: Yes, but the great point was that the Chinese paid spot cash, and that was a rare luxury for the farmers, to have a bit of real cash to handle.

ROBINSON: I know that well enough. I put a bit of a track through to the local township, hoping to sell my butter to the storekeeper. He bought it all right, at fourpence a pound, but not a penny in cash could I get out of him. I had to take out the value in goods, flour, tea, sugar and so on.

JONES: Back to the barter system, eh! But that was a standing grievance all the backblocks farmers had against the storekeepers. It must have made living difficult, though, having no cash income.

ROBINSON: So difficult that I often couldn't scrape up five shillings to pay the annual rates on my land. But there were worse cases than mine; I know of one farmer who economised on candles and kerosene by sticking an improvised wick in a jar of butter—he found it cheaper to burn butter than kerosene.—("Background of New Zealand; Refrigeration," prepared by F. Lingard, 2YA September 30).