

### Section III

#### OF THE BUILDING OF CITIES

WE always build twin cities, like London and Westminster, or Buda-Pesth, because two of us always want, both of them, to be mayors and municipal councils, and it makes for local freedom and happiness to arrange it so; but when steam railways or street railways are involved we have our rails in common, and we have an excellent law that rails must be laid down and switches kept open in such a manner that anyone feeling so disposed may send a through train from their own station back to their own station again without needless negotiation or the personal invasion of anybody else's administrative area. It is an undesirable thing to have other people bulging over one's houses, standing in one's open spaces, and, in extreme cases, knocking down and even treading on one's citizens. It leads at times to explanations that are afterwards regretted.

We always have twin cities, or at the utmost stage of coalescence a city with two wards, Red End and Blue End; we mark the boundaries very carefully, and our citizens have so much local patriotism (Mr. Chesterton will learn with pleasure) that they stray but rarely over that thin little streak of white that bounds their municipal allegiance. Sometimes we have an election for mayor; it is like a census but very abusive, and Red always wins. Only citizens with two legs and at least one arm and capable of standing up may vote, and

voters may poll on horseback; boy scouts and women and children do not vote, though there is a vigorous agitation to remove these disabilities. Zulus and foreign-looking persons, such as East Indian cavalry and American Indians, are also disfranchised. So are riderless horses and camels; but the elephant has never attempted to vote on any occasion, and does not seem to desire the privilege. It influences public opinion quite sufficiently as it is by nodding its head.

We have set out and I have photographed one of our cities to illustrate more clearly the amusement of the game. Red End is to the reader's right, and includes most of the hill on which the town stands, a shady zoological garden, the town hall, a railway tunnel through the hill, a museum (away in the extreme right-hand corner), a church, a rifle range, and a shop. Blue End has the railway station, four or five shops, several homes, a hotel, and a farm-house, close to the railway station. The boundary drawn by me as overlord (who also made the hills and tunnels and appointed the trees to grow) runs irregularly between the two shops nearest the cathedral, over the shoulder in front of the town hall, and between the farm and the rifle range.

The nature of the hills I have already explained, and this time we have had no lakes or ornamental water. These are very easily made out of a piece of glass--the glass lid of a box for example--laid upon silver paper. Such water becomes very readily populated by those celluloid seals and swans and ducks that are now so common. Paper fish appear below the surface and may be peered at by the curious. But on this

occasion we have nothing of the kind, nor have we made use of a green-colored tablecloth we sometimes use to drape our hills. Of course, a large part of the fun of this game lies in the witty incorporation of all sorts of extraneous objects. But the incorporation must be witty, or you may soon convert the whole thing into an incoherent muddle of half-good ideas.

I have taken two photographs, one to the right and one to the left of this agreeable place. I may perhaps adopt a kind of guide-book style in reviewing its principal features: I begin at the railway station. I have made a rather nearer and larger photograph of the railway station, which presents a diversified and entertaining scene to the incoming visitor. Porters (out of a box of porters) career here and there with the trucks and light baggage. Quite a number of our all-too-rare civilians parade the platform: two gentlemen, a lady, and a small but evil-looking child are particularly noticeable; and there is a wooden sailor with jointed legs, in a state of intoxication as reprehensible as it is nowadays happily rare. Two virtuous dogs regard his abandon with quiet scorn. The seat on which he sprawls is a broken piece of some toy whose nature I have long forgotten, the station clock is a similar fragment, and so is the metallic pillar which bears the name of the station. So many toys, we find, only become serviceable with a little smashing. There is an allegory in this--as Hawthorne used to write in his diary.

("What is he doing, the great god Pan, Down in the reeds by the river?")

The fences at the ends of the platforms are pieces of wood belonging to the game of Matador--that splendid and very educational construction game, hailing, I believe, from Hungary. There is also, I regret to say, a blatant advertisement of Jab's "Hair Color," showing the hair. (In the photograph the hair does not come out very plainly.) This is by G. P. W., who seems marked out by destiny to be the advertisement-writer of the next generation. He spends much of his scanty leisure inventing and drawing advertisements of imaginary commodities. Oblivious to many happy, beautiful, and noble things in life, he goes about studying and imitating the literature of the billboards. He and his brother write newspapers almost entirely devoted to these annoying appeals. You will note, too, the placard at the mouth of the railway tunnel urging the existence of Jinks' Soap upon the passing traveller. The oblong object on the placard represents, no doubt, a cake of this offensive and aggressive commodity. The zoological garden flaunts a placard, "Zoo, two cents pay," and the grocer's picture of a cabbage with "Get Them" is not to be ignored. F. R. W. is more like the London County Council in this respect, and prefers bare walls.

"Returning from the station," as the guide-books say, and "giving one more glance" at the passengers who are waiting for the privilege of going round the circle in open cars and returning in a prostrated condition to the station again, and "observing" what admirable platforms are made by our 9 x 4-1/2 pieces, we pass out to the left into the village street. A motor omnibus (a one-horse hospital cart in

less progressive days) stands waiting for passengers; and, on our way to the Cherry Tree Inn, we remark two nurses, one in charge of a child with a plasticine head. The landlord of the inn is a small grotesque figure of plaster; his sign is fastened on by a pin. No doubt the refreshment supplied here has an enviable reputation, to judge by the alacrity with which a number of riflemen move to-wards the door. The inn, by the by, like the station and some private houses, is roofed with stiff paper.

These stiff-paper roofs are one of our great inventions. We get thick, stiff paper at twopence a sheet and cut it to the sizes we need. After the game is over, we put these roofs inside one another and stick them into the bookshelves. The roof one folds and puts away will live to roof another day.

Proceeding on our way past the Cherry Tree, and resisting cosy invitation of its portals, we come to the shopping quarter of the town. The stock in windows is made by hand out of plasticine. We note the meat and hams of "Mr. Woddy," the cabbages and carrots of "Tod & Brothers," the general activities of the "Jokil Co." shopmen. It is de rigueur with our shop assistants that they should wear white helmets. In the street, boy scouts go to and fro, a wagon clatters by; most of the adult population is about its business, and a red-coated band plays along the roadway. Contrast this animated scene with the mysteries of sea and forest, rock and whirlpool, in our previous game. Further on is the big church or cathedral. It is built in an extremely debased Gothic

style; it reminds us most of a church we once surveyed during a brief visit to Rotterdam on our way up the Rhine. A solitary boy scout, mindful of the views of Lord Haldane, enters its high portal. Passing the cathedral, we continue to the museum. This museum is no empty boast; it contains mineral specimens, shells--such great shells as were found on the beaches of our previous game--the Titanic skulls of extinct rabbits and cats, and other such wonders. The slender curious may lie down on the floor and peep in at the windows.

"We now," says the guide-book, "retrace our steps to the shops, and then, turning to the left, ascend under the trees up the terraced hill on which stands the Town Hall. This magnificent building is surmounted by a colossal statue of a chamois, the work of a Wengen artist; it is in two stories, with a battlemented roof, and a crypt (entrance to right of steps) used for the incarceration of offenders. It is occupied by the town guard, who wear 'beefeater' costumes of ancient origin."

Note the red parrot perched on the battlements; it lives tame in the zoological gardens, and is of the same species as one we formerly observed in our archipelago. Note, too, the brisk cat-and-dog encounter below. Steps descend in wide flights down the hillside into Blue End. The two couchant lions on either side of the steps are in plasticine, and were executed by that versatile artist, who is also mayor of Red End, G. P. W. He is present. Our photographer has hit upon a happy moment in the history of this town, and a conversation of the two mayors is going on upon the terrace before the palace. F. R. W., mayor

of Blue End, stands on the steps in the costume of an admiral; G. P. W. is on horseback (his habits are equestrian) on the terrace. The town guard parades in their honor, and up the hill a number of musicians (a little hidden by trees) ride on gray horses towards them.

Passing in front of the town hall, and turning to the right, we approach the zoological gardens. Here we pass two of our civilians: a gentleman in black, a lady, and a large boy scout, presumably their son. We enter the gardens, which are protected by a bearded janitor, and remark at once a band of three performing dogs, who are, as the guide-book would say, "discoursing sweet music." In neither ward of the city does there seem to be the slightest restraint upon the use of musical instruments. It is no place for neurotic people.

The gardens contain the inevitable elephants, camels (which we breed, and which are therefore in considerable numbers), a sitting bear, brought from last game's caves, goats from the same region, tamed and now running loose in the gardens, dwarf elephants, wooden nondescripts, and other rare creatures. The keepers wear a uniform not unlike that of railway guards and porters. We wander through the gardens, return, descend the hill by the school of musketry, where soldiers are to be seen shooting at the butts, pass through the paddock of the old farm, and so return to the railway station, extremely gratified by all we have seen, and almost equally divided in our minds between the merits and attractiveness of either ward. A clockwork train comes clattering into the station, we take our places, somebody hoots or whistles for

the engine (which can't), the signal is knocked over in the excitement of the moment, the train starts, and we "wave a long, regretful farewell to the salubrious cheerfulness of Chamois City."

You see now how we set out and the spirit in which we set out our towns. It demands but the slightest exercise of the imagination to devise a hundred additions and variations of the scheme. You can make picture-galleries--great fun for small boys who can draw; you can make factories; you can plan out flower-gardens--which appeals very strongly to intelligent little girls; your town hall may become a fortified castle; or you may put the whole town on boards and make a Venice of it, with ships and boats upon its canals, and bridges across them. We used to have some very serviceable ships of cardboard, with flat bottoms; and then we used to have a harbor, and the ships used to sail away to distant rooms, and even into the garden, and return with the most remarkable cargoes, loads of nasturtium-stem logs, for example. We had sacks then, made of glove-fingers, and several toy cranes. I suppose we could find most of these again if we hunted for them. Once, with this game fresh in our we went to see the docks, which struck us as just our old harbor game magnified.

"I say, Daddy," said one of us in a quiet corner, wistfully, as one who speaks knowingly against the probabilities of the case, and yet with a faint, thin hope, "couldn't we play just for a little with these sacks ... until some-body comes?"



Of course the setting-out of the city is half the game. Then you devise incidents. As I wanted to photograph the particular set-out for the purpose of illustrating this account, I took a larger share in the arrangement than I usually do. It was necessary to get everything into the picture, to ensure a light background that would throw up some of the trees, prevent too much overlapping, and things like that. When the photographing was over, matters became more normal. I left the schoolroom, and when I returned I found that the group of riflemen which had been converging on the publichouse had been sharply recalled to duty, and were trotting in a disciplined, cheerless way towards the railway station. The elephant had escaped from the zoo into the Blue Ward, and was being marched along by a military patrol. The originally scattered boy scouts were being paraded. G. P. W. had demolished the shop of the Jokil Company, and was building a Red End station near the bend. The stock of the Jokil Company had passed into the hands of the adjacent storekeepers. Then the town hall ceremonies came to an end and the guard marched off. Then G. P. W. demolished the rifle-range, and ran a small branch of the urban railway uphill to the town hall door, and on into the zoological gardens. This was only the beginning of a period of enterprise in transit, a small railway boom. A number of halts of simple construction sprang up. There was much making of railway tickets, of a size that enabled passengers to stick their heads through the middle and wear them as a Mexican does his blanket. Then a battery of artillery turned up in the High Street and there was talk of fortifications. Suppose wild Indians were to turn up across the plains to the left and attack the town! Fate still has toy drawers untouched...

So things will go on till putting-away night on Friday. Then we shall pick up the roofs and shove them away among the books, return the clockwork engines very carefully to their boxes, for engines are fragile things, stow the soldiers and civilians and animals in their nests of drawers, burn the trees again--this time they are sweet-bay; and all the joys and sorrows and rivalries and successes of Blue End and Red End will pass, and follow Carthage and Nineveh, the empire of Aztec and Roman, the arts of Etruria and the palaces of Crete, and the plannings and contrivings of innumerable myriads of children, into the limbo of games exhausted ... it may be, leaving some profit, in thoughts widened, in strengthened apprehensions; it may be, leaving nothing but a memory that dies.