

OF FEMININE INTEREST

By "Patricia"

THE talk about earthquakes and how to register them, given by Dr. Adams, of the Dominion Observatory, during the children's educational session at 2YA, was one that should have been of great interest not only to the boys and girls to whom he spoke particularly, but to the whole of the grown-up population of New Zealand generally. "Very valuable information," he said, "was received from private residential observers throughout the country on forms supplied by the Meteorological Department. It was said that the forms were simple and easily understood. Dr. Adams spoke of the Rossi Forel scale and particulars as to exact time of an earthquake together with its direction and force, according to the scale received from widely-separated districts, which permitted the department to correlate very useful information. Those who are desirous of assisting in this manner were invited to communicate with Dr. Adams, Dominion Observatory, Wellington.

QUITE an interesting little talk was given from 2ZW by Mr. Stilling on some of the Australian animals. In his previous talk he spoke of the koala, the native bear, that queer little lovable creature that is friendly with all. Unlike the koala, which feels only on gum leaves, kangaroos are a pest to the farmer in many districts. Fences mean nothing to them as they are able to leap twelve or fifteen feet. The destruction they do to crops is enormous. The great red kangaroo often attains the height of 6 feet and, when cornered, is a dangerous animal. Organised hunts are arranged for the destruction of this creature, and in a season hundreds are disposed of. It seems a pity it should be so, but the farmer is quite unable to withstand the depredations of the kangaroo.

WALLABIES—a smaller species of kangaroo are not so destructive as they inhabit mountainous and heavily timbered country, and their everlasting preservation is thus assured. All Australians love the wallaby because it is inoffensive and easily tamed.

AUSTRALIA'S queerest animal, in fact the most extraordinary in all the world, and one that seems to be increasing, is that filthy scavenger the "Platypus," a duck-billed, furred, web-footed, egg-laying animal which suckles its young. This caricature of bird, animal and reptile is fortunately protected from Queensland to Victoria.

MRS. GORDON ROBERTSON, in her last lecture from IYA, on "Music and Beauty in Many Lands," spoke mostly on the beauty of sound, the sound of music that has been handed down to us from the Italian composers of the 17th and 18th centuries. She gave some interesting and historical facts as told by illustrious travellers in Italy, as for instance, Abbe Coyer wrote in 1768 "Tre violins, the instrumental performers and the singing, all stop us in the streets. One hears in the public

places, a shoemaker, a blacksmith, a cabinetmaker singing an aria in several parts with a correctness of taste which they owe to nature and to a habit of listening to harmonists formed by art." The speaker recounted that in Florence and Genoa the merchants and citizens combined on Sundays and Fete days to wander the countryside in societies singing music in three parts. Burney, the English traveller tells how "the Italians, when they admire a thing, seem on the point of dying of a pleasure too great for their senses." Another traveller, named Lallande writes "it seems as if in this country the fibres of the ears are more sensitive, more harmonic, more sonorous than in the rest of Europe; the whole nation sings, the gestures, the inflection of the voice, the cadence of the syllables, the conversation,—everything there expresses and exhales music."

THE Wombat is Australia's caricature of the European pig. Though it cannot be said to be pretty, is very playful, and is found in the Eastern States and Tasmania. No country has queerer or more engaging animals and birds than Australia, and Mr. Stillings talks are extremely entertaining.

TO the Italian of the 18th century music was a very personal thing. The passions, feelings, and frenzies portrayed on the stage—these were his own passions and frenzies, and he went to the theatre to observe himself. At this time Rome exercised a dictatorship over the whole of Italian music, before whom composers trembled. On the performance of a new opera the audience became extraordinarily heated, shouting approval to the violins, the bassoons, or other instrumentalists. If a poetical or melodious song pleased them they vociferously addressed the author. Should, however, the audience not be pleased they would shout "bravos" for other authors and composers, a punishment well calculated to suppress the crime of copying. Roman verdicts were not always infallible; still Rome was the keystone in the arch of the musical world of that day.

CONSUMING itself in its own fierceness, Italian music suffered a temporary decline. Romaine Rolland beautifully describes this when he says: "Even though the virtues of domestic economy are worthy of all esteem, all my sympathies are for the art that gives itself without counting the cost. It is the charm of this Italian music that spends itself with both hands without reckoning of the future. No matter if beauty be not lasting, what does matter is that it shall have been as beautiful as possible. Of the fugitive radiance of the beautiful dead centuries a joy and light remain for ever in the heart." Mrs. Robertson said: "Unfortunately at the moment, Italy seems to be a land of politics." Whether a scheme of reducing every individual to the position of a subordinate unit in a super-State will prove a good atmos-

phere for the blossoming of individual genius and art remains to be seen. However, some of the modern musicians of Italy inspire a hope, a renaissance of the classic and perfect beauty of her ancient history that will permeate the world with a gift that is distinctly hers.

I HAD a letter quite recently from a friend who has been in India for some years, and among other interesting news she mentioned that the wireless service had been much improved. Owing to the failure of the company that had been operating the broadcasting service, it was necessary for the Indian Government to take over, with the result that the programmes have been much improved. The license fee is ten rupees (13/4) per year, but there is a likelihood of it being increased to twelve rupees in order that a better service may be given. In Bombay broadcasts take place in four languages, and as most residents know at least two, quite a lot of fun and enter-

tainment is gained in listening. Although with a good set it is possible to hear some of the European programmes, static is usually so bad that they prefer to tune in to their local station.

ALTHOUGH static was not altogether absent, I thoroughly enjoyed the Australian network relay of the Gilbert and Sullivan opera, "The Pirates of Penzance," which was followed later by "Trial by Jury." The whole opera was excellent, and the enthusiasm of the audience was infectious. The Australian broadcasters seem to have ingratiated themselves with Messrs. J. C. Williamson, Ltd., for other operas are to be relayed during the next week or so, and on November 7 "H.M.S. Pinafore" is to be given by the Australian network. Gilbert and Sullivan will surely never die out in Britain or its Dominions, and no matter how often the season occurs we do not seem to tire of these delightful and humorous operas.



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