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CHILDREN IN FIGHTING ZONE MOST TRAGIC WAR VICTIMS

Pitiful Picture of Little Ones Who Never Learned to Play—
Boche Uses Poison Gas That Smells Like Flowers

Of all the horrors of this war there seems to be nothing more pitiful than the fate of the little children in the fighting zone on the West front. We have seen much as ever, save for financial pinching and a yearning for the welfare of loved ones "over there" cannot realize what war means to the children. Our boys go to farms, maybe, but they are well fed and in full liberty, and our play-grounds go on as usual, while from the air fields come shouts as the fans' favorite score a run.

How different in the war zone under the rain of shells and the ghastly persecution, and worse, of the German military machine!

Nothing More Pitiful.
"Can you imagine anything more pitiful than the lives of children who have never known anything but war?" said Dr. Esther Lovejoy, of Portland, Ore., to The New York Sun on her return from France. "Is there anywhere on God's green earth a more dreadful tragedy than the tragedy of a blighted childhood? The most wonderful thing to me in America is to see little children running about, happy and unafraid."

"I have spent six months in the nearest approach to hell that exists, I believe, in or out of the teachings of the theologians—the hell where babies are born to hear the sound of bursting shells as their introduction to this world of ours, where little ones learn their mother tongue only furiously and in whispers, where children must learn to wear their little gas masks as soon as they learn to walk, where suspicion and fear rule and love and confidence are not."

"What do we in America know about war? We cannot begin to sense what it means so long as our children play. I know what war is, for I have just come back from the land where children have never learned to play."

Repeating the Helpless.

Dr. Lovejoy had been working for the American Red Cross, at Evian-les-Bains, a gateway through which Germany sends back into France the old, infirm, maimed, halt and blind—all who are of no military value—and the little children. Not all the little children either, or the heartless Hun hold back women with one child only, for she has labor value in the energy she has above that necessary to care for one child. Then there are the children of French mothers and German fathers. There is no estimating how many such there are, and they do not come back. In the portion of France occupied by Germany there were, before the war, 6,000,000 people, and it is said that only 500,000 of these found their way back to France, chiefly through Switzerland. Boys under fourteen and girls under sixteen are sent back, but the older ones are kept. If the boys do not die of starvation they become slaves, but they do not become Germans, says Dr. Lovejoy. "The girls are sent back to France forever. Men may be defeated, but they are not conquered. Women, through the strongest of all human emotions and attributes, the mother instinct, can be conquered, and the Germans know this. So they keep the girls over sixteen with the mothers of one child, for their military value as mothers of the next German army."

"The rest of the children come back through Evian; thirteen thousand and more of them came through while I was here. Once there was a whole orphan asylum, caravans of children, sent through Evian."

"Usually they come with their mothers, a woman and two or three children; sometimes with their old grandparents. There are hundreds and hundreds who are simply brought along with people who are not akin to them, their own parents having been lost—killed or vanished—early in the war."

"Northern France, inside the German lines, must contain thousands of these homeless, wandering little children of no military nor naval value to the German invaders, having no one who feels responsible for them or to whom they can go, and so being allowed to roam about like little tramps except for an occasional roundup, when a batch of them is shipped back into France through Evian."

"That is an awful thing. If war had no worse horrors than the thousands of homeless, vagrant children who have no place to go except where there is war, no outlook on life except that it is a game of kill or be killed, it would be bad enough. But to my mind even worse is the plight of the children who have been born to war, who never know what peace is like."

"We piece together the picture of the life of these little ones inside the German lines from the stories they tell, they and their elders, but more from the look in their faces when they find themselves in a world where the sound of guns is a long way off, and where, wonder of wonders, people actually speak French aloud without first looking around to see if the boches are listening."

"These children do not play," says Dr. Lovejoy; "they do not know how to play. That is the sickening first evidence we get at Evian of their stunted, dwarfed, blasted little lives."

"There has been no chance to play over where they came from; play was dangerous; it might annoy the boche. Besides, children play instinctively only when they are happy, and these children, born in sorrow and unhappiness, have never been happy in their lives. Think of it, that there are thousands upon tens of thousands of little children in France, sunny, smiling France, who have never been happy, who do not know what happiness means!"

"It is not only mentally that these children show the effects of their environment from birth. All have suffered a war blight; they are undernourished, ill nourished and subject to all sorts of diseases."

Naturally Hate the Kaiser.
Even the older children have almost forgotten how to play. They seem so shy and awkward when they recover their freedom, but they soon recover their spirits and savvy. To watch the

little ones, however, is heartbreaking. They are filled with fear lest the boche will seize them for speaking in French aloud. They have all been taught French, these tiniest ones. They even have little French songs that they have learned to sing under their breath. One—a real children's song that all the children seem to know and that can only have been taught by passing from mouth to ear among the children themselves, has for its refrain: 'The Kaiser won't be happy till his head's cut off.' "Many families living even several kilometres back of the French lines have had to be broken up and the youngest children sent farther away. It is so hard for a two-year-old to remember to keep his little gas mask on, especially in the hot, suffocating summer! And now that the birds are returning to their nests and the flowers of spring wild flowers, how are the little ones to know that they need the mask? I have never heard or read of anything more beastly than that, but it is what the boche is doing."

WHY BRITAIN RULES THE WAVES

(Toronto Globe.)

The body of a brave boy, washed up on the crags of the lonely Scottish coast, has caused a profound manifestation of the deep sentiment of the grim and grief-worn British people. The lad was Fred S. Clements—a young sailor of humble parentage. He was scarce twenty years of age, but had crowded into the last three years of his heroic young life a record of adventure and achievement almost without parallel in history. Thousands of people witnessed the funeral—a full naval one—attended by blue-jackets, buglers, soldiers, firemen, girl guides and the scholars of his old school, Southbury Road, Enfield, a subscription tombstone is being erected to mark his resting place in the little cemetery of Enfield highway.

The war story of Fred Clements is a thrilling one. Five times the ships upon which he served were torpedoed by Hun submarines, and five times the lad narrowly escaped death. On one occasion, while floating on a piece of wreckage, he succeeded in saving the life of a fellow-sailor. He also served on several coasters, and shortly after von Tirpitz started his regime of ruthlessness the boy received a personal letter of commendation from Lord Jellicoe for being the first volunteer to sink a German submarine from an open boat. Some time later Clements and five other young British sailors were captured on a raft by a "gunboat" U-boat and were taken to Germany, where they were condemned to be shot. Clements, with two of his comrades, effected a sensational escape at sea, made his way to Dunkirk and succeeded in returning to England. After seven days' leave he returned to his ship, volunteered for special service. It was while so engaged that he met death, by drowning, being reported ashore on the northern coast of Scotland. Clements took an active part in the naval battle of Jutland, and a reward of \$2,500 was placed on his head by the German government.

In the spirit and the service of this brave British boy—shared by his sailor comrades—is following the glory and the grandeur of Britannia's claim to rule the waves. The sons of Drake and Nelson are worthy of the great traditions bequeathed them. When this war is won and its stirring story is written, the silence of the seas will be broken, and many a new hero will be immortalized in its history.

HITS BABY BUGGY TRADE

Makers Unable to Get Steel for Non-essential Industry.

Atlantic City, N. J., May 28.—The baby carriage industry may be halted by the war, it was reported here by the National Vehicle Manufacturers' Association, in war council here. Delegates say that inability to get material, especially steel, threatens to force the suspension of plants. Thirty prominent manufacturers were here to consider a war programme of co-operation with the Commercial Economy Board at Washington.

The convention protested against the failure of the government to class their product among essentials, and a committee was appointed to bring about recognition.

INVENTED THE BIG GUNS.



Professor Ransomeberger, German ordnance expert, who is reported to be the inventor of the 76 mile gun which has been bombarding Paris from St. Germain Forest.

A HEROINE OF YPRES.



Sister Marie had a quiet and sheltered school for girls near Ypres. When the Germans came she begged the commandant that the convent be held sacred and he listened, but later the convent came under bombardment and for two days the children hid in the cellars. Sister Marie led the way at night and they escaped to a barn about twelve miles away. For two weeks, with the country ravaged by battle, Sister Marie tramped eight miles every night and brought back food to her charges. Little by little they at length worked their way to safety, reaching Paris after five months of heroic endurance.

FIRE LOSSES IN 1917

TOTAL \$250,753,640

Underwriters Report Worst Year For U. S. Since San Francisco Fire

Few of Alien Enemy Origin—Say Increase is Due to Speeding up for War and Hasty Construction of Factories

Losses by fire in the United States in 1917 aggregated \$250,753,640, against \$214,500,000 in 1916, the losses last year having exceeded any since 1874, with the exception of the San Francisco fire in 1906. These figures were made public at the fifty-second annual meeting of the National Board of Fire Underwriters at the Waldorf-Astoria, New York. R. M. Smith, president of the National Board of Fire Underwriters and president of the Fire Insurance Company and president of the National board, presided at the meeting, which was attended by 137 prominent fire underwriters from all sections of the country, representing fire risks estimated at \$85,000,000,000.

Otto E. Lane, chairman of the board's committee on statistics and origin of fires, declared that the per capita loss rose from \$246 in 1916 to \$242 in 1917. It was a cause of satisfaction, he said, that the government had finally recognized the necessity of protection of the war industries and had created a fire prevention section of the War Industries Board under competent and experienced supervision. Owing to unsettled conditions no attempt was made in 1917 to secure statistics showing fire losses in European cities.

Few Fires of Enemy Origin.

Contrary to the general impression enemy allies had little or no part in the losses by fire since the United States entered the war. On this point President Bissell, in his annual report, said:

"As soon as the war began it was realized that the danger of fires caused by enemy incendiaries was not to be ignored, and as was perhaps natural, many sensational rumors gained currency, among them being that the National Board of Fire Underwriters as authority for the statement that property to the value of \$48,000,000 had been destroyed by fires caused by enemy aliens during the first nine months of the war. This published statement had the careful attention of our actuarial bureau, and disclosed the fact that as to incendiary fires there was no proof of incendiary origin, and as to nearly 90 per cent, no reason even for belief that the increase in fire losses was due to war conditions, which had called for the speeding up of industries, the hasty construction of new factories, congestion at plants, and overtime."

The underwriters renewed their pledge of national service to conserve the nation's resources, and to safeguard its productive facilities from interruption by fire, in the hope of aiding and hastening victory over the common foe."

The election of officers resulted as follows: President, Frederick C. Basswell, Home Insurance Company; vice-president, Charles L. Case, London Assurance Company; treasurer, Charles J. Holman, Commercial Union Company; secretary, Geo. G. Hankley, Springfield Fire & Marine Company; executive committee, C. G. Smith, Henry E. Rees, P. L. Hoadley, Frank Lock, Lyman Cander, R. D. Harvey, J. B. Levison, W. R. Hodge, A. D. Baker and Edward Melch.

ONTARIO'S NEW
EDUCATION MINISTER

(Toronto Globe.)
The appointment of Rev. Dr. H. J. Cody, rector of St. Paul's Anglican Church, to be Minister of Education for the Province of Ontario will be some what startling to the general public. The selection, however, is not unlikely to prove a good one, and one calculated to do much to restore confidence in the administration of the educational affairs of the province. It is interesting to recall that Rev. Dr. A. Egerton Ryerson, another distinguished member of "the cloth," was the founder of the present educational system in Ontario.

There is much good work for Hon. Dr. Cody to do. The Department of Education is not in a satisfactory condition. It suffers from dry rot and autocratic assurance. The feeling is general throughout the teaching profession that

it offers no freedom for initiative and progressive endeavor. Educationists of earnestness and enthusiasm are growing under the fetters of departmental stagnation, self-sufficiency, and self-satisfaction. The removal of Dr. R. A. Pyndel to his reward will be welcome to thousands of precepts in all parts of the province. The hope will be general that under new and better leadership, this

great department may again come into its own and give its rightful service to the citizenship.

Hon. Dr. Cody should win public confidence. He is a man of high idealism and force of character, and, in so far as he commits his undoubted talent and enthusiasm to his new work and steers clear of the corroding acid of politics, he should give splendid service to the state. Dr. Cody's appointment will be received by the public with keen satisfaction. His administration should be earnest, vigorous and progressive. He has an opportunity to do big things for his province in regenerating the department, in restoring the confidence and winning the co-operation of teachers and parents, and in carrying out the supreme purpose of education by character-building and good citizen-making among the youth of Ontario.

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