

"It Is Dangerous To Wake The Dead"

LINES TO CELEBRATE TRAFALGAR DAY

Written And Spoken By Clemence Dane For The BBC

(This is a transcription of notes taken from the original broadcast by the BBC. Because of difficult conditions of reception it may contain some slight deviations from the original script.)

THEY have dropped a bomb on St. Paul's—they, for their name shall not live.

The roof was ripped up, masonry crashed on to the table,

Laid before the Inviolable Fount.

Between the enormous walls the judgment infernal

Lashed racketing round the nave

Till waves of thunder and dust broke against Nelson's tomb.

Even then they were not afraid.

They were proud of all they had done,

Nobody warned them; they did not know,

None said, "It is dangerous to wake the dead."

For the Nelson spirit slipped easily out of the shroud

Into the morning down Ludgate Hill.

Splendidly he moves in the crowd

Hither and thither at will,

Slipping between the people going to work

Stiff from a shelter bed.

Then somebody said: "What flashed like stars in a rose red sky?"

A girl said: "A man passed by with a pinned-up sleeve."

A boy said: "I didn't see, I was watching the 'plane.'"

"One of ours?" "One of theirs I believe."

Then I heard a voice cry: "We have characters to lose—

Those people have none." "I say, that was a voice—I could follow that voice."

"So could I, and whatever order it chose to give I'd rejoice

To obey—I'd never once shirk."

"You know what I thought it said? I'd not be satisfied with less than 20 down."

* * *

Yes, yes, yes, nobody warned them. They did not know.

None said: "It is dangerous to wake the dead."

* * *

AND the wind drives along the Strand till the dust bins rattle,

A gay slow wind it is with a rumour in it.

I haven't the slightest doubt that a very few days,

Almost a very few hours will put us in battle.

"What's that?" they shout from the taxi stand.

The same voice answers: "Sooner the better I say. I don't like to have these things on my mind."

And the drivers stand and stare in amaze.

On goes the Nelson spirit leaving rumours behind.

Things are beginning to happen at last, says London bright-eyed.

When we choose we move fast, says London pride.

Tell us more. The spirit has passed muttering: "We must brace up.

The boldest measures are safest. Let us attack.

Who is not with our hearts? What, the people of action!

I really don't see the signal.

Lay your minds into the past. That's how I answer such signals."

There goes the precious little fellow, there,

Turning into Trafalgar Square just as the sirens blare.

From the pavement the pigeons rose with a flitter and flutter of wings.

"Kur-roo-oo" came their call, "Kur-roo-oo—we've heard it said often enough

When we lodged with Paul that it's dangerous to wake the dead."

Here, here, screamed the gulls who played between channel and river.

All the air is a-quiver with the indisputable news—

Nelson has stirred—Nelson has left his bed,

Now let them shake in their shoes.

Then we see with laughter all that they say.

Yes, indeed, we have heard how dangerous it is to wake the dead.

* * *

THEN the waves tear after each other, pass and repass,

Each agog to be first, breaking in spray,

Welling and cresting that they may find easy to say,

"Nelson—Nelson, awake. Tell the Victory."

They toss it aside in the lull, they whisper "Nelson!" and flee

Racing after the ships of the open sea,

Overtaking the fleet, tapping the news in code,

Nelson—in London—awake.

He is in the ruined streets, he is in the byway and slum.

Nelson is everywhere.

He stands in the wreck of the road. He sweeps up the broken glass.

He fights with fire and despair, he feels with his fingers your heart,

Till it beats in your breast like a drum.

This is the Nelson touch.

Pass on the news—he's awake.

Nelson expects so much.

Nelson expects that this day each man for the Island's sake

Will do his duty.

Do they know in the North, the South, the East, the West?

Let it go forth, news of our little man with the smile and the four-fold star.

Carry to Copenhagen the news of our Isle and our war.

Carry the news to the Nile, to St. Vincent and Trafalgar.

They have waked the Nelson—the spirit. He slept sound in his bed.

And no one had warned them—they did not know—none said

How dangerous it is to wake our dead.

LESSONS IN MORSE

(8) Holding The Key Again

The following is a draft of signalling lesson No. 8 broadcast from Stations 2YC, 12M, and 3YL at 10 p.m. on October 28, 29 and 30.

BEFORE starting with the receiving practice, the Instructor briefly dealt with the correct method of holding the key. His remarks were as follow:

While in a comfortable sitting position and using the right hand, let the thumb rest lightly under the knob of the key and place the tips of the first and second fingers on the key knob.

Don't grip the key, just exert sufficient pressure to prevent the fingers from slipping.

The forearm to the point of the elbow should be in line with and on the same level as the lever of the key.

The upper arm should be fairly close to the side of the body.

The back of the hand should be in a position to allow of an unrestricted vertical movement of the wrist.

It should be remembered that in order to ensure that the arm muscles are in a relaxed position a light key grip must be employed.

It was intimated by the Instructor that, if possible, trainees should practice sending for at least 15 minutes daily.

The rest of the lesson was taken up in receiving, practice being given in jumbled letters, figures and plain language.

London Philatelists Carry On

THERE is evidence in the commercial and business world that the daily air onslaughts on London are not being allowed to interfere with the work of the Empire Capital, but few would expect to find that "Business as Usual" is still the motto of the philatelic business. Yet such is the case. Within the last few days the New Zealand Post Office has had cable messages from several of its regular clients in the heart of London—the Strand, Regent Street, etc.—not only confirming standing orders for new stamp issues, but in some cases increasing their orders. Only in one or two cases have stamp businesses changed their addresses since the war began and where this has been forced upon them they have gone no farther than to another part of London.