

# Shattered life



Drifting over the plains and mountains to our Camp came alluring stories of beautiful sirens who were said to frequent a somewhat mysterious place they called "The Shatter." These sirens (so the rumour said), preyed on the feelings and desires of men, and they were stated to show a preference for soldiers and had no prejudice against those from our Brigade.

Soldiers as a class seldom flee from temptation in any form and the temptations that rumour ascribed to "The Shatter" possessed no terrors for them, especially those who had braved the blandishments of Tiger Lil and Tarzan, and other notables of Cairo. The writer being one of those realists who has a penchant for investigation of such places, joined a specially conducted weekend trip. The very atmosphere of the petrol buggy in which this party was conveyed showed that all were making the long arduous trip full of expectation. They had all apparently heard of the temptations to which they were likely to be subjected, but all were feeling that their powers of resistance were not likely to prove strong.

The seats of the petrol buggy could have been more liberally padded and the writer thanks the dieties that his posterior was better covered than those of many others. However, expectation is a great thing—many say it is the greatest—and after four hours of particularly slow travelling, we at last arrived. The prospect was pleasing. The show was palatial, and the Eves were present, though not in large numbers as rumour had proclaimed. The soldiers lost no time in invading bedrooms, and razors and hair pomade were soon in free use. Looking their best the soldiers were soon all down for dinner with their resolutions to resist the sirens still further weakening.

The sirens were gracious, they displayed a willingness to dance after dinner, they were not averse to partake of our liquid refreshment, but the willingness to tempt the soldiers seemed to be lacking. That willingness was not a prevalent desire. The soldiers, the long, the short and the tall, kept flitting from flower to flower. Their hopes, once high, began to slide like the Cheshire Cat in Alice in Wonderland . . . Gradually faded away.

As the evening wore on the whole scene rather brought back memories of the old rake in Oscar Wilde's "Women of no Importance," who, when asked whether there were any virtuous women in society, replied with a deep sigh, "Yes, unfortunately, far too many."

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## MUSIC IN CAMP

Music is in the heart of man and doesn't seem to be suppressed for long even in a military camp. The worse the locality the more a chap's spirits are forced to rise above its exigencies. You have only to visit one of the local shower-rooms to hear a burst of song from some revelling soldier. I will admit that most of these vocal efforts are confined to the lonely lovesick lyric. But then, what else would you sing in a military camp when you were aching for a civilised bath or an equally inviting girl friend. Around the huts, you can hear a diversity of musical talent. A cobbler of mine, when he's "in the mood," plays his beloved accordion, for hours; another his mouth organ, and still another, his fiddle. Just last week, a friend and I must have appeared a bit "nuts" while humming over rather dramatically, some Schubert songs. Have you heard those strains of Bach coming from our Block in bold string tone?

The Padre's room at the Y.M.C.A. has been a rendezvous of musicians. Anything from vocal, string, flute, clarinet, saxophone or piano to male quartets can be heard there as the weeks pass by. We are very grateful for the use of the room and piano.

Church parades are of mixed value musically, but the band is a great asset in the Camp Theatre Services—and what would the Main Guards be like without the usual obligato from the same jolly crowd? The booming tones make marching spring to new life as the "New" Guard proudly pass the "Old."

Radio and recordings do much to restore some sense of homeliness in the hut-lines where most of our leisure is spent. Rest there is as pleasant as can be away from home . . . some months ago, our Scottish blood was rampantly stirred, daily for several weeks, by the plaintive swirl of the pipes, coming down-wind from the trees near the hospital. "Good luck, Jack, I hope those pipes didn't go where they were often sent." What with concerts by outside folk, Brigade units and occasional dances, not to mention the constant influence of the two theatres, music lives on at our camp. Without it, we'd soon crack up, and forget that some day, this too, will pass and freedom will once more be ours.

—A.H.H.

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## SIGNALS—AND ALL THAT

With the Tank Brigade at "that certain Camp"  
In their frozen habitat

There's a Squadron that's just too too  
Signals—and all that.

Yes, the old school tie is still being worn  
And that's an honest fact

That the dear old thing will not be torn  
While we've Signals—and all that.

The cook said: "Men to start the day  
Clean up that tub of fat."

But the soldier said "Dammit man  
We're Signals—and all that."

"Who have I got," the poker king cried  
But the Major smelt a rat.

"Gad Sir," he cried, "You're on the mat  
Remember Signals—and all that."

Still boys let him in on their sixpenny blind  
And he soon made wad quite fat.

But he said, "Keep it dark  
After all we're refined

We're Signals—and all that."

Taihape once boasted an innocent maid  
(But keep that under your hat)

She learnt to play ball  
And the cause of her fall

Were those Signals of course—and all that.

—KELO.