

# DID YOU HEAR THIS?

Extracts From Recent Talks

## Central Heating, B.C.

THE Elizabethans could have learned a great deal from the stately Roman houses which graced England 1,500 years before. The cultured Romans devoted valuable space in their houses to such strange things as baths and sanitation. They had central heating systems, and understood ventilation. The Britons and Saxons who took over what the Romans left did not appreciate these refinements, or the houses either. They promptly used them as stone quarries for the walls of their one and two-roomed houses and for their fortifications. Their way of living was vastly different. The amenities of their civilization were few, but eminently satisfactory to them.

In the Roman villas of England, 20 to 30 rooms were not unusual. They were almost always beautifully sited, with wide views to the south and east. Walls were of stone and roofs were covered with tiles or slates. A rough and obscure kind of glass was used in the windows, and the walls were of plaster on which brightly coloured patterns were painted. With the departure of the Romans from Britain the art of glass-making was lost and did not reappear till the Middle Ages.

The method the Romans had of central heating is very interesting. The floors of rooms to be heated were of concrete, commonly used by them, and a

the Bishop of Raphoe. This reverend gentleman, not content with piling up riches for the next world, had an eye for the main chance in this world also. As the Countess of Jersey recounted in her memoirs: "Visitors who dined with him at Osterley were often



attacked on their homeward way, and if they shot in self-defence, found their weapons missed fire. One night a guest was warned that his charges had been withdrawn. He reloaded, and, on being accosted by a masked man, fired, and his assailant made off. The Bishop was for some weeks unable to perform his episcopal functions."

Of a less predatory sort were two members of the same fraternity who on a night in 1743 held up a gallant captain on the Bath Road. They demanded only one guinea, which, they said, they hoped to repay. Receiving this donation, they gave the driver of the post-chaise a shilling, and told the captain if molested again to give the password for the day, "Virgin Mary." Further on he was stopped by four men, but on his mentioning the watchword they raised their hats and rode off. Evidently there were unionists in that day as in this. —(John Moffett in a Book Talk from 4YA, October 23).

## The Big Estates

ROBINSON: Wasn't another important experiment in the 'nineties the splitting up of big estates? I've heard my father talk of those days. I suppose this had a bearing on working conditions?

JONES: Most certainly. It gave wage-earners an opportunity to become farmers on their own account. It's extraordinary that so much land in the 'nineties was tied up by speculators, companies and run-holders. A million acres, according to Reeves, were held by fifty absentee landlords; 585 persons owned 10 million acres. It is little wonder that, seeing there was little good land left for people who wanted to become farmers, there should be agitation against this locking up of the country.

ROBINSON: Yet, at the time the land tax, and later the compulsory purchase clauses in the Lands for Settlement Act, were regarded as revolutionary.

JONES: Yes. It was just as well that the first purchase—that of the Cheviot Estate—was so successful. The purchase of other large estates followed rapidly.—("Background of New Zealand: Working Conditions," prepared by Martin Nestor, 2YA October 28).

## New Zealand Inventor

NOW here is an eminent inventor, Donald Murray. He was born in Auckland in 1865. Educated in Auckland, he afterwards spent two years at the Agricultural College in Canterbury from 1884 to 1886. He graduated B.A. in Auckland but finished his university course in Sydney. Eight years afterwards Donald Murray went to New York with a telegraph invention which was designed for setting type by telegraph, by connecting the linotype to telegraph machinery. His slogan for his invention was, "This tape sets type." The Linotype Corporation of New York offered to pay for the development work necessary for applying it to the linotype. Actually the Postal Telegraph Company took it over for conversion into a printing telegraph, and Murray spent two years helping that company in the development of the apparatus. When it had reached practical form as the Murray Automatic Printing Telegraphy System, he brought it to London in 1901, where it

## Good-bye To Corporal Punishment

An increasing proportion of boys and girls in New Zealand are passing, for a short time at least, into some form of secondary school. Some think the time too short. The schools themselves have changed considerably in recent years. Only the other day I was talking with a teacher who had come back to his old school after a retirement of about ten years. He said, "The most important thing I notice is the different attitude of the boys to their masters. They aren't frightened of them to-day. They don't expect to be belted." That is one of the most hopeful things I have heard for a long time. It means, you see, that the modern teacher is trying to understand his pupils, to help them in the job of growing up. I look forward to the day when corporal punishment—vicious both to him who gives and him who receives, will be as far removed from schools as the thumb screw from our courts of law. (A. B. Thompson, in a discussion with G. W. C. Drake, Vocational Guidance Officer, on "School and Vocation," 1YA).

was taken up by the British Post Office. During the five years spent with the British Post Office as Printing Telegraph Engineer, he became M.I.E.E. He established a telegraph engineering factory in London, and sold many installations of his system to Germany, Austria, Russia and Sweden.

A vital improvement was the conversion of the Murray Automatic into the Murray Multiplex Printing Telegraph System, and installations of this improved system were sold to many more countries, including Brazil, Australia and New Zealand. The American patent rights were bought by the Western Union Telegraph in 1912, and put into wide use all over the U.S. In 1921 Murray took up the agency for the Morkrum Printing Telegraph, a very ingenious machine like a typewriter. Finally the famous Teletype was evolved in the Morkrum Company's factory. This revolutionised telegraphy and has been the means of saving millions of pounds to telegraph administrations the world over. In 1936, during a visit to Chicago, Murray was shown at the teletype factory a teletype setter setting type just as he had planned when he came to New York in 1899.—("New Zealand Brains Abroad," Bernard Magee and Major F. H. Lampen, 2YA).

## Story of the Burma Road

WHEN Canton fell, Kunming, the new capital of Yunnan, near the border of Burma, became the international gateway of China, and statesmen and journalists began to emphasise the importance to the British Empire of this new highway, both from strategic and trade points of view. The Burma Road isn't a new road—it is really one of the oldest in the world. It was a mule caravan route in the days of Marco Polo, and centuries before that merchants brought caravans, loaded with fragrant spices from the Spice Islands, ivory and silver, and rubies and sapphires from Mogok along this way. But those were the Golden



Days, now hardly more than a legend. For centuries the volume of trade has been small, chiefly because hostile tribes have inhabited the border country on both sides and also because the peasants of Western Yunnan are too poor to buy merchandise of any kind. It needed a war to bring home the absolute necessity for such a road, and both Britain and China showed remarkable energy in making it.—(Mrs. Vivienne Newson, "Adventures on the China-Burma Road," 2YA October 22).

## Poetry And Humour Of The Irish

In many of the quaint and humorous phrases that keep Irish conversation sparkling, there is a flash of real genius and inspiration. The line between poetry and humour is hard to draw. To go and listen "to the crack" is a literary education. To talk to some old Irish people once you have gained their confidence and friendship, is a perpetual delight. Miss Somerville and Miss Martin Ross have preserved many of these old phrases in their books. J. M. Synge hardly ever put a phrase into his plays that he had not actually heard in conversation among the peasants. Here are a few such phrases, chosen at random. Look for the poetry as well as the humour as you hear them. "Would you know him again?" a man was asked. "Know him! I'd know his skin in a tanyard." A racehorse coming up the straight may be in need of "some nourishment from the stick." (You may have known horses like that, but lacked the poetry to express it so aptly). I once heard a woman complain to another about some misdemeanour of her small son. "Wait till I get him. I'll persevere on him." A moody child was described by her mother: "She's like porridge, she's lumpy." If you wish to cheer someone up, you try to "lift a smile to their lip." (Rev. A. C. Acheson, "Irish Humour," 3YA, October 17).

lost art for centuries to follow. Under the floors were stone flues, through which passed warmed air, heated by a furnace. Wood was the fuel, for though the Romans mined iron in a district that was full of coal, they never seem to have realised that this could be burned.—(Eric Miller, "Fashions Ancient & Modern: Houses," 4YA October 29).

## The Enterprising Bishop

HIGHWAYMEN were one of the classic features of the road along which Cecil Roberts conducts us in "And So To Bath," and one must pause to admire the versatility of one of them who was also