



CHAPTER IX

Cherry Pycroft, member of the Waafs, hurried to London to the apartment of her friend, Denise, who had married the man she loved. On arriving she learns that Denise no longer loves Simon, and that she is leaving that night to avoid meeting him on his return from a trip to America. Cherry admits she has been in love with Simon. Denise asks her to stay and greet her husband with the bad news. Simon arrives but Cherry withholds the news. Learning that the train to Bristol had crashed—the train that Denise had taken—Simon and Cherry drive there, identify Denise's charred suitcase, and assume a badly burned body is hers. Months later Simon and Cherry are married, but Cherry's happiness is spoiled at finding Denise's engagement ring in a drawer proving to Cherry that Denise is still alive. Cherry finally shows Simon the ring and tells him all the facts. He is very bitter about it and they separate. Cherry gets ready to have dinner with John Hartrap, who has promised to help her.

John Hartrap took one swift look at her when they met, and said, "Are you the same girl I met at the Hampdens?"

"This is me in my Sunday best."

"I see. I begin to recognize you now."

It was fun. She was Cherry Pycroft, A.C.W.2, out for an evening. Cherry London really had no one down on the station ever remembered the "London."

This evening she was determined to enjoy herself and for once she was successful. When they returned to the airplane he stopped the car some distance from the main gate. "It was a wonderful evening," she said a trifle wistfully. "Thank you, John for taking me."

His face in the pale moonlight seemed unhappy despite the swift smile he gave her. "Thank you for coming. And I've told you—you're not to fret. When do this again the next time you are free. See you in a day or two."

He drove away and she followed. The girls were chatting in the front room as she pushed open the door of her billet. She slipped quietly upstairs. A moment later Valerie joined her. "I thought I heard you come in just now. I've been waiting for you. Simon's been here, Cherry."

Cherry swung around from the dressing table. Her heart dropped. "Oh, Valerie! Darling, when did he come? What did he say?"

"I didn't see him. I've been over to Aunt Alice's. Blake was the only one who was here. I gathered he called and asked for you. Blake said he seemed awfully sick when she told him you had gone off duty. He left word that he particularly wanted to see you, as tomorrow he's leaving London."

Cherry felt her heart turn over. "Oh, Valerie, I wouldn't have had this to happen for anything. Where is Blake? I must find out just what he said."

Blake was downstairs drinking tea. She looked around with interest as Cherry burst into the room. "Hello, Pycroft," said Blake. "You've had a visitor."

"Valerie just told me." She was keeping herself in hand with difficulty. She wanted to clutch Blake by the shoulders, to ask her fifty questions all at once. "How did he look Blake? Do you—do you think after all he still loves me?" As if Blake could answer that! Simon didn't wear his heart on his sleeve, and she must not either.

She said calmly, "What time did he come, Blake?"

"Around half past six. Just in time to take you out to dinner."

"Oh, why wasn't I here? Cherry asked herself passionately. Why, when every other night of the week she was either here in her billet, or somewhere else near at hand, had he chosen to call this evening just when she was off duty? Doubtless he had worked it all out, fortnight by fortnight, and realized that this evening she'd be free. He hadn't bargained on her dining with another man. If only he had written saying he was coming! If only to find out!"

"Did he ask where I was?"

Blake chuckled. "Not in so many words. He asked what time you'd go out and if I had any idea when you'd be likely to come back."

"What did you say?"

"Dear, don't worry. I was very discreet."

Cherry flushed. There were times when she hated Blake. "I'm not worrying. I just wanted to know, that's all."

"As it happens I told him nothing. I didn't know till Grigg told me after he had gone that you were off on the tangle. Have a good time?"

"Yes, thanks, Blake. Valerie said Simon left a message."

"So he did. I was forgetting I say, Grigg, any more tea in the pot?"

"Plenty. Want some, Pycroft?"

"No, thank you. What was the message, Blake?"

But Blake was more interested in her tea. "That's terribly strong, Grigg. Isn't there any more hot water?"

way and out through the main gate. A passing car picked her up and gave her a lift to the train. She wasn't at all certain of finding Simon. He might not be at his club. Maybe she should have telephoned. But suppose she reached him by telephone and he stalled her off? Suppose he'd changed his mind again lately—coming about wanting to see her?"

She wished the train would go more quickly. But it was a Sunday; no nice fast expresses this morning. From the London station she took a cab to Simon's club, sitting forward on the edge of the seat all the way. Soon, very soon now—

It was a tall imposing looking building. One room was set aside for women. Here she waited while a page called Mr. Lindon. She felt almost sick with anxiety.

Any moment now he would be walking toward her. Should she run to meet him? No, not here! She would have to say coolly, "Hello, Simon." Oh God let it be all right. Let everything that is separating us be cleared away. Then she heard him speak.

"Why, Cherry?"

"Simon?"

"What are you doing here?"

"I—I wanted to see you. I was so sorry I missed you last evening. Blake said you were leaving London this afternoon."

"I am. I'm going to Scotland. Actually my time's been advanced a little and I find I'm catching the one o'clock."

"Are you going for long?"

"I don't quite know. Official business is always a little hush-hush, you know."

"Yes, I understand."

He asked her if she'd like something, some coffee perhaps.

"No, thank you, Simon. I—I am not disturbing you, am I? Not keeping you from anything important?"

Absurd to say that to one's own husband. But all wasn't well between them. Simon was a stranger, cold, polite. Oh, if he felt like this toward her why had he come down to see her last evening? She said desperately, "When I heard you'd come to see me, Simon, I hoped—I hoped—"

The words choked her. Her throat felt dry and parched. She plunged on. "I hoped perhaps everything would be all right again, that perhaps something had happened to make you feel differently about me."

"I've always felt the same about you, Cherry. I told you that the last time we met. Actually I have found out something. That was why I came down to see you last evening."

"Oh, Simon, what is it? Tell me quickly. Simon, what is it?" she begged as he didn't immediately answer.

(To Be Continued)

Corporal Bus Gates Writes About London

Mrs. Rupert Camp has received the following letter from her brother, Corporal Bus Gates telling of his trip to London.

OUR TRIP TO LONDON

If you have never prayed before now is the time to get on your knees and thank the good Lord that you are an American living in AMERICA the home of the free because unless you yourself could see the ruins of what would not believe what I am going to tell you. We arrived in London before noon in a railroad station that was just tattered and ruined by the destruction of the Flying bombers of our enemy Germany; but with it all you see people coming and going, from all walks of life, the rich and the poor the women and men in service from all over the world. It truly can be written that the great city of London is the crossroads of the world. With few exceptions you can find people serving their country's, the whites the yellows and the blacks, war has no line between races when we all are fighting for the same cause and that is our freedom and our way of living. Leaving the station on the subway you will find bunks and beds there of people who work in the day and spend their nights sleeping underground. It is hard to believe unless you can see it with your own eyes people making their homes beneath the surface of the city. Arrived at Piccadilly Circus which is the heart of London, to look at the people moving around and taxis running and the buses crowded one would never believe that in this great city lives were lost and buildings that were once history destroyed, not just one but thousands of beautiful buildings. Again with the rush and rumble of the crowd you can well picture London as once a great city and truly the crossroads of the world. Boarding a taxi of old vintage driven by a man who for years had seen London grow into the greatest city of them all, we went to the American Red Cross Center, the Mostyn Club, here with hundreds of other soldiers some from the farms some from industry and others from business serving our country as one great army we got accommodations and believe

it or not the first time I have slept between sheets since I left the United States. After washing up and having a bite to eat, we again hailed a cab to have a look at the great city of London. The driver of the taxi though old was a great help in showing us around and explaining to us all the wonders the city had to offer. Driving through Hyde Park which has not lost its beauty with all the terrible destruction which the city has suffered you find American troops drilling on the lawn. In another part you find a friendly game of Soccer which is called football over here or driving along you will see a woman pushing a baby through the park. On leaving the park you will see the Beautiful Palace of the Duke of Morister a stately old place which is still a landmark but this building too has suffered the Blitz as it is called over here. You find the home of the Duke of Wellington and the home of Queen Victoria well preserved but those tall marks of just a few months ago will tell you that these places too had their taste of "Jerry" or the German bombs. Driving along a beautiful parkway with rows of stately old mansions which before the war were occupied by the Nobility of England are standing empty leaving the elements take their course, of these many are in ruins, when the blitz started it did not know the rich or the poor. At the center of the park one will see the most beautiful place in London, namely Buckingham Palace the home of the King and Queen of England. It is a massive place with a high iron fence and mounted guards all around. Here you will see people from all walks of life taking pictures and looking in the hopes of getting one glance of the king. Inside the gate was a carriage with a beautiful horse going toward the main entrance bringing back the memories of pictures we saw years ago of this beautiful place. Just a short distance from this beautiful place you see Westminster Abbey, buried there are Royalty and Nobility of England, this beautiful edifice known throughout the world is beyond description in many ways. We were fortunate enough to go through this beautiful place which still stands unscathed through all its bombings suffered by this great city. Once inside you stand there in amazement at this wonderful place of worship. Kneeling there are people praying and by their dress you can tell they come from all walks of life, maybe they are thanking the good Lord for doing them a great favor or maybe they are praying for their loved ones who are far away in the service like we ourselves are at this very moment. Wandering around this great place you find names of many famous people many of which have made history and who were responsible for the development of our own great land, America. You could write pages about this one place and spend days looking around this masterpiece of art and still would not see it all. The altars are massive and covered with gold. The Abbey itself is layed out in the shape of a cross, and covers about two city blocks, it is truly one of the many wonders of the world, if only time had permitted much could have been written about this famous Abbey. Just beyond is the great Queen Ann Palace, another landmark of this once great city, with its beautiful lawns and trees it is really a stately building of days gone by. Driving along this great parkway you see the great business house and home of the late John D. Rockefeller, to us Americans the man who handed out the shiny dimes. Leaving this parkway you see the House of Parliament, truly a great place and one to be remembered always. Here the great country of England is ruled and governed, this building is along the great Thames river, the one river that runs through London, you see destruction all around but this building has yet to get any of the blitz. This building like our own state buildings in Washington is well guarded by the military police. Just across the street from the House of Parliament is the famous Saint Margaret's Church; this beautiful building was not as fortunate as the House of Parliament because it has suffered the blitz like most other buildings in London. The rear of this church is all crumbled in but is being rebuilt. Drifting along the Thames river you see the Great House of Lords, another governing body of England; this is massive but nothing to compare with the House of Parliament. Just looking at these buildings you can see they have been standing for hundreds of years, but are well preserved. Beyond this point and driving toward the heart of the city you see famous Ten Downing Street. I am sure you will remember this as the great place of Prime Minister Chamberlain and a place that will never be forgotten by the people of England because here the great war that is now raging was declared. Just off Downing Street is the War Office, this building is of more modern design a long with this you will find the Foreign Office, of which two buildings the War Office is the more massive but as mentioned before these buildings had their taste of the once famous blitz. Traveling past these buildings, on your left you hear the striking of a great clock and looking around you see the Big Ben clock known the world over. Moving along to Trafalva Square,

you find the famous monument to the soldiers and heroes of the last war. This resembles the tomb of the Unknown Soldier in our own Washington, D.C. On one side of this famous square you see National Art Gallery, if time had permitted I am sure this would be one place worth spending some time, but since our time was limited we pass on to Nelson's Corner, this again is a famous landmark marking the place of burial of Lord Nelson, the famous Naval Officer of days gone by. While traveling about this great town you see in all directions barrage balloons protecting the city from enemy aircraft. Moving along from Nelson's Corner you come to Saint James Palace, this stately mansion stands in ruins with only the four walls standing. This was truly a place of art. As you leave Saint James Palace you note you go to Pall Mall, the Business District of London, this section which covers about four square miles lies in desolation. Like our great Wall Street of New York this famous place of great business houses tell you at a quick glance that war is hell at its best and that Germany must some day be made to pay for these famous losses. Driving along the streets in this section you can look for blocks and see the wall just standing there bringing memories of the Great City of London. The few buildings that are still standing are doing business as in the past, the brave people of London still carry on and, with it all are always cheerful and willing to give information to those that are looking for help. We then crossed the famous Waterloo bridge, with its famous steeple and draw bridge over the busy Thames river. One can see boats taking goods aboard to be delivered to fighting men all over the world. Once across this famous bridge you see a large church standing there but on driving closer you see that Jerry has been there and has left just your bare walls standing. To remember that once on that spot stood a place of worship, going back over the famous river this time we are on the Great London Bridge which you will remember as a child playing the game London Bridge is falling down, well I remember those days years ago and now I had the pleasure to cross this bridge which will always live in my memories. If at any time you visit London you will find many famous churches and among them will be Saint Paul's Cathedral another stately edifice that still stands intact and leaves London the great city that it really is. Just to the rear of this great Cathedral you find Scotland Yard, this place made famous by novels and stories of the days gone by, it is still in use and does remind one of all that has been written about it. Driving along among these ruins you pass by the world famous British Broadcasting Company called

the BBC by all the people of London and England. I am sure you have heard this over your radio back home many times. This building stands alone among the ruins, being of modern design and well protected it looks quiet to see just one building standing among all these ruins. This too has its own history, in 1940 burning shells dropped by Jerry's Driving across town you find the Royal Academy of Music built years and years ago as a tribute to famous lovers of music. Another stately building you find just across the street from the Academy is the Bank of England, yes this building too has been damaged but is still open and is doing business as ever going on up to the East side of London you find the famous markets and non-markets where every morning the supply of these rationed goods. Another place of interest is the Mint where many coins which we Americans find hard to handle, Shillings, florins, Half-Crowns are just a very few of these famous coins. Yes, even the famous London Hospital had suffered the blitz, it covers several city blocks, but still administrators to the sick and suffering. Toward the end of our tour we see the famous Old Bailey, a real old building that has been standing for years and years, here all prisoners are tried and sentenced. Standing in front of Old Bailey, you see the great Tower of London, here is a great shrine to the men that have served their country and have given their lives. Moving along you find the City Temple where all the famous dinners are given in honor of the King and the nobility of England. By this time you are in Halbert Circus and this brings us to the end of our tour of Old London. From here we walked to the world famous Madam Tussaud's Exhibition in Wax, yes here you see so lifelike that you feel you must talk to them you see people of yesterday and today, not only are the people of England shown, but our own Americans people that have helped to make our country famous and great. Leaving this most interesting place we walked to the Marble Arch, one of the great show places of London; just across the street from there we had our first meal in an English cafe known as the Marston Lyon Cafe, not in America and cannot eat as we wish, with their food rationing so strict I imagine it is hard to prepare a menu for a place of this size. The food was very good considering conditions, but give me a good old American steak anytime. To complete the day which to this time was a busy one we went to the Palace Theatre to see the stage show "Something in the Air" which has been running in London for over a year. This stage show would remind one of Broadway, the music was very catchy and

the wardrobe was most beautiful all through the show. The song that carried the show was "You Happen Once in a Lifetime" and I think the tune stuck in my mind quite well because I find myself humming the tune all day in the theatre they have a beautiful Cocktail Lounge and here I had my first drink of Scotch since my last leave in September. During intermission believe it or not they serve tea to the patrons of the theatre but being that I am not English I pass up to have lemonade which did hit the spot. Another thing in England you are allowed to smoke in the theatre and some times it is quite annoying but to one that loves to smoke I guess it is a blessing. After the show we had our first experience of being lost in a big city, we waited outside the theatre for a taxi but with no luck, so there we stood just wondering where we were, but to the rescue came the Military Police and they are very friendly and helpful, they directed us to Piccadilly Circus and from there we took a bus to the Marble Arch where we got off and then to the Red Cross Club to bed, and remember we did sleep between sheets again feeling like civilized people once again. The bed was too good to get out of so we stayed in bed until late in the morning; when we did get up it was time for lunch so again we relied on the Red Cross for a meal. Going back to childhood days we went to the London Zoo in the afternoon and that is one place that Jerry has missed, it is still in full operation and was worth seeing and something long to be remembered. After leaving the Zoo we boarded a bus and going down town we passed a church that was bombed and only the walls standing but on the steeple was a clock still keeping perfect time. By this time it was again time to eat and again we had dinner at the famous Maison Lyon Corner Cafe. During dinner they have music which is quite a treat from the army way of life. After dinner we went to the movies to see Alice Faye with Benny Goodman and his orchestra in "The Girl He Left Behind" which has been showing here for two months and worth seeing. After the show back for our luggage and then again on the subway to the station and by this time you could see the people sleeping in their hard beds far below the surface. So around and around the world goes but there is no place like home sweet home.

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