

Fables from the Future

(a selection from *Lidové noviny*, May 25, 1934; all may be found in Karel Čapek: *Listy z let budoucích a Bajky z let budoucích*, Jirí Opelík, Praha: Melantrich, 1990)

In the Age of Bomb Shelters

Can you believe it? People once built their houses aboveground. What primitive times those were!

Building Commissioner

From the standpoint of health, your cave is defective. It lets in air.

Science

. . . in those days they used to teach that the earth's atmosphere was composed of oxygen, hydrogen, nitrogen and rare gases.

That's terrible! Such ignorance!

Child

Mommy, what's "blue mountains"?

Memorial

What's this shaft for?

That's where we will solemnly bury an underground memorial to our Leader.

Perfect Apartment

What, no rats?

Are you kidding? Rats couldn't survive here.

Landlord

If you don't pay your rent, I'll throw you out in the sun.

Transplant

My doctor ordered a change of air. So I'm looking for a cave somewhere.

Boy

Daddy, what is "peace"?

I don't know. Don't ask stupid questions.

Differences

The best houses are made of limestone. Granite's a little cold and dark.

Bride

And we're going to have a little underground porch, where I can set out some pots of mushrooms and molds . . .

Year 2200

The greatest invention of our times! Stainless flint tools!

Year 2500

. . . he's been up to the earth's surface, and he claims you can breathe quite easily.

Maybe so, but what would you do up there?