

THE END OF A PHASE

Written for "The Listener" by PHYLLIS McDONAGH

LAST week, the Exhibition closed. It was the end of six months of national celebration and rejoicing. It was the end, too, of a phase. Something that our forefathers made possible, and which it has been our privilege to commemorate. Our children, yet unborn, will make the next Centennial Anniversary. But we shall not be here. We shall have played our part.

Already in the grounds, when I saw them last week, dissolution was approaching. In a few days, I thought, great white courts and quadrangles that, for six months now have been scenes of historic splendour, would tumble into dust. The Gothic columns and carved frescoes would tremble and collapse. The valiant standards would furl their flags. The fountain's play would cease. The coloured lights, the reflected gleam of rose and amber and gold, would dim and pale into darkness. . .

And by now, the machinery's throb has stopped at the touch of an unseen switch.

The patient sheep and cattle on the moulded hills and valleys of the Dominion Court have deserted their evergreen pastures. On the miniature harbours of Dominion ports, ships have sought a final harbourage. In the Glow Worm Cave darkness has fallen where once was quivering light.

In the Pioneer Huts the erect figures in their sprigged waistcoats and hooped gowns have relaxed from their long

vigil. The spinning wheel, the old "go ashore" cooking pot, the family Bible, the baby's wooden cradle, are laid aside.

Old treasures, with the bloom of years on them, have vanished into the shadows from which they came. Oils and painted miniatures that for six months now have gazed down on the crowding throngs, have retired, it may be, for another century.

The Royal Jewels no longer dazzle our gaze, the Port of London no longer sounds its call. From the Australian Court, the fruit and the wheat, the play of surf, and sky and wind, have gone back to the land that gave them.

The long procession of show cars have made a final entourage through the northern gates. The pas and war canoes are emptied. From the General Exhibits Hall comes a crash of scaffolding as the stalls are dismantled and laid aside. Their occupants have vanished with their wares.

In Playland, the last spruiker's cry has ceased. From the Crazy House, the sailor has sounded his last guffaw. The swift rushes and descents of the Roller Coaster have been made, the Cyclone and Jack and Jill have slowed—and stopped. The side-shows, the race and card games, all the fun and glitter of Carnival Land have vanished as if they had never been.

There is a sadness and a finality in it all. It is not time that flies, but we, the children of time.

Taking Out the Kink

How many of us sigh for nice natural glossy ringlets—and accept, as a substitute, the machine-made ones from a permanent wave. Not so the dusky belles from Harlem, New York. Curls are viewed there with such distaste that the beauty salons have installed special machines to take out the kink.

Latest Slimming Prescription

From overseas comes the latest slimming secret—the best method known. Get a good strong hold on the edge of the dinner-table—and shove yourself away! The author's whereabouts are at present unknown.

Women's Bravery

On the East Coast of England, a call was sent out from the lifeboats for a doctor to join them in their search for some men who were reported clinging to a lifeboat out at sea. A woman, Dr. Norah Atcheson, promptly answered the call. In dangerous seas, and in constant danger of striking a mine, they searched for four hours. All they found was an empty boat and a number of sailors' hats floating in the sea.

The crew cheered this plucky woman when they returned from their quest. All she was afraid of was being sea-sick!

Plastic Surgery

Plastic surgery, so popular with society women overseas for restoring the youthful contours of the face, is no modern discovery. It was well known in India over two thousand years ago. The early Greeks and Romans also practised plastic surgery, and our present-day method is

The World's Ugliest Woman

Mlle. Polaire, an ex-Parisian actress, was buried recently in a pauper's grave in Paris. In her heyday, Mlle. was billed sensationally as "The World's Ugliest Woman." She was very jealous of her reputation, and insured herself for £4,000 against becoming a beauty. A lone voice crying in the wilderness!

modelled on the work of a famous 16th century Italian plastic surgeon.

We are not as modern, after all, as we think we are.

Not So Backward

An elderly education officer, visiting a school for evacuated children, came across a very dull and backward pupil.

"Why, when Mr. Chamberlain was your age," he remarked, "he was top of his class."

"Yes," muttered the boy, "and when 'ee was your age 'ee was Prime Minister."

Queen Mary's Gift

The Queen Mother made a happy choice in her present to Queen Elizabeth on her birthday. She bought four silver-gilt sauceboats, of oval shape and with two little ring handles. Each one is mounted on a stand about three inches deep. Two of these the Queen Mother presented to the Queen, and the other two she is keeping to give the King on his birthday.

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