

having a great time and looked exceedingly romantic, while, apart from fascinating a few susceptible *signorinas*, they did succeed in creating an awesome impression on one or two small boys of six or seven who had never seen a real rifle before!

Suddenly an expectant murmur went through the crowd. The liberators were coming. Every one smiled, every one looked happy and jolly and curious and anticipatory.

on the roof of the cab, the other half hanging precariously on to the framework—all of them were just lapping up the welcome.

I stood in the crowd, about 10 yards back from the street. So far I hadn't made myself known. For nine long weary months I had been on the run, and here were the British at last. I wanted to push forward and shake hands with them, and hug them—in a manly



And then they came. The first vehicle came into sight at the bottom of the street. It was a jeep. The crowd went delirious with excitement. Men shouted and brandished rifles high in the air, women waved handkerchiefs "*Viva, viva,*" they all cried, "*Viva i liberatori.*"

Slowly the jeep came up the street, slowly it passed under the archway. The occupants, two young English lieutenants, looked embarrassed, smiling at the crowd a little self-consciously, as if they didn't know what they should do about it all. Behind the jeep came a half-tonner—a sergeant waving wildly out of one window, the driver out of the other. Then came a truckload of husky sappers in shorts, half of them sitting

way, of course—and yet at the same time I wanted to watch from afar, as a spectator. I stayed still, my mind a turbulence of thoughts.

More trucks followed, some laden with grinning troops, others with equipment. Gradually, as the procession continued, the mood of the people changed. Gone was the first ecstatic hilarity; in its place was a sombre gladness. Near me stood a middle-aged man with tears in his eyes, in front of me a mother openly wept. A deep thankfulness seemed to sweep the crowd; the people smiled and wept at the same time. Full realization of what was really happening, that liberty and freedom had come after all