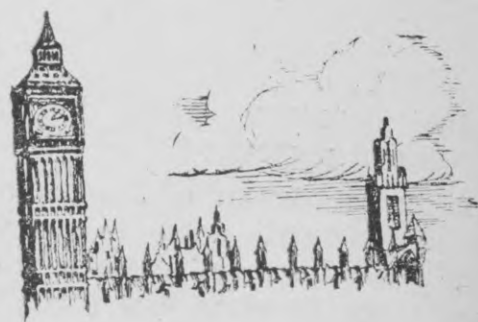


London —

November 11, 1918



It was the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month. Suddenly from Big Ben came the first note of the chime telling London the war was over. From all sides men and women came hurrying into the streets. All the bells of the City began to ring. People poured out of every building, hundreds, thousands, rushing to and fro, shouting and cheering.

Excitement knew no bounds. Complete strangers ran and shook each other by the hand. As they looked into incredulous faces they did not cry jubilantly "We've won the war," they only said "The war is over—it's over—it's all over".

The tumult grew like a whirlwind. Flags and rattles appeared as if by magic. The streets became a seething mass of humanity. Almost before the last note of the chime had died away men and women were pouring like a torrent down the Strand on their way to acclaim the King.

Throughout the day crowds continued to course through the streets. Little work was being done anywhere. In the abandonment of relief the people felt it was necessary to celebrate though many were too dazed and exhausted for the rejoicing to be really exhilarating. Safety, freedom, peace, deliverance, were the words most often on their lips. There was laughter and tears, praying and drinking.

Nightfall brought no end to the public jubilation. An increasing drizzle was powerless to depress the high spirits of the people. The street lamps were unmasked in most of the places where merry-makers gathered. The porticos were ablaze with lights. London was not lighted quite as in prewar

times, for the fairy lights and sky signs were not seen, but from shop fronts, upper windows, and the arc lamps of the streets sufficient light flooded Piccadilly Circus and the approaches to it to rob the chill November night of some of its gloom. Searchlights painted illuminated patterns in the sky, but the explosions heard were only fireworks.

All through the evening streams of men and women surged through the streets, oblivious to the rain and muddy roadways. They pressed in dense masses about the gates of the main tube stations. As fast as people went in others came out to take their places in the thronging crowds.

The music halls and theatres were crammed. Long queues of people stood outside the doors for hours before the performances began, singing bits of popular songs and cheering anything and anybody that took their fancy. The air was full of an intoxicating spirit of joy. It needed only half-a-dozen people to start a patriotic song—*Rule Britannia* or *Land of Hope and Glory*—or any other—and the whole assembly would take up the song. Artists entered into the spirit of the day, and each mention of "peace" set audiences cheering anew. There were cheers for the King, for the soldiers and sailors, for service leaders and national leaders.

The closing times for places of entertainment, restaurants, and clubs were suspended to allow full opportunity for public and semi-public celebrations. At a late hour the sounds of singing and cheering echoed through the streets of London.