

CHILDREN'S NEWSPAPER

JUNE 12 1920

The Children's Palace of Horrors

WHAT have the children of this country done that their great pleasure house, the finest playing-ground in the whole United Kingdom, should be turned into a chamber of horrors?

The war was fought for them. To make their world worth living in our men went out into the Valley of the Shadow of Death.

And now, while Peace comes slowly in, what is it we see? We see the War Men trying to keep alive the memory of this ghastly thing, setting up its ruins like scarecrows, painting them and labelling them and putting them in glass cases, and cramming them into the Children's Palace, that very palace built to usher in the Age of Peace among the nations. The Crystal Palace is turned into a chamber of horrors, and a thousand pounds a week is to be spent in keeping up this War Museum, lest the spirit of war should die out among us, and Junkerdom should fall.

Most sane people will agree that the Times is right when it speaks of this "megalomaniac museum," with its great staff of officials amassing a gigantic lumber of petty relics that nobody wants. Acres on acres of these petty things there are, and thousands on thousands of pounds are being wasted on salaries for the men who have brought them together and built places for them while men who won the war are waiting for houses to live in.

Somebody has pointed out that the Office of Works has over a hundred architects, and no wonder, for somebody must swallow up the thousand pounds a week that it costs to turn the Palace of Peace into a Palace of War, and somebody must find a way of displaying all the bits of stuff collected at great cost. But who would not rather see it burned or buried instead of set up here in our great Children's Palace, as if for all the world it was the thing to feed our children on?

Can we afford it? While all that is best in the world is trying hard to build up a League of Nations, can we afford to spend a fortune every year in trying to beat back into some sort of life the dead body of this foul thing that has brought the world where it is? It lies there all but dead, a dragon slain by the noblest men who ever went out from St. George's land.

What sort of a joke is this that asks a weary, much-taxed nation to put a thousand pounds a week into the slot to see this thing at work again? A joke that Punch would hardly print, for will it not sound hard and harsh in all those homes where the memory of the war is still a sad and sorrowful and sacred thing? A. M.



THE EDITOR'S TABLE

Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London

above the hidden waters of the ancient River Fleet, the cradle of the Journalism of the world



Two Cottage Doors

WE do not love Napoleon, but we love that poem of Béranger in which the grandmother tells her tale of him. She had seen him pass with a caravan of kings behind; she had seen him go to Notre Dame; and then he knocked at her cottage door.

Is there not something very like it all in that story of the chief man in France today, President Deschanel? For he, too, has been knocking at a cottage door on a dark night. He, too, was received with amaze by the peasant's wife, though how happily different her story of the knocking at the door will be from the story of that other cottage door.

One winter's night, as this might be,
I heard a knocking at the door;
I opened it; great heavens, 'twas he!
A couple in his wake—no more;
Then sinking down upon a seat—
Ay, 'twas upon this very chair—
He gasped: "Defeat! Ah, God, defeat!"
What, grandmother, he sat down there,
He sat down there?

President Deschanel knocked at the door in France's hour of victory; for Napoleon it was all over:

'Tis there. But all, alas! was o'er;
He whom the Pope himself had crowned,
The mighty hero world-renowned,
Died prisoner on a far-off shore.
For long we none believed the tale,
They said that he would reappear,
Across the seas again would sail,
To fill the universe with fear!
But when we found that he was dead,
When all the shameful truth we knew,
The bitter, bitter tears I shed!
Ah, grandmother, God comfort you,
God comfort you!

Between these cottage doors—the door at which the poet imagined Napoleon to knock, and the door at which the President has actually been knocking—what a marvellous history of events there lies!

Those who Gave Their Sight

YOU that still have your sight,
Remember me!
I risked my life, I lost my eyes,
That you might see.
Now in the dark I go
That you have light,
Yours all the joy of day,
I have but night.

JOHN OXENHAM

On England's Roll

ANOTHER hero has left his mark. This is what he used to say to his granny, who brought him up with his four orphan brothers:

"Never mind, granny. I'll soon be thirteen, and able to work and bring in some money."

He was George Oliver Dawber, of Ashton-in-Makerfield, a little man of thirteen who was like a father to his four younger brothers, and, as if that were not enough, jumped into the water to save a drowning boy. He gave up his life instead, and his name is on the roll of England's heroes.

As he lived for others, so he died for others, and it is written of him, as it was written of old,

Greater love hath no man.

Coal Is Up

COAL is up again; has it ever been so dear since men began to burn it? Yet, after all, it takes Nature several million years to make a ton of coal, and we can hardly expect the labour of millions of years for nothing. At any rate, we may hope that at present prices Nature thinks herself well paid.

Tip-Cat

THE tailors are very disappointed with the Academy. Perhaps the artists think men matter more than clothes.

"WHEN I was at the War Office," Mr. Macpherson tells us, "I used to be somewhat grieved." So did some who were not there.

NET results:
Tennis scores.

A ROBIN has built its nest in a letterbox. It caught the post.

THE money-lender who tried to escape from the police preferred a bolt to a lock.

"THE Zoo is for the people," a morning paper says. It is certainly the best place for some.

THE failure to get Mars on the wire should not be accepted as final. Perhaps their wireless is under Government control.

A PILLOW case: Insomnia.

THE Kaiser's beer-mug has been sold for £40. We daresay he will find another.

IN a wearying law case the judge asked Mr. Cannot if he could not shorten the case. Mr. Cannot thought he could. Seems to be badly named.

A RICH ironmonger has just retired from business. He is cutting his nails.

The Unexpected

A VERY odd thing happened when the President of France fell out of the train.

As the news ran round that a man had been found who had fallen from the train, every compartment was searched except that of the President, so that it was not for some hours that the President was missed.

It is never quite safe in this world to think that the unexpected will not happen. It will.

Thanks

Thank God for trees:
Bird; blossom; breeze.
But thank Him most
Of all for these:
Fun; frolic; cheers;
Light; laughter; tears;
And memory that
Both Sees and Hears.

EGBERT SANDFORD in the New Witness

The Tale of a Ruin

By a Town Girl in the Country

I CLIMBED the hillside to a great castle in which Richard II. had lived, and Mary, Queen of Scots, been imprisoned. Cromwell's cannon battered the walls badly enough, but you must look for the damage to find it.

The good woman in charge of this old castle provided me with tea, and we talked of the owner of the castle.

"Ah, that poor lady!" she exclaimed. "She has never been the same since her son was killed in the war. Directly she got back from London she came to see me. 'I knew,' she said to me, 'you would understand.'"

The eyes of the good woman filled with tears: She took me into her own room to show me the photograph of her own son who had fallen in the Great War.

"He said to me," she related, "that he would never wait to be fetched. And he said, 'The others are married; I'm the only one who wouldn't be missed.' Missed!" She fought with her tears. "Missed!" It was positively the cry of a soul in pain. Then, very gently, these words: "He was such a mother's boy!"

Cromwell's cannon left their mark on the outer walls of this old castle, and the cannon of William Hohenzollern have left a wound that can never be healed on a heart within.

As I walked down the hillside I thought of the English boy who had been born in this old castle, who had played in the rooms where Richard II. and Mary, Queen of Scots, had lived, and who had barely reached manhood when the guns blew him into fragments.

Surely the curse of God must rest on all war-makers!

A House to Let

By Our Country Girl in Town

IT was rather late in the afternoon. The road was empty. As we walked there the cry of a cat came from the opposite houses.

There it was, a thin, black, harried cat, crouching at the bottom of an area so deep that to get out of it was impossible. The house was to let. In one of the windows was a bill inviting inquirers to call on Mr. B. at his office in a street of which we had never heard. The bill was written, not printed.

We found that Mr. B.'s office was a dismal private house where the windows looked as if they had never been cleaned. There was no brass plate on the door, only a written card in the window.

We rang the bell, and the door was opened by a little old man in shabby clothes, who pushed his spectacles on to his forehead to peer at us with his blinking and watery eyes. I think he was unused to callers; at sight of us a visible brightening came into his face.

It was tragic to see how great was his disappointment when he heard our business. He had evidently thought our object was to buy a house.

But when we apologised for the trouble we were causing, he said to us:

"Oh, pray don't mention that! I'm very fond of animals myself. I once had a dog—"

And now we could hardly get away!

He came first of all under the porch of his house; then he descended the steps with us. Then he stood at the gate with the wind blowing his thin hair about and the rain striking on his wrinkled face, telling us stories of the dog he loved—such little stories!

Late that night we walked round to the empty house. The cat was no longer crying in the area.