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ALLIES FROM JAVA

"They Can Get Knocked Out And Still Recover"

LIKE work, it fascinates Albert Park, the meme," wrote the late Jerome K. Terome, "I could sit and watch it for hours." If these weren't his exact words, they are near enough to point the moral he be any gas there, and had in mind, and it seems to apply with particular force to the work of digging holes. There is nothing more certain to attract the City idler or lunch-hour stroller than the sight of a hole with a man thing might go up. working in it.

With the opening of tunnelling faces around Albert Park, Auckland is at present having a positive orgy of holewatching. I succumbed myself at lunchtime vesterday. Up till then I had been able to resist the temptation to imitate the herd by hurrying past on the other side like the Levite of old, but yesterday there was a mechanical shovel on the job and when I noticed that the scoop appeared to be turned round the wrong way-scooping back towards the machine—I had to investigate. After all it might be worth writing to Mr. Semple about.

WAS trying to get a good view of all that was going on when I saw the birds. There were two of them in a small white-washed cage, sitting in the shade of a neighbouring building. At first I thought they were goldfinches, they had the same small reddish crest, but their beaks were heavy and pink in colour and there was no green or yellow in their plumage. The breast was pearlygrey, the back and head ark brown. The most striking characteristic was certainly the pink beak. It was the same type of beak as you find in a canary, or any other seed-crushing bird, but it seemed too heavy for a bird of that size, being about half an inch long, half an inch deep and much the same in width at the base.

" I SUPPOSE you're wondering what kind of birds these are?"

My questioner appeared to be looking after the livestock and in his way he was almost as interesting to look at as his charges. He was bearded like a minor prophet and clumps of snowy curls were erupting from the open neck of his singlet. A bit of a character, you might say.

"These are love-birds, Javanese love-birds," he explained. "There's a scientific name for them, of course, but I von't bother you with that because everyone knows them simply as Javanese love-birds."

"Do they sing or talk or do anything like that?" I asked.

He looked at me much as the birds might have looked at some ersatz birdseed.

"They are very useful for detecting the presence of gas. Now, in this work," winning the war. How many tactics he gestured comprehensively to include does it take to make a strategy?

chanical shovel and all its works, "in this work you might easily cut into an old gas main. There mightn't again there might. If there were any, there might not be enough for you to notice it, and if you were smoking a cigarette every-Even if you weren't smoking you might be overcome without

knowing why and then you'd be in a

"I SEE," I said. "And so you use these birds to detect the presence of gas?"

"That's it. You can use canaries, but these are better. Canaries are meant for singing and they don't often recover from gassing, but these birds, they're tougher. They can get knocked out and still recover. Of course, you have to take care of them, but I know how to do that.
"I remember I was in a mine acci-

dent once when sixty men got knocked out by gas. I didn't drink and I was the only one who kept on his feet. Of course, couldn't save the whole sixty of them, but I got hold of the relief shift in time to get them all out into the open air. We had to pile them in trucks like mutton and run them out of the mine and then

"It's a terrible thing is gas" sluice them down with buckets of water. but there were only two who didn't re-cover. That was in Cascade City, between British Columbia and Washington. It's a terrible thing is gas."

AGREED, but feeling that the glittering eve of the Ancient Miner was in danger of affecting the National War Effort, I thanked him hastily for his information and went off back to work. I forgot to have a closer look at the mechanical shovel, but as I walked back I remembered a phrase the old man had

. these birds, they're tougher. They can get knocked out and still recover." Javanese love-birds. Maybe there's a moral or a parable in it somewhere, if I could just think where



Perpetrated and illustrated by KEN ALEXANDER

HERE are a few observations from the wreckage of war:

A U-Boat is a wolf in ship's clothing. A Japanese peace envoy is a "yes' man sent abroad to keep up the yessing while his country gets on with the

knowing.

The "Honourable Ja, anese" is honourable in everything—except honour.

A Nazi is living proof that man can rise to terrible depths.

Axis warfare is waged by sea, airand dirt.

A dictator is a man who hates himself so much that he wants the whole world to pay for it.

Hot-air superiority is a poor substitute for air superiority. One's too good to be true; the other's too true to be good-for the enemy.

The Pacific Ocean has never truly lived up to its name. Now that it is the scene of a particular showdown why not call it the Specific Ocean?

One of the lessons learnt from events is "Look after the tactics and the strategy will look after itself." Tactics is winning to-day's fight. Strategy is



THE SAME OLD QUMMY?

Propaganda is lies made to look like truth-and even truth made to look like lies. Truth that nobody believes is often more valuable to liars than lies that everybody suspects.

Japan hasn't previously tackled a hundred-per-cent. white country. The "White Australia policy," although faintly tinged with brown, may give the laps the blues when the white Australian sees red. It is said that the brown man is yellow when his antagonists are in the pink. He looks black only when his opponents are green. You bet it's a colour war!.

If Japan can't join Germany at Russia's front door, she'll have to knock at the back. It will prove a nasty knock for Nippon.