

Parrick Peaskill

'43

Peace return

Deep in the Heart of Cactus

(He got many Thorny Pricks)

by

X. X. X. (Pre-war - All Three)

by

Ruth Fletcher

Arm^d Creed

Scene: A.R.P. Shelter: Parliamentary Grounds.

Coal

Old King ~~XXXX~~/with hat and binoculars surveying empty bottles.

Coal

Old King ~~XXXX~~/(Sings): "There was beer, beer, " etc.

(Looks mournfully around through binoculars): What a life.-- Why, it isn't a life - it's a living death. No beer, no oil, no food, and a patriotic ban on racing. But there's one thing - we've plenty of beer. (Takes off Hat): I take off my hat to the miners. The people are so angry so discontented Ministers don't dare to meet in Parliament. If we hadn't had this private air-raid shelter built for Cabinet meetings most of us would have been hung, drawn and quartered by now. (Angry noise outside. Tomato whizzes by). Gosh. The hooligans must have found a hole in the roof.

(Enter Flashlight Lazer): Lazer (horrified): What's the meaning of all these bottles, Old King Cole?

Cole: These bottles? They don't mean much.

Lazer: ~~XXXX~~ Don't you realise that beer and racing have been the ruin of our party?

Cole: They might have been before the war, but you can't ruin anything on this beer. Why, this beer reminds me of love in a punt.

Lazer: Love in a punt?

Cole: Yes; very near water.

Lazer: Well, you're a punter. You ought to know.

Cole: Why are you looking so mournful, Flashlight? Don't let the country's miners get you down.

Lazer: All is not well in the State of New Zealand, my dear friends. The dogs are barking.

Cole: What are Lee and Barnard saying now?

Lazer: It's not them; it's the people.

Cole: The people?

Lazer: They've been listening to the Rev. Muckrake. Besides, they object to our austerity campaign, and to 10 per cent plus contract.

Cole: -----and having no beer.

Lazer: (sighs) Soon I shall not dare to appear in public without an armed guard. If only Alter Cash were here. He would tell me how to get out of this difficult situation.

Enter BAS HFUL BOB, gagged and bandaged with a Telegram.

Lazer: Hullo, Bashful, what's the matter?

Bob: (Gestures of anger).

Cole (pointing to Bob): That's an old gag, that one.

Lazer: Look's as if he's been in the wars, too.

Cole: That'll be the day.

Lazer: Who's the telegram from, Bob?

(Bob hands telegram to Lazer).

Lazer: Why, it's from my dear friend, Alter Cash. All the way from Greenland. He says (Reads) "Assets frozen. Best wishes. Home to be home in 1955. Alter." A lot of use he is to the Cabinet.

Enter Mrs. Scowlit, in W.A.A.C. costume-

Mrs Scowlit: (Bursting in): Oh, Flashlight, please excuse me bursting in at a Cabinet meeting, but really this is extremely urgent. I don't know what to do. One of my Waa cs has been found in a most compromising situation with an artillery officer at the ~~Waa camp~~ at ~~Lincoln~~.

Lazer: This is contrary to standing orders.

Mrs. Scowlit: We can't take it lying down, can we?

Bob, Obviously excited rars around, etc.

Lazer: (Bit bored): Oh yes, yes, but this is only a minor matter.

Cole: I takes off my hat to the miners. (Raises hat).

Mrs. Sc: What am I going to do. The women are sick of rationing and couponomising; I do hope that none of you will lose your seats. (Feels back of skirt for reassurance).

Cast

D.K. Coal - Oom Crean
P. Prasser - G.P. Bogle
A. Cash - A. Stone
B. Simple - B. Barthwick
Mrs Scowett - Lon Robinson
Mrs Prigg - Michael Berge
Sydney Holland - H. Schramm
Red Huckle - Daria Hafford
Lt Lee - John Walton
Gen Fremblea - B. Hesefer

Lazer: I'll lose my portfolio.

Coal: You're not going to do away with port, too? Are you?

Enter Rev. Muckrake.

Coal: Ah, the friendly toad.

Bob (Angry gestures).

Lazer: We want you. You're responsible for most of our troubles. You'll have to stop this women in the street session and help the Labour Party.

Rev. Muck: Women in the street session. That's not the Commercial Broadcasting Department. That's the Marine Department.

Enter Messenger with one arm. Messenger takes telegram from bag and hands it to Lazer. Exits.

Lazer: (Opening telegram): Ah, it's another telegram from Alter Cash, all the way from Patagonia. He says (Reads): "Have stripped the shirt off the last Patagonian. Best wishes. Alter." It seems that Alter Cash is doing well for himself, friends, while we're in the cactus.

All come to front of stage and sing to tune of "How Ashamed I Was."

We've touched them for their clothes,

What a hole we're in.

We've touched them for their hose,

What a hole we're in.

We've touched them for their nose,

Our women look like crows,

Oh gor-blimey what a hole we're in.

We've left them high and dry,

What a hole we're in.

For pre-war beer they sigh,

What a hole we're in.

We've left them high and dry,

They're squeaking to the sky.

Oh gor-blimey, what a hole we're in.

At last the time has come,

What a hole we're in.

When something must be done,

What a hole we're in.

At last the time has come,

We've got to fight or run,

Oh gor-blimey what a hole we're in.

Lazer: (Mournfully): What a hole we're in.

Coal: (Looking round shelter): If you know of a better ~~fun~~ hole go to it.

Enter Messenger.

Lazer: Some more helpful advice from Alter, I suppose. (Takes telegram) This time it's from Timbuctoo. He says: "Can't raise anything here. Best wishes. Alter." (Exit Messenger) If the Minister of Finance can't help us, who can? How can I continue to govern the country with no money and the people at my throat? What do you think we ought to do, Mrs. Seemitt?

Mrs. Se: Speaking for the women, I think we should import another division of Marines.

Muck: This one certainly needs a long rest.

Mrs. Se: ~~Hardly practicable~~. There aren't enough girls to go round now.

Muck: But they certainly get round, don't they?

Lazer: What about you, O.K. Coal. Have you any ideas?

Coal: I'll say. Back to the old beer. Bigger and better horse-racing.

Muck: What, more ~~xxxxxxxx~~ horses. My women in the street session Mayn

Lazer: You would. Now listen to me. Suppose we abolish the blackout.

Mrs. Se: On behalf of the girls of Wellington I protest at the lighting of the blackout.

Lazer (Astonished): Good heavens, Mrs, don't you know Blackout has been abolished?

Muck: I've got an idea. What about my society for Closer Relations with the Russians.

Coal: I suggested that when the Russian Ballet was here.

Lazer: What do you think, Bas hful?

Bob - (Lecherous gestures).

Lazer: (Pompously): I have pondered this matter deeply. For many hours I have paced back and forth in my private A.R.P.'s helter. I have considered the pros and the cons, the ins and the outs, the why and the wherefores ----

Coal: The wets and the dries - with time and a half for the wets.

Lazer: Certainly, time and a half for the wets. I wouldn't work on anything but union principles. And now pray let me continue. I have contemplated my er----subject from all angles. I am convinced there is only one solution. I've got the dinkum oil. I ----

(Enter Messenger) Don't say this is another telegram. (Messenger whispers in Lazer's ear). NOISE OF AEROPLANE OFF - ENTER ALTER CASH WITH BAGGAGE.

Lazer: Gor-blimey, it's Alter himself. Where've you been all this time?

Cash: I've just flown here from Hollywood.

Lazer: Hollywood?

Cash: Yes, I assisted in an election there.

Lazer: An election?

Cash: Yes, the 1943 Beauty Queen.

Lazer: You've just arrived in time. We need your help. I am about to make an important announcement. Ladies and gentlemen, are you listening? I am going to hold an election. It'll take the minds of the people away from their troubles. It'll confuse 'em.

Coal: Confucius him say, girl who is wall flower at dance dandylic on sofa.

Lazer: Tch, tch. Yes, we're going to have an election now.

All sing. Tune: Garrad's adaptation of Prairie Flower.

The population's getting rough,
They feel quite sure they've had enough.
If we wait too long they'll make it tough,
So let's hold elections.

The housewives league is getting sore,
Their sugar ration they can't draw.
They've got no fruit, not just one core,
So let's hold elections.

Each wife and sweetheart quite agrees,
We ought to bring 'em from overseas,
The boys who sat them on their knees,
So let's hold elections.

On every side we hear them say,
That Labour's done and had its day;
We've got to show them we're O.K.
So let's hold elections.

ACT II

SCENE: ~~XXXX~~ Post Office Square, and showing corner of Pier
and in National Club.

CHARACTERS: Old King Cole, on soapbox, addressing crowd. Five citizens in crowd speak.

Cole: Ladies and gentlemen, during the last few weeks a wave of confidence in the Labour movement has swept the country from Bluff to Cape Maria.

Cit 1: The Black Maria. Have you been nabbed again?

Cole: The politics of the Home Country have been revolutionised by the plans of Sir William Beveridge. I take off my hat to Sir William Beveridge. (TAKES OFF HAT).

Cit 2: What about our New Zealand beverage? Isn't it time you put up the beer here?

Cole: Your suggestion has my earnest support, but I fear a certain amount of opposition from my friend and colleague. Mr Lazenby. He is, I regret to say, not a drinking man.

Cit 3: No, but he's drained the country dry.

Cole: Look at Labour's war effort. We've done away with profits.

Cit 4: What about ten per cent plus contracts?

Cit 5: What about Civil Service overtime? What about the paper shortage?

Cole: The paper shortage? The paper shortage will be relieved only when the Eighth Army have reduced Rommel to a pulp. And now look at the wonderful war effort of the workers. Look what the watersiders have done. The Waterfront Control Commission has galvanised the wharves. I take off my hat to the wharfies. (TAKES OFF HAT).

Cit 1: The soldiers are doing the work. You're not paying them time and a half, are you? And talking of soldiers, weren't those binoculars a gift to the Army?

Cole: That's a foul and contemptible lie. Only a muckraker would say a thing like that. These binoculars belonged to Harry Koll.

Cit 2: Can't you see his memorial without them?

Cole: The whole country owes a debt of gratitude to the miners. I take off my hat to the miners. (TAKES OFF HAT).

Why, only the other day, just think, he offered to help if any of my Waccs needed anything. He's such a dear. And the way he looks at them. I am sure he really means what he says. But not dear people, I want to tell you how much the Labour Government has done for women, especially young women. (LAUGHTER) I know it's done more for young women than most of you realise. The maternity benefits have solved all our problems. Just think, you can have a baby now for 7/6.

Cit 1: Any reduction on twins ?

Cit 2: How ~~much~~ NOT to have one ?

Mrs Sc: Women are making themselves felt in industry and transport. They're on the trams, on the trains, on the buses ---

Cit 3: On the streets.

Mrs Sc: Women are filling places they have never filled before.

Cit 4: Like the battledress trousers.

Mrs. Sc: Yes, women are wearing the pants. And they won't take them off till they've won the war.

Cit 5: I've seen some that seemed to have won the war already.

Mrs Sc: And then, there's the land girls.

Cit 1: What, more girls landed ?

Mrs Sc: And don't forget the Post girls. Looking after the country's mails.

Cit 3: When were you last down the mine, Daddy ?

Cole: All my life I've been up and down mines. Mind your own business. And I take off my hat to the slaughtermen. (TAKES OFF HAT) The whole country owes a debt of gratitude to the freezing workers. Too long have they been given the cold shoulder.

Cit 4: God's frozen people, eh ?

ENTER MRS SCOWLETT, ESCORTED BY MEN WAACS.

Mrs Sc: Leave 'em to me, Paddy. I'll fix 'em.

Cole: (USING BINOCULARS): Ah! my friend, the lady commandant of Waacs. (TAKES OFF HAT).

Cit 1: If that's all you can take off you don't do any harm.

Cole: Would you care to use my soapbox, Mrs Scowett ?

Mrs Sc: Thank you, thank you, my dear friend. I must thank my old friend Paddy. He's such a dear. I do hope you'll vote for him. Why, only the other day, just think, he offered to help if any of my Waacs needed anything. He's such a dear. And the way he looks at them. I am sure he really means what he says. But now dear people, I want to tell you how much the Labour Government has done for women, especially young women. (LAUGHTER) I mean it's done more for young women than most of you realise. The maternity benefits have solved all our problems. Just think, you can have a baby now for 7/6.

Cit 1: Any reduction on twins ?

Cit 2: How much NOT to have one ?

Mrs Sc: Women are making themselves felt in industry and transport. They're on the trams, on the trains, on the buses ---

Cit 3: On the streets.

Mrs Sc: Women are filling places they have never filled before.

Cit 4: Like the battledress trousers.

Mrs. Sc: Yes, women are wearing the pants. And they won't take them off till they've won the war.

Cit 5: I've seen some that seemed to have won the war already.

Mrs Sc: And then, there's the land girls.

Cit 1: What, more girls landed ?

Mrs Sc: And don't forget the Post girls. Looking after the country's mails.

Cit 2: We can look after ourselves.

Mrs Sc: And a poor job you've made of it. If it wasn't for the women
the Japs would have been here long ago.

Cit 3: They knew you were here. That's why they didn't come.

Mrs Sc: We'll keep New Zealand free ---

Cit 4: A free for all --- like the Waldorf.

Mrs Sc: We and my sister organisations, the W.A.A.F.'s and the ~~W.A.A.F.'s~~
~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~ W.R.E.N.'s.

Cit 4: And the S.P.W.C.

Mrs Sc: That's a new one. What is it?

Cit 5: The Society for the Prevention of Women and Children.

Mrs Sc: You don't believe me. I'll show you what my girls can do.

Come on, girls, shake a leg.

(WAAC MEN'S BURLESQUE BALLET)

Cit 2: We can look after ourselves.

Mrs Sc: And a poor job you've made of it. If it wasn't for the ~~one~~
the Japs would have been here long ago.

Cit 3: They knew you were here. That's why they didn't come.

Mrs Sc: We'll keep New Zealand free ---

Cit 4: A free for all --- like the Waldorf.

Mrs Sc: We and my sister organisations , the W.A.A.F.'s and the ~~XXXXXX~~
~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~ W.R.~~MA~~N.'s.

Cit 4: And the S.P.W.C.

Mrs Sc: That's a new one. What is it ?

Cit 5: The Society for the Prevention of Women and Children.

Mrs Sc: You don't believe me. I'll show you what my girls can do.
Come on, girls, shake a leg.

(WAAC MEN'S BURLESQUE BALLET)

(Short)

ALTER CASH PUSHES THROUGH CROWD WITH BAGS, PAPERS.

Cit 1: Who are you pushing, mate ?

Alter: Let me through. I've got important news.

Cit 2: Why, it's Alter Cash ~~himself~~.

Cit 3 : I thought he was in New Caledonia.

Alter: As a matter of fact, I've just come back from the States for
the election. Friends, I bring you wonderful news. The Govern-
ment of the United States has, this moment, agreed to my pro-
posals that bigger and better wrestlers be sent to this country
after the war ~~from the States~~.

Woman: I must have met the advance guard on Lambton Quay.

Alter: We must give our great American allies a free hand.

Woman: Give an American a free hand and he'll put it all over you.

Alter: And friends, I have further good news . Last week I was in Mos-
cow, and our great Russian allies have agreed to my proposals.

Cit 1: What did you propose, Wally ?

Alter: Proposals to establish an underwear factory.

Cit 2: Underwear factory ?

Alter: Yes, a second front.

Alter: But harking back to the election, I want to make the issue
clear. It's finance that's going to win this war. And the

Russian bank is printing hundreds and thousands of notes to do it. The response to my Lost Liberty Loan week was amazing

Cit 2: What about a Leave - me - alone - Week ?

Alter: My friend, you are not on your honeymoon. There's a war on. And then, there's National Savings.

Cit 1: Nash'll take your savings.

Alter: In America, they were astonished at what we had done. As I said to my dear friend, Eleanor, Roosevelt you know, it takes the glamour of American femininity to bring out the best in a man. I was as much at home in the White House as in the -- the field.

Cit 3: We've never seen you appear there.

Alter: We've got a new legation.

Cit 1: How much did it cost ?

Alter: 30,000 dollars.

Alter: I had a new car.

Cit 1: How much did it cost ?

Alter: 10,000 dollars. I had lunch with Mae West.

Cit 1: You certainly keep abreast of the times. And how much did that cost ?

Alter: 5000 dollars. I shook hands with the President of the United States.

Cit 1: How much did that cost ?

Alter: 2000 dollars.

Cit 2: Who's paying for all this ?

Alter: You are. And we and the boys'll show you how.

(ALTER, COLE, BOB (Gestures) SING "DEEP IN THE HEART OF TANES.")

1. We fight all the Japs,
And take the raps,
Deep in the heart of Tanes.
2. To dodge the crash,
Put all your cash,
Deep in the heart of Tanes.
3. I've dug the grave,
For all you save,
Deep in the heart of Tanes.
4. Your next month's rent,
Has just been spent,
Deep in the heart of Tanes.
5. Your extra clothes,
We need all those,
Deep in the heart of Tanes.

6. So feel no shame,
I take the blame,
Deep in the heart of Tanes.
7. If you go bare,
I don't much care,
Deep in the heart of Tanes.
8. For your poor rags,
Mean money bags,
Deep in the heart of Tanes.

EXEUNT CAS H, BOB TO PIER HOTEL.

ENTER MRS PRIGG FROM NATIONAL CLUB, LEADING HOLLAND
DRESSED AS SCHOOL-BOY.

Cit 1: Who've you got there, Mrs Prigg ?

Mrs Prigg: Don't worry about him. That's Sidney Holland. He's just the boy about the place. Now you've been listening to the tales of the Labour Party. Don't believe a word of them. The Labour Party have ~~xx~~ put you in the mess you're in now. The National Party will get you out of it. The Labour Party made you wear those posterity suits.

Cit: What a terrible legacy for the next generation.

Mrs Prigg: (Sarcastically): Hand me down my reach-me-downs. And just look what the housewives have to put up with. The farmers get --- for their produce. The retailer makes --- And you pay -----

Cole: Madam, if I were your husband, I'd poison you.

Mrs Prigg: Sir, if I were your wife, I'd take it. An army of Price Tribunal Inspectors slink like the Gestapo through the land And talking of the Gestapo, where's Major Faulkes ?

Cit 4: He's with the old folks at home, I suppose .

Mrs. Prigg: And time he was sent there, too.

ENTER MUCKRAKE

Mrs Prigg: But here's a man who will tell you how our civil liberties have been stifled. My friends, the Rev. Muckrake.

MUCKRAKE REPLACES MRS PRIGG ON STAND.

Muck: Parade, 'shun.

Sorry, folks, I've been shocked into a military frame of mind. I bring you a new policy. But before I introduce it, I'd like to recite to you this pleasing little verse which caught my ear.

Crowd: 'Ear, 'ear.

Muck: (RECITES)

This is the tale of a man in the street,
A nice old fellow, and still on his feet.
Your sympathies now he hopes he will steal,
And be more successful than in his appeal.
Your friendship will lighten his poor weary load,
As we journey together on the friendly road.

Now, the sentiment in this appealed to me.

Cit 5: You're hot stuff on this appealing, aren't you?

Muck: As I see it, this country should return to the simple honest life of our forebears. Nothing becomes a man more than the dignity of labour.

Cit 4: That's why you joined the Auckland Waterside Workers.

Cit 3: No fear. 8/6 an hour and the Hon Dave Wilson were that induced him to join.

Muck: Let us have an open-door policy for broadcasting.

Cit 2: Have you picked the lock on your door yet, Scrim?

Muck: I've said it before, and I say it again. One man can run the two services for half the salary. Put Shelley on the shelf.

Cit 1: That's a selfish suggestion.

Cit 2: What party do you stand for?

Muck: Well, all the offers haven't come in yet. But you can rest assured that I can use the best. To be union conscious is not enough. Only the happy blending of the material with the spiritual bringeth about the full life. I rather like this.

ENTER LAZER WITH POLICEMAN.

Lazer: Avaunt, begone, you wicked cur, away;
This gentle crowd, it'll never be your prey.

Isn't that a nice thought.

ENTER MAN WITH MICROPHONE.

LAZER: People of New Zealand. The time has now come when we must look before us and behind, and make a complete survey of the dangers that beset us. The people of New Zealand have developed bad habits of intemperance and self-indulgence. All I ask is a spirit of willing sacrifice and self-denial. I myself deny that the union secretaries run this country. I and my colleagues only take their advice when we deem it both necessary and relevant. We will guard and defend the State from its enemies without and within. And in this connection, you may well ask why I am speaking from a national hook-up rather

down from 2Z3. It is this. You have to see that the Rev. Jackson is still at large. Naturally, the election office is closed during this period. Of course, I am not at liberty to divulge all the details about the fight with the Government about the situation.

Cit 1: There's too much political censorship in this country.

Cit 2: You took a position and made him a censor. What's the sense that?

Lazer: We're not sensitive about that. He's a very sound guy. And ours is a sound policy. And you cannot do better than support me and my colleagues at the election. Support Labour because Labour has a plan.

Cole: I have great pleasure in moving a vote of confidence in the Labour Party. Will somebody second that?

SEVEN SECONDS SILENCE

Cit 1: This is what we think of the Labour Party. This is all we've got to thank you for. Come on boys tell them.

ALL SING "THANKS FOR THE MEMORY."

CROWD ADVANCES ON LAZER. THREATENING.

Cit 1: That's what we think of you and your policy.

Cit 2: We're not going to vote for you.

Cit 3: Down with the garbage.

Cit 4: What'll we do with those boys.

Cit 1: We'll conscript them.

Cit 2: Let them fight the war instead of talking about it.

Cit 3: We'll send them to the Middle East.

UPROAR

CHATTER

ACT III.

SCENE: DUG-OUT IN TRIPOLITANIA WITH CANDLE IN BOTTLE ON
PACKING CASE.

CHARACTERS: PRIVATE LAZER
PRIVATE ALTER CASH
BOMBARDIER BOB
SERGEANT MUCKRAKE
PRIVATE LEE
PRIVATE COAL
FRIEDBREAD RAT (O.C).

SCENE OPENS:- LAZER, CASH AND BOB (GAGGED) ON STAGE. LOWER
HALF OF KING COAL SHOWING IN DISTANCE. KING COAL ON GUARD.

CASH (TO LAZER): NOW LOOK AT the hole you've got us in, Private Lazer.
We're deep in the heart of cactus ~~now~~ That's what comes of
having a General Election.

LAZER: How was I to know we'd get in this mess ? I only brought in
conscription. I didn't expect to be conscripted.

COAL TURNS ROUND. DROPS RIFLE

COAL: There's a woman outside.

CASH: Is she my type ?

COAL: Is she your type ? (LOOKS OUT THROUGH BINOCULARS) She's alive
and breathing. (COAL GOES OUT)

COAL (OFF STAGE): ~~Are you sixteen, little girl ?~~

GIRL (OFF STAGE): ~~YES Please.~~

BOB GESTURES

LAZER: Bob thinks we'd better change the guard. (CALLS). Paddy.

COAL (OFF STAGE): Run away little girl, run away.

COAL ENTERS AND SALUTES.

COAL: Yes, bombardier.

LAZER: Bob says he'll take over for a spell.

CASH: You'd better lend Bob those binoculars.

LAZER: Yes, the Army seems to have come into its own at last.

COAL: You unutterable cads. I've said it before, and I say it again:
Those binoculars belonged to Harry Holland. On guard for 15
minutes, and I come back to find all the rations gone.

CASH: How'd you like a beer now, Paddy ?

COAL: Gee --- even that 2 per cent would go well now, wouldn't it ?

CASH: If you hadn't quarrelled with Muckrake, he might have won the
election for us. Funny we haven't seen him since we've been
over here.

BOB (EXCITED) DROPS RIFLE. THROUGH DOOR ENTER SERG. MUCKRAKE.

MUCKRAKE: Happy in your work men ?

ALL: Yes, thank you, Uncle.

MUCK: Sergeant to you.

LAZER: Congratulations on your new stripe, Unc - er - sergeant. What unit are you in now ?

MUCK: I'm in the Y.M.C.A. I run the Lowry hut in Cairo.

CASH: What brought you here ?

MUCK: I just called round to see if you boys are in need of any home comforts.

LAZER: Has my long woollen underwear arrived yet ?

MUCK: It's on the bottom.

LAZER: Ah yes, but whose ?

MUCK: I mean the Red Sea, you idiot.

COAL: Can't get me any beer, can you ? Even that 2 per cent is wet.

MUCK: Sorry. But there's some very fine Horlicks at my canteen. It'll make you sleep over night.

COAL: That stuff on leave. Who wants to sleep in these Arabian nights. We spent most of a night in the Wazir.

LAZER: Was a good show, too.

MUCK: Well, I don't seem to be needed here. There are other friends I must help along the desert's dusty road.

(RECITES):-

The soldier no matter what his rank or code,
Deserves all help we give him on his road.
And when the storms and desert sands are blowing,
The boys are there, and there I must be going.

Isn't that a lovely thought to end up with ? S'long boys.

EXITS, FALLING OVER LT. LEE WHO ENTERS. ALL STAND AND SALUTE.

Lee; Stand easy men. I was in the ranks once myself. Any complaints? How do you like your new quarters ? You seem very comfortable here. Any rats round here ?

LAZER: No, he's just gone on guard, sir.

LEE: We can't have that slackness on parade, Private Lazer.

LAZER TIGHTENS BELT.

COAL: Is there any chance of promotion in the Army, sir ? After all, I was a Union Secretary once, in 1914.

LEE: Yes, but where were you in 1916 ?

CASH: What a sell.

COAL: You can talk.

CASH: And I mean to. Your namby-pamby method of dealing with the miners cost us thousands of votes.

COAL: You didn't help much, you were away all the time.

CASH: I have to do all the thinking for the party, you scurrilous, scoundrelly, schoritchel burger.

COAL: You carping, crawling, cringing canoodleburger.

LAZER: No, he's just a lazy, loafing, lickspitting lumberburger.

COAL: Ah, that's right. That's the burger.

CASH SETS ON COAL. FIGHT BETWEEN CASH, COAL, LAZER.

LEE: What's the meaning of this ? Come to attention in the presence of your superior officer.

LAZER: (EMERGING FROM SCRUM): I'm sorry sir, I lost my temper.

COAL: (PICKING SELF UP, RUBS SELF): I bumped my thumb. I've thumped my body all over. (TO BOB) Listen you, and the others here. I'm calling for volunteers for a night raid on a line of enemy pill-boxes.

COAL: No more number nines for me.

LEES: I want three men from this dugout.

LAZER: First of all, we'll send old Bob. He can't say no. D'yer hear that Bob ? We've volunteered for you.

CASH: One will do, won't it sir ? Bob's equal to three ordinary men.

BOB GESTURES. SHAKES FIST.

LAZER: You two had better go. You're a single man, Paddy. You'd be just the man, too, Walter. You've travelled round a bit.

CASH: I'll say. It's time I had a rest.

LAZER: My responsibilities to the Dominion won't let me go. Otherwise I'd be among the first to offer my services.

CASH: Little Sid Holland is looking after those responsibilities for you now. Don't let us deprive you of your chance of ~~going~~ glory.

LAZER: I'm only a private. Privates never get the V.C.

COAL: They get the V.D. ~~too~~.

LAZER: You mean the ~~Victoria~~ Decoration, of course.

COAL: Of course, ~~of course~~.

LEE: Let's get down to business, mer. I want the names of the men who are coming with me.

LAZER: (HASTILY) Bombardier Sample, Private Cash, Private Coal, I'll stand here and hold the fort.

COAL: How FORTunate for you.

LAZER: Well. that's settled then.

LEE: Fall in, men.

COAL: We fell in when we came over here.

THREE VICTIMS SCRAMBLE INTO POSITION.

LAZER: (SINGS) Now is the time when I must say goodbye;
Soon you'll be marching far away with Lee.
When you are gone, then I'll remember you.
Men who stood by me, strong and staunch and true.

COAL, CASH, AND BOB SING. (BOB ASSISTS WITH ACTIONS)

To you old Pete, aloha from the bottom of our hearts;
Keep the gun at your side, and the flag flying high;
We'll all salute you as we go out to die.

ALL: We'll meet again;
Don't know how, don't know when;
We all shall meet again,
Some Labour Day;
When Labour's in power.

STEPS OFF

COAL: LOOKS OUT, AND THEN COMES BACK: There's a man out there with a moustache.

CASH: Tell him to go away. I've got one.

ENTER GENERAL FRIEDBREAD.

FRIED: What's going on around here ?

ALL STAND AT ATTENTION.

FRIED: Haven't I seen you before somewhere ? (PEERS AT LAZER) I've seen that face before. Isn't that Lord Humberg the Hamburg of Horsburg, the rollicking rook of the rich ?

LEE: (CLICKS HEELS) Oh no, sir. That's Private Lazer. A very worthy member of my platoon. His civil occupation has not altogether fitted him, for a military career, but I'm knocking him into shape.

LAZER SURVEYS OWN FIGURE.

Ah yes, I remember now. And these were your partners in crime? I wasn't a party to it. I had my own party.

FRIED: Well lieutenant, I'm pleased to see that you're making soldiers from such crude material. But shouldn't one of these men be on sentry-go ?

CASH: Please sir. Bob just came in to wash his hands.

LEE: Return to your post immediately and keep a sharp lookout.

BOB SALUTES AND EXITS TO POST.

FRIED: Fine body of men you have here Lieutenant.

LEE: They've just volunteered for the dawn patrol. They're going out and they may be some time.

FRIED: Magnificent, magnificent. I'll inspect them before they go.

LEE: IN two ranks fall in.

THEY CLOWN ABOUT.

LAZER: I'll stand in for Bob. But only for the inspection.

FRIEDBREAD INSPECTS THEM. DURING INSPECTION BOMB ENTERS

SHELTER FROM ROOF.

COAL: (NUDGES CASH) What's that ?

CASH: I dunno, ask Lazer.

LAZER: I dunno, ask the General.

COAL: Er - excuse me General, what's that ?

FRIED: (CASUALLY) That's only a bomb.

COAL, LAZER, AND CASH SCRAMBLE FOR A CORNER AND TAKE

FRIEDBREAD AND LEE WITH THEM.

BOB, HEARING COMMOTION ENTERS, LOOKS ROUND ENQUIRINGLY. SEES BOMB. LOOKS AT IT PUZZLED. HEAVES IT OUT NONCHALANTLY.

BOMB EXPLODES. BOB FAINTS.

FRIED: (EMERGING FROM THE HEAP) Magnificent courage. What devotion to duty Lend a hand you men, help him up.

LEE: Fall in.

COAL AND CASH MARCH OVER TO BOB AND RAISE HIM. TAKE OFF HIS GAG.

FRIED: You shall be decorated for this.

BOB FILLS OUT CHEST.

LAZER: Of course we will. We did remarkably for our first affray on active service.

ECB: I'll say you were active. I made things hum, didn't I sir ?

FRIED: Good show, Bob, good show. Properly at ease men. Attention!

ALL STAND AT ATTENTION.

FRIED: With the compliments of the season, Bob.

TAKES LARGE MEDAL FROM OWN CHEST AND PINS IT ON BOB'S.

ALL: Hip, hip, hip Hurray! Hip, hip, hip Hurray!

ENTER MUCKRAKE. SALUTES GENERAL.

MUCK: Sir, I have a most important message.

BRINGS OUT SIGNAL BOOK AND STARTS MORSE.

FRIED: Come to your senses man. What the devil does that mean?

MUCK: Briefly, sir, it means this. (READS) Country fed up. Stop.
Holland in Dutch. Stop. Director of National Service appeals
for Private^S/Lazer, F., Cash, A., Coal, O.K., Bombardier
Simple, B.B. Stop.

FRIED: D.S.O. of course.

MUCK: (CONTINUES READING) Urge immediate release for work on Home
Front.

LAZER: There's no place like home, boys.

FRIED: In view of the outstanding valour you have shown today, I take
great pleasure in releasing you from His Majesty's Armed
Forces in the Middle East, so help me God! Signed. Freyberg.

STANDS AT ATTENTION.

ALL JOIN IN CIRCLE AND SING TO TUNE OF "CARRY ME BACK TO
OLD VIRGINNY."

Chorus

Carry us back to Old New Zealand
There's where the cocky and the butter-fat are prized
There's where the miners are kings in the winter
N.Z.'s the land that we nearly socialised
There's where we laboured so hard for the masses
Day after day for a Utopian plan we'd boost
No place on earth has been taxed more severely
Than Old New Zealand where the Unions rule the roost

Praiser

Carry us back to Old New Zealand
There let us live till we build a Golden Age
Off in the halls of the House shall we linger
Till every worker is on the Basic Wage
Holland and Savage are long gone before us
We have not followed where they would have led
Still will we strive for the good of the people
Although the bulk of our principles are dead

Chorus

Carry us back to Old New Zealand
There's where the State owns everything you grow
There's where a wharfie's one up on a banker
There's where the best of our labour leaders go