

DID YOU HEAR THIS?

Extracts From Recent Talks

Welcomed in False Colours

THE date was November 9, 1914, the day of the Lord Mayor's Show. All the guests were marshalled in the Guildhall prior to the banquet, and awaited their turn to be presented to the Lord and Lady Mayoress. Enthusiasm was running high as the war was only about three months old. The Prince of Wales was present, so also were all the dignitaries of state, the Sea Lords, the War Lords, and also Mr. Asquith and Mr. Balfour. Ambassadors, too, were well in evidence. My eyes watched everything and everybody. My ears missed little too. The usher would announce for instance, "His Majesty's First Lord of the Admiralty." He would take his place between black and white rods in waiting and march up to the dais amidst applause. These escorts depended on the rank and status of the person concerned, diminishing in number as the seniors were disposed of. I said my ears missed little, but they very nearly did, as I suddenly came to my senses by a dig in the ribs. The usher was announcing, "The Officers Commanding the Newfoundland and New Zealand Expeditionary Forces." Unescorted, the two of us advanced somewhat like "sidesmen" taking up the collection plate in church. We both blushed vigorously. My friend commanded at the time an advance guard from his country of fifty men, and I had 250 New Zealanders in camp who had been recruited in England. The very sincere welcome given to two very small fry from overseas on that occasion showed clearly how much the Old Country appreciated the help so freely offered in those days. History is repeating itself again in a similar way at Home.—(*"Just Welcomes,"* by Major F. H. Lampen, 3YA, December 26.)

Making Friends with Tuis

FOR the last few weeks I've been trying to make friends with some tuis that have taken up their home in our village. I'm having quite a lot of fun out of it too. In front of our cottage is one of the largest manuka trees that I've seen, and it is here that the tuis have made their day-time headquarters. It is only a matter of twenty yards from our veranda. From here I take up my position and I stop, I look and I listen. This requires a deal of patience, but it is well worth while. I start with a rather poor imitation of a warble and often as not it is answered and gradually the tuis will come into view and perch themselves on the branches of the manuka. I then leave my "look out" and ever so slowly get as close as I can to the tree, keeping up our two-way conversation all the time. The birds are getting more inquisitive every week and don't fly away now when I walk slowly towards them. So far I've got them down to within six feet of me. Of course my greatest ambition is to get them to come down and have their honey water out of a small cup held in my hand. You see they get to know me as one who sees to their daily ration being placed in the tree for them. This I place a little lower each day and I'm living in high hopes of realising my ambition, providing nothing comes to interfere with the even tenor of their ways.—(*"Just Homes,"* by Major F. H. Lampen, 2YA, December 26.)



The First Christmas Card

DID you know that this custom of sending Christmas Cards is not nearly so old as you would think? In fact it's less than a century since the Christmas Card was—shall we say—"invented."

A man called W. A. Dobson, who afterwards became Queen Victoria's favourite artist, painted a card and sent it to a friend instead of his usual Christmas letter in 1844. A year later, a Newcastle vicar, the Rev. Edward Bradley, better known as an author under the pen-name of "Cuthbert Bede," went one better by getting his Christmas Card design printed for sending to his friends. A boy of 16 called W. M. Egley brought out a card as early as 1842. This clever boy's card shows Sir Roger de Coverley, a Christmas dinner, a Punch and Judy show, a distribution of soup to the poor at a house door, skating, and a little knot of Christmas waits singing carols. So you see it was a boy who really got in first. The first Christmas Card to be sold in shops was designed by J. C. Horsley, an artist, and it was sold at a shilling. One of those cards is now worth £50, as it is highly prized by collectors. In the middle of the card is a family group enjoying a good Christmas dinner, and in other panels are sketches of hungry and shivering beggars being fed and clothed.—(*"This and That": "Christmas Comes But Once a Year" from "Ebor's" Scrapbook, 2YA, December 23.*)

Irish Countryfolk

NOW, I had my first sample of Irish kindness and generosity. I was inquiring about buses to take me further on to another seaside town where the company was assembling after the week-end, when "herself" of the hotel came to me and said, "Now don't you be bothering your head about buses. There's a young man here will run you over." Then, very confidentially, "He's just gone to have a shave before he asks you." And sure enough, the borough surveyor took the afternoon off and drove me through lovely countryside, under the shadow of the Knockmeildown Mountains, to Dungarvan. By the way, before we left the Mayor was extracted from the depths of his bicycle shop and presented to me, so I feel I left Waterford with due civic dignity!

We stopped by the roadside to visit a famous little pub where the girls and boys used to gather from miles around to dance the old Irish jigs and reels to the strains of Michael Casey's accordion. Now this pub was a tiny white-washed cottage by the roadside with two rooms. One had a small bar at one end and no other furniture but a few chairs and the seats in the chimney. The floor was of earth trodden hard in generations of dancing, and on it, beneath the huge open chimney, burnt a glorious turf fire with an iron pot slung over it. Now Bridget and Michael had lived there all their lives, slept in the other room, and cooked all their meals at this open hearth and I have never in my life been received with more dignity than by this simple and gracious old couple. We had a most interesting talk about the war and the unfortunate activities of the I.R.A. terrorists in England, which they, and most

sane people in Ireland, strongly deplored, and when we left to continue our journey, I felt strangely moved that I had been so fortunate as to glimpse some of the real life of Irish people so soon after my arrival.—(*"On Tour in Southern Ireland,"* by Diana Craig, 2YA, January 1.)

Margaret Says Good-bye

WHEN I was first asked to give these talks I felt very doubtful about it. What could I talk about, I wondered, that would interest listeners I had never seen, who knew nothing of me, and of whom I knew nothing. I consulted my youngest sister, but she was most discouraging, a way sisters have, and told me that after having spent a wakeful night worrying about it she had come to the conclusion that I could never do it. One or at the



most two talks she thought I might manage, but any more would be out of the question. This cold douche made me quite determined to prove to her, if I could, that she was wrong. After all, I told myself, I'm a woman, so if I talk of the things that interest me I'll probably find that they interest other women as well. That was a long time ago. Since then I have talked to you over five hundred times. To be exact this is my five hundred and second talk and I feel sure that you will agree with me when I say that it is quite time for you to be given a rest. I'm rather looking forward to a rest myself, though I have enjoyed giving these talks immensely. So many listeners have written me kind and encouraging letters. They have sent me cuttings for my garden—most of the cuttings have grown, too, and are named after the donors—they have told me about their children, they have consulted me about their worries and of course they have told me about their dogs and their cats. I hope I have answered all those letters that were not anonymous. I think I have, but alas some of my answers came back to me because the addresses given were not sufficient. I would like to take this opportunity of thanking everyone who wrote to me, and of saying how deeply I appreciated those letters and how much they have helped me in my work.—(*"Margaret's" final talk to women, 2YA, December 30.*)

Greek Names Live Again

SIDNEY: Do you notice the number of old names this war between Greece and Italy is bringing up? They don't seem to have changed much; Epirus, for instance. I seem to remember it from my Roman history.

Henry: You ought to, Sidney; Pyrrhus, King of Epirus, came over to help the people of Tarentum against the Romans. He gave us our expression a Pyrrhic victory. Tarentum is the modern Taranto.

Sidney: The names don't change much, Henry.

Henry: As a matter of fact the modern Greek language is very like the ancient Greek. An Englishman who knows ancient Greek can make himself understood fairly well in modern Greek. Have you ever heard of Edith Searle Grossman, a New Zealand writer?

Sidney: Vaguely. She wrote novels, didn't she?

Henry: Yes. Mrs. Grossman was a very accomplished woman, and among other things she was a great lover of Greece. Thirty years ago or so she went to Athens, and while she was there she actually wrote for Greek newspapers in Greek.

Sidney: Yet most people are so entirely ignorant of Greek that there is a common expression: "It's Greek to me," meaning I can't understand a word of it.

Henry: That's another quotation; from Shakespeare's "Julius Caesar." But I fancy the saying would have come into use without that.—(*"Who Wrote That?"* 2YA, December 15.)