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## IT SHOWS THAT SINATRA CAN BE A GOOD INFLUENCE

(Written for "The Listener")

HE solid young soldier, with the bunch of flowers wrapped there. in coloured paper, was whistling "I'll walk alone, because to tell you the truth . . ." He was whistling it quite nicely, having apparently no trouble at all in getting the quarter notes, the off-the-notes. He appeared to be quite unself-conscious about his whistling attracting some attention. Occasionally he sang the words, and he sang nicely too. Watching out this way and that, he sat in the middle of the seat in the arcade. A collar and tie showed beneath his battledress tunic, his trousers had sharp

"I bet you had some good times ever

"Dreams we fashioned the night . . Not so good; I was in the infantry," the soldier said.

The stout old party sitting at the end of the seat had her hat covered with trimmings that looked like pieces of sugar-bag. She wore a rusty black coat, ample enough to cover her from the neck to the ankles. She had a walking stick and this, together with the way she looked over the top of her glasses, which, besides being cracked were held together with string, somehow gave her an air of dignity. She had been petting the big stray mongrel dog that grinned with its



creases, and he wore polished tan shoes. His big, full-moon face was shaved very smooth, and his straight reddish hair showed trimmed and glistening, where his Field Service cap didn't cover it. He had New Zealand shoulder flashes, but no badge of any rank.

"I don't mind being lonely . . ."

The thin little oldish civilian sitting next to the soldier looked just shabby, nondescript, and rather grubby-and perhaps he was a little drunk. He had his tobacco fin on his knee, and kept holding up a tissue, trying to get the light in order to see which side was gummed. Finally, while he opened his tin, he held the tissue by the corner in between his lips. And when he was at last rolling his smoke he said to the soldier:

"Been overseas, eh?" "And I'll tell them I'd rather . . .
Yes," the soldier said. "Greece, Crete, mouth hanging open and slowly wagged its tail, but now kept trying to put its paws up on the old party's knees. She had threatened it, and now she hit out with her walking stick.

The dog gave a whimper and its tail collapsed, and the soldier stopped whist-

"Ledy," he said, "never ill-treat an animal. Hit a dog, and you strike a blow at man's best friend. I'll always be near you . . ."

The civilian said:

"You'd have some good times. What

about Cairo? What about the girls?"
"Never looked at them," the soldier said. "Each night in every prayer. Those foreign women aren't in my line," he said.

THE argument going on between the two workers who were sitting on the (continued on next page)