

DID YOU HEAR THIS?

Extracts From Recent Talks

Early in the Morning

POST an urgent letter at two or three in the morning. You'll have to walk down to the Strand to do it. It's the only all-night Post Office. Walk there—in the cool air of just before dawn—say, two o'clock summer-time. Post your letter—drink a coffee at a coffee-stall or a "cab-man's rest"—and do a bit of a wander round, say, Covent Garden Market. There will be a great bustle of coming and going at that early hour.

Waggons are topped high with produce. Their drivers fling rustic phrases at one another—dialects from most counties of England. You won't be able to understand a word of 'em. They'll be as uninterpretable as a foreign tongue. But they'll be merry. It's a good end of a strenuous toil for them. They've harvested, sorted, packed and stacked, and brought their goods to market. Their carts are empty. Their horses thrust grateful noses deep into nosebags. There's a curious reek of fruit and vegetables, petrol, horse-dung, and sweat. I wonder if they'll like you? The peasants—in every country of the world—the Cockney—and every animal I ever knew—especially dogs—have an uncanny, and often embarrassing instinct for knowing what's what in human beings. The Cockney will know—he'll know without so much as a glance—whether you're there to pry.—("My London," Alison Grant Robinson, 2YA, March 18.)

More Like Than Unlike

OUR humorous weekly *Punch*, and the American humorous weekly *New Yorker*, are excellent specimens of their kind, but they are very different indeed, and seem to belong to two different worlds. But in my view the gap between these two periodicals is much wider than the gap between their respective readers; or put it this way—the actual readers of *Punch* are

not as determinedly British as *Punch* itself is, and the readers of the *New Yorker* are not so thoroughly American as the *New Yorker* is. The result is that I have found, over and over again, that when I get together with ordinary folk on business or pleasure, we're surprised to discover how alike we are and how easy it is to get along together. . . . Several of the boys, supported by the whole bunch, declared emphatically that their greatest and most pleasant discovery was that the English, instead of having no sense of humour at all, as they had been led to believe, had actually an enormous and all-pervading sense of humour. Hearing this proclaimed so unanimously I nearly cheered.—(J. B. Priestley in a BBC Talk after meeting a number of young American officers in England.)

Food for the Eyes Only

IT'S a little disappointing that Tane, when he planned the forest trees, didn't make more provision for gastronomic taste. Why couldn't sweet, luscious syrup ooze from our titoki? Perhaps Tane aimed higher—appealing to the visual sense and through that to the poetical. The Maoris in their gift of oratory and rhythm seem to give expression to this sensuous environment. The titoki is a most attractive tree—the tinted foliage and then the fruit! What could be more satisfying to the eye than those sprays of artistically-arranged berries—the shining black seed poised in the centre of the scarlet aril, or beaded pulp, which the brown seed-case holds out so temptingly—and the colouring—glistening black, bright scarlet, and richest brown.—("Bush Trekking," Rewa Glenn, 2YA, March 17.)

Artificial Respiration

EFFORTS at resuscitation will only be successful when the respirations, but not the heart, have been stopped. Death is extremely difficult to diagnose, the onset of true *rigor mortis* being the only certain clinical sign. Artificial respiration, along with administration of carbon dioxide, should be persevered with until recovery takes place or *rigor*

mortis sets in, and even in successful cases it may take several hours. The Board of Trade recommends Schafer's method for a minimum period of four hours, but recovery has been recorded even after eight hours. It is in this type of asphyxia that the rocking stretcher is invaluable, because, apart from the difficulty in maintaining prolonged artificial respiration, it avoids the detrimental break in rhythm and timing which occurs when one operator changes over with another.

The importance of the immediate application of artificial respiration in electrocution is further confirmed by recent Canadian statistics, which demonstrate that when it is begun within one minute of the electrical shock, 90 per cent. of the victims recover, whereas after a delay of six minutes only 10 per cent. recover.—(Red Cross Talk, "First Aid in Asphyxis," 2YA, March 13.)

Inspiration at the Hairdresser's

OF the six hundred songs written and composed by Charles Dibdin we have an anecdote about one that "came to him" while sitting in a hairdresser's chair. A man and his little son once called on Dibdin and found him in a cloud of powder, being prepared by a hairdresser for his evening appearance. As they talked, Dibdin remarked that he wanted a subject for a new song. While various suggestions were discussed, the once familiar jar of a ladder on lamp iron outside was heard. "The Lamplighter!" exclaimed Dibdin, "a good notion," and he forthwith began humming and fingering on his knee. When he was released by the hairdresser, Dibdin stepped to the piano and played and sang the long-famous song with that title.—("More Than One String to Their Bows," 2YA, March 15.)

The Gift of Tongues

CONSIDER Gertrude Bell's linguistic prowess. Her excellent education in England—she came of a scholarly and travelled family, and herself took a first-class in History at Oxford—made her mistress of such foreign languages

THIS week, because of pressure on space, we have had to hold out our usual list of news bulletins on shortwave, but it is substantially the same as in our previous issue, and will be reinstated next week.

as French, German and Italian, languages she used in her frequent travels abroad. I'm not sure at what stage of her life she learnt Arabic, but she must have known it well. When she was in Syria she got a Persian to come and teach her his language, though she already had a good knowledge of it. A little later, on a world tour, she spent some time in India, and chose an Indian servant from whom she could learn Hindustani. The same tour brought her to the Far East, where she took lessons in Japanese. And at some time or other she picked up some Turkish. Indeed, wherever she went in her much-travelled life, she seemed to learn the language as a matter of course. Such was the mental equipment—or part of it—possessed by this remarkable woman, Gertrude Bell, who was later to advise, out of her wisdom and her vast stocks of knowledge independently gained, such people as Lawrence of Arabia, high British officials in Cairo and Basra, and the first King of Iraq.—("Some Adventurous Women: Gertrude Bell," Margaret Johnston, 2YA, March 14.)

Prisoners From Rangitane

THE authors record only one act of discourtesy by a member of the ship's company. Clothes, meals, and suspense were the great problems. I think women readers will find this book very engaging in the account of make-shift with the few garments the prisoners had available, and their delight at last when, in Australia, they were given a credit note of £10 apiece to spend to the best advantage at a department store. *Prison Life on a Pacific Raider* is a good-hearted, lively record of experiences which will live for the rest of their lives in the memory of those who endured them. I think the prison doctor's words to his charges express its mood and are a rich commentary upon the whole adventure: "It is not your army, your navy, or your air force we fight: it is this British Spirit."—(Book Talk, John Moffett, 4YA, March 11.)



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