

# DID YOU HEAR THIS?

Extracts From Recent Talks

## Queen Victoria at the Circus

"LORD" GEORGE SANGER once took his famous circus to Windsor, and the Queen watched the procession. It was in the courtyard of the Castle where Sanger paraded his show, Her Majesty saw the grand parade from her carriage and liked it so well that she had it repeated, and remember, she was a little old lady of eighty at the time.



The Queen's secretary escorted the circus proprietor to the Royal carriage when the second parade was finished, where he was presented to his monarch. In that high, clear and penetrating voice for which Queen Victoria was famous she said:

"So you are Mr. Sanger?"

"Yes, Your Majesty," was the reply.

Then with a smile and a twinkle in her steadfast eyes, "Lord George Sanger, I believe."

"Yes, if Your Majesty pleases!" stammered Sanger.

"It is very amusing," was the Royal lady's answer, "and I gather you have borne the title very honourably?"

"Thank you, Your Majesty," said Sanger, "your gracious kindness overwhelms me!"

The great old showman had really no right at all to call himself "Lord" George Sanger. Then why did he do it? Years before he had a rival in the person of Buffalo Bill, who used to call himself the Honourable William Cody, and at other times Colonel Cody. This probably got on Sanger's nerves, and he said to himself: "If he can be an 'Honourable' why can't I be a 'Lord'?" and there and then he called himself "Lord" George Sanger, and altered all the posters and the names on the caravans, cages and lorries. Actually, Sanger was the son of a travelling showman called James Sanger.—"This and That, from Ebor's Scrapbook: 'Lord' George Sanger," 2YA, March 31.)

## Virginia Woolf's Background

VIRGINIA WOOLF wrote a book—two volumes in fact—called *The Common Reader*. You and I, coming across this on a library shelf, might think *The Common Reader* — that sounds like me. I'll take a look at this and see if I can get any ideas from it. And we find that the first essay is entitled *The Pastors and Chaucer*. I suppose all of us "common readers" have heard of Chaucer, and know that he wrote the *Canterbury Tales*, and perhaps we've even read a little. But how many of us know anything of the *Paston Letters*, a series of domestic letters written in the fifteenth century? You will find other essays about Jane Austen, and George Eliot and Thomas Hardy and other familiar names. But Virginia Woolf also treats her "common reader" to disquisitions on Montaigne, and the Countess of Pembroke's *Arcadia*, and Montaigne and the Duchess of Newcastle, and John Evelyn and other literary personalities that don't form the daily fare of what we would call the common reader. The truth is that Virginia Woolf spent her life among readers far above the common, and what was "common" to her seems extremely elevated to us. "Daughter of Sir Leslie Stephen," said the recent cable announcing her death "and related to half a dozen famous literary families . . ."—to the Darwins, including Charles Darwin who set the world by the ears when he published *The Origin of Species* and *The Descent of Man*, to the Symonds, John Addington Symonds and the rest, to the Strachays, the St. Loe Strachays and Lytton Strachey whose entertaining and occa-

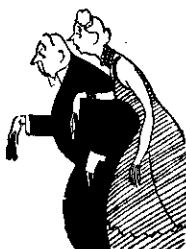
## "In Memoriam"

TENNYSON'S "In Memoriam" is a monument of a great friendship. Tennyson and Arthur Hallam were very dear friends. They were about the same age, and had been at Cambridge together. They had the same tastes and the same outlook on life. Both were poets. Arthur Hallam impressed his contemporaries as a young man with a splendid future. "I have not seen his like," said the young Gladstone, who was a close friend, so that when Hallam died suddenly at the age of 22, his circle felt that not only they themselves, but society, had lost something very precious. The effect on Tennyson was well-nigh shattering. He was plunged into deep sorrow; all joy went out of his life, and he longed for death. This sorrow coloured Tennyson's life for a long while. The writing of "In Memoriam," his tribute to Hallam, was spread over seventeen years. In this long poem Tennyson not only wrote of his personal sorrow; he considered the sorrow of the world and problems of life and death, doubt and belief. Thus two strains run through "In Memoriam," the personal and the general—the grief of the poet for the loss of his greatest friend, and what a critic has described as "the experience of a soul as it contemplates life and death, as it finds or misses comfort in the face of nature, as it struggles through doubt to faith or through anguish to peace."—"Poetry Hour (No. 6): The Elegy, 2YA, April 11.)

sionally irreverent life of Queen Victoria is known to many of you, as well as his *Eminent Victorians*. There was plenty of brilliance within the family itself, and when we see gathered round these the scholarly friends who delighted to visit the Stephens's household, the brilliance becomes perfectly dazzling. Virginia Woolf, we are told, was educated at home. When one lives in a home like that, why go away to be educated? Merely being there, surrounded by books and good music and the talk of intellectual people, is surely a complete education.—("Women Novelists: Virginia Woolf," by Margaret Johnston, 2YA, April 19.)

## The Receiving Line

THERE was one feature of social life in Washington, which struck me as unusual; it still does. And that was what they call "the receiving line." You know at any big party or reception, whether it is a private one or some official function, there is always a host or hostess, perhaps both, to receive the guests. The same custom exists here for official entertaining as in England. The guests either give their name, or hand their invitation card to the uniformed official at the door of the drawing room, and he announces you. You then shake hands with the host or hostess, and when the party is given for some special guest, whom you are invited to meet, that person is also in the official group. If Mr. and Mrs. Something hold a reception for Mr. and Mrs. Something else, that makes four



people with whom you shake hands. Now, the Americans extend this, sometimes to inordinate lengths. You are received not only by your host or hostess, but by a whole line of people. When it is a club that entertains, it is not only the president

who receives you, but the whole committee. Shy people find it a very embarrassing business running the gauntlet of the receiving line. Your name may be correctly announced at the door, and each person in the line, passes both you and your name on to her next-door neighbour in the line. As there is always a buzz of conversation, and perhaps an orchestra playing, your name may not be heard correctly, and from one distortion to another it goes on its corrupt way, and though you may begin Miss Scanlan, by the time you have been passed through about twenty hands, you may emerge Mrs. Magurkinshaw at the end of it.—("Shoes and Ships and Sealing-wax," by Nelle Scanlan, 2YA, April 8.)

## When Paris Hats are Lovely

IT is never safe to assume that Gertrude Stein is merely being frivolous. Take two remarks which occur in different parts of her book, "Paris France," but which are closely connected in thought. "It is funny," says Miss Stein, "about art and literature, fashions being part of it. Two years ago everybody was saying that France was down and out, was sinking to be a second class power, etc., etc. And I said, but I don't think so because not for years, not since the war have hats been so various and lovely and as French as they are now. I don't believe that when the characteristic art and literature of a country is active and fresh, that country is in its decline. There is no pulse so sure of the state of a nation as its characteristic art product, which has nothing to do with its material life. And so when hats



in Paris are lovely and French and everywhere, then France is all right." There—a typical provocative squib, we think; the sort of thing that makes an evening party a success. Then later we read: "As always, art is the pulse of a nation. From Bismarck to Hitler anybody can see that from 1870 to 1939 Germany has had not art. When a country is in such a state that people

who like to buy things can find nothing to buy, there is something wrong." And that is not only true, but exceedingly interesting. Since Germany became an Empire there has been nothing individual and supreme in her arts. Another large and spreading subject to think out. Miss Stein is more than just amusing. One of the main themes of her book is that France accepted, welcomed and created the 20th century, while England refused it, preferring the 19th, Russia tried to skip it and go on to the next, and America standardised it.—(Book Review by Mrs. Richards, 1YA, April 9.)

## What is Intelligence?

SO far I have talked about intelligence testing, but have not attempted to say what this intelligence is that we attempt to measure. It has been defined as the ability to do abstract thinking, the ability to adapt oneself to one's environment or to make changes in that environment. Some think that there is no such thing as intelligence, but only the ability to do this task or that task. One could think of people who are great musicians or artists or craftsmen who would not be able to pass the matriculation examination; while on the other hand, some men consider that if a person is good at one task then he will excel at others. The most acceptable theory of intelligence is one which combines both these view points, put forward by a psychologist named Spearman, and based on mathematical analysis of test results. He suggests that we have a fund of "g" or general intelligence which pervades all our actions. It requires "g" to read a book, to solve a problem, to cross the road, to lace up one's shoes, but it is obvious that it requires more "g" to solve a problem than to lace up one's shoes. In addition to this fund of "g" which we can use for many purposes, we have a number of "s's" or specific abilities for different tasks. We all have "g" in varying quantities, but one person may have an "s" for music which another lacks.—("Can We Measure Intelligence?" by G. H. Boyes, 4YA, April 8.)