

LISTENINGS

Perpetrated and illustrated by KEN. ALEXANDER

BLOOD AND OIL

ADOLF has travelled far from home and his joints must be stiff. He needs oil. Irak looks like the answer to the Fuhrer's prayer. Looking across the camel pastures, Hitler murmurs: "There's oil in them thar wells." So what?

Wretched Ali, sometimes called Rachid Ali and worse, started the fire-works, but Adolf missed the early doors and the show was a fizzle.

If Adolf arrives now as the Defender of Islam, wrapped in bed-linen and crowned with a couple of coits, he will find John Bull bedded down at the oasis with his ordnance at full cock.



Bull has got his head down and has already won the toss. He has announced his intention of defending the oily oasis of Irak and the safety of Suez and Egypt, with all he has got, until the sands of the desert grow cold—or too hot for Haroun Al Hitler. It is realised by Bull that Hitler will eventually skid on oil and get caught out in the slips. It is unlikely that the devil will feel comfortable so near the Holy Land. If Hitler believes in miracles he might hesitate to risk another. But probably he believes that he is the greatest miracle to date.

Still, there are signs that he is not so certain of himself as the modern miracle-man as he was. Recently he

whined to his people: "God knows I did not want war in the Balkans." When Hitler brings God into the argument it is either accidental or opportunist. When he's the life of the party he is God. When the party gets rough he attempts to burden God with the works of the devil.

BUT there are other signs that the Tiger is getting desperate enough for anything. He is thrashing right and left in thwarted rage—lashing at London with one paw, ripping at the Atlantic with the other, and tearing at the Balkans with his teeth. He knows he is far from home, and the further he goes the harder the hunting. His instinct warns him that he is treading dangerous paths. He may spring at Suez and Gibraltar simultaneously. But the one may mean Suez-ide and the other is a proper porcupine.

It is not difficult to imagine that there is some scratching going on at the Reich zoo. Tiger Hitler, Rhino Goering, Rat Goebbels, and Cat Ribbentrop must be feeling an itch of doubt. Jackal Musso, of course, snoops round the outskirts sniffing for a stray bone and muttering "No bone!"

"Irak is so open," complains Tiger Hitler. "I like to pounce from cover on unsuspecting victims."

"Charge in! That is my instinct," growls Rhino Goering. "My sight may be short, but I charge like an express train—that's me!"

"Yes, but you sometimes get off the rails," says Hitler.

"The hole in the wall for mine," squeaks Rat Goebbels. "I'm no desert rat."

"Step carefully, Adolf," warns Cat Ribbentrop. "We're not hunting mice any more. Bulldogs are different. You have to pounce sudden or forever hold your pounce."

"Do you notice the atmosphere getting slightly colder?" asks Tiger Hitler, shivering a little. "It's ridiculous. I know, but I feel quite stiff in the joints."

"What you need is oil," says Cat Ribbentrop.

"You're telling me," sighs the Tiger, gently licking his Grecian scars.

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congratulated on his performance by Sir Adrian Boult, conductor of the BBC Symphony Orchestra.

Long Voyage Home

Mrs. Moller left England in stormy weather last November—so stormy that there was little danger of submarine attack. Some time before she sailed, her husband had also left England on another outward trip but, his ship being much slower than that on which Mrs. Moller travelled, she almost overtook him before he reached the African coast. As it was, she had the exasperating experience of seeing his vessel pass out of a West African port just as hers was moving in to berth. They exchanged radio messages, and when Mr. Moller got ashore at the next port down the

coast, they had the unusual luxury of a telephone conversation. Right down the West Coast of Africa she followed him, and at Capetown they managed to get one day together. All the way across the Indian Ocean she heard nothing of him, but they had a brief spell together again in an Australian port. Since then, she has not seen him at all and, like most other wives with men at sea, she doesn't know where he is.

Though she is happy enough to be away from the sizzling sound of bombs falling ("and they always sound as if they're coming straight at you"), Mrs. Moller's feeling about being back in New Zealand are mixed. She is pleased "in patches," as she put it, to be back, but she thinks that even in wartime, England is worthwhile.



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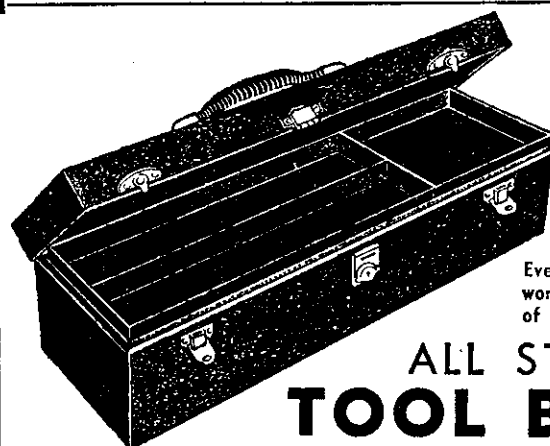
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