Smith Square; St. John's, Waterloo Road; St. John's, Red Lion Square; St. John the Divine, Kennington; St. Mary's, Haggerston; St. Mary's, Islington; St. Martin-in-the-Fields; St. Mark's, Kennington; St. Nicholas, Deptford; All Souls', Langham Place; The Church of the Ascension, Bayswater; Holy Trinity, Minories; St. George's (R.C.) Cathedral in Southwark; Our Lady of Victories (R.C.), Kennington; The Metropolitan Tabernacle and the City Temple. The last two were famous for the ministries of the famous Baptist minister, Charles Haddon Spurgeon and the rather later Congregational minister, Joseph Parker.

In this long list there are two splendid examples of Nicholas Hawksmoor, architect of St. Mary Woonoth, near the Mansion House, and these are St. Alphege, Greenwich, and St. George's-in-the-East. All Soul's, Langham Place, is one of a very large number of churches erected in the first half of the 19th century by the Commissioners for Building New Churches, and was actually designed by John Nash, who was responsible for the laying out of Regent's Park and Regent Street.

Some years ago a note on some of the buildings erected by Dr. Nicholas Barbon in the later 17th century was published in these *Transactions*. It is interesting to note how many of his buildings which had survived until 1939 have now disappeared or have been badly damaged. Essex Street Arch at the end of Essex Street, Strand, was damaged but has since been repaired; some of his houses in Bedford Row, in Red Lion Square and in the Middle Temple have also suffered severely.

It is a tragic story, very inadequately recorded here; but any effort to set down some of the historic associations which we have lost in the grim days and weeks of 1940 and 1941 is perhaps worth while. One may hope that the bulk of the havoc which London may expect has already occurred, but no one can be dogmatic as to the future; and a final effort to damage our metropolis, in revenge for our destruction of so much of German war effort, may well be anticipated.

LONDON SAGA

Arthur Bryant's *English Saga* is a brilliant survey of the last century of English life from 1840 to 1940; and, as is natural, it emphasises the importance of the metropolis as it grows and

sprawls without let or hindrance. In 1840 London had two million inhabitants and it stretched from Shadwell and Wapping to Chelsea and Battersea; and it was not long since the development of Regent's Park, Portland Place and Regent Street had set a standard for one part of London at least. Further to the south-west Pimlico had been transmogrified into Belgravia, and almost everywhere instead of Wren's red brick was "white and potentially grimy stucco."

> "Augustus at Rome was for Building renowned
> And of marble he left what of brick he had found;
> And is not our Nash, too, a very great master,
> He finds us all brick and leaves us all plaster."

London was governed by its Lord Mayor and Corporation, that is London of the sacred square mile. But the incorporation of the suburbs, the 17th century L.C.C., started by Charles I and again supported by his son, had died two centuries before; and 300 Parish Vestries, elected under 250 Acts of Parliament, exercised some show of authority outside the city boundaries, but mainly "interpreted democracy in their own jovial way by almost ceaseless entertainment at the public expense." There was little town planning, especially in the poorer area; just "monotonous agglomerations of mean streets." In these gloomy surroundings lived the human material from which Dickens and Cruikshank derived their inspirations.

With the spread of London quicker means of transport became necessary. Four hundred vehicles with the nickname "Omnibus," and 1200 cabriolets, soon shortened to cabs, helped to get people from home to office; and the *Illustrated London News* had occasion to complain of the "ruffianly conduct of omnibus conductors."

But then, as now, Shank's pony was an admirable alternative for those who lived fairly near their jobs. Then, as now, good meals were available for business men, but there was as yet none of the town catering on a gigantic scale which is so characteristic a feature to-day. Filth could be seen almost everywhere; if not in the main street, then just round the corner, and there were squalid, verminous Rookeries next to the Temple, to Westminster and to Mayfair. But, in spite of all, life proved stronger than filth, cholera and typhus, and the population increased.

The streets were often disorderly, and at night often dangerous, when a revolution in roads and safety was provided

by gas lamps and Sir Robert Peel's policemen. Here are two striking contrasts. Smithfield Market, just north of the City, was "a nasty filthy dangerous country bastille in the heart of London"; while you could still occasionally shoot snipe in Pimlico. The rich seemed to be growing more luxurious every day, and the contrasts of wealth and poverty seemed to be getting more flagrant. "Greasy, verminous, grimy, lawless London squallor" would find a grim satisfaction in watching a public execution amid "ribaldrey, coarse jokes, reckless drinking and unashamed debauchery."

Were we heading for a Republic? It certainly might well have seemed so, and Lord John Russell, speaking to Queen Victoria, voiced the popular opinion when, in reply to her query, "May a subject disobey his Sovereign?" said, "Speaking to a House of Hanover Sovereign, I suppose so." Greville, in his revealing Diaries, notes that "the people seemed inclined to hurrah no more," and William Dyott warned his contemporaries of "unpropitious times to come." It was perhaps fortunate that there were the Metropolitan Police and the Household Cavalry to keep order. For the conditions of the slums made a rising of some kind inevitable.

There were many cellar habitations in London, as elsewhere, with their "walls wet with fetid fluid," and in many streets could be found blackish-green slime pools. It is not surprising that typhus, cholera and putrid fever abounded, when we remember that in one London area there were 30 hovels housing 380 people without one privy. In an adjacent area there were 2400 sleeping in 852 beds, with anything from 3 to 8 in a single bed. It must be admitted that lack of sanitation was not confined to the slum area, for we read that constant sore throats among the footmen of Windsor Castle led to the discovery that there were 50 unemptied cesspits underneath the servants' quarters.

In spite of the Municipal Reform Act of 1835 many towns and undefined areas were without any efficient local government, and with no sanitation or common amenities. Two thousand new houses were being built in the London area each year, and the subsoil on which they were built included 17 million cubic feet of decaying residuum. Belgravia rested on the foulest sewers, which produced purulent throats, typhoid, febrile influenza, typhus and cholera; Buckingham Palace was ventilated

through the common sewer, in the Westminster Cloisters were found cesspools which needed 500 cartloads to empty them; while nearly all the streets of London were ankle-deep in muck.

> "Is it a street or kennel—foul sludge and fetid stream,
> That from a chain of mantling pools sends up a choky steam;
> Walls black with soot, and bright with grease, low doorways, entries dim,
> And out of every window, pale faces gaunt and grim."

London outside the City was governed like a village, and the conditions of the populace showed little improvement. "King Death," wrote *Punch*, "gazed at the spectres of Carbonic Acid gas, Miasma, Cholera and Malaria, who took their toll of gaunt, ragged humans amid arched sewers and slime."

The Thames was like a filthy old man dragging up dead rats from a liquid, gaseous mass of black mud and dying fish, and its shores were rotten "with guano, stable dung, decaying sprats, and top dressings from market gardens." It is not surprising that all who were suffering from the inefficiency of government should show sympathy with some of the reform movements that were on foot. "Laissez-faire had been run to death"; the "triple-guarded heritage of the English man to do what he likes with property, labour and time had shown one of its weakest spots, when a foreigner could write, "Let every man get his bucket and squirt and put the fire out himself. That is self-government." There were some signs of progress, somewhat small but indicative of movement in the right direction. Still there were many long stretches to go before London could be a tolerable place for the poor. The same visitor made this comment on the passers-by whom he met: "Faces do not laugh, lips are dumb; not a cry, not a voice is heard in the crowd; every individual seems alone; the workman does not sing; passengers travelling to and from gaze about them without curiosity, without uttering a word." It is surprising that there was not more outward disorder, when there was so much to reform. Instead, the sordid round of drink, debauchery, violence, punishment, incompetence and hideous destitution never ceased. We may sometimes wonder whether William Morris does not paint too attractive a picture of the Thames as it must have been from 1340 onwards when Chaucer was living in London. "Small and white and clear" may be too complimentary for the City of those days. But there can be

no doubt as to the condition of the Thames five hundred years later when *Punch* could write:

"Filthy river, filthy river,
Foul from London to the Nore,
What art thou but one vast gutter,
One tremendous common shore.

And beside thy sludgy waters
And beside thy reeking ooze
Christian folk inhale mephitis
Which thy bubbly bosom brews.

And from thee is brewed our porter,
Thee, thou gulley, puddle, sink,
Thou, vile cesspool, art the liquor
Whence is made the beer we drink."

Arthur Bryant has written a *Saga of London* as well as of England; and he shows that, in spite of many failures, the London of 1940 which the Luftwaffe has sporadically damaged, is a cleaner, healthier, happier, though a far larger place than the London of a century ago.

NOTES AND QUERIES

1. Future of London Squares. 2. Nineteen Centuries of London Life. 3. The Genesis of L.C.C. Plan. 4. The Shape of Things to Come. 5. John Gwynne. 6. A Chamber of Horrors. 7. The English Town Exhibition. 8. Wren Society. 9. Replanning Britain. 10. The Ministry of Planning. 11. The Georgian Group. 12. The Square Mile. 13. Holidays at Home. 14. Which London? 15. The Abbey Monuments. 16. Finds on Bombed Sites. 17. Westminster and U.S.A. 18. England's Capital. 19. Clearing the Clink. 20. Stepney and Bethnal Green. 21. Past and Present. 22. Bedford Square. 23. Lenin's London Home. 24. The Sprawl of London. 25. John Burns's Books.

1. FUTURE OF LONDON SQUARES.—Henry Shaw, M.P., Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Town and Country Planning, speaking at a meeting of the Chelsea Society, pleaded for a revival for the respect of our great English tradition in town planning. The Chelsea Society endeavours to preserve as much of old Chelsea as is possible, and to keep alive the civic spirit in a village made memorable by the career of Sir Thomas More. London Squares the speaker regarded as great contributions to its architecture, and he hoped and believed that