

DID YOU HEAR THIS?

Extracts From Recent Talks

How Small the World Is

A FEW years ago, I had the good fortune to find myself a guest for luncheon in the home of a famous Oxford don. I was seated on my hostess's right, and on my other side was a boy of 11 or 12, her grandson, whose surname was Mitchison. Now Mitchison to me meant only one person — Naomi Mitchison, the author of "The Conquered," "When



the Bough Breaks" and many other books set in ancient Rome or Greece. So I made inquiries, and my hostess and I were both filled with delight, I at finding Naomi Mitchison was her daughter, and she at discovering that her daughter's books were known and admired at the far ends of the earth. We fell to discussing the books, and agreed that we liked *The Conquered*

best; whereupon the small boy offered his opinion—he didn't care very much for mother's books, except perhaps *Black Sparta*. My hostess was Mrs. J. B. Haldane, wife of the famous professor and scientist, who died a year or so ago. The professor struck me as one of the kindest men I have ever met, which was just as well, for my knowledge of science is so infinitesimal beside his that I might have been tongue-tied. But imagine how much at home I felt, when in that distant Oxford drawing-room he suddenly asked me about the success of the Hataitai traffic tunnel, about the ventilation of which he had been consulted!—(*A Few Minutes with Women Novelists: Naomi Mitchison*, by Margaret Johnston, 2YA, May 10).

Czech Spies

SPY and Counter Spy is a story that deals with dynamiters, kidnapers, labour trouble-makers, the tangled skeins of war diplomacy—all the exciting and tense activity that is known as "spy stuff," and it is a story which is fully authenticated. As an instance, I should mention that Voslua was working continually hand in glove, as we say, with British Naval Intelligence in the United States, and you know how successful the British were in countering the frantic efforts of the Central Powers first to prevent American intervention in the Great War, and then to prevent American assistance from becoming effective. And while *Spy and Counter Spy* is an exciting book—a proper spy-thriller—it rises above the literature of its class in its implicit revelation of the high motives that make these peaceable Czech and Slav Americans risk their reputations, their liberty and their lives in the underground world of espionage. The burning nationalism, the willingness to risk all for freedom, give to these pages a quality of inspiration. This is an account of spying relieved entirely from the mercenary or the vindictive, and it adds to the testament of the magnificent struggle for Czech independence, now so unhappily, but we cannot doubt temporarily, in eclipse.—(*Book Review by John Moffett*, May 14, 1941.)

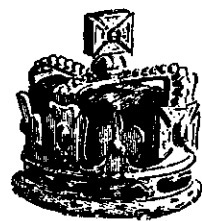
A Rose By Any Name

IT was interesting, and perhaps a little pathetic, to read recently of how David Lloyd George, Great Britain's Prime Minister of the first World War, while he was speaking in a debate in the Commons, confused the names of two countries, and of how courteously he was corrected by Winston Churchill, the Prime Minister of the present war. The names which Mr. Lloyd George had confused were Iran and Irak, otherwise Persia and Mesopotamia. There are, of course,

names which differ only a little in English from those used by the inhabitants of the countries themselves; names such as the Swiss, French and German versions of Switzerland, which are all at least recognisable. If we see a ship tied up to the wharf with Kobenhavn on her stern as the port of registration, we immediately translate it into the more familiar Copenhagen, and with no difficulty. Even where there are alternate names, such as Abyssinia and Ethiopia, Formosa or Taiwan, there is a chance that one will remember. Sometimes, though, the local name and the English version are very different. Japan is properly Nippon, Egypt is Misr, from the old word Misraim, meaning a guarded fortified place, while the real name of China is Chung-Hua Min-Kuo, or the People's State in the Mid. Albania, at least until the invasion, was locally known as Shqiperm. And, strange as it may seem, the Japanese Emperor is called the Mikado only by foreigners. To the Japanese he is the Imperial Son of Heaven of Great Nippon.—(*"Changed Names on the Map"*, by Stuart Perry, LL.B., 2YA, June 5).

Coronation Privileges

AT the coronation of a King certain families enjoy what might be termed hereditary privileges, which have been handed down from father to son through centuries. It would be very interesting to trace the origin of some of these functions; many relate to customs now obsolete. There is a tenacity about many of these traditions, and they live on as part of that sense of continuity of which the British are so proud. So, when plans for the Coronation were



first begun, the Court of Claims was set up to decide which of these ancient claims would be upheld, and which refused. One Duke had the right to claim so many yards of broadcloth; another so many yards of velvet. Another claimed the privilege of carrying certain items of the Royal regalia in front of the King or the Queen in the Coronation procession. Another put forward his claim to supply certain white kid gloves. In some cases, there were two claimants for the one privilege, rival branches of the same family, each asserting its seniority. In one case, a claim was made on behalf of the estate, the new owner of the castle and property, insisting that the privilege went with the estate and not with the title. He claimed that his purchase of the castle entitled him to the hereditary functions which had long ago been bestowed on its original owner. This claim was based on the wording of some ancient document relating to it. I suppose, when the privilege was granted, the fact that the castle and estate should one day pass from the original family into the hands of strangers was not even thought of, and therefore not provided for.—(*"Shoes and Ships and Sealing Wax"*, by Nelle Scanlan, 2YA, May 20.)

"What, You Again?"

MANY years ago a school-mate and I were staying in a small private hotel in London to sit for the Army Examination for entrance to the Royal Military College at Sandhurst. All went reasonably well until the final day when we had to undergo the German language tests. We met at breakfast as usual and according to our rules we were to speak to each other in German. During the meal, I pronounced the German equivalent for "pardon" wrongly, and was immediately corrected by an old gentleman at our breakfast table with the correct

pronunciation. I realised at once that I had made a mistake, but with the valour of ignorance I gaily tried to cover my obvious mistake by saying "Of course that all depends on what part of Germany you were educated in," and left it at that. A youth of 18 arguing with a man of 60! On arrival at the place of examination I was told to report to a certain room for a conversation test in German. I knocked at the door and in answer to a "Kommen sie herein" I opened the door and tripped over the mat and nearly knocked over a chair. I pulled myself together and apologised with "I beg your pardon, sir," only to be answered in English, "What, you again?" There, if you please, was the man of the breakfast table, and now my examiner. Apparently he bore me no ill will, because although I failed in the examination as a whole I did pass in German.—(*"Just Coincidences"*, by Major F. H. Lampen, 2YA, May 29.)

The Co-op Store

THIS small shop in Rochdale has been the pattern for the growth of consumer co-operation in many countries of the world. Stores have become very large in some cases and to-day they handle most of the goods sold in any large shop, but the principles underlying their management and working are very largely the same, that is if they are consumer co-operatives of the Rochdale pattern. The weavers agreed to contribute £1 each and so to have shares in the society to the value of one pound. They saved up this amount gradually, some of them just a few pennies each week until they had the pound that was needed. Still, to-day, when societies are very large, there is a limit to the number of shares which any member may hold. The rate of interest on the shares is fixed and is usually low, and however many shares one member may hold he has only one vote. But the basic ideas of the Rochdale system which became the pattern for development in England and Scotland and for many other countries too, were connected with the prices of the goods and the distribution of the profits. Goods were to be sold for cash only, at the ordinary retail prices which were charged in other shops in the town. This would naturally, given reasonably efficient management, result in profits being made each year. To distribute these profits a plan was hit upon that stands out as one of the most effective rules for success ever devised in the management of a society of people. Profits should be distributed to members in proportion to the amount of their purchases from the store. So if there were two members each with a one pound share, and one spent £10 with the store and the other £20 the second person would receive twice as much return in the way of profit as the first.—(*Winter Course Talk, "Consumer Co-operation"*, by Dr. G. C. Billing, 4YA, May 27)

The Soup Pot

I'VE been staying on a farm lately, and the eager appetites, and the heartily-expressed appreciation of the housewife's fare were enough to gladden the heart of any cook. And good and seasonable fare it was, too. What particularly appealed to me was a huge pot of soup that was already for anyone who might come in half-frozen from drafting sheep, or setting traps. Thanks to this never-failing pot, it



took only a few minutes to put life into the children of the household, when they came home with their blue, pinched faces, and numb hands and feet, after the cold bus ride from school. Each was given a bowl of it, and a good supply of rusks made from the dried crusts and ends of bread, and in just no time they revived after the chill and strain of the long winter afternoon. I did admire this stock pot, which, as I say, never failed, and which produced a variety of the most appetising and nourishing soups which I have ever enjoyed.—(*A.C.E. Talk*, 4YA, May 28).