

# DID YOU HEAR THIS?

## Extracts From Recent Talks

### A Midsummer Walk

THE less preparation and planning there is for a walk, the sweeter the walk. The most delightful walk I ever took just "happened." It was one midsummer-night in Scotland, where, as some of you may remember, the darkness at that time of year doesn't last very long. I was an undergraduate, and having grown weary, about nine o'clock in the evening, of working for some stupid examination, determined to go out and not come back again until I felt like going to bed. As luck would have it, I fell in with another undergraduate equally disposed to idle out the day. We had a bit of food together—and I can tell you, even at this distance of time, what the food was. Salmon mayonnaise; real salmon, mind you, out of the River Tay or the River Tweed, washed down, maybe, with a pint of something cool. And then we started to walk. We weren't going anywhere in particular, but we walked that midsummer-night through, and, about five in the morning, finding ourselves, again as luck would have it, outside a friend's house in the country, we threw stones at his bedroom window till he woke and let us in and gave us breakfast.—(Professor J. Y. T. Greig, "The Vicious Practice of Hiking," 2YA, December 8).

### Menace of Snoring

IF I asked you what was the worst noise in London at present, you would all know; the noise of war; the roar of 'planes, the burst of bombs, the bark of the anti-aircraft guns. But if I asked you what was the second worst noise of London now, I doubt if any of you would guess right. Snoring! Yes, snoring!



It seems odd, doesn't it? But one Harley Street doctor has recently described snoring as a national menace. The reason why snoring has acquired such importance at the moment is the fact that thousands of people now spend their nights crowded together in air-raid shelters; packed in basements, or underground stations or Anderson shelters. The lack of sleep has proved one of the greatest hardships to people in London. At first, they found it impossible to sleep at all during air raids. Now they are adapting themselves, and learning to snatch a little sleep in the lull between raids. And many have acquired the new habit of even sleeping through raids. Sleep has become very precious; ear-plugs have been supplied, and many people find with these pressed into their ears, and with perhaps a woollen scarf on top of that, they can deaden the outside noise of war. And to those sleeping in the deep shelters, the sound of guns and bombs comes only faintly. Snoring is nothing new. In war and peace there have always been snorers, some more proficient than others. But it was regarded as a purely domestic matter, to be dealt with by the family, as tactfully as possible. Now it has become a national menace.—(Nelle Scanlan, "Shoes and Ships and Sealing-wax," 2YA, November 29).

### The Law of the Jumble

GOING down to catch the bus the day following a certain jumble sale, I remember, I was wearing a brand new knitted silk tie that I had bought the night before. In the lane that leads to the main road, I met another male member of the community. He wished me a cheery good-morning, and then came out with "Where did you get that tie?" I told him, and

he replied with, "Well, that's not bad—it's one my wife made for me a week ago." He took it in good part—even more so when he found that he was wearing my sock suspenders, sent me for Father's Day. Women, it seems, have very little conscience when they get carried away with enthusiasm. After a day or two, everybody found that they were in the same boat, in fact until you got accustomed to it, you were all at sea. For instance, I called in on one of my neighbours one evening, and saw one of my scarves hanging on a peg. I naturally thought I had left it there on a previous visit, and helped myself to it on leaving. He stopped me with a "Steady on, old man, that's mine. I bought it at the jumble sale." I slunk away, and referred the matter to my wife. The only consolation I got from her was that as I already had three scarves, I wouldn't miss one of them.—(Major F. H. Lampen, "Just Jumble Sales," 2YA, December 12).

### Faith in Medicine

THE greatest care is taken by medical science to obtain an absolutely pure drug; exhaustive experiments upon animals are conducted to test its action and to ascertain the correct dose, so that all risks are removed before it is used for the cure or relief of human ailments. All this pharmacological work has resulted in the elimination of many old-fashioned drugs which were proven to be useless if not harmful, and to-day, the actions of the remainder are well understood. There does, however, persist in the minds of the public a very exaggerated belief in the value of "the bottle of medicine." In earlier days, the physician was little more than a dispenser of exceedingly unpleasant concoctions, the value of which was often assessed by its taste. To-day the function of the physician is to examine his patient carefully, so as to obtain a thorough knowledge of his physical condition. Then comes the question of treatment. This may require the use of drugs, and the doctor very properly prescribes a medicine, but very often the only treatment necessary is some adjustment of habits, diet, exercise, etc., and no medication by drugs is either necessary or useful. Gradually the public are recognising this, but there still remains a quite unjustifiable faith in "the bottle of medicine" and the idea that unless one is given or ordered, there is something lacking in return for the physician's fee.—("Fashions, Ancient and Modern: Medicine," by a member of the medical staff of the Dunedin Hospital, 4YA, November 26).

### Mrs. Gaskell's Village

AFTER their marriage, the Gaskells lived in Manchester, and that was the background of Mrs. Gaskell's first novel, "Mary Barton." It showed Manchester in a period of industrial distress; and by her understanding portrayal of work-people, and their real thoughts and feelings, Mrs. Gaskell was able to influence public opinion and help in improving working conditions at a time when a great deal of improvement was needed. Literary people are sometimes despised by "practical" folk for their inefficiency, for living in the clouds, but Mrs. Gaskell was one of a crowd of reformers, along with Tom Hood (who wrote "The Song of the Shirt"), and Mrs. Browning and Dickens. "Mary Barton" was received with enthusiasm, and two years later, in 1850, Dickens invited Mrs. Gaskell to contribute to his periodical, "Household Words." Thus came into being that much-loved story of a little English town, "Cranford," with its old maids, its tea parties, its

## "Snore Wardens" For Air Raid Shelters

It is expected that about a million people will be using the London air raid shelters during the winter. Some of them house as many as five or six thousand people—those are the underground railway stations and tubes. Just imagine that chorus of snoring at night. Do you wonder that they have installed "snore wardens" in these places, in order to control it as far as they can. Some of the tube station have bunks now, not bunks for all, but for a good number, especially for the women and children. And they are issuing season tickets for these shelters, giving preference to women and children, and next, to working men and women. Some bring their own mattresses, others have made sleeping bags. Quite a number just sit or lie or lean, and get what rest they can. The Berkeley Hotel, one of the most fashionable in London, has now put up bunks in three tiers around the walls of its own basement shelter; just like bunks on board ship. This shelter has only one partition, which shuts off the staff from the guests, but snorers on both sides of the partition are dealt with impartially.—(Nelle Scanlan "Shoes and Ships and Sealing-wax," 2YA, November 29).

fragrant memories, its little romances and excitements. Mrs. Gaskell had, like Jane Austen before her, found her material in the people among whom she was brought up.—(Miss Margaret Johnston, "A Few Minutes With Women Novelists: Mrs. Gaskell," 2YA, December 14).

### The Compleat Walker

IT was in America . . . One of my friends there, who was a poet, and one of the best fellows that ever jumped a ditch or climbed a stile, asked me suddenly if I liked walking. Notice what he said—walking. Being a poet, and a professor of English to boot, he used the appropriate word. "Oh, yes, rather," said I, and I dare say I boasted a little about past achievements among the Gram-



pion Hills, on the Yorkshire moors, or along foot-paths lying deep in beech-mould in leafy Buckinghamshire. "That's just fine," he said, in the American idiom; and promised to come by for me in his car the following Saturday afternoon, drive me out to a farm which made a good starting-point for a walk, and there meet others who also delighted in the same gentle recreation. Figure to yourself my dismay when the whole party assembled, and I found that all the others, including even my friend the poet, had donned a kind of uniform for the occasion. Heavy boots, rough woollen socks, wonderful knickerbockers tucked into the socks, even more wonderful caps, and firmly grasped in each hand a veritable alpenstock—"Merciful Heaven!" thought I, casting sideways glances at all this elaborate get-up, and contrasting it with my own shabby jacket and shabbier flannel trousers—"Merciful Heaven! Have I made a mistake? Are we really bound for some glacier in the vicinity that I haven't heard of?" I couldn't believe they'd have dressed themselves up like this for anything short of 35 miles of good, hard going; and I knew, alas, that I was out of training. Well, it proved quite a pleasant stroll. We covered about six miles in a circle, and got back to the farm in time for fried chicken and hot biscuits. So you see I didn't "hike"; I just "walked." One might almost say I "sauntered."—(Professor J. Y. T. Greig, "The Vicious Practice of Hiking," 2YA, December 8).