

# THERE'S NO NEED TO SHOUT!

(Written for "The Listener" by J. S. ABBOT)

**W**HEN we were very young I was asked what we learned at school. I replied, "Reading, writing, spelling." "Nothing else?" I thought a minute and said, "Well, we have gazinta, too." "Gazinta, what's that?" "Oh, you know, two gazinta four, three gazinta six."

Well, I am back at school, sitting in a row in front of the blackboard. We don't have "gazinta" now. We learn reading. To be exact, we learn lip-reading.

*The time has come, the teacher said,  
To talk of many things;  
Of lips and vowels and consonants,  
And suchlike useful things.*

It's no joke being deaf. Any deaf person can tell you that, though not many say so. Pencil and paper are very poor substitutes for ears. A few people know the finger alphabet, but those who can do it really well are as rare as roses in June. Besides, the deaf are in a minority, and cannot go about making unmitigated nuisances of themselves. Usually they are far too shy, so they stay on the outskirts of the crowd, and fool themselves into having a good time. A wise friend realised this, and carried me off to the League for the Hard of Hearing demonstration. I came to scoff, and remained to be converted.

## "The Time of Their Lives"

For ten minutes I talked with the teacher, and did not realise that she was deaf. I went from group to group of

people, and everyone was just talking normally, and yet everyone but me understood. Quite a number were using hearing aids—no more conspicuous than spectacles — and were having the time of their lives.

We sat around the room "listening-in" with hearing aids while a short talk was given over the microphone. Then there were gramophone records, and a violin—piano duet, and songs and recitations. And most of it came through splendidly. But it is quite true that unusual words were hard to pick up. In fact, aids are only about 60 per cent effective by themselves. Lip-reading is about 40 per cent effective, while the two together are nearly 90 per cent perfect. And what more could anyone want?

The lip-reading class sits round the blackboard on which is a list of words showing certain lip movements. The teacher runs through the list, saying each word two or three times, so that the pupils gain a mental image. Then she makes short sentences using the words: "I am going by train, are you?" is not read, after a little training, as "The man hoeing in the rain is blue," and "Mary caught the last tram" is not confused with "Mary bought her lost lamb"

## Use a Mirror

We were told to spend 15 minutes a day practising the words on the list: if we had no sweethearts or wives to help us, to practise in front of a mirror. It is just as good. Of course lads must use the mirror in the privacy of their bedrooms, but lasses, especially if they are pretty, can use the mirror at any time, anywhere: waiting for a tram, in the tram, in the lift, at the hairdressers—or even during office hours under the pretext of powdering their noses.

But lip-reading is not only for the totally deaf. Actually, the partly deaf will benefit most quickly. The intense concentration needed to hear sufficiently well during the medial stages of deafness takes a great toll of mental energy, which is almost entirely prevented with lip-reading. It is easier, too, for the partly deaf to learn lip-reading, for they have part of the sound of the word as a guide, whereas the totally deaf person has only the lip movement to go by.

"Is the time spent learning lip-reading worth while?" I answer from experience, "Most certainly it is." I will not quote Helen Keller, who must be regarded as a genius rather than a fair average sample, but go along while a class is on—you will be welcome—and see for yourself just what lip-reading alone is capable of, and see what lip-reading plus an aid is capable of, and you will be convinced as I was.

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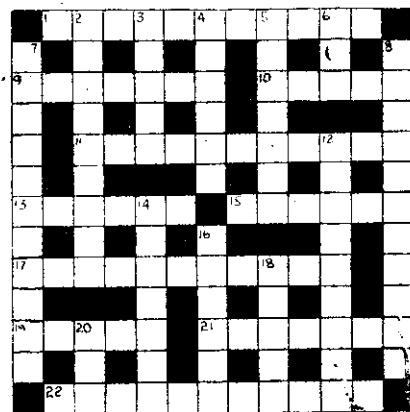
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## THE LISTENER CROSSWORD

(No. 84)

(Constructed by R.W.C.)



### Clues Across

- Re spiced tea—its value becomes lower here.
- A quick succession of notes from our dale
- Lo! I go into an Eskimo's house.
- Amused by deer in a tent.
- Len and Ray are almost here.
- These make us cold.
- Nevertheless no truer animal was ever this colour.
- That esteem conceals colloquial dislikes.
- Reacted in a slightly different way.
- I don't cry, Sue! (anag.).

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