

DID YOU HEAR THIS?

Extracts From Recent Talks

Weaving Bark

IT was cotton that shipped the negroes to America. While the darkies plucked "white gold" in the "cotton fields away" the Maori wahines in this unknown land were wandering in cool glades stripping bark from the Houhere trees. With their sharp stone knives they would sever the bark part of the way round the tree, then tear it off in strips. The outer bark would be peeled off—the inner layers soaked in a stream until the mucus sap was washed out and the lacelike strips could be easily pulled apart. As soon as the strips were dry, the old dames, squatting on their mats would begin their plaiting or weaving.—(*"Bush Trekking,"* Rewa Glenn, 2YA, March 24.)

Profligate Nature

COUNTLESS millions of seeds, both of plant and animal life, can never reach maturity. It is quite obvious that only a certain number of trees can grow on an acre of land, and only a certain number of sheep can live on an acre of grass. Hence this productivity of nature lends to the struggle for existence. It is said only one oyster out of 5,000,000 reaches maturity. A single pair of flies are said to produce 20,000 larvae, which in a few weeks will hatch into flies ready to reproduce, thus giving rise very soon to 200 million larvae. Indeed, living things multiply so rapidly that they would, if not in part destroyed, soon produce enough progeny from a single pair to cover the earth.—(*"Evolution,"* Professor R. Lawson, 4YA, March 24.)

Bugs in the Attic

MY next landlady was neither young nor charming. But she had a very nice attic room, scrupulously clean, for the ridiculous sum of twelve-and-six. Twelve-and-six! I might have known. I would now. And I did very soon. Of this house—long since demolished—I still have the latch key. I moved in that evening but, because I was going to a theatre I didn't unpack. That night I returned very late and very tired and flung myself into the little spotless white bed. How good it was! I was asleep in a moment. But in the night I woke and tossed, and went to sleep again. A second time I woke . . . and this time I wondered, because I usually sleep pretty soundly. The house was still . . . the little room with its leaning ceiling was flooded with moonlight. I buried my head in the pillow. But a third time I woke. And this time something strange took my attention. I was sure the wallpaper had been plain. But now, in the bright moonlight, I could see a pattern on the opposite wall. Not only a pattern . . . it was moving! A horrible suspicion grew in my mind. I leaped

out of bed and switched on the light. Yes, it was true. Bugs. Plain, straight, undeniable bugs. There was a washstand near. I grabbed the basin, filled it, stood in it, and peeled off my pyjamas into it. Then I reached for my hair-brush and brushed furiously. Very carefully I pulled a fur coat from one of my suitcases—everything else, I felt, would be contaminated—and—barefooted—I fled down the stairs. In the street I found a cruising taxi. "Please," I asked the man "will you go to the top of this house and bring me my things? Two suitcases, some clothes on a chair, some shoes beside the bed. In a basin of water on the floor you'll find some pyjamas. Wring them out and bring them too." Nothing surprises the Cockney. In two twos he was back with me—and smiling broadly. "Why now, Miss . . . they doesn't bite everybody. They doesn't bite black people. Funny thing, that." And so ruminating the old fellow climbed back into his seat and we set out for my next abode.—(*"My London: A Roof Over One's Head,"* Alison Grant Robinson, 2YA, March 25.)

Up the Pole

THE distance from Innisfail in Queensland to Broome in Western Australia is fifteen hundred miles as the crow flies. If you set out to make the journey on foot, you would find yourself travelling for the first 500 miles through difficult country. By the time you had reached the telegraph line, you would probably have given up the idea of reaching Broome. You would see the long line of telegraph poles disappearing to the south, and the sun

above, and—nothing else. And you would—if you still had the strength—climb a telegraph pole, and knock off an insulator. Then, you'd slide down, sit at the foot of the pole, and wait until the linesman came along to see what the trouble was.—(*"North of Australia,"* National Service Talk, 2YA, Monday, March 23rd, 1942.)

Cries for a Living

A YOUNG woman who cries for a living is Miss Sally Belle Cox, who is employed by the National Broadcasting Company of America whenever they need the sound of a crying baby. She makes £20 a week that way. Miss Cox, who is a teacher of swimming, discovered her gift when she had a job at an orphanage. The orphans cried so loudly that she turned savage and started imitating them. The orphans were so delighted with Miss Cox's imitations, that they stopped crying, and laughed instead. When she heard that the broadcasting people needed a weeper she went along and wept to the programme chief and was engaged on the spot. She

worked for months in a regular radio feature called "Raising Junior." She was Junior. In a new year programme she took the part of the New Year and cried magnificently. You've often seen pictures of the Old Year, sketched as an old man with long hair, whiskers and beard, shuffling out of the way to make room for the New Year, pictured as a baby. That's the New Year Miss Cox represented on the radio. And don't think this young lady laughs at her crying—oh dear no—she looks upon herself as an expert and can imitate any child from one hour old to fourteen years of age.—(*"The Junior Encyclopædia of the Air,"* conducted by "Ebor," 2YA, March 23.)

Pioneers on Foot

THEY had great powers of endurance. I don't know what we of this later generation would say if asked to carry a fifty of flour from the city up to Mornington, yet this was an accepted practice in early days. There are records of men who walked from Balclutha to Dunedin to be married and then walked back again, and lest we should put this aside as showing what strange things bridegrooms will do, let me set beside it the case of a worthy resident of Waitati who walked to divine service in Dunedin every Sunday morning. A friend of mine told me that his father came ahead of the family and settled in Roxburgh. Later, the rest arrived and the father walked to Dunedin to meet them—a week's journey over the Old Man Range. Early ministers seem to have had astonishing stamina, covering on foot a charge extending from Waiholā to the Bluff, and another a circuit extending from Waikouaiti to Stewart Island. When rivers had to be crossed rafts were made of flax sticks and horses were swum behind boats across the harbour entrance at the Heads. Yes, they had great powers of endurance and also a real genius for inventiveness. They built houses but they did not build them from materials purchased from timber yards and hardware stores, they hacked them out of the virgin bush. They learned how to split totara logs so that they yielded planks which compared well with sawn timber. Where they could not get nails they bored holes and used dowells.—(*Extract from address delivered by Rev. D. O. Williams, at the Otago Early Settlers' Association, 4YA, March 23.*)

Important—To Ourselves

A SMALL English boy I knew of was inclined to be very self-assertive. His schoolmaster said to him: "You must learn, Smith minor, that you are not at all important." "But I'm very important to myself," was the small boy's reply. Well, we are all very important to ourselves, aren't we? But the child has to learn that other people are just as important, and it is much more difficult for an only child to learn this lesson than for one who has brothers and sisters. Yet no one gets very far in life if he can't stand up for himself at times. We don't want a child to be always giving in like a lamb.—(*"What Makes for Happiness,"* Mrs. Madeline Alston, 2YA, March 23.)



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