

## OUR KINGS AND THE GREAT FIRES OF LONDON.

In the year 1666 the City of London went up in flames, watched by our gay King Charles II, whose courage did much to minimise the calamity. Soon a new city more splendid arose on its ashes.

On the night of Sunday, December 29th, 1940, fires once more raged all night in the City, after the indiscriminate showering of incendiary bombs by the barbarous enemy, which was the fiercest fire-raising attempt of the war, in which historic Guildhall and eight of Wren's churches were destroyed. We specially grieve the loss of lovely St. Bride's, Fleet Street, with its slender spire, the journalists' own church.

St. Paul's Cathedral ringed by fires was in danger for some time. Bombs fell on and burnt through the lead roofing, but were extinguished before serious damage was done. For miles away the Cathedral stood out clearly against a glowing sky.

### THE KING'S MESSAGE TO THE CITY.

The King sent the following message to the Lord Mayor of London, Sir George Wilkinson:—

I warmly thank you, my Lord Mayor, and the citizens of London for their kind New Year message, and the Queen and I cordially reciprocate their good wishes. We feel deeply for them in the wanton destruction of their Guildhall, which has for many centuries been the symbol of the history and traditions of our beloved capital.

The Lord Mayor replied to the King's message:—

I respectfully tender the City's thanks for your Majesty's gracious message of sympathy. I would like to pay tribute to the unconscious heroism of the members of the public services and to the indomitable courage of the citizens. They will never flinch whatever the ordeals to come. I am confident of their ability to endure.

### KEPT THE FLAG FLYING.

Dawn on Monday found the Union Jack hung proudly at the Guildhall masthead, and very rightly the Lord Mayor thanked Mr. George, a member of the Guildhall staff, who put it there, and whose gesture aroused the enthusiasm of the crowds who visited the scene.

### RIGHTEOUS INDIGNATION.

The Rev. F. C. Baker, the devoted Vicar of St. Stephen's, Coleman Street, expressed the feelings of all of us who have been privileged to serve the City of London, as nurses have done for centuries.

In an address at St. Margaret's, Lothbury, on New Year's Day, the Vicar of St. Stephen's said:—

"The church is down, but my blood is up. It is up with righteous indignation, and I hope I am none the less a Christian for it. As I stood on the ashes of St. Stephen's Church this morning I thought of Christ's denunciation: 'Thou, Capernaum, which art exalted to Heaven shalt be thrust down to Hell.' I feel sure that if Christ were standing in this City to-day that is what He would say about Germany. I have read much history in my time, but I know of no nation so depraved, so hellish and brutal as Germany has proved herself to be; for it is not Hitler alone, but the German nation

which has endorsed his methods which must be held responsible when the day of reckoning comes."

He was amazed, he said, that such persons as pacifists or conscientious objectors could be found in such days as these. There was nothing Christlike about their attitude. Christianity was not for milksops, but for men and women ready to restrain evil wherever it existed. Pacifists and conscientious objectors were assisting Hitler just in the way he wanted help by refusing to join in the battle against him. They were helping him as much, though perhaps not with the same intention, as were Fifth Columnists.

"Nothing would please the Huns better than to feel that they had discouraged us or broken our spirit. They have done neither, so my message is: 'Take heart. Keep your faith serene, your courage high, for victory is going to be ours, and probably this year.'"

## METHODS TO PREVENT INFECTION IN THE SHELTERS.

### FURTHER PROPOSALS BY THE HORDER COMMITTEE.

"Further recommendations of Lord Horder's Committee regarding the conditions in air raid shelters with special reference to health, and a brief statement of action taken by the Government thereon," which have been presented to Parliament by the Minister of Health and the Minister of Home Security, were published recently as a White Paper (Cmd. 6245, price 1d. net).

The recommendations are given below, followed by statements of action taken:—

#### TUBERCULOSIS.

- (i) That arrangements be made to hospitalise at once cases of "open" tuberculosis known to frequent shelters. If necessary, compulsory powers should be taken to effect this.
- (ii) As far as possible each tuberculous family should have a family shelter and should obtain priority in the issue of an Anderson shelter or of other assisted shelter accommodation.

Local authorities and medical officers of health have been urged to see that action is taken along these lines. The necessary compulsory powers have been obtained.

#### LOUSE INFESTATION.

- (i) The Committee endorsed the action taken by the Ministry of Health for arranging—(a) short courses of instruction at the London School of Hygiene for shelter wardens; and (b) the preparation and issue of a short pamphlet suitable for shelter wardens giving briefly the essential facts in the life history of the louse, the flea, and the bed-bug, and summarising simple measures for dealing with these pests.
- (ii) Selected insecticides should be made available and the methods of their application should be submitted to trial. The method or methods chosen should be set out in a leaflet for the guidance of wardens acting under medical supervision.
- (iii) If compulsory powers to delouse do not at present exist they should be taken immediately.
- (iv) The advisability of obtaining more accurate information in regard to the incidence of louse infestation in shelters is recognised. To this end the inquiries which have been already set on foot should be extended to other areas.

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