

DID YOU HEAR THIS?

Extracts From Recent Talks

"Finest Liar in India"

HERE is yet another Messmate o' Mine. He held the exalted rank of Colonel. He was then known throughout the Army as the finest liar in all India. He had told his tall stories so often that I'm quite certain that he actually believed them to be true. Baron Munchausen was a mere novice compared with our Commanding Officer. He had a story for every occasion. Here is an example of what I mean. We were talking about tiger shooting one day, and



he chipped in with this remarkable story. After telling us that he had been out in the jungle with his trusty Winchester repeating rifle for a fortnight without seeing or smelling a tiger, he sadly decided to go home. Walking slowly up a small hill, he suddenly saw the head of a tiger peeping over the top of the rise. He raised his rifle and fired. When the smoke had cleared away, he saw the brute still there. Again he fired—the smoke cleared and the tiger was still there. Bang! Bang! Bang! Bang! Bang!—five more shots, and this time as the smoke disappeared, he saw the animal fall dead. After a moment or two, he went to the top of the rise only to discover that he had killed 53 feet of tiger, or in other words—a complete family, Pa, Ma and five cubs. These apparently had been following each other in single file, and as one was killed, another fresh one took its place. None of them decided to run away—no! those tigers were built of sterner stuff. And we poor juniors daren't even laugh at his hair-raising yarns! ("Just Messmates o' Mine." Major F. H. Lampen, 2YA, November 13).

A Teacher Retires

SOMETIMES, retirement, like greatness, is thrust upon us; but, in the teaching profession, at any rate, there is a short optional period in which one can either carry on with the good—or bad—work, or without sacrificing one's pension, decide there and then to cut the painter, take the plunge, burn one's boats, or cross the Rubicon. The metaphor is a matter of choice. The plain fact remains that, however unimportant it may seem to an unsympathetic world, we have to make what is for us a tremendous decision. So in my case, after 20 years of secondary teaching, begun rather late, I decided to retire while the choice was still open. Like Charles Lamb at the evening party, I made up for coming late by leaving early There is one way to break the shock of the change. Put between the two existences, if you can, a year of travel—something that is entirely different from the ordinary routine of life. This is the perfect solution. The change begins as the usual school holiday, and extends imperceptibly into a new way of life. Return to the tyranny of bells and lists and time-tables is unthinkable.—("A Schoolmarm Looks Back: (1) Retirement." Miss Cecil Hull, 2YA, November 15).

Clara Butt's Debut

WITHIN half-a-dozen years of the opening of the Royal College of Music, a girl of seventeen gained a scholarship, and soon distinguished herself at the students' concerts, particularly in the performance of opera. This girl's name was Clara Butt. So successful was this particular student's performance as Orpheus in Gluck's opera *Orpheus and Eurydice*, produced by the Royal College of Music at the Lyceum Theatre, that the Prince of Wales com-

manded a repetition of the performance, which H.R.H. and other royalties attended. She was presented to the Prince, who became very interested in her career from then onwards. A few months later, at her first command performance before Queen Victoria, Clara Butt's orchestral accompaniments were conducted by Sir Arthur Sullivan. He declared, after she had sung his "Lost Chord" at his request at the audition: "This is the first time I have heard it sung as it should be sung." ("Some Favourite Edwardian Entertainers." 2YA, November 9).

Cats Don't Flatter You

I THINK of all the pets we have, cats represent the aristocracy. They have such a magnificent aloof air; they don't give themselves away; they are so pleased with themselves—and they seldom let mere humans interfere with their views on life. These may not be exactly the qualities one values in a pet. They're interesting qualities, but not perhaps lovable. The sad truth is that cats don't minister to our vanity or feed our egotism. Dogs do. Just look into your spaniel's eyes and you'll know for certain—whatever the rest of the world may say—that you're a perfectly splendid person.—("Our Animal Friends: Cats Come Third." Mrs. Mary Scott, 2YA, November 12).



Influence of the Guilds

WE begin with the 15th century, when the Guilds were flourishing in all their magnificence. They so dominated every phase of town life that a boy could be educated by his father's Company, apprenticed to that Company, taught the trade by the Company, found in work by the Company, feasted once a year by the Company, pensioned by the Company, buried by the Company, and his children cared for by the Company. If he fell into debt and was sent to a debtors' prison, the bounties of the Company followed him there. And even if he disgraced himself and was lodged as a common criminal, the Company augmented his meagre rations with something more substantial. This was the degree to which a Guild influenced a workman's life in the Middle Ages, and, to a similar degree, the Guilds influenced every section of a city's life—its defence, its charities, its religious observances, in fact, every-

So Glad You Came!

THE truly terrible guests are those that rise brightly each morning, refreshed by the leisure of the day before and a good night's sleep, and ask their harassed host: "Well, what are we going to do to-day?" It's the sort of question that leaves you utterly dumb in the country, particularly as these guests are usually town birds, who can't ride and aren't even sure what those curious things dangling on each side of the saddle—stirrups, did you say?—are really meant to be. And, when benzine is scarce and there isn't anywhere much to go—well, the answer to that question is sometimes hard to find.—("Between Ourselves: The Perfect Guest." Mrs. Mary Scott, 3YA, November 18).

thing, and every person from the City Council down to the slackest workman and the naughtiest apprentice.—("Decline of the Guilds," W. G. McClymont, 4YA, November 4).

Bottles on the March

FROM the earth comes also glass for bottles. There is one large glass manufacturing company fulfilling New Zealand's requirements. It has two furnaces at present operating, one devoted to amber bottles, the other to clear glass. These bottles are produced mechanically by ingenious machinery. The



liquid glass flows into moulds and then passes through long cooling chambers, from which the bottles emerge in rows, like soldiers on the march—uniformly, incessantly 24 hours a day, every day of the week. This factory produces in the course of a year more than 50 million bottles and jars. Since 1936, output has increased by 30 millions.

Extensions in progress at the present time involve an outlay of approximately £12,000, and the additional plant will be in production by about March of next year, and will increase production by about 100 per cent. This new plant will also produce various types of pressed glassware such as tumblers, salad bowls and small glass dishes.—("Secondary Industries in New Zealand." N. E. Crimp, Secretary to the Auckland Manufacturers' Association, 1YA, November 6.)

Don't Take Yourself Along

IT is not enough just to go for a holiday physically, we must also travel mentally, leaving behind our old repressed, or self-centred selves, and taking on a holiday mood. The following shrewd comment on how useless holidays and travel are, to the self-centred woman, is attributed to a negro laundress. Speaking of one of her employees who was always giving herself holidays, she said, "I dunno why that woman is always going somewheres—she always have to take herself along." Those who, when they take a holiday, always take themselves along, and talk about themselves, and fuss about themselves, or indulge themselves by taking offence or demanding better service than the next one, might almost just as well stay at home. They make very poor fellow-holidaymakers, and not only ruin their own vacations, but they do a good deal to ruin the holidays of others.—(A.C.E. Talk, "Making the Most of Your Holiday," 1YA, November 17).

Emancipation of Edward VII.

THE Prince Consort died when Edward was twenty and the grief-stricken Victoria went into retirement. Thus Edward suddenly became free. Less than two years later he married Princess Alexandra of Denmark, and set up a household at Marlborough House in London. What followed was not in the least surprising. Edward proceeded to enjoy himself. The world was suddenly open to him. He had been subject to an iron discipline of education for years, and been bored by it. Now he was free to indulge his natural taste for society. Never again, unless he wanted to, need he open a book—and apparently he very seldom wanted to. He was young; he had plenty of money; he was heir to the throne; and he was married to a lovely and lovable wife, who won the admiration and affection of the British public. In fact, people were mad about her. Society was naturally eager to receive the young couple, and the young couple were eager to be welcomed. The Prince and Princess of Wales became at once the leaders of society. They liked brightness and gaiety and found plenty of it. Entertainment at Victoria's court had been dignified and magnificent, but dull; there had been little ease and little laughter. Now that he was his own master, the Prince of Wales, to quote his biographer, E. A. Benson, made himself the centre of a very mixed society of lively young men and pretty women.—("Edward VII. and His Times," 2YA, November 9.)