

## SNIPPETS FROM TALKS

# Policemen in Land of Comic Opera

State Servants Corrupt Because Underpaid—Purity of Language in Peru  
—Japan and China “Upside Down” to Europeans, but More  
Cultured and Polite.

MR. A. A. M. GRUNDY (3YA).

THE Peruvian policemen are amusing little chappies, about five feet high. Many ride horses much higher than themselves and they are like travelling arsenals with their pistols, swords, truncheons, and general armoury. They are all underpaid, and as a result are very corrupt. In those days each president who had been put into power had threatened to wipe out the useless foreigners infesting the quaysides, but found their numbers too great to combat. . . .

DURING my time in Peru I learned to speak Spanish fluently as spoken by Peruvians. These people speak Spanish more clearly than the Chileans. It is nearer pure Castilian than the Spanish spoken in other Latin-American republics. Spanish is dialectic—or should I say idiomatic? No two republics in South America speak the same dialect, as no two counties in England speak with the same accent. Ecuadorians speak Spanish as Americans speak English—in a sing-song way. I maintain that more excitement, more adventures can be encountered in South American republics—land of comic opera—than in any other continent in the world.

PREVIOUSLY I have referred to Latin-American republics as the “land of manana” (to-morrow). No one will do anything to-day that can be done to-morrow. Generally speaking, South Americans are a most lethargic

race—they may be aptly termed “mas o menos people”—or more or less people, but perhaps that term should be applied less to Chile than to anywhere else south of Panama. In Peru an appointment is at 7 o'clock “mas o menos,” a vessel sails at noon “mas o menos,” a president is appointed to hold office for five years “mas o menos”—usually rather less than more. In one week I saw three presidents elected in Lima—one was shot and two ex-presidents were deported.

IT is a country to which I would strongly advise people not to go in the hope of finding work. South America has for some years been going through very bad times—the depression has hit that country worse than most places. Admittedly it is a land full of adventure—and a playground for people with money, although many wealthy Chileans left their country during the peak of the depression for Paris. In fact they are to be found all over the Continent, but I understand that a law has been enacted for these “absentee landlords” to return to Chile and their farms, as the government will not allow money to be sent out of the country.

DR. MORRIS N. WATT (3YA).

UNDER the microscope it turns out to be a tiny water snail. There is nothing particularly interesting about this specimen, but if you were suddenly confronted with a snail about a foot long (as this one appears to be) you would certainly give it more than a passing look, and probably ask yourself when you had that last drink. But if we

carefully turn the slide over—so that now we are looking through the glass at the underside of the snail—there is more to attract the attention, as parts covered by the shell are now readily seen. The most interesting feature is the head, a great shapeless mass with two long feelers which extend and contract, and are in constant slow movement. The lower front part of the head appears to consist of two large fleshy lips separated in a vertical direction, like a hare-lip. Wide out from between them sweeps a ribbon-like tongue covered with tiny spikes. If the surface of the slide were covered with microscopic vegetation you would see a long rectangular patch cut out and swept away at every excursion of the tongue. Their teeth are a beautiful object for the high powers of the microscope. Of course, to see them properly the snail must be killed and the so-called tongue dissected out and mounted on a glass-like medium.

MISS C. CRIGHTON IMRIE (3YA).

AFTER living in Japan and China for a little while you see the people looking at the world as if from an upside-down position. Their brains seem to register backwards—that is, to our way of thinking. They speak backwards, write backwards, read backwards, and from standing an umbrella upside down to striking a match away from them, there seems to be no action of their daily lives, however trivial, but finds with them its equal in ours, but its opposite. For instance, when a gentleman enters a house he doesn't take off his hat, he takes off his boots. In a Japanese stable horses are kept with their heads facing outwards. The people begin dinner with eating fruit and other dessert, and finish with hot soup. It is most unwomanly in China not to wear trousers. Yet they are human beings like ourselves. Perhaps if we saw ourselves as others see us our surprise as in the case of the Japanese and Chinese might be less pronounced.

THE first thing to impress the visitor is the universal niceness of manners. In politeness, in delicacy, they have no peers. Art has been their mistress, and culture is not the attainment of the few, but the common property of the people. They are passionately fond of children. I have never heard crying babies, or seen a troublesome or disobedient child there. Unquestioning obedience is the habit of centuries. It does seem a contrast when you see European mothers coaxing and frightening children into unwilling obedience. In everything I saw I could not fail to realise that the Japanese Empire is one great family, and the family is in itself a little empire.

## Cricket North Island Versus South Island



THE most important cricket match of the year in New Zealand will take place in Wellington on Friday, Saturday and Monday, February 8, 9 and 11. This is the match between teams representing the North and South Islands, the players being the cream of those taking part in this year's Plunket Shield games.

Arrangements have been made by the Broadcasting Board for all the main stations to broadcast resumes of the play at regular intervals during the match. These resumes will be broadcast at the following times each day from all stations: 11.50 a.m., 12.50, 2.0, 3.0, 3.35, 4.10, 4.50 and 5.50 p.m.