

DID YOU HEAR THIS?

Extracts From Recent Talks

The Copses Nod

ENGLISH is the happy hunting-ground of the howlerist; and the things we learn—you'd be surprised!

A mare's nest means a houseful of women.

Nostalgia is an incurable disease of the nose.

The masculine of goose is mongoose. (Hoots, lassie! You must hail from Bonnie Scotland!)

Charles Dickens wrote "The Nitwit Papers."

Keats was always unhealthy, and suffered severely from the critics. (Unfortunately, it is a common complaint.)

Asked to explain the phrase "The copses nod" from Tennyson's "Galahad," one bright girl suggested: "The policemen are asleep."

In the course of our professional lives, we poor teachers receive some hard knocks, but perhaps the hardest was contained in an essay written in a third form on "Schooldays": "At sixteen you have finished school, and are then able to learn something that will be of use to you in after-life."—(A School-Marm Looks Back," by Miss Cecil Hull, 2YA, December 13.)



Capek's Last Novel

I HAVE been reading the last novel written by Karel Capek, the widely-known Czechoslovakian writer. It is the work upon which he was engaged when he died; died of a broken heart, it is said, because of the destruction of the great republic with which his name is so closely linked. Capek has been almost the only writer of Czechoslovakia who has succeeded in gaining a world-wide reputation. The part he played in the development of the national theatre, the satiric plays he wrote upon the problems of the industrial and mechanised world in which we live, his close connection with liberal and democratic movements, all helped to make him a world figure symbolising some of the best characteristics of his time and country. It is perhaps a little disconcerting that the novel he was writing at the time of his death has little to do with politics or international events. It is the biography of a musician or a musical pretender, and Capek was attempting to write the story of his life and character as seen and interpreted by a number of his close associates, his boyhood companion, his first love, his room-mate in his university days, his wife, and the professors and musicians with whom he had dealings. The fact that the book remains unfinished doesn't matter very much, because Capek's wife has added a short chapter in which she tells how he proposed to complete his novel.—(Book review, by Winston Rhodes, 3YA, November 25.)

South Africa's Part

NOW perhaps I may be permitted to tell you a word or two about my own home country, South Africa. New Zealand has a homogeneous population and it is fair to say that it is 100 per cent. behind the war effort and war policy of the present Government, and 100 per cent. in the present struggle with the rest of the Allies. South Africa has not a homogeneous population. Its European population is divided between the Afrikaans and English-speaking sections. You may take it that the English-speaking section is almost, if not entirely, unanimously on the side of the Allies in the present struggle. But at least one-half of the Afrikaans people are opposed to South Africa's present participation in the war. Our decision to take part in that

war was by a free vote in a free Parliament, and has been reaffirmed on several occasions since it first was taken on September 4, 1939. But that decision has not been accepted by the Opposition parties in the South African Parliament. In considering South Africa's war effort, therefore, regard should always be had to this very important fact. But even so, I think we have every right to be proud of our contribution to the Allied cause in the two years and more which have elapsed since the war began. We have taken a leading part in destroying the Italian African Empire in Somaliland, Abyssinia and Eritrea. To-day we are taking a big part in the struggle to throw the combined forces of Nazism and Fascism entirely out of the Continent of Africa. From a white population of just over 2,000,000, we have recruited an army of 120,000, and of that army at least half bear Afrikaans names.—("South Africa Speaks to New Zealand," Leslie Blackwell, K.C., M.C., M.P., Official Envoy from South Africa to the Government of New Zealand, 2YA, December 7.)

Domestic Orchestration

WHO was the English boy who wrote some music for a child's play, and when he grew up and became a famous composer made the same music into two orchestral suites? The boy was Edward Elgar, who, when he was young, lived in the West Country city of Worcester. In 1869, at the age of twelve, he composed the pieces for a child's play, scoring them for what he called "domestic orchestra." You know what that means—comb and tissue paper, Tommy-talkers perhaps, and the best metal tray to be had in the house. Nearly 40 years afterwards, the composer, who was Sir Edward Elgar by this time, revised the music for the famous Three Choirs Festival, which was held in Worcester in 1908. So the music was played in public at a great festival in the same city where it was originally written and performed in private, and was not much altered by the composer when he grew up. It just shows what an imaginative boy of twelve, with a touch of musical genius, can do. Sir Edward was a lovable man who was very fond of children—he composed his *Nursery Suite* for our Princess Elizabeth and Princess Margaret Rose and the *Starlight Express* music also for children.—(From "The Junior Encyclopaedia of the Air," by "Ebor," 2YA, December 1.)



Relations With Japan

AFTER the last war, the Versailles Treaty drew up a settlement, which some people thought would last, for Europe. But the problem of the Pacific still remained. As the United States had not joined the League of Nations, a special settlement was needed to stabilize the position in the Pacific. This was done at the Washington Conference in 1921 and 1922. The Chief Naval powers there entered into a Treaty limiting their navies. They fixed the ratios or proportions for the navies of Britain, the United States and Japan at five, five and three. They also agreed to a Treaty maintaining the status quo in the fortifications on Pacific Islands. And they guaranteed "the sovereignty, the independence, and the territorial and administrative integrity of China." At the same time Great Britain gave up her alliance with Japan. She did this largely out of deference to American and Canadian sentiment, preferring to draw closer to the English-speaking nations of the Western Hemisphere. Between Britain and the

Better Than Realism

WHEN young Paul saw the enemy airman, leaning out, laughing at the refugees under his machine-gun fire, he realised, suddenly, what this power is which has driven him from his home and destroyed it—a power aimed against everything that is wrapped in the meaning of home and country, everything that makes child or man love his own. "You don't want any of us to have that," cries Paul. "You only want to make us have yours. You think you can make us give in. But we won't give in, ever." It's not a realistic novel of the war, this; almost it's a fairy tale. But just because it is, the truth in it has a glow that realism cannot give.—(From a review of Robert Nathan's "They Went on Together," broadcast by J. H. E. Schroder, 3YA, December 9.)

United States a Gentleman's Agreement was reached. Britain would control the Atlantic and safeguard America against attack from Europe; whilst America would look after their joint interests in the Far East, and keep most of her fleet in the Pacific.—("America's Relations with Japan," by Professor Leslie Lipson, 2YA, December 10.)

This Green and Pleasant Land

I TRAVELLED 18,000 miles by air to reach New Zealand, and this is the twenty-ninth country I have visited or crossed over to get here. It is undoubtedly the richest looking, most prosperous looking and most smiling of all the countries I have crossed. A South African farmer would grow green with envy if he were to travel, as I have done, down the West Coast of the North Island, through your amazingly rich agricultural, sheep and dairy country. My only doubt as I came along was whether you realised that it might be difficult in the future to keep so rich a prize as New Zealand unless you can find the population to hold it.—("South Africa Speaks to New Zealand," Leslie Blackwell, K.C., M.C., M.P., Official envoy from South Africa to the Government of New Zealand, 2YA, December 7.)

The Answer was a Lemon

HERE is a story which shows how the addition of only one item to the diet made all the difference to the health of a British garrison, and incidentally kept the Rock of Gibraltar in British hands. The Great Siege of Gibraltar began on June 21 in the year 1779, when French and Spanish warships instituted a blockade and endeavoured to starve the defenders into submission. Towards the end of a year, provisions began to run short, and fresh fruit and vegetables were practically unobtainable. The result was that a hideous disease broke out in the Garrison. The disease was scurvy, which is caused, as we know to-day, by a lack of Vitamin C in the diet. Scores of men died every week, and for a time it looked as though the Garrison would be defeated . . . not by the human enemy, for they could make little impression—but by disease. Then came good fortune. A raid was made on a passing convoy, and among the ships captured was one loaded with lemons. The Garrison had never heard of Vitamin C, but those lemons were chock-full of just that—and the result was immediate. The scurvy was stopped in a miraculous manner. Not only stopped, but no further cases developed; and a quantity of the lemon juice was preserved and lasted for the remainder of the siege, preventing any further outbreaks.—(From a recent Health Talk from 22B by C. G. Scrimgeour, Controller of the Commercial Broadcasting Service.)

