

# DID YOU HEAR THIS?

## Extracts From Recent Talks

### As America Sees Us

FOR a while, there was a craze for fancy printing. But after all, the purpose of printing is to be read, and some of these—I suppose I should call them modern—methods of printing made it very difficult to read even the name of the book. One publisher dropped all capital letters. The author's name looked very odd beginning with small letters. Others used a type rather like Chinese characters. You had to peer at it very closely to read it. Novelty has its uses, but when it defeats the main end, which is to be clearly read, it hasn't much to recommend it. It's rather amusing to compare the different type of jacket your American publisher will put on the same book. I have no chance of seeing a rough draft of the American version before it is published, but their artist's idea of the New Zealand scene is often comic. I have one book, with a New Zealand setting, and in the American jacket there is a grim, grey old castle, which looks centuries old, perched on top of a high hill, and below is a village with a type of house that is entirely foreign in this country. They are tall, narrow, three-storied houses with sharp gables, and the foliage looks more like the cactus growth of their own desert lands. Still the heroine has all her clothes on, and is not being molested by a black-browed villain. — ("Shoes and Ships and Sealing Wax," Nelle Scanlan, 2YA, September 9.)



### Tragedy in China

EACH woman who came seemed to have a tale to tell, but one story remains ever present in my mind. I had gone over to a friend's house one day, when I met Mrs. R., a tragic figure in black. I had spent Christmas at her house the year before. Very simply she told me what had happened. As she spoke her fifteen-year-old daughter sat, nervous, twitching her hands. She described the bombing of a certain amusement centre. She, her husband, and daughter had gone out in the car to do some food shopping and, as they went down town, they found themselves caught in the usual rush of office cars. They determined to turn and go home by another road which they hoped would be less crowded. As they reached a certain corner, the refugee crowds of Chinese, who were thronging the streets, became more dense. They all seemed to be looking upwards, craning their necks to watch a dog fight between two aeroplanes. It was in the very early days of the fighting, and there were no dug-outs and the crowds had not learnt to scatter. Seeing it was impossible to drive forward, her husband stopped the car to see what was happening. Suddenly he dropped to the ground. His wife jumped out of the car and turned him over. He had shrapnel through the heart. At that moment there was a blinding flash, a roar as a bomb fell. The two women tried to lift the body, and as they put it into the car, a badly wounded Chinese girl crept up, and begged to be taken away. With amazing courage the widow first drove to a hospital to deliver her patient, then to an undertaker's to deposit her husband's body. She went home and collapsed. A week later, on board the President Hoover, with her daughter and a few suitcases, leaving her home and shop to their fate, she sailed to Manila and was met by an earthquake. And here they were now in Hong Kong on their way to America. Four days later they were in the President Hoover when she was bombed outside

### So Many Asses

WHEN William Shakespeare lived in London a Scotsman named Banks, with his astonishing horse Morocco, became the talk of the town. In those days Morocco was a young nag of a chestnut or bay colour. The tricks which the animal performed delighted the Londoners because he seemed to be as much at ease on his hind legs as he was standing on all fours. When his master threw down his glove, and commanded Morocco to take it to some particular person—say, for example, to the gentleman in the large ruff, or the lady with the green mantle, the horse did what he was told without a mistake. When Banks put some coins into the glove, Morocco would tell how many there were by raps with its foot. It is on record that Morocco could read the numbers on the upper face of a pair of dice—that is the number of black spots on white cubes. One of Morocco's tricks that used to make the people laugh heartily was the way in which he singled out the gentleman who was most fond of the ladies. . . . Morocco was taken by its master to Scotland in 1596, and the Scots thought the horse was controlled by a spirit. In the year 1600, Banks took the Londoners' breath away by making Morocco walk up to the top of old St. Paul's Cathedral belfry and then return to the ground. We find in the old Jest Books of the time, that, while this performance was going on in the presence of an enormous crowd, a servant went into the Cathedral to tell his master, who was walking in the middle aisle, what was going on outside and urged him to come out and see the wonderful sight. "Away, you fool!" answered the gentleman, "what need have I to go so far to see a horse on the top, when I can see so many asses at the bottom!"—"Famous Horses in History," 2YA, September 29.)

Shanghai, mistaken for a troop ship. This is but one instance of the tales that met us continually.— ("What It's Like to be a Refugee," Barbara Collins, 2YA, October 8.)

### Bar Sinister

A: A man with so many natural gifts runs a risk of becoming too popular don't you think? How did Sam Bennett fare in this respect?

B: I'm glad you asked me that question, because it gives me an opportunity to testify to Sam's strength of character. During Sam's early days in



the village, partly perhaps to help overcome his misfortune, but more particularly because of his love of music and company, he went to the "Red Lion" in the long winter evenings, where he was the centre of jollification as they enjoyed the half pint mugs of beer. But he was never a lover of the bar; so he left its associations and became a strong opponent of its bad habits and found other avenues for his talents. He had no sympathy with those who spent too much of their 10/- weekly wage there. One incident will suffice to show this. After a few years, when he could

acquire a little farm and have his own horses, the animals he so much loved, he became the village carrier. He was obliged to get a hired man to make a few journeys, and on resuming his usual run himself to and from Shakespeare's birthplace, he found that, as he was returning, his horse pulled up at a wayside pub. "Oh, ah," he said, "I know what's happened!" The dumb animal had told Sam a story. He didn't blame the horse. He said "That woman has got my man to stop here for another drink. She'll never ride in my cart again to teach my animal bad habits." Sam kept his word.— ("Sam Bennett," J. Purser, 1YA, October 14.)

### Educating the Farmboy

AS far as the educational qualifications of the boy are concerned a sound general training is required, with preferably at least two years post-primary education and very desirably a school certificate (three or four years) or similar qualifications—this may be useful some day; one never knows and many have been very sorry that they left school without some such certificate. A suitable course will include the basic sciences such as biology, botany, zoology, physics and chemistry, woodwork, metalwork, farm mechanics and motor-engineering, and book-keeping. The aim of his course should be to fit him to read intelligently, to acquire knowledge from the research of specialists and to develop an open and receptive mind towards agricultural problems. For this, the biological, or agricultural sciences, are very necessary. Some commercial training is most desirable, as farming after all is a business as well as an art. Before leaving this phase of the subject, I feel that it is most desirable to say something about two commonly held and very unshaken ideas. One such opinion is that post-primary education is not necessary for a boy going on a farm—no more disastrous idea can ever have been put forward—the fuller his school career has been the more qualified he is to take his place in the rural community and to benefit from the short courses conducted by the Agricultural Colleges, the Department of Agriculture, and so on. The second idea concerns the ownership of land. It is often stated that it is no use going farming as the boy can never own his own land. This may be so if one has in mind a well-developed farm in a progressive district and ownership when the boy is a young man, but the figures do not support the argument for the land in general, provided the boy is of a saving disposition and is willing to spend part of his life either developing a piece of country or on the outskirts. The proportion of those who are their own masters in the agricultural and pastoral industries is several times greater in these occupations than in any of the secondary industries or in commerce, and most of the proprietors of farms build up their farms from their own earnings.— ("Agriculture as a Career," B. M. Davis, 1YA, September 25.)

### Threat From the Church

ANOTHER little anecdote: A padre arrived at a camp to take a service in France. The canteen was cleared and the men gathered. There was a stove but the temperature was still below zero. The first hymn was not a success. The padre knew his job. "We can do better than that," he said, stopping the hymn. "Now you know me. I can preach for ten minutes or half-an-hour. Sing heartily and I preach for ten minutes, otherwise—" The hymn was renewed with great gusto. The padre preached for seven minutes, but he got his message well over. When the men streamed out they were warmer in mind and body.— (Miss G. M. Glanville, in a review of Bernard Newman's "One Man's Year," 3YA.)