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# DID YOU HEAR THIS?

=Extracts From Recent Talks =

### Of Ships and Rats

NE of the most amusing pets of my personal acquaintance in the navy was a white rat, which belonged to the Hotspur, of Narvik fame, He had travelled quite a long way when I met him, for his owner had bought him in Alexandria, from a "gilly-gilly" man-



in other words, a native of Egypt who will show one almost anything there is to see, at slight profit to himself, of course. There are dozens of these men, in fact I should probably be more accurate if I said hundreds, and

apparently this particular gilly-gilly accosted our friend after he had dined. The dinner had been a bit of a celebration and consequently he was feeling very mellow and 27.) happy when he suddenly noticed a white rat peeping out from the gillygilly man's clothing. It was popping in and out and generally being rather unto blame for wondering whether it really was there at all. Having been reassured on this point, he insisted that he must have it, and as his companions could not dissuade him, the sale went through then and there, and the rat changed hands .-(" Pets in the Navy." Mrs. O. J. Gerard, 2YA, April 24.)

#### In The Dark?

MANY literary people think Virginia Woolf (whose tragic end we so deplore) quite supreme as a novelist, for delicacy of touch, subtlety of thought and her power of suggesting a state of mind by indirect means. But Virginia Woolf will never make a universal appeal because she is too elusive and, try as one will, one can't always tell what she is driving at. We read on and on, hoping to find broad daylight instead of just a glimmer on the next page, but no---we are left in the end in the dark. An undercurrent of tragedy, a sense of futility, runs through her books, and she seems to find no meaning in anything. Yet as a critic she ranks high, and her essay "A Room of One's Own" is a delightfully witty analysis of the history of women in relation to the writing of fiction .--("On Novel Reading." Madeline Alston, 2YA, April 27.)

## Bath and Baths

FROM a cultural point of view, Bath is a city unique in the world. It is the most perfect example of 18th Century architecture in existence, and is irreplaceable. Never before in its long history, which dates back to Roman times, has it felt the hand of war. In the struggle between Cavalier and Roundhead, a battle was fought on Lansdowne Hill above Bath, but the city slept peacefully on. The beginnings of

Bath are unknown. Hundreds of years before Julius Caesar crossed the Straits of Dover, there was a British settlement at Bath. The Romans found there hot springs running away into the Avon, and realised that these springs had valuable medicinal qualities. They built there a large and beautiful city which they named Aquae Solis, The Waters of the Sun. A little of that city has been excavated, and to-day you can visit the baths to which the Roman officers came to cure their rheumatism, caught while defending the northern wall against the Picts and Scots. It is impossible to excavate the whole of Aquae Solis, because modern Bath is built on top of it. If you go down into the Roman baths, you can see long passages going out into darkness beneath the city's foundations. As you walk down Milsom Street you walk over the top of a buried city, into which German bombs have now plunged. - ("Bath," Topical Talk, 2YA, April

#### At Peter's Gate

TWELVE German pilots knocked on St. Peter's gate and demanded adexpected, so perhaps our friend was not mission. On being asked to identify themselves, they said they were the German flyers who had been shot down over England that day. St. Peter asked them to wait while he checked with the



lists. On returning to the gate, he said:
"Eight of you will have to go back. The High Command meport says that only four of you were shot down, and we have to go by the official record!" Quite a neat little story, don't you

think, to illustrate the unreliability of Nazi war bulletins. But that is not the funniest thing about it. It's real point is that it is a story which the Berliners were telling one another with many a guilty chuckle and a hasty glance over the shoulder at the time when the Berlin radio and press were reporting the destruction of the British Isles by raiders with charmed lives .- (Book Talk by John Moffett, 4YA, April 22.)

#### Sheep In London

NOW the mist's lifting and the sun pushing through a bit more you can just see the Arch, and the ghostly outlines of Park Lane running all down that side to Hyde Park Corner. What are you staring at? No-you're not crazyit's true, they're sheep you can see. They graze anywhere in the Park but you're more likely to come upon them this end. That's one of the American jokes against us, you know—"The Londoners possess, in a narrow strip of green running along one side of Park Lane, the most valuable building site in the world, and they graze sheep on it!" Of course we dol - ("My London." Mrs. Alison Robinson, 2YA, April 22.)



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