

DID YOU HEAR THIS?

Extracts From Recent Talks

Old-Style Surgeons

DURING the next reign Henry VIII. carried on this policy, increasing his income and no doubt delighting the craftsmen by granting charters to the Fishmongers, to the Brotherhood of Bakers, the Fraternity of Innkeepers, and by uniting the Guild of Surgeons, and that of the Barber-Surgeons. By the Charter of the Barber-Surgeons he attempted to prevent the dangerous practice of surgeons, who carried on the business of shaving and washing, taking into their houses any patients suffering from pestilence and infectious diseases. The artist Holbein painted a fine picture of Henry handing over the Charter to the kneeling surgeons.



The King appears to be rather restless and impatient with one leg gouty and swollen. By the terms of the Charter which he is handing to them the Barber-Surgeons could conduct anatomy classes using four bodies a year from Tyburn Gallows. There is a good, and true story about one of these bodies. When the anatomists began their dissection the letting out of blood woke up the corpse. It was an awkward situation, for he could not be hanged again. The members present revived him with warm wine and packed him off to the East. Under a new name the corpse flourished as a Levant merchant and sent a noble screen of gilded leather to the surgeons, which stands in their hall to this day.—(*"Decline of the Guilds."* W. G. McClymont, 4YA, November 4.)

Early London

IT is worth while, I think, saying a word or two about the growth of early London. You will remember how the Romans built up their centre on the two hills where small streams ran down to the Thames, making gravelly islands in a marshy stretch of ground. They built a wall round the two hills near where St. Paul's stands to-day and Tower Hill. Then it is said that in early Saxon times London was pretty well deserted. Some say that Alfred the Great really re-established its importance. Anyhow by the 12th century London was a tiny area where people lived and earned their living in certain definite ways. You could distinguish four belts of people according to their occupations. Along the river—by the way early interpretations of the meaning of London were, "the dark pool" or "the fort on the pool,"—along the river lived the fishermen and the watermen. Then on the higher ground above them lived the merchants. Beyond these again were the market streets where goods were sold, East Chepe and West Chepe. A fourth belt, or the north belt, was made up of the houses of some of the craft workers, an industrial belt, with scattered houses and small orchards. That was London with an extension across the river by the bridge to Southwark, a small village at the southern end of the bridge. By about the year 1400, London had grown outside the walls but not very far, just about to Temple Bar which is, if I remember rightly, something over half a mile from St. Paul's.—(*"Sea Traders of Old England."* Dr. G. C. Billing, 4YA, November 11.)

Visitors Welcomed

NO matter what may be our visitor's reasons for calling, so long as she is really interested in home-making she is very welcome, and although we may have to make time afterwards to catch up with interrupted work, we are glad to give time to hearing her views and discussing her problems. What do

Trade of Old England

LET me in conclusion just refer to a statement made about the extent and variety of English foreign trade about the end of the reign of Queen Elizabeth. Behind the humdrum mention of commodities and countries you will remember the story of adventure, determination and hardihood which were typical of those who built it up. To Germany and the Low Countries went English cloth and wool and beer, and back came groceries, hops, linen, brass and copper. These things went also, except the beer, to France and Spain along with lead and tin and hides, and back came wines and salt and sword blades. From Portugal came also spices from the East. Herrings were an additional product going to the Mediterranean, and from it came silks and cottons, currants, and oil, and dishes of fine porcelain. From the Baltic came pitch and tar, wax and furs. To the Barbary coast went fine cloth and armour, guns, and ash for the oars to row their galleys. From the coast came sugar, dates, carpets and cotton. So the list goes on. To the Spanish West Indies went linen, knives, looking glasses for the natives, oils and wine, and gold, silver and pearls returned. Three English products, lead, tin and woollen cloth were called "the touchstone whereby the wealth of England is tried."—(*"Sea Traders of Old England."* Dr. G. C. Billing, November 11, 4YA.)

interruptions matter when the visit may enable us to help the visitor, or the visitor may pass on ideas and suggestions which will help us?

I suppose everyone realises how valuable it is for us to learn what aspects of our work have proved to be particularly useful, and to hear frankly stated what are the real problems and difficulties which a housewife experiences.

We learn a great deal which we can use to improve our work when visitors drop in to report and to talk about their interests and needs, and the part which our work has played or might play in the future in helping them to realise their ambitions. Incidentally, too, letters discussing such subjects as these are equally helpful.—(*"Information Available Through the A.C.E."* 4YA, October 31.)

"The Third Sex"

TO be honest, I think that in the past, say 60 years ago, the reproach implied in the saying "Men, women and parsons," was well earned. I have a theory that the aim of the Victorian era was to obliterate the shameful laxity of the days under the Georges—roystering days when men gloried in the sins of the flesh, and when nothing was sacred. Then in violent reaction you got the exaggerated proprieties of the Victorian age, and the parson became the personification of unreality, apeing an almost feminine gentility and delicacy. He avoided all that was rudely masculine, dressing in his black broad cloth, high parson's collar (described somewhere as a white-washed wall round a



lunatic asylum), and shovel hat, and becoming, as the pious reaction slackened, a figure for ridicule. Some of you may remember the play called *The Private Secretary*, where you have all pious Victorian

curates rolled into one pathetic figure of fun—The Rev. Robert Spalding—with his umbrella, his goloshes, his glass of milk, and his bath bun—his glasses on the end of his nose, his apologetic manner, without question belonging to the third sex. Do you remember the irate Anglo-Indian, Mr. Cathermole, who says to him, "Have you got an Uncle, Dammit?" and he answers "No, but I have an Uncle Robert."—(*"What NOT to Say to a Parson,"* by a Parson, 1YA, November 13.)

Proof of the Poison

IT was found that Mrs. Ethel Major's father had a poison chest in his home which hadn't been opened for many years. In it was a large bottle of strychnine. The police obtained the father's consent to burst open this cabinet, the key of which had been lost for some years. An examination of the bottle of strychnine showed clearly it had been recently handled, although there was nothing to show that Mrs. Major was the person who'd handled it. The police now decided to arrest the woman. Upon her being searched they found hidden in an inner pocket of her purse the lost key to her father's poison chest and there were signs on it indicating that it had recently been used. She was placed upon her trial before a jury consisting of 9 men and 3 women.



They returned a verdict of "Guilty," and the prisoner was carried screaming from the dock. She was later hanged, this being the first time a woman had suffered the extreme penalty for eight years. After the trial, but before the execution, the police discovered another remarkable piece of evidence. A man who'd been working with Mrs. Major's husband one day had lunch with him. Major produced a packet of corned beef sandwiches from his pocket. He took a bite out of one and hastily threw it away saying, "I am sure this woman is trying to poison me." Some birds flew down, and started to peck at the sandwiches: a few minutes later the man looked round and saw that one of the birds was dead.—(*"Famous Trials,"* by a Dunedin barrister, *"The Case of Mrs. Ethel Major,"* 1934, 4YA, October 27.)

The Edwardian Age

IT was a glittering age, the age of Edward VII. It was a time of lavish display, when wealth and position enjoyed themselves with little or no thought of the morrow. There was always some apprehension about war, and people began to talk about German ambitions, but society seemed secure in its riches and its privileges, and Britain invulnerable in her command of trade and the seas.

Yet it was an age of change. Britain made an alliance with Japan and an entente with France, and came to an understanding with Russia. The Boer War was brought to an end. A Liberal Government took office after years of Conservative rule, and attacked ancient interests and privileges. A national system of insurance against unemployment and sickness was introduced.—(*"Edward VII and his Times,"* 2YA, November 9.)

Food After the War

IN the reconstruction after the war, it is not only buildings and streets that will be changed, it will be many of the essential features of daily life. We live in grooves, and once jolted out of them, and finding the new path less strenuous, with more personal freedom, there is small likelihood of falling back into the old ways again. Take food. I don't know how many different kinds of bread you could buy in London before the war, but there were dozens and dozens. Many have grown to prefer the National loaf, as it is called, a specially-devised health loaf, which contains far more nutriment. One woman wrote me that she hoped the National loaf would always be available after the war. She wouldn't change it for any she had ever tasted.—(*"Shoes and Ships and Sealing Wax,"* Nellie Scanlan, 2YA, October 31.)