

Steinbeck Sees Yanks Arrive At an English Railroad Station

Watches Tired Men Pile Out of Jammed Train; Tells Story of a Witting 'Wolf' and a Cheerful Red Cross Girl at Coffee-Doughnut Stand

By John Steinbeck
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LONDON.—The little gray English station is set in the green, rolling fields where the grass is being cut up, where the mowing machine has gone, the cut grass is wilting and the red poppies are wilting. The scabbled tracks go by the front of the station and the siding runs in back of the station. At 4:03 the American commandant and four officers drive to the station. A British officer comes out of the signal man's room. "The train will be four minutes late," he says. All of the officers look at their watches. On the main line a through train roars through at about seventy miles an hour. The young lieutenant says, "I thought British trains were slow."

"They used to hold the world's record for speed," the commandant says.

On another track a freight train moves rapidly through the station. The fat cars are loaded with tanks, a solid line of tanks the whole length of the train. A hundred yards from the station a clubmobile is parked, a bus converted into a kitchen for the cooking of doughnuts and coffee and run by two Red Cross girls. Their coffee urns are steaming and great baskets of doughnuts are accumulating. They lift out the doughnuts and load the baskets with them. On top of the bus is a loud speaker connected with a phonograph.

The commandant says, "That big girl is a great one. We got 500 men at 6 o'clock this morning. They were pretty tired. That big girl put on a record and did a Highland fling to some boy music. She's a funny one. The smell of the cooking doughnuts comes down the breeze."

The British officer comes out of the signal man's house again. "It will be here in three minutes," he says. And again the officers look at their watches. The little train comes around the bend. It passes the station, puts its tail into the "Y" and backs into the siding. The compartments are solid with helmeted men and their equipment is piled in front of them to the knees. Their faces are almost as brown as their uniforms. They are sitting with their heads on and they are tired. It is a hot afternoon, one of the few of the summer.

Troops Pile Out Wearily

As the train pulls in the phonograph in the clubmobile howls, "Mr. Five by Five." The sound carries a long way. The soldiers turn their heads slowly and look toward the music. Now a sergeant runs down the side of the compartment and opens the doors of the compartment and the men do not move. A stout captain, with a very black moustache, shouts, "All right men, pile out of it. And the little compartments are large the men. They stand helplessly on the platform. Their shoulders slump with sweat under the heat. Straps and their backs wet under the sun. They carry their barracks bags too and the things which won't go in a gaiter here and a mackintosh, a pair of shoes. One man has a fox terrier on a string and it stands beside him panting with excitement.

The stout, worried captain gets the men lined up and marches them to the clubmobile. Swing music is still throbbing from the loudspeaker on the roof. A simple file of men passes a little counter on a side of the truck and each one gets a big cup of coffee and two doughnuts. Then they break their ranks and stand about drinking the coffee and looking lost. The big girl comes out of the truck and works on them.

"Where you from, boy?"

"Michigan."

"Why we're neighbors. I come from Illinois."

A local wolf, a slicker at home, a dark boy with sideburns, says wearily and just from a sense of duty:

"What you doing tonight, baby?"

"What are you doing?" the big girl asks, and the men about laugh loudly as if it were very funny.

The tired wolf puts an arm about her waist. "Plant me," he says, and the two do a grotesque shag, a kind of slow-motion jitterbug.

Recognizes Former Film Star

A blond boy with a sunburned nose and red cheeks shyly approaches a lieutenant. He has his coffee in one hand and his two doughnuts in the other. Too late he realizes that he is in trouble. He balances the two doughnuts on the edge of his cup and they promptly fall into the coffee. He salutes and the lieutenant returns it gravely and says, "Excuse me, sir," the boy says. "Aren't you a movie star?"

"I used to be," the lieutenant says. "I used to be."



CLEANING UP FOR THE ACTION TO COME
On board one of the troopships carrying Canadians into the Mediterranean for the assault on Sicily, one of the soldiers does a spot of housework. (Canadian Army Photo)

Desert Destiny

By Joseph Chadwick

CHAPTER XXIV

"I knew I'd seen you in pictures," the boy says. "I'll write home about seeing you here. Say," he says with excitement, "would you write your name here on something and I could send it home and then they'd have to believe me and they could keep it for me."

"Sure," the lieutenant says, and he signs his name with a pencil on the back of a grubby envelope from the soldier's pocket. The boy regards it for a moment.

"What're you doing here?" he asks.

"Why, I'm just in the Army, the same as you are."

"Oh, yes, of course. Yes, I see you are. Well, they'll have to believe I saw you now."

"How long have you been over?" the lieutenant asks.

"Were not supposed to say anything about stuff like that."

"Sure, I forgot. Good boy to remember it."

The doughnuts in the coffee have become semi-liquid by now. The boy drinks the coffee and the doughnuts without noticing.

"Do you suppose we'll ever be let to go to London?" he asks.

"Sure. When you get a pass."

"Well, that's a long way off, isn't it?"

"Not so far. You could make it on a forty-eight-hour pass easy and have lots of time."

"Well, are there lots of girls there?"

"Sure. Plenty."

"And will they, will they talk to you?"

"Sure they will."

"Hot damn!" says the boy. "Oh, hot damn!" the stout, worried captain shouts, and "fall in!" the sergeants shout. The blond boy gets in line, still holding his cup. The big girl yells at him over the music: "Hey, senny, we need those cups!" She rushes fiercely up to him and grabs the cup and then quickly bats it over the side of the truck. The men on both sides of him laugh loudly, as if it were very funny.

Canned Fruits And Vegetables Are Frozen

OTTAWA, July 26.—(CP)—The Prices Board today halted movement of canned fruit and vegetable products in warehouses to retailers' shelves as a move to assure adequate supplies for next winter.

The order, effective immediately, was announced by K.W. Taylor, Prices Board Food Co-ordinator, and affects all canned fruit and vegetable products, except canned soups, baby foods, jams, jellies and marmalades. Frozen and dehydrated products are not affected.

"The action takes the form of withholding from the retail market the current stock of canned vegetables and fruit and the remainder of the 1942 pack now in the hands of canners and wholesalers, thus conserving stocks during the period when supplies of fresh products are readily obtainable," the Board said in its announcement.

"In putting this plan into operation the Board is merely doing on a national scale what thirty households do in holding their home canned products on the shelf or in the cellar while fresh fruits or in season," Mr. Taylor said.

"The foods administration has been well aware of, and seriously concerned with, the situation with respect to abnormally high prices on fresh fruits and vegetables this spring," Mr. Taylor continued.

"It has thoroughly canvassed the possibility of a ceiling arrangement for these fresh products but, with the best possible advice available, has been unable to evolve any practical plan towards this end."

"The advice we are receiving from various market areas in Canada are to the effect that fresh vegetables, particularly are beginning to move to market in increasingly heavy volume and already are becoming available to consumers at lower prices. This will become more apparent within the next week or two in most areas in Canada."

WHEAT FOR U.S.

Although the 795,000 bushels of Canadian wheat of the quota allotted by the United States to Canada for the twelve-month period beginning May 29, 1943, has now been filled, that fact does not affect imports from Canada by the U.S. War Food Administrator or any other person or agency designated by President Roosevelt.

Tracy was still dancing with Pete when she saw Ruth rise, pull Jim up from the sofa and lead him outdoors. Again, she felt a pang of jealousy. Out there in the moonlight, would Jim be Ruth again?

Pete muttered, "See what I mean? Do you blame me for hating that woman? Since he came, Ruth has not had eyes for any one else." His tone was bitter.

Tracy said suddenly, "I'm tired of dancing. Let's sit down."

A few minutes later, Ramon and Helene came into the room. Then, Juan drifted in.

"What's this I hear about Phil Garrison dodging a bullet this morning?" Juan asked.

"That's right," Pete told him, then made a wry face. "And I'm the suspect in the attempted murder."

"Nonsense!" Tracy said quickly. "Jim doesn't suspect you any more. He realizes he made a mistake this morning."

Juan frowned. "What's going on, anyway? That's the second escape he's had from being shot. It's beginning to look planned. Who's gunning for him? Heaven knows, I myself don't want him here and am eager to get him away, but killing a man is something else again!"

His dark eyes fixed suspiciously on his uncle.

Ramon, seeing that look, leaped up. "Look here, if you're accusing me—"

"Oh, don't look so shocked and self-righteous," Juan broke in. "Maybe you wouldn't use a gun yourself, but you're not above paying Jose to do it!"

Ramon took a quick step forward and struck his nephew across the face with the flat of his hand. Juan recoiled back then surged forward with clenched fists.

Tracy, jumping up, caught hold of his arm. "Stop, Juan—oh, stop!"

He was trembling violently, but he headed her off. He stood uncertainly for an instant then strode across the room to the bar and poured himself a drink.

"You can't blame Ramon for striking you after what you said," Tracy told him. "I'm sure you didn't really mean it. Why don't you apologize?"

Juan shrugged. "Okay—maybe I was a little hot-headed. Sorry."

Ramon slowly sank back into his chair. There was a moment of awkward silence.

Then, he said, "We've got to send this Phil Garrison away. If Jose should kill him, the blame would be put on us, because it's known we don't want him here." He turned to Tracy accusingly. "You brought him here—it's up to you to make him leave."

She nodded unhappily. "I know, but I can't make him leave. Only the Senora can do that, and she won't. She wants him to stay despite what's happened—she says no Garrison should run away from danger."

"All this wouldn't have happened if you'd listened to us and refused to bring him here in the first place," Juan grumbled. "I don't see why you do. After all, it's as much to your interest as to ours not to let this outsider in on us. Where will you be if the Senora is won over by him and decide to headquarter the ranch to him? You depend on it as much as we do. It's your home and you've got a stake in it—or expect to have when the Senora dies. If Phil Garrison gets the inside track, she's very likely to give all the rest of us the short end of the stick."

Tracy gave Juan a cold look.

"Thanks for not begrudging me my pleasure," she said sarcastically. "But what part of the ranch will any of us have if the ranch and Ramon and Ruth have your way?"

"You want it sold," Ramon put in. "The Senora is too old to know what is best, as her only living son, should decide the matter. It should be acknowledged as the head of this family. If Phil Garrison is outside, as I mean say, it should be put in charge here, it would be grossly unfair. And I mean to fight against it."

With that, he rose and stalked out.

After he was gone, silence settled over the room. Juan poured himself another drink. Helene sat staring into space. Pete seated himself at a card table and began playing solitaire.

Tracy moved restlessly about. She was wondering whether she should tell Ramon and Juan that their worries were groundless—that the man they thought to be Phil Garrison was only a stranger. But no—they might go straight to the Senora with the truth and thus spoil her happiness. Tracy could not bear to let that happen. Best to let things ride for the brief while that Jim would be here. Besides, Ramon and Juan were so callous and calculating that it gave her a certain satisfaction to see them having been sent to Greek War Relief Fund Campaign Headquarters.

Her thoughts were interrupted by a knock at the door. She led to the patio. Answering the knock, she found Clint Hanlon outside. He had changed from his trail-dusty clothes to a white linen suit.

He smiled at her and said, "I was wondering if you would come out for a walk with me. Tracy, I'd like to have a talk with you."

"Of course, Clint."

They walked out through the patio and beyond. Clint didn't speak at once.

Finally, he said hesitantly, "I'm not much of a man for talk, and I don't know just how to say what I want to say. But for one thing, I want you to know that I don't expect to be just a ranch manager always. I mean that some day—maybe some day soon—I hope to have a place of my own. Does that—uh—interest you, Tracy?"

"Interest me?" she said uneasily. "What do you mean, Clint?"

He halted and faced her. "Well—uh—when a girl gets married, she usually wants a man who'll do things, doesn't she? I just want you to know that I've got ambitions and expect to fulfill them. When do you want the sort of girl I'd want for a wife?"

Tracy was now keenly embarrassed. "Clint, are you trying to tell me that you're in love with me?"

He looked away, then back. "I'm asking you to marry me, Tracy. Not at once—not in a hurry—but when I can give you all I want to give you. You needn't decide on the moment. Give me your answer after you've considered a while."

She couldn't speak. She merely nodded jerkily, wondering whether any girl had ever had so unromantic a proposal.



The Home Guard

It takes a lot of people, in a lot of places to "hold the line." It takes generals and scientists, statesmen and soldiers, sailors and fliers, and all their assisting forces on land and sea and in the air. And it also takes Johnny and his dog.

You see, after all Johnny and his dog and all they stand for are the reason why of Dieppe and Tunisia, Sicily, Europe and the far flung islands of the sea. Johnny's job is to keep strong and happy on the home front and to learn today's lessons so well that each tomorrow will grow progressively brighter for Canada...and all the world.

It takes a lot of people to keep Johnny going, too. Among them it takes the retail stores of Canada to clothe him and feed him and his friends and relations who must serve at home instead of in the front lines, and so on right down the line.

And so, the BOYS' SHOP at Moore & McLeod Limited brings to you all this message of Johnny and his dog.

RETAILERS for VICTORY

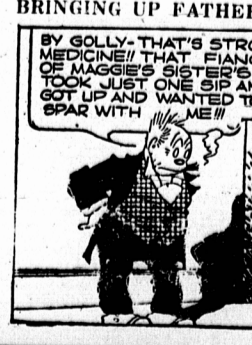
MOORE & McLEOD Limited

CHARLOTTETOWN

Prince Edward Island

Get everyone in your family to buy an extra dollar's worth of War Stamps during July.

BRINGING UP FATHER



By George McManis

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hostess. The singing of the National Anthem closed the meeting.

CRANK CASE OIL

Drained crank case oil is not a good lubricant for farm machines.