

"Why should we add section to section like rows of dominoes?"

lawns, flower-gardens and children's playing ground within, and at the top of, the U. He'd even give us a well-equipped laundry and a wet weather playing room to be shared by all the families. Half the area now used by those dozen sections would actually give more value in space; our buildings would be more convenient, more original, more handsome. With this type of construction extended over the city, our transport lines would be shortened and our shopping areas more concentrated and efficient. But we'd lose some of our independence? Neighbours might get on each others' nerves? Very well, he said, take your alternative—expensive individual housing; costly transport, drainage, gas and water and electricity; miles of good land taken up in roads; the dreary sameness of cheap streets pretending to be varied; and a growing separation between the city and the country. Have your suburbs—neither the one thing nor the other.

I PICK up a handful of acorns and twist them in my fingers. It's an intriguing thought—to plan deliberately for the shrinkage of a city, to throw a cordon around the houses and plant a notice over the paddocks and plantations. Thus far and no farther. It might be thinking

More people—more business, my mother's answer, had stuck in my mind because it didn't satisfy. Why do we always want more business? One can understand the shopkeepers, the theatres, and the bus companies—but the rest of us? Is there an optimum size for a city, when its residents have every facility they need or at least the possibility of creating these facilities, and when it can say to industry: "Go elsewhere. There are medium-sized towns looking for you." It may be said that we need growth of population, influx of new industries, for stimulation, so that we shan't degenerate into a kind of civic middle age. But need a city fear stagnation if it should be cohesive enough, bold enough to decide what it wanted and to say: We want no overgrown metropolis, no octopus suburbs eating up the countryside to which we should be bound with the constancy of the happily married? Would not a more complete interplay of city and country and provincial life be itself a stimulant to liveliness and quality?

Quality. The quality of rich individual and community life.

But *that*—shades of the road-builders, the house-and-section peddlers—that wouldn't be "going ahead."

in the future, in terms of conditions that don't yet exist, but if we fail to contemplate, occasionally, a new thing that may seem remote, then we can never hope for conscious improvement at all. . . . I walk in the open park, which was once described to me as "a piece of the English countryside," and I think of the centennial and the Empire Games. Heaven forbid I should poke my pen-nib into that controversy; but it throws some light on this question of "going ahead."

THE CAT

*WE pity the bird caught in the ruthless claw
of the supercilious and smiling cat,
and if the kill were sudden, even that
stark revelation of relentless law
would blight the rapture of a Summer's day.*

*AND yet—
if pain and terror neutralised each other
in the wild throbbing of that little breast,
and then swift dark descended, that were best;
and we should choose this method, and no other
to slaughter bird or beast.*

*NOT so the pretty cat! That epicure
turning the morsel of her cruelty
on contemplation's tongue, ecstatically
tastes blood, and savours, sip by sip, her power,
with each recapture of her tortured prey!*

*AND are not we birds in the claws of fate,
our ultimate doom foretasted and foreknown,
while fancy amplifies each undertone
of stalking Death, who claims us soon or late,
and seldom lets us die
swiftly or mercifully?*

N. F. H. MacLeod

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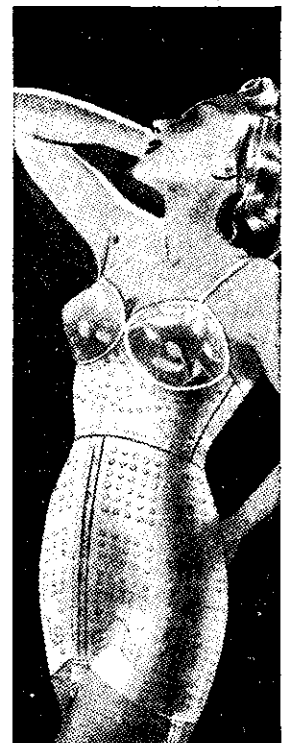
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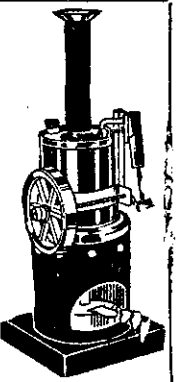


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