

attentions of a sly imp with a roguish smile. "Two ackers, George." The partnership was working well . . .

The soldier walked on. He had to meet a friend at the club. A gharry stood invitingly alongside the filthy gutter. Two undernourished Arab



horses made half-hearted attempts to cope with the innumerable flies. A grinning Soudanese squatted on the fragile driving-seat. He saw the New Zealander hesitate and the haggling match began. Back and forth swayed the price. "Uskut", said the soldier in desperation. "Ten ackers, George." "La. Fifteen," said George with a happy grin. The soldier turned on his heel, and a huge black hand clutched at his khaki shirt. "O.K. Ten ackers," said George with a broad grin. "Igri, George," and away went the vehicle in its crazy dash through the crazy Cairo traffic. Trucks rushed by dizzily, dirty children shouted indescribable things and postured rudely, donkeys laden with vegetables and flies or Arabs and flies pushed past hurrying pedestrians, trams screamed shrilly as only Cairo trams can, itinerant lemonade or fruit merchants shouted their wares, and women in the dirtiest rags imaginable gazed from doorways, feeding their babies and the flies or abusing their precocious children. On went the

gharry through streets that grew busier and more prosperous, where great limousines carrying fashionably dressed women and Egyptian businessmen raced past and the shops changed from squalor to the last word in smartness. And so to the club and a crowd of Kiwis on leave . . .

The three New Zealanders were singing lustily and the tune they sang was the Egyptian national anthem. But the words were their own—"We're all black . . . and we dearly love our King." The few Egyptians who bothered to listen to the singing above the din of the *mouski* smiled with a tolerance that came from centuries of wisdom and understanding. The three soldiers passed on through the narrow, grimy street, past a clutter of native shops and stalls. An urchin of less than ten Cairo summers pushed a basket of oranges under their noses. "Very clean, very sweet, very hygiene," he chanted, but the Kiwis ignored him. "You laik nice girl, George," he said with a leer, changing his wares quite unconcernedly. "*Kweis ketir bint*", he added knowingly. "*La, la! Yalla!*" shouted the nearest soldier, and the urchin spat at him feelingly. On walked the trio from the other end of the world—on past the stalls of fly-covered poultry, gaudy cloths, delicate filagree silver, crude pottery; on past a filthy, disease-ridden beggar, a mass of children demanding bak-sheesh; on past ageless Arabs smoking their hubble-bubbles and playing backgammon amongst the filth of the pavement. They had a "date" that night at the "Pam-Pam"—a "date" with some *bints* and several bottles of Stella. That was if the Kiwis did not smash the place up and spoil everything . . .

Tuesday, May 20, began like any other day in Crete. Just before eight o'clock the sirens and bells from Canea to Maleme sounded their warning. From that moment there was no "all clear".