

PUTTING AUSTRIA ON HER FEET

Good Work Delayed by Lack of Money

HOW VIENNA IS TRYING TO SOLVE THE HOUSING PROBLEM

By a Correspondent in Austria

One of the worst difficulties in Vienna in the last four years has been the lack of houses.

In that huge and splendid city of palaces, when the war ended, 72 per cent of the tenements were of two rooms with a tiny scullery, and many were of one room. Now in many places round Vienna and in some farther away little settlements are springing up of groups of people banded together to provide houses, and with them gardens and food, for themselves on a very clever and ingenious scheme.

Each group is what we should call a cooperative building society, and these societies have received help from the State or the municipality or both in the provision of the land.

Free Labour

In the case of forest land the trees have been cut down and removed by the State. But the settlers do not only give money as with us, but at least 2000 hours of their own free work. Some can give skilled labour, some can do only unskilled work, and some are set to help with the necessary clerical work. The materials are obtained from a central organisation at a cheap rate.

The people have done a great deal towards building their own little houses, and the trade unions raise no objection. If a man cannot afford a whole house at once he can start with a "kernel" house of two rooms and pay for the rest bit by bit until he can complete a five-roomed house. Every house has its quarter of an acre or more of garden, and a man can keep a goat or chickens.

Children's Pets

The Austrian children are as keen on pets as English children. "You must come to see Adolf," said one. Adolf was an enormous contemplative rabbit. Then I had to go to look at an empty hutch—Fritz was dead and deeply mourned. The children who were rickety and delicate in Vienna are getting well and strong in the new settlements. Help has been given by the Society of Friends.

Just now there is rather a lull in the progress of the movement. The League of Nations Commission in charge of the loan for Austrian reconstruction made its assistance conditional on the cutting down of State and municipal expenditure, and the help given to the settlements has had to be reduced.

Yet every workless man and retired government servant taken from crowded Vienna and set to produce food from land hitherto waste are helping to put Austria really on her feet again. But the big financial machine grinds heavily, and merely insists on economies.

MAKE YOUR OWN SUNSHINE

New Alpine Light for the Home

A new kind of electric arc lamp has been introduced in London, which produces 4000 candle-power of exactly the same light as is given by the Sun on the summit of Mont Blanc.

It is fitted on a stand with wheels, and can be moved about a room with ease.

Warm summer sunshine can be turned on at home just like ordinary electric light; and a course of sun treatment is claimed to have all the advantages of a summer holiday.

PROTECTING THE BIRDS

NEW BILL BEFORE PARLIAMENT

Fresh Attempt to Save Britain's Songsters

NO MORE SMALL CAGES

There seems no end to the laws we have to make to stop thoughtless or wicked people from deeds of cruelty to their helpless fellow creatures. A Bill is now before Parliament to give further protection to wild singing birds, which are still caught and caged in enormous numbers.

A favourite way of catching them is by using captive birds to attract them into a trap. Sometimes these "decoy" birds are held by a string and sometimes they are maimed, legs or wings being broken so that they cannot get away. Twigs are smeared with birdlime, so that the visitors are caught by the feet or wings in the sticky stuff. The new Bill would punish people convicted of any of these practices.

Cruelty and Ignorance

It seems that in London public houses, and doubtless elsewhere, Sunday singing competitions are held, and thousands of small birds are snared and sent up for these. Four out of every five die before they have settled down to their captivity. They are kept in tiny cages because it is believed, wrongly, that the smaller and darker their cages the more heartily will they sing, and that if they are blind they sing best of all!

The law can already deal, of course, with brutes who deliberately blind their victims, but the new Bill seeks to make it an offence to confine birds in a cage too small to allow them "freely to stretch their wings and exercise themselves." The C.N. would have said, "freely to stretch their wings and fly away home!"

It is to be hoped that no one will try to stop the quick passage of the Bill through Parliament. But no laws will prevent this kind of cruelty from being practised in secret, unless people help by making a strong public opinion against it. Happily education has done, and is doing, a great deal in this direction.

LA FONTAINE

His Damaged Monument

The statue at Château-Thierry of the great French writer of fables, La Fontaine, suffered much damage in the Great War.

Wishing to raise a more important memorial in its place, but finding the raising of sufficient funds a difficult problem, the local municipality appealed to the Minister of Public Instruction for permission to ask for contributions from the schoolchildren of France.

Permission was not given. In England we do things differently, as shown by the success some years ago of the fund raised by an English paper for a monument to Daniel Defoe in Bunhill Fields.

TOO MANY CLOTHES

A Medical Officer's Warning

The medical officer for Cumberland has issued a warning against burdening children with too many clothes. Too many are almost as bad as too few.

Dr. Morison's warning is illustrated by a remarkable instance of parental over-care. A boy not yet five was discovered wearing in school this outfit:

Two pairs of trousers	Woollen combinations
A vest of cotton-wool	A shirt
A heavy woollen vest	Three jerseys
A lined waistcoat	A coat

Who will say, after that, that warning is unnecessary, and that a mother's common sense will teach her how to clothe her offspring?

NEWS FROM EVERYWHERE



Gathered by

Canada has more cattle than people.

A reader in the Cape Province of South Africa reports that the family cat, Bachelor Tom, is now eighteen years old.

Since the adoption of the United States Constitution 136 years ago, the Congress has enacted over 50,000 laws.

What's in a Name?

Duck and Quack were the names of two persons who appeared in a London County Court case.

A Watch's Long Rest

An English lever watch, lost in a ploughed field over a year ago, started to go as soon as it was wound up.

1000 Million Feet of Logs

A huge timber raft containing 1000 million feet of logs has just been towed 1000 miles from Oregon to California.

Opening up Central Africa

A new railway bridge, costing £800,000, is to be built across the Zambesi to connect Nyasaland with the rising port of Beira.

A Postman's Walks

Mr. Abraham Sprigg, postman, of Easton, near Bristol, who has retired, has walked during his 42 years' service over 100,000 miles.

M.P.'s Meals at the House

Last year 179,757 meals were served in the House of Commons refreshment rooms, at an average cost of about 4s. 2d. each.

The Rise in London Property Values

In the seventeenth century Billingsgate Market was leased for £95 a year. Last year the traders in the market paid £36,500 in rents.

14 Miles Through Mountains

Engineers have just finished boring a fifteen-foot hole for nearly fourteen miles through the Sierra Nevada Mountains in California. The work has taken five years.

Death of a Famous Goldfish

The goldfish Ernest, which lived in the Savoy Hotel fountain, is dead. Cigar ash is supposed to have been the cause of it. He acquired fame by playing leapfrog over a floating cork.

Facts About our Fish

The number of fishermen catching our fish for us in England and Wales is 40,000, and they ply their trade from the Barents Sea right down to the Atlantic coast of Morocco.

The Cross-Word Craze

The first cross-word puzzle book in French has just been published. Such books are now numerous in England. In America, where the puzzles originated, the sale of such books is said to have reached ten millions.

Seals in the Wash

Seals have become so numerous around the Wash that they are said to account for a scarcity of fish. About 150 were killed there last year; but as many as 200 are reported as having been seen together.

DUCKS GO FOR A RIDE

Trip in Kensington Gardens on a Toy Steamer

In the C.N. a few weeks ago, in the Tale Before Bedtime, a writer told of the joyous ride of a proud drake on a youngster's pond boat.

And, sure enough, this thing has happened. One of our contributors, who had not seen the fanciful ride in our pages, reports the real ride. Here is what he says, on the evidence of his wife and little girls.

Many are the brave little model steamboats that drive their way across the Round Pond in Kensington Gardens, and as a rule the ducks in their path gracefully make way for them. But the other Sunday two of the ducks, fancying a voyage, perched themselves on the deck of a large toy steamer, and remained as passengers until the little vessel had reached the shore.

MAGIC BOTTLES OF PASTEUR

France's Gift to America AN INSPIRATION FOR A UNIVERSITY

There will be no lamentations, but only congratulations, over three treasured relics which have recently left the Old World for the New.

They belonged to Pasteur and they have been given to Columbia University by the University of Lille in that scientific spirit which knows no frontiers, so that young America should have for its own something which that wise benefactor of the race used and handled when working towards his great results.

No treasures of art are these, but only humble tools of research that any glass-blower could make, a little long-necked flask, another flask with a special cap, and some U-shaped tubing. Pasteur had no magnificently equipped laboratory, but most often genius has worked with ready-made tools, and it was with these and others like them that Pasteur began that research into fermentation which pointed the way to the discovery of disease germs and was the inspiration of Lister's system of aseptic surgery.

Millions of Lives Saved

What a simple but pathetic magnificence lives in these relics. The sword of Charlemagne might seem to the world rarer, but these were the swords with which Pasteur struck off the world's fetters of disease. Millions of lives, a million years of suffering, have been saved by the science which Pasteur stored within these bits of glass.

They were as potent as the magician's wand, but that was because of the magician who used them, and who found Nature's secrets in them not by chance or any happy stroke of fortune but by patience and industry and profound sincerity in seeking the truth. Above them in the case where they are to rest in New York City should be inscribed Pasteur's immortal words to the workers in science: *In the field of science and observation chance favours only the prepared mind.*

THE POLICEMAN'S TOOTH

Dentist Meets an Expensive Patient

We all feel we are very brave when we make up our minds to go to the dentist's, especially if it means having a tooth pulled out. But the other day a policeman had to find out if a man who had been stopped by law from acting as a dentist any more was defying the law. He went to see the dentist, and, to test him, asked him to pull out a tooth. And the dentist did!

Of course, the tooth may have wanted pulling out. If it did it was a cheap way of getting it done, for instead of being paid the dentist had to pay £5 for doing it. If the policeman really sacrificed a good tooth, he ought to have some of that £5.

A CORONER'S GOOD ADVICE

Identity Cards for All

The Westminster Coroner has been giving good advice to prevent people who become unconscious in public places from being unknown. He suggests that everyone should carry always something that will serve for his or her identification.

Apart from the people who wish to conceal their identity, and they unfortunately are not a few, we all would do well to take the Coroner's advice. Why should it not be made a rule to carry a pocket card saying who we are and where we live? It would save trouble all round if an accident should happen.