

# DID YOU HEAR THIS?

## Extracts From Recent Talks

### Who is Superior?

MOST of us are full of unthinking prejudices about the Chinese. We are quite unaware of the abysmal depth of our ignorance about this great race. They all look much alike to us because they all have black hair and brown eyes; and we never can remember their funny names. We are prone to adopt an attitude of jocular superiority, blissfully ignorant as we are that, to the cultured Chinese, with a thousand years and more of civilisation behind him, we appear as crude upstarts. In the interests of international understanding it would do us all good to read Pearl Buck's books about China. And here is one of those rare cases when the medicine that is good for us is pleasant to take, provided, as I warned you that you are not too squeamish.—*"A Few Minutes with Women Novelists"*—*"Pearl Buck,"* by Margaret Johnston, 2YA, February 22.)



### A Communistic Native Tribe

THERE is something fascinating in travel in the wild lands of South America, especially in the jungle lands bordering the river Amazon in Brazil, and when it is a one-man expedition, it is even more interesting. Harold Noice tells in his book *"Back of Beyond"* how he obtained a job with the Pathé Film Company and later on went to Brazil, principally to film the native life in this untamed land. This meant, of course, a long journey of some thousand miles up the Amazon accompanied by a native guide, Pedro. Penetrating the Brazilian jungle is an ordeal in itself. Clearing the network of vines, tree roots and vegetable growths, is no easy job, states the author, and so rapid is the growth that the pathway is soon covered and the track obliterated. Perhaps the most interesting feature of this book is that dealing with the savages themselves, the Tariano Indians. These tribes live together under one roof, a huge house known as a Moloka, housing them all, men, women and children. Pedro and Noice paid a visit to the chief tribe and stayed in the Moloka, so were enabled to observe tribal customs of many kinds. A truly communistic people these. There is no waste, there is never any accumulation of food, for all food is shared. All the hard work is done by the women, the men doing the hunting and fishing, and the fighting when necessary. The film camera caused much excitement and at one time when some magnesium flares exploded it was necessary to make a hasty retreat. These superstitious people imagined this to be an evil spirit at work. I do not think that I have read a more interesting book than this one for its description of wild jungle life, native life and tribal customs, and river life. The author possesses that happy knack of telling a good story.—*(Book Review, 3YA, January 21.)*

### Using the Same Constitution

THE original 13 states have multiplied into 48. From the Atlantic sea-board, the United States has spread westwards right to the Pacific coast. From four million souls, the population has grown to 130,000,000. From an agricultural and fishing community, the country has developed into one of the most powerful industrial nations in the world. Yet, the written letter of the Constitution is basically the same to-day as in 1789. There have been 21 amendments to it, but only a few of these have brought about any fundamental change. Naturally the Constitution could not be adapted to the 20th century unless its written letter were differently interpreted. This then is what has happened. Steadily over the last eighty years, the federal government has increased its power relatively to the states. First, the

civil war between North and South led to a strengthening of national authority. Then when modern business grew to its present nation-wide range, only the federal government had the means to control it. And as the United States increased in international importance, the problems of foreign relations placed further responsibility on the federal government.—*"The Political System of the United States"* (2) *"Federalism and the Political Parties,"* by Professor Leslie Lipson, Victoria University College; 2YA, February 17.)

### He Became A Cobber

IN 1931 and 1932 Dr. Wood was examiner in Australia for an English music college. From town to town his work took him, but he does not record his work, but his periods of play in between. Never a moment's idleness. Whatever was to be learned in Australia, he learnt; whatever was to be seen, he saw. And such descriptions of it all in *"Cobbers"*! His book must have made their great Australia better known to Britishers than ever before. Every back-block within foot reach he visited. And those two years made him sure that worth-while Colonials are just transplanted British men. He could see their types again in Suffolk when he reached his home again. If ever a man bred in the professional circles of England became a cobber, he did. Whatever company he found himself in, he got the best from it and gave back of his best. Dawn, and camp fires, bush men, the songs of old England and Waltzing Matilda to finish with—these things made an Australian of him and forged a strong link of Empire.—*(Book Review by Miss G. M. Glanville, 3YA, February 11.)*

### Hood and Sullivan

CAPTAIN BASIL HOOD was the only librettist to approach Gilbert in wit and dramatic dexterity. Mention of Gilbert reminds me that Hood collaborated with Sir Arthur Sullivan in *"The Rose of Persia"* and *"The Emerald Isle."* And not only did German set Gilbert's *"Fallen Fairies"* to music, but to complete the circle, when Sullivan died and left *"The Emerald Isle"* unfinished, it was Edward



German who completed the opera—and a splendid job he made of it, too. And, by the way, there's another bond between Gilbert and Hood. When *"The Gondoliers"* was taken to Windsor Castle for a command performance before Queen Victoria it was announced on the programme as a comic opera by Sir Arthur Sullivan—poor Gilbert wasn't even mentioned—he was furious at the omission. And when *"Merrie England"* was sung by one of our choral societies some years ago the words—Hood's words—were printed on the programme but Basil Hood's name was left out. How does that strike you, Henry?—*(“Who Wrote That?” 2YA, February 16.)*

### Libraries in Camps

THE librarian at one of the main Territorial Camps was in Wellington the other day, and he gave me some information. During the first fortnight hundreds of men joined the camp library and 3,000 books were issued. On Sundays, the busiest day, queues of men wait to have their books issued and discharged. Every type of reader can be found there, from the university student to the man who

has not read a book since he left school. The librarian has made his office available as a study for men doing serious reading, and it's sometimes crowded out. A series of lectures by experienced speakers who are in camp themselves has been fostered by the library, and books bearing on these talks are being supplied by the Country Library Service. Of course circumstances are specially favourable from the library point of view at that camp, there being no other attractions within reach. Where a camp is near a city and men can get away for week-end leave, the amount of reading done is much less. But results are encouraging. Here are some of the special requests received from another camp: *"The Story of Codes and Ciphers," "The Doctor in War," "Civil Defence," "Handbook of the Pacific."* These were all in one or another of the main libraries of New Zealand and the inter-loan system took the books where they would be most useful—in the camps.—*(“Librarians in the Witness Box,” 4YA, February 20.)*

### Love and the Poets

SIDNEY: Now that we're on the subject of love, who said—

“Two souls with but a single thought,  
Two hearts that beat as one?”

I'm always coming across it. I read it yesterday in an article along with several other well-known sayings.

Henry: It's about all that's left of a once popular drama called *"Ingomar, the Barbarian."* Do you know the parody—?

“Two souls with but a single thought,  
Two hearts that beat as one,  
He wed for money—so did she—  
And both of them had none.”

Anything else, Sidney?

Sidney: “The course of true love never did run smooth.”

Henry: Shakespeare — *"The Dream."* It's one of the many quotations that people habitually use who say they haven't any time for poetry.

Sidney: And — “Who ever loved that loved not at first sight?”

Henry: Shakespeare, but he got it from Marlowe. However, George Chapman said it a couple of years before Marlowe. These things may be borrowed, but it's possible for poets to think the same thoughts independently. Tennyson used to complain that he couldn't talk about seas roaring without someone saying he had borrowed it from Homer.

David: Talking of Tennyson, wasn't it Tennyson who said it was better to have loved and lost, than never to have loved at all?

Henry: Yes, it's Tennyson lines that most people know, but others said it before him.—*(“Who Wrote That?” (No. 4), 2YA, February 16.)*

### Federal Powers and State Power

IF we had a federal system in New Zealand with the old provinces still existing, I am sure there is one issue on which we would soon take sides. Some of us would want to give greater power to the central government; while others would argue in favour of the provincial governments. There you have an inevitable source of disagreement—and so it has been in America. Right through American history, you will find opposing parties under different names supporting either federal powers or powers for the states. The very first party to dominate the United States was called Federalist; it was the party of George Washington, of Alexander Hamilton, and of John Adams. As you can guess from its name, it advocated more federal authority at the expense of the states. After it came a reaction, and the country was ruled by a party under Jefferson and Madison, which preferred the states to the federal government. The two modern parties, the Republicans and Democrats, have always disagreed on this issue. It is amusing that to-day each has reversed the attitude which it formerly held.—*(“The Political System of the United States” (2) “Federalism and the Political Parties,” by Professor Leslie Lipson, Victoria University College; 2YA, February 17.)*