

DID YOU HEAR THIS?

Extracts From Recent Talks

Useful About the House

SOME men are what is known as useful. Others are referred to as useless about the house. The useless ones are just shrewd husbands who have discovered that a reputation for uselessness saves wear and tear on brain and muscle. But the value of the useful ones depends on what form their usefulness takes. One of



the most notorious of the useful species is the domestic fixer. I don't mean the man who actually fixes things, but rather the optimist who unvaryingly says "Leave it to me, I'll fix it." The hall-mark of the fixer is that everything he fixes is in a bigger fix after he fixes it than it was before it was fixed. But, if there is one quality a household fixer possesses above all others, it is

courage. We are proud to say this for haven't we all been fixers in some degree in our day; that is, before we learnt that it is cheaper in the long run to get a plumber to fix the gas than to get a doctor to fix us after we have fixed the gas. But the fixer, in his heyday, will tackle anything from a choked sink to a strangled bath.—(*"The Man About the House."* Ken Alexander. 2YA, January 17.)

Just Silent Workers

MY mind goes back to the last war, when a body of honest-to-goodness Englishmen decided to raise sufficient funds to put up a building for the use of soldiers and sailors on leave. Many meetings had been held, discussing the cost of the building, the site, the furnishings, the number of rooms, and so on. After many such meetings one of the members got up and suggested that another member and himself should be appointed as a special sub-committee to go into the question of ways and means for raising the money to purchase the land and also to erect the building. This was agreed to, and the sub-committee of two went into solemn conclave together. Next day they reported that it was no longer necessary to worry about the finances as all the money required for these two objectives was forthcoming. Not till the war was over and the land and buildings were handed over to the Army for soldiers' recreation rooms, did the subscribers' names leak out. There were only two names—the two members of the sub-committee. The story had it that when these two adjourned, they tossed up, and the winner had to pay for the new building and the loser for the land. The fact also remained that the public were not asked to put up a single penny as the rest of the committee saw to all the furniture, billiards tables, in fact everything from the hundred bedrooms down to knives, spoons, and forks for the restaurant. If that was not sufficient they all, joint and severally, guaranteed the cost of fuel, gas and electric light for the duration of the war.—(*"Just Silent Workers."* Major F. H. Lampen. 2YA, January 8.)

Work in the W.A.A.F.

RADIO LOCATION is the newest of the W.A.A.F. duties, and it is still fearfully hush-hush. One is given to understand it forms an important part of the defence system of this country, and no questions asked. One of the most important and also most exciting jobs the Waafs can do is the receiving of the radio messages from the 'planes. There are specially trained and extremely efficient Waaf radio operators attached to all Bomber Command and Fighter Command headquarters, and these girls work in shifts, since it's a 24-hour job. At night they

Dead Or Alive?

SOPHIA'S ideas on life and death grow clearer, as she takes the mortal scene into her . . . bird's-eye view, may I say? She argues them out with her unbodied companion. She recalls, more and more distinctly, the forgotten teachings of her long-dead father, a clergyman and a philosopher, and towards him she turns again from the fading, dwindling concerns of earth. "Oh, I wouldn't like that. Too creepy! Oh no, I'm sure I wouldn't." Don't say it. Mr. Ervine is much too human, humorous, and intellectually alive a writer to let even the hand of death lie heavy on a novel. Sophia enters into some pretty serious discussions, yes, but they're neither dull nor mawkish. Let me give you one glimpse of old Sue Sumerson, looking down at her surviving third—'Erbert: "There 'e is, there 'e is! An' if you please, goin' into the Plough, an' me not cold in me grave yet. Couldn't miss 'is pint, one day." That's respect for the dead, that is! There's nothing dead and alive about the dead in Ervine's story.—(From a review of St. John Ervine's novel *Sophia*, 3YA, January 20, by J. H. E. Schroder.)

see the 'planes taking off for a big raid on Germany, and they sit by the side of their instruments waiting for incoming messages from the raiders. For a long time, of course, there is silence, but gradually, as the 'planes turn for home, their job well and truly done, the messages begin to come in. Orderlies stand by to hurry the messages through to the big room where the "high-ups" wait as patiently as they can. A huge chart hangs on the wall, and other girls mark positions, and tick off the pilots' names as they safely cross the coastline of England.—(*"Proud Service."* Monica Marsden. 1YA, January 27.)

At the Harbour Bar

WHEN old Auckland pioneers are asked about their early memories of the place, for some reason or other (they generally begin with the harbour. One remembers seeing boats moored to the veranda of the first waterfront hotel. Another recalls the time when the Waitemata reached as far as the Waverley.



A third takes the water a block or two further up, perhaps even to the City Club in Shortland Street. Successive reminiscences advance up Queen Street like the waves of a flowing tide, and each time, you may have noticed, to another hotel. Can there be some connection between the harbour and the bar? My own memories don't belong to what may be called the whisky - and - water school. For we lived at the further end of Epsom, and not even the most accomplished "reminiscer" or confirmed liar—the terms are sometimes interchangeable—has ever recorded any tendency on the part of the Manakau, even in the earliest days, to leave its grey home in the west and make its way, say, to the old Royal Oak. The Manakau was always content with its own bar.—(*"Auckland in the Good Old Days."* Miss Cecil Hull. 1YA, January 19.)

The Lofoten Islands

TAKE the Lofoten Islands—they've been in the news a couple of times recently. This group of islands is off the coast of Norway, high up, right inside the Arctic Circle. They are actually further

north than Iceland. We are apt to think of any land beyond the Arctic Circle as being, to our comfortable standards, much too cold for ordinary living. It suggests arctic conditions, frozen harbours, locked with ice for many months, and all the land deep under snow. But as a matter of fact, though the Lofoten Islands are inside the Arctic Circle, they are not such a frozen waste as might be imagined. They are planted right in the course of the warm Gulf Stream, which sweeps across the Atlantic from the Gulf of Mexico, bringing some of that Mexican heat, a little watered down, of course, right across those miles of ocean, to act like a nice hot water bottle in this arctic cold. The vegetation is extraordinarily luxuriant for such a latitude. Ferns two and three feet high grow on the lower slopes. The warmth of the Gulf Stream even makes the climate a little enervating, which seems strange in these latitudes. We usually associate that with tropical, or semi-tropical heat. In a good winter, even the sheep may remain out of doors right throughout the season, as there is little snow. And another amazing thing about these Islands up in the Arctic Circle, is that the sea around them, even the sheltered harbours, are never frozen in winter. — (*"Shoes and Ships and Sealing Wax."* Nelle Scanlan, 2YA, January 9.)

American Indian Music

THE American composer, author, lecturer and teacher, Daniel Gregory Mason, once said: "America has not one music, but ten musics." American Indian music has for the last four centuries frequently been the subject of comment by travellers and explorers. For the past 160 years Americans



have taken a practical interest in it. One of the American composers who has sought inspiration from the music of the Indians, is Charles Wakefield Cadman. He has devoted years of study to the subject although he has also written much that is not in the category of Indian music. In 1909 Cadman visited the Omaha Indian Reservation and made a study of Indian songs and folk lore. He collected a number of authentic native tunes which he later harmonised. He also made some records of Indian songs and flute pieces. The four songs that resulted failed to interest a single publisher until a stroke of luck led to an introduction to Madame Lillian Nordica, the American soprano. After once having heard "From the Land of the Sky Blue Water," she fell in love with it, added it to her repertoire, and at the premiere of the song in Cleveland, had to sing it three times.—(*"Our Allies and Their Music—The United States."* 2YA, January 11.)

Farewell to the Queen's Hall

YOU will remember that the Queen's Hall, London's most famous and loved concert hall, was made a total wreck during a particularly savage air raid. I shall always remember that night and my feelings the next morning—it happened that on that Saturday afternoon I was playing with the Philharmonic in the Queen's Hall in a performance of Elgar's *Gerontius*, and as we were giving a concert there the next day I am afraid that most of the orchestra left their instruments in the hall. We optimistically arrived on the Sunday morning for our rehearsal, and as I drove down Portland Place and the debris got worse and worse, my heart sank lower and lower, and turning the corner around Broadcasting House in Langham Place, there stood the smoking remains of my musical home, with my disconsolate colleagues vainly trying to rescue fragments of smouldering instruments. Among them I could see my friend, Cedric Sharp, solo 'cellist of the Philharmonic, and a very great artist. He was holding up two charred pieces of wood—the back and belly of his famous Teeler 'cello, a beautiful instrument and an irreplaceable loss.—(*"Music in London."* Thomas Matthews, visiting violinist, 2YA, January 13.)