



THE GREAT ADVENTURE OF TO-DAY

HOW DID THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS BEGIN?

ON November 11, 1918, at eleven o'clock in the morning, the Armistice was signed which ended the Great War. After four years of deafening destruction the bugles blew 'Cease Fire,' and thus began the silence of peace, which we remember particularly for two minutes every Armistice Day. It is our duty to see that this peace lasts for ever.

'This war has been so terrible,' said the statesmen, 'that there must never be another.' Fighting is wasteful and unreasonable: dogs fight for a bone because they cannot reason that to divide it is fairer and more sensible. Men can reason and their children are taught not to fight for what they want. If savages disagree over a piece of land they fight for it, but in civilised countries all over the world the citizens have learned not to fight: they make laws, they appoint courts of justice and policemen to see that these laws are not broken, and quarrels between citizen and citizen are settled without force or bloodshed.

'Let us make a society which will give the same advantages to nation and nation,' said the statesmen. Let us decide all future international quarrels without fighting. Let us make a League of Nations which will arrange this.'

WHAT IS THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS TO-DAY?

From the first sentences in each of the Peace Treaties which ended the Great War were the promises which the nations made to help the new League. These promises are called the COVENANT of the League. The nations who signed the Covenant promised to reduce the number of guns and arms which they possessed, to join together in punishing any nation which broke its promise not to fight, to help backward countries, to see that everyone in the world worked under healthy, happy conditions, to help one another to fight disease and illness everywhere. They decided to meet once a year at Geneva in Switzerland to make plans for carrying out their promises.





THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS HAS STOPPED WARS

There are sixty-five countries in the world, and fifty-four of these have signed the Covenant and are members of the League. The meeting of men from these fifty-four countries which is held every September, is called the ASSEMBLY. White men from Europe, brown men and yellow men from Asia, and black men from Africa meet at the Assembly on equal terms to see how they may best fulfil the undertakings which their countries made when they signed the Covenant.

One meeting a year cannot carry out the world's business, but men from far countries cannot be asked to make the journey more often. So a smaller Committee is appointed to direct the work of the League throughout the year. It meets every three or four months and is called the COUNCIL. The Council does not always meet at Geneva. Sometimes it pays another country the honour of meeting in its capital. There is always a British member of the Council.

HOW DOES THE LEAGUE DO ITS WORK?

The Assembly and Council cannot do all the work of the League: they only meet from time to time. There are offices where men and women of all nations work all the year round. The big League office beside the lake at Geneva is called the PALAIS DES NATIONS, and the people who work there are called the SECRETARIAT.

In the Palais des Nations are committee rooms where experts from the various countries meet to give their advice on problems which the Assembly is helping to solve. Doctors advise the Health Committee on cures for disease, and on the prevention of its spread from country to country; soldiers and sailors advise the Armaments Commission how to save money now spent on arms for more useful purposes such as trade, schools or hospitals: financiers and business men advise about making trade and travel easier between nations.

Beside the Palais des Nations there is another large League building on the shore of the lake—the INTERNATIONAL LABOUR OFFICE. Here they plan proper light and air for the world's factories, proper hours of work and sleep for workers of all ages.

One big branch of the League is not at Geneva but at The Hague in Holland. It is the League's Law Court, THE PERMANENT COURT OF INTERNATIONAL JUSTICE, and its home is called the Peace Palace. Here disputes which in the old days meant war are now settled by law, by great judges chosen from various nations. This court's great work makes it deserve its grand name.

How much does all this cost? The answer is a million pounds a year. This *sounds* very expensive: it is really very cheap. Great Britain by herself paid out a million pounds