

Steinbeck Says Stories of Blitz All Hang on Some Trivial Detail

Little Incidents Became Set in Londoners' Minds Against a Backdrop of Fire, Noise, General Horror in Ravaged City; He Cites a Few Examples

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By John Steinbeck
LONDON People who try to tell you what the blitz was like in London start with fire and explosions and then almost invariably end up with some very dry detail which crept in and set and became the symbol of the whole thing for them. Again and again this happens in conversations. It is as though the mind could not take in the terror and the noise of the bombs and the general horror and fastened on something small and comprehensible and ordinary. Every one who was in London during the blitz wants to describe it, wants to solidify, if only for himself, something of that terrible thing.

"It's the glass," says one man, "the sound in the morning of the broken glass being swept up, the vicious, fat stink of it that is nothing I remember more than anything else, that constant sound of broken glass being swept up on the pavements. My dog broke a window the other day and my wife swept up the glass and a cold shiver went over me. It was a moment before I could trace the reason for it."

One Pale Blue Evening Slipper

You are going to dine at a small restaurant. There is a table across the street from the place, a jagged, destroyed stone house. Your companion says, "On one of the nights I had an engagement to have dinner with a lady at this very place. She was to meet me here. I got here early and then a bomb hit that one. He points to the ruin. "I went out in the street. You could see plainly, the fire lighting the whole city. That front wall was spilled into the street. You could see the front of a cab sticking out from the pile of rubble. Thrown clear, right at my feet as I came out of the door, was one pale blue evening slipper. The toe of it was pointing right at me."

Another points up at a wall, the building is gone, but there are five fireplaces, one above another, straight up the wall. He points to the topmost fireplace. "This was a high explosive bomb," he says. "This is on my way to work. You know, for six months, there was a pair of long stockings hanging in front of that fireplace. They must have been pinned up. They hung there for months just as they had been put up to dry. "I was passing Hyde Park," says a man, "when a big raid came over. I went down into the gutter. Always did that when you couldn't get a shelter. I saw a great tree, one like those, jump into the air and fall on its side not so far from me—right there where that scoop is in the ground. And then a sparrow fell in the gutter right beside me. It was dead all right. Concussion kills birds easily. For some time they were new."

Desert Destiny

By Joseph Chailwick

CHAPTER X

His discovery that the Senora Maria had a secret locked in her heart filled Jim Conroy with a vague uneasiness. He came from the sickroom looking darkly intent, but he merely said to Tracy, "She is sleeping now, but she won't be right there where that scoop is in the ground. And then a sparrow fell in the gutter right beside me. It was dead all right. Concussion kills birds easily. For some time they were new."

"I'll sit by her for a little while," Tracy told him. She smiled faintly. "Don't think I'm neglecting you the moment you become my guest. It's just that he been away from her for so long."

She was anxious about the Senora, and Jim could gauge the depth of her love for the woman in the room behind him. It was an unselfish love, and Tracy was genuine. He said, "Don't worry about me. I'll go sightseeing about the Hacienda. He looked after her as she entered the room. He was beginning to like Tracy a lot, big-brother style."

Ruth Garrison was another matter. She was waiting for him in the living room downstairs, just as he knew she would be. Her dark-blue eyes had a sparkle and her full red lips looked inviting. She was beautiful, but in an arrogant way. He couldn't find warmth in her loveliness. Ruth slipped her arm through his. "I've had your bag taken to our wing of the house where the more cheerful. Tracy lives here in the old part, but the rest of us find it depressing."

The other section of the Hacienda was out of another world. The spacious rooms were lavishly comfortable. Surrounded by extravagant luxury, it was easy for the younger Garrison to forget that they were living on a vast cattle ranch—and obviously forgetfulness was what they desired. Ruth led the way into a low-ceilinged rumpus room, equipped with all sorts of devices to while away the hours of bored people. Jim sat on a sofa by well-stocked bar while she mixed cocktails.

"You don't seem at all like a cousin," Ruth told him. "I'm like you. That makes it easier for me to like you."

"You mean my appearance?" "Not entirely. You aren't like us in looks. But meant something else. There's something about you that's different from Ramon and Juan—and from me, too. Maybe it's your manner. You're sharp-looking, as if you are nobody's fool. And I think you can be tough."

"Well, aren't the Garrisons tough?" Ruth shook her head. "We've gone to seed. We're soft. Too much money; too easy a life. "So you think I'm different," he mused. "Why does that make it easier for you to like me?" "I don't know exactly. But the hard truth is, we Garrisons are so much alike we don't get along. Ramon—I mean, Dad, Juan—his nephew, and I quarrel at the drop of a hat. And there's Helene, Ramon's wife. My step-mother. We fight like bitter enemies."

"So it's a nice family battle?" "Nice is right. Then, most of all, there's our feud with Senora Maria. We all are fond of her, of course. But the Senora tries to live our lives for us. I'm not giving you a very attractive picture of your relatives, Phil."

Canadians Tell Strange Stories

LONDON, July 8 — Sgt. J. P. Hind of Vancouver brought back the strangest story of the heavy raid on Cologne last night. He was one of the group of Canadians which took part in the assault.

He told of charging through an electrical storm in sub-zero weather, of shaking off a direct hit from enemy ground batteries; of missing a head on collision with a Lancaster by 20 feet and of making the homeward flight with navigational instruments not working.

FO. D. A. MacDonald of Fock Glen, Sask., was making his second Cologne trip and was more pleased at getting home first than at driving off an attacking fighter. The last time he was ribbed plenty for coming home last.

For Pte. Sgt. Johnnie Merchant of Sturgeon Falls, Ont., the trip was further proof that 13 is his lucky number. It was his 13th operation overseas, he was graduated from two Canadian training schools on the 13th day of the month and he made his first operational flight on the 13th.

It was also the 13th trip of his mates, Pte. Sgt. Wilbur McCombs of Port Medway, N.S., and Sgt. Frank Finlay of Verdun, Que.

CANNIBAL DADDY

The black bass male guards a nest of eggs until they hatch and then eats some of the young.

"I remember the eyes of people going to work in the morning," a man says. "There was a quality of tiredness in those eyes I haven't forgotten. It was beyond a tiredness you can imagine—a desperate kind of weariness that never expected to be rested. The eyes of the people seemed to be deep, deep in their heads, and their voices seemed to come from a long distance. And I remember during a raid seeing a blind man standing on the curb, tapping with his stick and waiting for some one to take him across through the traffic. There wasn't any traffic, and the air was full of fire, but he stood there and tapped until some one came along and took him to a shelter."

In all of the little stories it is the ordinary, the commonplace thing or incident against the background of the bombing that leaves the indelible picture. "An old woman was selling little miserable sprays of sweet lavender. The city was rocking under the bombs and the light of burning buildings made it like day. The air was just one big fat blasting roar. And in one little hole in the rear tier voice got in—a soft voice: 'Lavender!' she said. 'Buy lavender for luck.'"

The bombing itself grows vague and dreamlike. The little pictures remain as sharp as they were when they were new.

Jim Conroy had to wince when she called him Paul. He had tricked Tracy into believing him to be Phil, in the hope that through her he could find the real Phil Garrison. Then he had duped the Senora in the hope of secretly righting matters with Tracy. Now he could not unmask himself without bringing down more trouble than he would be able to handle.

He questioned, "And Tracy? How does she fit into the feud?" "Oh, Tracy is on the Senora's side. But we all like Tracy," Ruth's lips curled in an unamused smile. "As who doesn't," she added. She poured the cocktails, handed a glass to Jim, and lifted her glass. "Here's looking at you, cousin. Her dark eyes flicked over him. "And wishing you weren't a cousin."

Jim said, "Here's to you," and put the drink to his lips. He decided that Ruth was bored with life at Garrison Ranch, and because she was bored she was most certain to be a flirt.

The roar of a plane sounded against the still desert night. Jim could tell by the sound that it was circling for a landing. Ruth said, "That's Cousin Juan, back from flying. Dr. Jessup to town. He's back early, so he couldn't have found any lonely girls in Lanassa. I call him Don Juan."

Jim followed Ruth out on a patio in time to see the plane coming in on a field which a minute later had lighted up with a big floodlight. Jim disapproved of the landing gear make, a minute later he disapproved of Juan himself—because Juan reminded him so much of Phil Garrison. Juan tumbled from the silver low-winged sport plane, a smiling boyish man in his middle twenties. He smiled because of pleasure from flying, and then seeing the stranger with Ruth Garrison his face seemed to frost over.

Ruth said, her voice a trifle mocking. "This is Phil Garrison, Juan. They brought him back alive. He doesn't look like a Garrison, so I've told him we'll like him a lot."

Juan held out his hand to Jim Conroy. "Welcome to Garrison Ranch, Phil. But watch your step. Our welcome usually carries with it a stab in the back."

They laughed together, and Jim Conroy tried to reserve judgment on Juan Garrison. It was unfair to dislike him merely because he was like his cousin Philip.

When they returned to the rumpus room Ramon was there with a strikingly attractive, auburn-haired woman and a colorless younger man, who was mixing a drink at the bar. Ramon and the woman—Jim guessed her to be about thirty—sat together on a white leather sofa. Ruth took Jim Conroy forward to introduce him. The young man's name was Pete Donohue. He said, "Hiya, pal. The auburn-haired girl was Helene, Ramon's wife."

She looked up at Jim Conroy. There was golden flecks in her eyes—and something more. Surprise. Slowly, Helen Garrison smiled at him. And said, "No introduction is necessary—Phil Garrison and I have already met." She looked at her husband. "Don't you remember my telling you, Ramon?"

Her glance came back to Jim Conroy again, laughing at him—calling him "Fraud!" He felt jollily alarmed.

(To be Continued)

BEEES WAR - WORKERS

Honeybees contribute to the war effort by producing beeswax for a coating for shells and airplanes.

In Memoriam

FREDERICK JOSEPH WEBSTER The death of Frederick Joseph Webster of Dunstaffnage occurred on June 23rd, 1943. Although the late Mr. Webster had not been in the best of health for the past few months, yet he was very active and his death came as a distinct shock to his family and friends.

Seven years ago he moved to Dunstaffnage from Ten Mile House and was a resident of Dunstaffnage for many years. He was born on August 17th, 1866 and was married on Oct. 3rd, 1893 to Minnie Elizabeth Lavers of Georgetown who remains to mourn her loss. The late Mr. Webster lived a very quiet and kindly life. He had many friends in the community, and he will be greatly missed in his home and in the Church. He was a member of the United Church.

Funeral services were conducted at the home by his pastor, Rev. J. A. Nicholson and at Central United Church where Rev. Mr. Nicholson was assisted by Rev. Mr. Baak of Marshfield.

Favorite hymns of the deceased were sung and the male quartette of Central Church sang the familiar hymn, "Softly and Tenderly Jesus is Calling." The minister pronounced a message of comfort and hope to the congregation and to the family. Floral tributes were many, testifying to the esteem in which he was held by all in the community.

Interment was in the People's Cemetery. Besides his widow the following sons survive: John Franklin, Herbert Lee, George Henry, Lemuel Hicks. Another son, William Roy was killed in the last war. Surviving also is a brother, Henry of Mansfield, Ont., and a sister, Emily Mrs. Wm. Kelzer, York.

The pall bearers were Messrs. Matt Wood, Almon Boswell, John C. Stewart, Charles Ellis, W. J. Jenkins, C. W. Robertson. (Patrol picture copy.)

Prime Minister King Reviews World Situation

OTTAWA, July 9 — (CP) — The bonds of wartime association linking the United Nations must be developed into a "working model of co-operation" for even greater use in the years of peace, Prime Minister Mackenzie King told the House of Commons today.

The Prime Minister, reviewing the world situation as debate on External Affairs Department estimates opened, said the time is approaching when, "even before victory is won," the concept of the United Nations will have to be embodied in some form of international organization.

Mr. King spoke on the eve of portentous developments in the war, which were hinted at in his address. He marked the changing tide in favor of the United Nations, and observed that the new German offensive on the Russian front, in association with intensified Allied bombings of European targets, "marks a place of new beginning in the way in Europe."

He spoke of Canada's growing stature in the company of nations and of her world-wide diplomatic representation.

He spoke of the difficult problem of refugees and the international action which must be taken to deal with it. Canada was prepared to participate in such action, but he could not say how many refugees, in addition to those already here, might be accepted in Canada for the duration.

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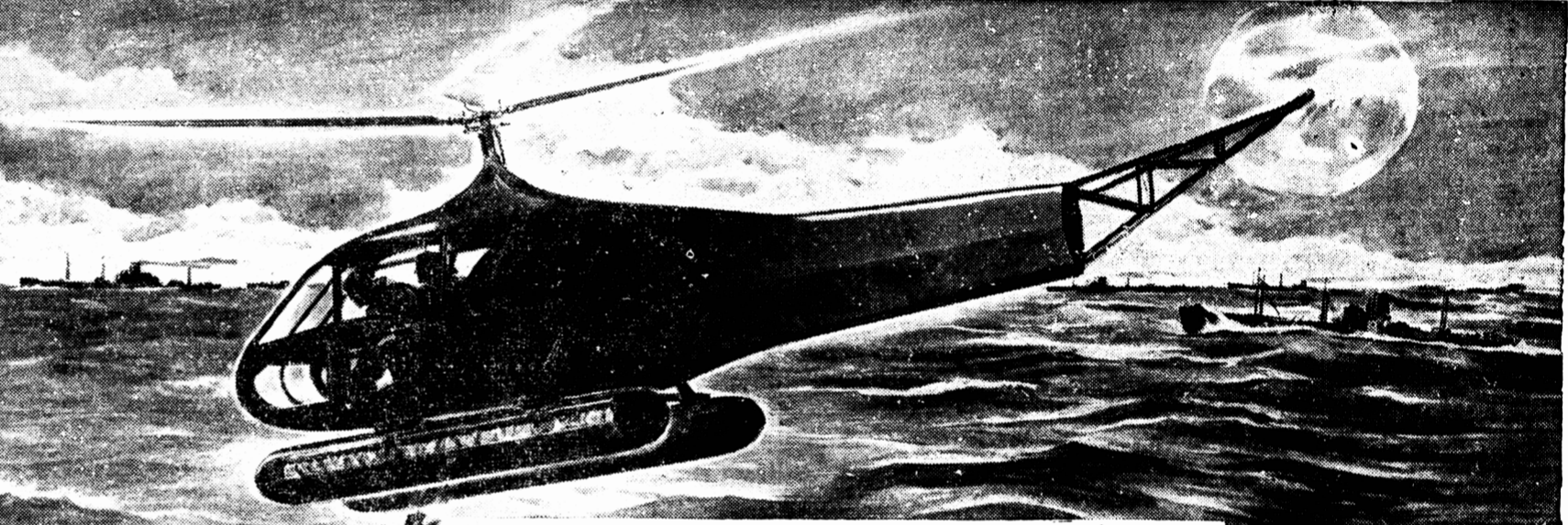
Tells Of Plan To Invade Eire

DUBLIN, July 9 — (AP) — The story of plan, presumably German, to invade Eire in 1940 was told to the Dail today by Justice Minister Gerry Bolland in a scorching criticism of the outlawed Irish Republican Army.

"In 1940, when things were looking very bad," he said, "it became known that a parachutist had landed here. He was not captured himself, but in his paraphernalia we found plans which, as far as we could see, were plans for invasion of this country. "It took up to 18 months to capture that man, and during that time, he was harbored by I.R.A. people. Bolland said a second parachutist landed, and was captured almost immediately, but asserted: "He escaped and it took us three months to get him, and during that time, he was in touch with the same group of people. Is that an indication of the wish of the people to involve this country in war?"

CHILD DROWNED

ST. GEORGE, N. B., July 7 — (CP) — Apparently stricken with a cramp while swimming in the Masaguanadivic River today, Clarence Stewart, 9, was drowned near his home at Elmcroft. He was a son of Mr. and Mrs. Herman Stewart. Italian Somaliland is the source of half the world's supply of incense.



Industry is helping win the war... industry must help build a peacetime world. Fighting now is winning the war... Thinking now can win the peace. Today millions of service men are fighting for "a better world to live in." Other millions of individuals are performing miracles of production through the united efforts of management and wage earners—all of one mind—for "unconditional surrender." Tomorrow these millions will be permanently employed in peacetime pursuits provided they—all of one mind—dictate sound peace terms calling for sustained prosperity. If the world is to prosper, there must be the same cohesion among the United Nations during the transition period and thereafter as now exists during the world-wide conflict. Internal stability here and in other nations can be gained and maintained only by sustained industrial production and by economic interdependence. The people of this country, in common with the people of other lands, will prosper materially and spiritually when this war is ended but only if insistence, world-wide in scope, is now voiced for A JUST AND DURABLE PEACE. THE INTERNATIONAL NICKEL COMPANY OF CANADA, LIMITED 25 King Street West, Toronto

Today Helicopters shadow subs... Tomorrow They'll land on your lawn. Illustration of a helicopter and a submarine.