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K. S. Venkataswami
V. C. Gopalratnam

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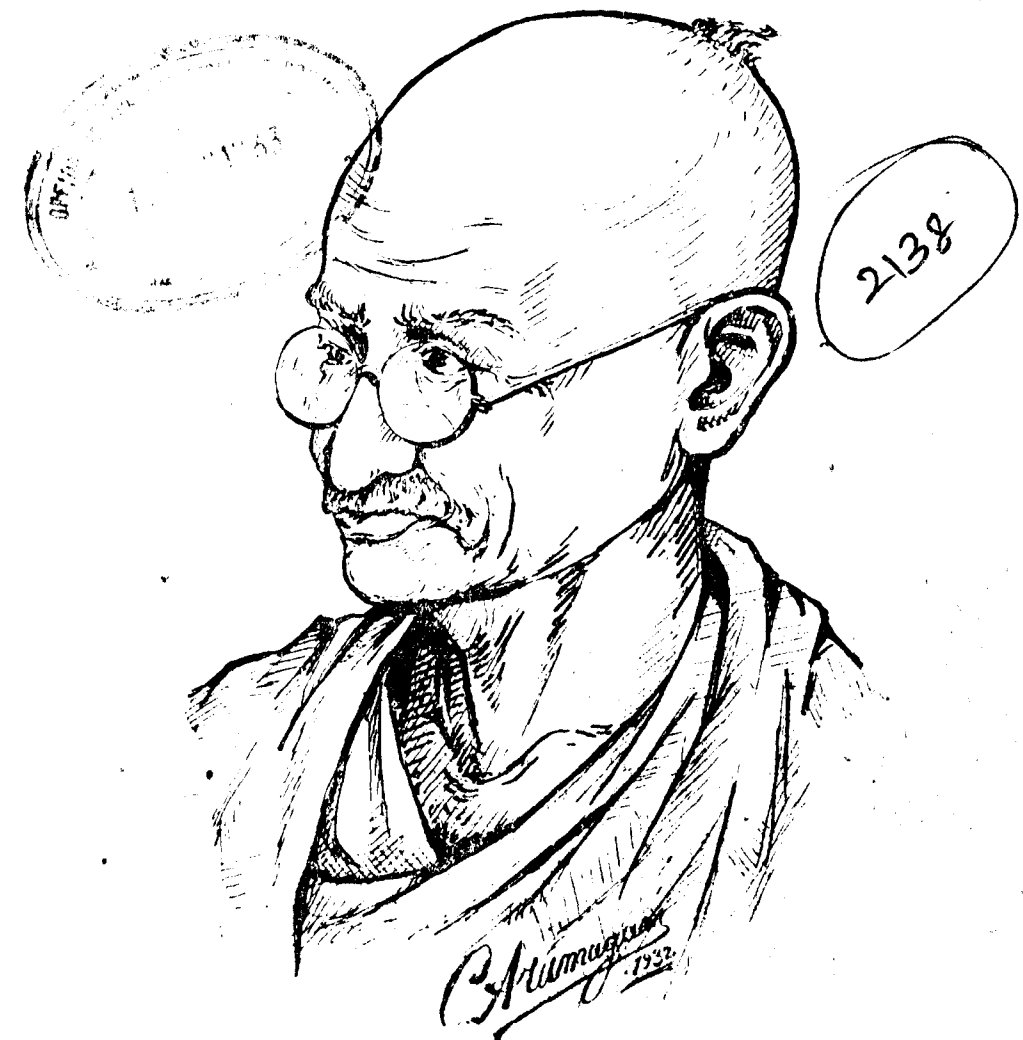
48 Pages
As. 2

The MERRY MAGAZINE

Vol. I

MADRAS, 10th MAY, 1933.

No. 9.



To-day, more than ever before, in the heart of every son of the motherland, is engraved the image of our guardian saint. And, once more, a nation in agony turns to the prison at far off Yerravada, awaiting in fear and trembling the outcome of the fateful decision the Mahatma has arrived at.

CONTENTS

	PAGE.		PAGE.
1. SPARKS FROM OUR ANVIL ...	289	18. A COMEDY OF ERRORS (M. C. MENON) ...	316
2. THE MAJESTY OF THE LAW (LEO) ...	290	19. PHONOGRAPHY (V. GANAPATHI) ...	317
3. APPROPRIATE ADVERTISING ...	292	20. THE BRINJAL SELLER (R) ...	319
4. MY PET ABOMINATION (K. S. VENKATARAMANI) ...	293	21. MAN, AS HE IS CREATED (P. RANGAPRASADA ROW M.A.) ...	320
5. APRIL LUCKY NUMBERS ...	294	22. THE CREAM OF THE JEST ...	321
6. THE GOAT (P. P. SAMUEL) ...	295	23. NEWSPAPER PARASITES (DR. CYNICUS) ...	322
7. TICKLERS (TUT TUT-TUT) ...	297	24. ONE MINUTE STORIES ...	324
8. AN ANT-IC (V. C. GOPALRATNAM) ...	298	25. YOU WOULD LIKE TO KNOW ...	325
9. BALA, THE BAD WOMAN— THE RETURN OF BALA (DEISVI) ...	300	26. SENSE AND NONSENSE ...	326
10. OTHER PEOPLES' HUMOUR ...	305	27. TAKE IT FROM ME ...	328
11. BRAIN-WAVES! (NEIL A'CANTEN) ...	306	28. BARBERS ...	328
12. VITAMIN-P (KALYAN) ...	309	29. OUR READERS AMUSE ...	329
13. THE LOGIC OF PROHIBITION ...	310	30. MR. EDITOR.....HIS PAGE ...	330
14. MUSINGS ON MAIDENS—THE JAPANESE GIRL (G. VENKATACHALAM) ...	311	31. RESULTS OF 'EN' COMPETITION ...	331
15. CORRESPONDENTS ANSWERED ...	312	32. 'SUPPLY A LETTER' COMPETITION ...	332
16. A TOSS-UP (FELIX SUM) ...	313	33. FREE INSURANCE SCHEME ...	333
17. "SAID THE SPARROW" (E.M.) ...	315	34. TAJ MAHAL JIG-SAW ...	334
		35. FREE INSURANCE COUPON ...	334

THE MERRY MAGAZINE

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THE MERRY MAG

Vol. I.

MADRAS, 10th MAY, 1933.

No. 9.

SPARKS FROM OUR ANVIL

Mr. Churchill objects to be classed with Gandhiji as a non-co-operator. This disposes of the rumour that he had applied to be enrolled a member of the Congress.

Sir Samuel Hoare gave a display of skating at the Park Lane Ice Club in the presence of Mr. Baldwin and other Conservative ministers. We understand that the performance has completely allayed the apprehensions of the die-hards, regarding the outcome of the Joint Committee deliberations.

The Rt. Hon'ble Mr. Srinivasa Sastri is reported to have said: 'I've sometimes been accused of playing a dubious part.'

We must say, we've never heard of the qualification.

Mr. Shanmukham Chetti declares that the Assembly Presidentship is only 'an avenue of service to the country.'

He had, however, to enter it, *via* OTTAWA!

The same gentleman reminded the Lord Mayor of Madras that both of them were still young.

We are confident that they will live it down!

With reference to Mr. Macdonald's talks with President Roosevelt, a bulletin says that so far, 'only a preliminary exploration of different routes had been commenced.'

Presumably for Mr. Macdonald's return journey to England.

'Having seen the four engineers returned from Russia, Sir John Simon declared that he was convinced they were innocent.' Reuter's report.

Seeing is believing.

English papers regret the omission of the Rt. Hon'ble Mr. Sastri from the Consultative Committee. We regret that he did not announce his decision to co-operate in working the new constitution earlier.

Reuter says that Thornton and Macdonald are being given preferential treatment in their Russian prison.

Trust Britons to obtain the 'most favoured treatment' anywhere!

During the last session of the Assembly, Sir Hari Singh Gour once stated that his party was unanimously of opinion that the house should be adjourned by the 12th inst. It subsequently transpired that (a) the decision was not unanimous, (b) the subject was not discussed, (c) there was no quorum for the party meeting and (d) that no notice of the meeting had been given!

Sir Hari Singh's defence is that he was making experiments with truth.

The same gallant knight made history once by going into the division lobby alone. He thus proved the unique strength of his party.

It is stated that the members of the Assembly, who have not been invited to London in one capacity or another, have memorialised the Viceroy that they should be allowed to assist their colleagues in their attempts to assist the Joint Committee, in its attempt to assist the Secretary of State for India, in his attempt to assist the Cabinet, in its attempt to assist Parliament to fulfil its declared intention to assist India to an increasing share of the pains and penalties of Self-Government. But they are a negligible minority!

Sir Robert Horne describes himself as a moderate of good will; whereas Mr. Churchill is of moderate good will.

Sir Samuel Hoare predicts that the Indian extremists will be unable to capture any of the new legislatures. It will be recalled that he made a similar prophecy in regard to Burma.

Sir Alfred Knox complains that the testimony of Indian witnesses is untrustworthy. Let us hope that Sir A. P. Patro will fare better this time.

"The South Indian Peoples' Association and the 'Justice' through its Secretary Mr. M. Damodaram Naidu, Advocate, made an application for the winding up of the said Company on the ground that the business was carried on at a loss and that it was unable to pay its debts. Mr. Narasimha Aiyer appeared for the Company."

News in a Daily Paper.

Bravo, Brahmin. You have survived Justice and lived to assist at its obsequies.

THE MAJESTY OF THE LAW

(L B O)

"Courts of Law should be quite plain and simple in their architectural appearance. Law personified is of majestic presence....."

A grave, not to say a sad simplicity of style will best reflect the mental, moral and physical conditions of those whose interests compel their unwilling attendance..... Grandeur or magnificence is merely impertinent..... Inevitably the association of courts of law seems to be rather with lunatic asylums and debtor's prisons than with palaces and temples, and taking a middle position between the two groups, a style neither grandiose nor mean, splendid nor sad, but a happy medium of decent plainness, seems to be the most satisfactory and proper."

It is clothes and not manners that maketh man. Some years back, a gentleman went to the White House and there craved the favour of an interview with the then President of the United States of America. He was forced to wait a rather long while in the antechamber before audience was granted. The not-too-well-dressed gentleman, however, waited until his patience had its reward. After the close of his conversation with the President, the latter courteously arose and escorted his visitor to the steps of the Presidential residence. The visitor's curiosity overcame his politeness and he turned round and asked, "Mr. President, I was forced to wait a long time before I could secure admission to your presence but now the President comes to his doorstep to see me off." With a smile, the latter replied, "We judge a man by his clothes but we treat him according to his deserts." This tale may be apocryphal but it deserves to be true.

All men, however, are not as discerning as Mr. President was. We say, lightly, appearances are deceptive and go on being deceived by appearances. We know that a coat of fur may cover many imperfections but whoever chose rabbit skin if he could have fur? When Rudyard Kipling writes

"The Colonel's lady and Judy o'Grady
Are sisters under their skins."

we all agree and think what a knowing feller that fellow Kipling is and how cleverly he gets deep down into the recesses of the human heart and gets at the truth. And, incidentally, we slap ourselves on our backs and feel that we are rather knowing 'uns ourselves.

Which is as well. But human nature being what it is and our rulers and legislators being what they are, rules of ceremonial and form have been prescribed as a necessary corollary to the doing of certain acts of public importance. Of two great ex-Speakers of the House of Commons, Peel and Gully, it was said that one ruled by awe, and the other by law.

Take then the law of the land in which we live. We are all of us within the law, though not in the Kiplingesque sense. At some time or other in our lives, we are willy-nilly brought into contact with it in some capacity, pleasant but more often unpleasant. Therefore it is thought meet that the law, that is, the administrators thereof, must, during the discharge of their duties be clothed with great pomp and ceremony, in order that the beholder may be suitably impressed with the awful majesty and power of the law. The local celebrity on the Bench of Honorary Magistrates venting his spleen on some luckless vagrant and the Judge of His Majesty's High Court of Judicature boring his hapless listeners with some spiteful irrelevance, are alike invested with the romance that doth persistently cling to the officers of the law. And meet it is that when the law functions, it must do so with due ceremonial and form.

In our own local High Court, the fountain-head of our law and the repository of Justice, our High Court Judges, there are some fourteen of them, move and have their being. A Judge arrives in his motor-car which draws up under a portico to which is affixed a notice reading "Judges' Entrance." A dozen or so *chobdars* are scattered about near the steps under the portico, each one of them armed with a long, ornamental silver stick or mace. (Of this, more anon.) As soon as the car containing the Judge comes to a standstill, one of the waiting group detaches himself from the others, springs forward to open the door of the automobile and the Judge, just at present looking neither particularly impressive nor gravely judicial, steps down with some difficulty. The *chobdar* now takes command and having given his white gown an

unnecessary pat, he grasps the mace firmly in one hand and starting from about three paces in advance, stalks along in front, turning neither to the right nor to the left but looking steadfastly in front. Not a flicker is there in his eyelid, not a muscle moving in his face. How he manages to repeat this performance every working-day of his life and many times in each working-day and yet keep his countenance, is a thing wrapt in mystery. One day, perhaps, one more indiscreet or garrulous than the others of that band of strong, silent men will let us into the secret.

But we keep His Lordship waiting. Onward and upward then goes the *chobdar* and the Judge, whose task of finding his Chambers is thus made beautifully simple, follows with some little difficulty and attains the safe haven of his Chambers.

The Judge safely steered thereinto, the *chobdar* leans the mace against the door-post and relapses into an attitude of negligent ease on the verandah. Not for long, however; for, in a few minutes, His Lordship comes out, ready to start on the journey to the courtroom, there to begin the arduous labours of the day. Let us follow His Lordship. But, stay! Surely this is not the same gentleman we saw step out of the automobile and walk upstairs. Yes, it is. But he has donned his robes of office. Gone are the soft collar and frivolous coloured neck-tie, the trousers of white drill or duck can hardly be seen, the ample dark silk robe covers everything in its embracing folds. You can distinguish the snowy white high collar of starched linen and the two long bands flowing out from under it and hardly anything else of His Lordship, save, of course, His Lordship's face, which has now assumed an expression, at once judicial and stern. We have kept His Lordship waiting again. We apologise and we promise this will not happen again.

So, once more, the procession starts with the *chobdar* in the van. Along the corridors,

the Law, in all its majesty, proceeds and even the most case-hardened tout, hurrying hard on the heels of his victim of the moment cannot help shrinking a little closer to the wall while the stately procession wends its way along—the central figure in it, Olympian aloof, unbending.

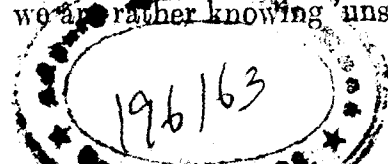
Soon, however, the portals of His Lordship's court-room are reached and in a silence, in which you can drop the proverbial pin and be only a pin the poorer (though, of course, you can always pinch one from the pin-cushion on the table in the Advocates' Room, His Lordship enters the room by the doorway sacred to His Lordship's exclusive use and slowly climbs the steps of the *dwis* on which His Lordship's throne is set. The Court-keeper, timing himself to a nicety, in a stentorian voice, bellows forth the word "Silence" what time His Lordship, having negotiated the necessarily narrow opening between the edge of the table and his chair, sinks back into the padded recesses of his luxurious judgment seat. All present in court, who had sprung to their feet at the moment of His Lordship's entrance, resume their seats with the usual scraping and shuffling.

The Bench Clerk now rises and gabbles some words from a printed list in his hand and counsel springs to his feet and addresses the Court. "M'lud" says counsel, "Your Lordship sees, in this case, M'lud, and I really need not stress this point, M'lud, as your Lordship will be able to perceive, M'lud"—And with an air of weary resignation which His Lordship does not attempt very heartily to conceal, His Lordship sinks back into his chair. Shall we blame His Lordship if sometimes he were to mutter to himself "Good Lord, at least three hours more of this preposterous windbag." But, my Lord, may we respectfully remind your Lordship that at the end of this not too arduous day, there will be a matter of some fifty pagodas credited to your Lordship's salary account.

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My Pet Abomination

(K. S. VENKATARAMANI)

KIND reader, I propose giving you a treat on shaving if you are of the leisured class of the idle but reading rich, with the temperament that enjoys the trivialities of life, a gift that is pre-eminently the heritage of the poor. My temperament for all its philosophic outlook and verbal exuberance is one such, well-combining the virtues of the poor and the vices of the rich. Though I enjoy very much an essay on shaving, preferably from my own pen, this civilised and civilising operation itself is one of the major agonies of my life and of this *Kaliyuga*. For me it takes away the holiday sense, and the glory of Sunday morning, the day sacred to the Sun god.

But shaving is the symbol of civilised, urban life. It is a primary operation that keeps in check the excrescences of evolution. It ranks only next to eating. And there are as many ways of doing it as there are temperaments. There is in shaving the devotee as well as the atheist, the rationalist as well as the fanatic, the hero who races a smart blade with lightning speed all over the hills and dales of the face, and declares himself ready for coffee, lovingly patronising with his finger an occasional cut or two as if he had discovered his own *atman* by some splendid accident. There is also the fortnightly veteran who would fain grow a beard, if only to save the inroads into his privy purse allotted to him of queenly grace—but has to clear the 'jungle' out of a contemptuous regard for social tyranny.

Kind and clean-shaven reader, in any event, shaving has gained a grip on man as old as his own appetite. But I wonder whence has man taken this vow of destruction of hair which womankind adores? Is it because of cussedness and rivalry between the two sexes in all the affairs of the world? But by this Socratic method, I know I cannot befriend you, impatient reader. Let me then reveal to you by personal anecdote my philosophy of shaving.

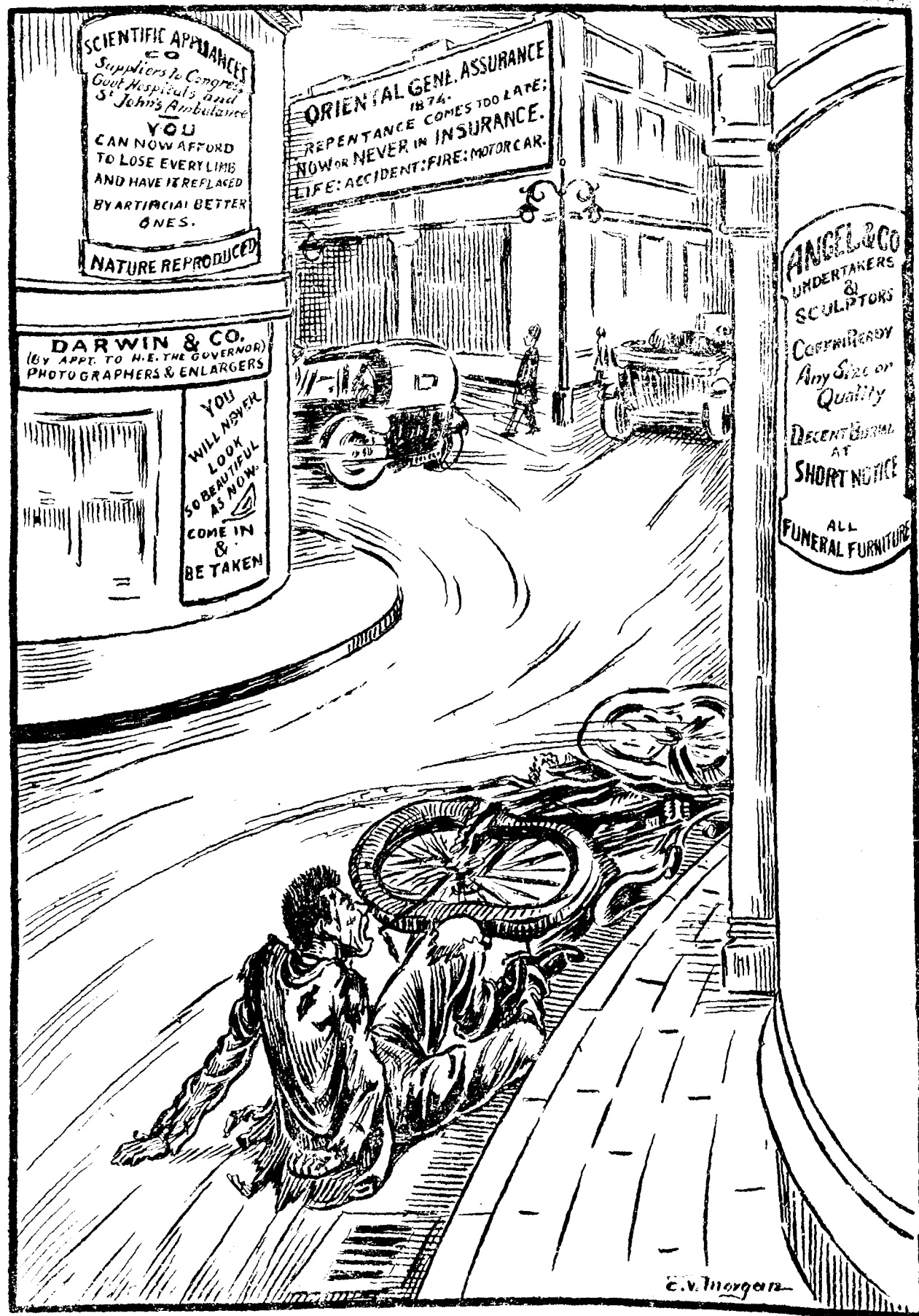
By temperament I should like to have my shave very early in the morning; for nothing

like an early bath as our *sastras* and *charaka* say—and I for one prefer to have a bath after a shave, if only to wash away the greasy touch of the barber. But who can muster up the courage for the ordeal before a cup of coffee whose aroma, as distilled in the South Indian home, is hard to beat even in Turkey under Kemal Pasha?

Advanced reader, you who have erected a shrine to the shining steel blade, will you be shocked to hear that I am not of the self-shaving variety, but a pucca sanataniist who enjoys the roaming pleasure of a vegetable cutter scalping the head, though of late, a conversion is slowly coming over me, making me feel that the barber is the first link that ought to be cut off in the economic and professional interdependence of our complex modern life. And don't pity the barber for the loss of his vocation. For, the manumitted barber will surely become the village surgeon; how else, can you carry medical relief to the seven lakhs of Indian villages, and work—work means talk in plenty—for rural reconstruction.

Therefore, kind reader, if you are still following me, every early Sunday morning, primarily for the pleasure and courage of coffee, I put off my barber on some plea or other—he calls thrice on Sundays to ascertain my royal moods. Of course I give a handsome subsidy to this unfortunate pillar of civilisation, because I am eager both to finish and to put off this perilous weekly venture, like a patient awaiting a surgical operation. Then coffee puts in some mixed courage, and I await fearfully the tread of the barber. Eventually he fixes me up. Once he has control of my head, especially in that meek posture of submission, as we the orthodox do it, I behave charmingly—with something of the maturity and wisdom of riper years and the resigned innocence of a child on the castor-oil day.

My surrender is complete, and to avoid all possible ill-will on either side I supply the barber with all the modern amenities for



"Appropriate Advertising!"

The Merry Magazine

this game of skill and delicate touch: a Kropp razor of pure Sheffield make—the Buy Indian League cannot convince me in matters of life and death—and an indifferent shaving stick, and a beautiful brush quite after my heart, which sheds in sympathetic profusion its own hair every time it is called into play; the two are pure Indian products. But with all this equipment and pre-vision, my safe emergence is a matter of luck, like everything else in this world, resting on the *lagna* and *nakshatra* for the shaving hour. If Mars predominates, there is spilt blood, and if Jupiter rules, there is only an irritated scalp with no legal evidence of injury. On such lucky Jovian days, I feel as delighted as if I had a dollar cheque from Chicago on the local Chartered Bank.

The shaving hour, the hour of delight to many, is not for me. The hour which is supposed to deliver man from the savagery of the jungle into the refinements of civilisation, is the hour of torture and vague agony to me—how many times have I not mistaken beads of rolling water for drops of blood, and hoped in vain that drops of blood may be but surplus water rolling down the cheeks for the sheer

joy of motion. There! no wonder shaving is my pet abomination.

But none the less I like my barber, though I tremble at the exercise of his skill. He is a true type of the under-dog, the Indian under-dog, poor, ignorant, helpless and exploited for ages, whom civilisation sweats so that it may shower its blessings on the chosen few. But for a strange feeling that without my four annas per week, his life would be harder still in these hard times, I would have long ago grown a beard, if only to cover a shy, receding chin with a shapely, marvellous, well-anointed growth that would go a long way to better my claims for poetic worth or the Sanyasin rank.

Already, kind reader, you would have made out some strong leanings in me to either side. After all, what end is nobler than that of a poet and a Sanyasin? If a hearty dislike of shaving leads me to such a noble destiny and opens up a career of such infinite possibility, half of my self-acquisitions, it includes a Kropp razor, I hereby will away to my barber, and the other half to the founding of a Medical College, where admissions shall be solely confined to the brave clan of barbers.

THE MERRY MAGAZINE APRIL LUCKY NUMBER SCHEME

Do you possess one of these numbers?

Below is given the list of winning numbers.

5 7 3 2	1 0 3 2 7
6 3 0 4	1 3 5 8 9
7 4 1 3	1 4 6 2 7
8 5 8 6	1 5 0 3 8
9 7 1 5	1 6 6 2 7

The Editor will pay Rupees Five for each copy of the Merry Magazine bearing the winning number.

Readers possessing the above copies are advised to send them intact by registered post or hand them over in person to us not later than 25th May '33.

Prize-winners residing out of India will have an extra week's time in which to claim their prizes.

In the event of any numbers remaining unclaimed by 3rd June '33 other numbers will be published in their place.

Now See Page 317.

THE GOAT

(P. P. SAMUEL)

THE thermometer had mounted to a hundred and five, and I was resting in the coolest spot of the house, feeling absolutely down and out, when my wife called to me that the goat had broken itself free and galloped down the road.

It was her goat. Ever since she learned from the newspapers that Mahatma Gandhi had given up cow's milk in favour of goat's, she made life impossible for me until I bought her the animal for twenty rupees. It was a marvellous beast, according to its previous owner. It had excellent manners, produced milk by the pint, at the shortest notice, and ate nothing but a handful of select leaves a day. Once, it seems, a man saw him milking it and offered him fifty rupees on the spot, but he wasn't in need of money then, and the goat was certainly worth more. It was indeed a hard bargain. He talked for minutes of goats in general and his goat in particular, and I responded with a long speech in which I called goats all the names in my vocabulary. I closed my peroration with an edifying talk on the World Slump and the scarcity of money, the bearded beast nodding approval all the time. Then my wife called me aside and whispered in my ear that it was going for an old song, so to say, and that I should buy it before he changed his mind. So we split the difference and the goat was mine—rather my wife's.



Tucking away the current issue.

It made a memorable debut by tucking away the current issue of the Merry Magazine. I didn't catch it red-handed—perhaps, I should have said blue-mouthed—but my wife told me the next day that she did see it munching something bluish. The Editor of the Merry Magazine had offered a prize for the lucky number and a little bird had told me that mine would be the winner. But the redoubtable woman saw only the humorous side of it.

“‘Lucky,’ did you say?” she laughed. “Yes, that’s the word. I daresay no other copy of the Merry Magazine has had the good luck to be digested by a goat and converted into milk and mutton. Cooeee-e-e-e-e-e.”

The merry dose seemed to have turned the beast’s head and made it a practical joker. It has had much fun at my expense since. The very next morning when we tried to milk her, she took it for a joke and reacted in a gamely manner. I asked Leela (that’s my wife) to hold her down by the hindlegs, but she gave a buckling jump, and wrenching herself free, caught me a juicy one on the snout.

“Did it hurt.....your.....nose?” asked Leela, making womanly attempt to choke a giggle.

I was nursing the member in question, tenderly, and trying to convince myself by autosuggestion that I wasn’t seeing any stars.

“Never say die!” said the daughter of Eve, helpfully. “She is a harmless creature.”

“She is Bernard Shaw on four legs,” said I, pointing to my damaged rudder, by way of giving evidence.

“No, dear, she isn’t really so bad as all that. Just look at her and see what a child she is.”

And sure there was the goat, looking mild as mild, and doing a spot of quiet semaphore with her beard.

“*Fortis cadere, cedere non protest,*” said I, and having reassured myself with the classical quotation (which means that the brave man may fall, but he will not

yield) I took courage and recommenced the



"The fruits of my industry."

The Merry Magazine

perilous task of milking. I put my whole weight into the job (I am a heavy-weight, by the way) and toiled at it for a full half hour. And there lay at the bottom of the can the fruits of my industry—half a teaspoonful of precious milk saturated with wool.

"Manners maketh a goat," says Shakespeare. Or is it Nathan? But my bearded devil annoyed me every hour by its ungently conduct. Within a week it had given me a broken nose and accounted for a copy of the Merry Magazine, a Cashmere sock, a silk tie, a piece of chamois leather and (gush!) my wife's best jacket. "Serve you right!" I should have told her, if I didn't have to buy her another. And in return for this balanced diet, the goat gave us twenty to thirty drops of milk a day.

"I'll tell you what," said I to Leela one day, "I shall sell it to a butcher."

"O dear! O dear!! O dear!!!" she blubbered, becoming as watery as a wet sponge.

"She is a White Elephant," I told her.

"No, she is a white goat," replied Leela, the figure of speech falling flat on her.

"But only a Henry Ford can afford to feed white goats on silk, linen, and Merry Magazines," I retorted. "She is a bit too cosmopolitan in her tastes to suit us."

"Oh, she is only a bit shy and giddy due to change of environment. She will come to in a few days, dear. I can assure you she is an angel at the bottom."

I couldn't agree. As far as my nose had a taste of it she was very hard at the bottom, and I wasn't sure if the bottoms of angels were made of cast iron. Of course I would have shattered her shyness and giddiness and nonsense in half a jiffy, if only she were a billy-goat. But to beat a nanny-goat (a woman!) was *infra dig*. Moreover, the cane we had at home was short and her legs were long. Supposing she took offence and indulged in a bit of leg-play and I was within range! So I let her be. But she had no idea of give and take and just won't let me take a little well-earned rest.

* * * * *

Last evening I was stretching my weary limbs after the day's toil when Leela called to

me: "The goat has bolted." I ran out to the gate just in time to see her stern disappearing round the corner.

"Quick," said the redoubtable woman.

"Quick what?" I wanted to know.

"After her, before she is lost!"

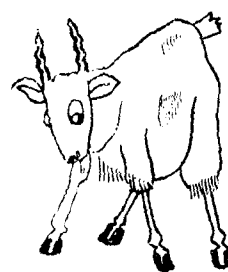
"Kismet," said I, sinking into an arm-chair.

I am always one for peace at any price and I saw that my domestic peace depended on the redemption of the wandering goat. But how to do it? There was a time when I was a lightweight and a long distance runner, but ten years of placid domesticity had metamorphosed me into a balloony heavyweight. To beat the beast—who was evidently a great sprinter and in form—after giving her a clean start of half a mile, carrying my twenty stone all the way, was an impossibility. It would have been easier to swim the Pork Strait and get my photograph in the papers under the caption: "A Great Porkine Swimmer."

After a few minutes of hard thinking I sallied out and made straight for my club. Yes, I would lie low till about 9 p. m. and then return home with a long face and a long tale of a weary chase, a nasty fall, a hair-breadth escape and things of that sort. Well, I would make it so pathetic that Leela would forget her quadruped altogether and be happy to have her biped back in a whole skin.

As I returned home at 9 p. m. I thought of the pestilential goat that was gone. Was I sorry? Heaven forbid! I should most certainly have died of bruises in a few weeks if the brute had remained. I felt like singing, singing the Hallelujah Chorus, when I thought I shouldn't see the beard of the wretched goat again!

"Glory be!" said I, opening the gate. But the sight that defiled my eyes made me utter a very un-parliamentary word, in the same breath. Was it a dream? No! by all the goats in the world. There was the blighted goat, on the steps, semaphoring away with its beard!!



TICKLERS

(TUT-TUT-TUT)

1. Annotate:—

- Physician, heal thyself.
- Willing to wound, but afraid to strike, A tim'rous foe and suspicious friend.
- They also serve who only stand and wait.

2. Write short notes on:—

- The Madras Public Services Commission.
- Soviet Justice.
- The Self-Respect Movement.

3. What do you know of:—

- Sir Mirza M. Ismail.
- Mr. Hilton Brown.
- Dewan Bahadur G. Narayanaswami Chetti C. I. E.,
- Mr. A. Rangaswami Aiyangar.

ANSWERS TO TICKLERS

- This is the Nazi retort to English protests against the ill-treatment of Jews in Germany. One of their papers was unkind enough to remind the Jewish and other members of Parliament that the Germans never said anything about British methods of suppressing Congress activities in India. They point out that one good turn should serve another.
 - This is the conclusion of the powers-that-be regarding the political and moral equipment of the Moderate Indian Patriots. Curiously enough, it seems to be the view of the extreme left also.
 - All the attempts heroically made by, for and on behalf of the Chettians of Saigon have not borne the expected results. France which said 'no' to her American creditor was not likely to quail before such small fry. She was, however, prepared to give the assurance to the Chettiar creditors, that their money would be safe, so long as they didn't ask for it! Hence this is the only consolation of the Chettians.
- One of the departments organised by our philanthropic local Government, and throwing a pleasing light on its benevolent intentions. Designed with a view to relieve unemployment among retired and retiring officials, it has, within a short time, not only become self-supporting, but bids fair to work at a profit, thanks to the voluntary contributions made to its funds by a large and growing body of youthful sympathisers.
 - To judge from English newspapers, it is nothing but a travesty of British justice. The Russian system is barbarous in the methods of interrogation,

since one accused is forced to answer questions without knowing what the other accused have said. Secondly, if an accused pleads guilty, it is not accepted unless independently proven. Under-trial prisoners are treated on the presumption that they might be innocent. Last and worst of all, when a man is condemned, he is awarded a sentence utterly at variance with his natural apprehensions, and is treated in prison as an honoured guest rather than as a culprit.

(c). This movement represents the Nemesis of the spirit of communalism in public life. The promoters of the movement act on the assumption that they cannot call their self-respect their own, unless they lose that of the world first. To this end they attack religion with religious zeal.

- It is hoped that he will not be the last Indian Dewan in South India. But the fates of Cochin and Travancore augur ill for our hopes. Is there any connection between I. C. S. Dewans and the coming Federation? (*Tut-tut-tut, questions are not permitted in answers!—Ed.*)
 - A minor official in the hierarchy of the Indian Civil Service, but a major humorist of 'Punch.' Has given us pictures of Anglo-India and sympathetic studies of the seamy side of the Revenue Department and subordinate officialdom. His hobbies have been collecting money for the Sircar, and sending objectionable people to prison. Is apparently fed up, for he is reported to be anxious to resign.
 - Is going to England, just to show that he can afford the expense without the help of the Government. Is a very self-satisfied individual, and has implicit faith in things as they are. If there is to be any change anywhere, he would suggest the addition of a single letter of the alphabet at the appropriate place in his title. We have since been given to understand that the Dewan Bahadur has changed his mind about the trip to Europe for reasons of health. There has otherwise been no change in his views.
 - A born editor, a very Delane. Has an uncanny knack of always attaining the palm without the dust. On the 7th April last, he wrote or caused to be written an epoch-making leading article calling for a change in the policy of the Congress. A swift retribution overtook him, for within three weeks the incensed gods have made him flee the country. Let us hope he will return a sadder and wiser man.

AN ANT-IC

(V. C. GOPALRATNAM)

It is always a very bad thing to do—to despise others for any supposed inferiority to us. Everything in creation has its mission. Even mosquitoes have their mission in life. They make us think kindly of the flies. Half the trouble that people get into in this world can be easily avoided, if only they would remember this. History has it—and history never lies—at least Ancient history never did—that the greatest city in the then known world, Rome, was saved by a pack of geese. To-day, every one of us is chokeful of contempt and derision towards these excellent creatures. We point the finger of scorn at them and their very name has become a term of common reproach. As my very particular friend, the night-watchman of Jacobs, would say “Gratitudo is very rare among men”. Take Robert Bruce; if he had had the least spark of gratitude in him, would he not have passed a “Spiders Protection Bill” to figure honourably for all time to come, on the statute-book? Should he not have ordered that all spiders’ webs ought to be preserved under the Ancient Monuments Act. But, instead of that, what have we now? A spider’s web is a thing of light consequence to be brushed aside by the merest chit of a chamber-maid. Rightly did Cardinal Wolsey say, “Put not thy trust in princes”. It is very regrettable that the spider should have ignored such excellent advice when it took it into its head to help Bruce the ungrateful.

We, Indians, are somewhat better in this respect. We have some feeling of gratitude still left in us. Have any of you ever sat and pondered over the problem, as to why the killing of a cat is considered to be a sacrilege? I have the reason for it from a sage whom I met the other day. It seems once a great Emperor was so unpopular that his life was attempted by an assassin who tried to stab him from behind. Nothing could have saved the Emperor from certain death but the timely interference of his pet cat. With an angry shriek, the cat jumped on the assassin, just in time to convert what might have been the fatal blow into a mere superficial scratch.

And the best part of the story is, after the assassin was safely secured, the cat came to its Imperial master and laid a little pot of Pomade-Vaseline at his feet: It was then that the grateful Emperor, in order to give the lie to Cardinal Wolsey’s dictum, ordained that thenceforth no cat should be killed throughout his Empire. The Imperial mandate has grown in course of time into a generally accepted spiritual ban with a spiritual sanction attached to it.

As long as I live, I shall never knowingly kill a black Ant—even if it nips me. It is not for any service ren-

dored to me personally that the little thing receives this consideration at my hands. It is a mark of thankfulness, for having on one occasion turned the life of forty youths, from one of eternal torture to one of serene happiness and bliss.

At that momentous period in my life, when I was twelve years old, I was the brilliant head-boy of the third form. Our pedagogue was a fifty-year old gentleman with distinct ideas on what he believed to be discipline. The code which he followed was formulated somewhere in the B. C.’s by a person called Draco who must have been suffering from an acute form of dyspepsia. To say that we loved our master would be about as true as to say that the Government loves Gandhi. Nor will I go to the extent of saying that we would have sung a paean of joy if we had heard on one fine morning that a motor-car had run over him. We first tried personal petitions to persuade our master (let me call him Mr. P.) to revise his methods. We failed. Then we tried ‘a report at headquarters.’ As a result, sundry students of our class were punished for disrespect to the teacher, by being directed to breathe the more rarified atmosphere of the class-room, for some hours at a stretch. Next we tried ‘gentle remonstrances’ like spilling ink on his white muslin turban or putting little lumps of gravel in his pocket, when he was looking away. We never attempted the German method of sticking a pin in his seat, for, he was a rare old bird and would never take his seat without first feeling it all over with his hand, staring all the time at us.

Things were in this predicament. On the day I am about to speak of, a dull gloom prevailed over the whole class who were waiting, of course not eagerly, for the arrival of the tyrant. I was deeply ruminating whether an anonymous letter threatening him with instant death would not be effective, when my eyes accidentally fell on a certain thing moving on the floor. It was a Black Ant going peacefully along. In the most absent-minded fashion, without even knowing what I was doing, I picked up the little thing and threw it on the pedagogic throne. Immediately, the agitator of our youthful hearts stalked into the class-room and took his seat—certainly not amidst cheers. It was the arithmetic hour and Mr. P. having pompously dictated an impossible sum to be worked, leaned back in his seat to chew the cud of betel-leaves recently munched.

Fifteen minutes were given us to work out the sum and failure entailed ‘worse than death.’ I had proceeded as far as the second step in the sum, when my eyes were irresistibly drawn as it were, to the muncher of betel-

leaves and puncher of juvenile heads, who was vastly enjoying the very pleasant pastime of picking his teeth. The Ant—May his tribe increase!!—having abandoned the rattan-back of the chair, had made an advance to the very person of ‘the enemy’ and was reconnoitring the country at the back. My heart was going like an uncontrolled automobile; forgotten was the sum to be worked; forgotten the terrors of the penalty therefor. I was hypnotised by the black speck, moving on the white stretch of Mr. P.’s coat and alternating hope and fear played havoc with my nervous system all the while. Finding nothing to interest it on the desert region of the coat, Mr. Ant grew venturesome and advanced into the difficult country at the nape of Mr. P.’s neck. Probably, not being able to tread lightly, he seems to have tickled Mr. P. who made one wild, sweeping, brushing movement with his open hand covering the whole back of his head.

‘All is lost’ was the foremost thought in my mind and unable to control myself, I let out a little scream and at once began to cough as afflictedly as I could. But this, and the explanation I offered that an ant suddenly nipped me, failed to convince Mr. P. who thereupon gave me twenty-four hours to write out an imposition to the effect that “I will not misbehave in the class any more,” a thousand times. I simply did not care for it. For, my eyes were rewarded with the welcome sight of my dear, little, black Ant which after miraculously escaping the onslaught of the tyrant’s hand, had consolidated its position on Mr. P.’s turban and was merrily going round and round. I would not have then minded even if I were asked to write out the imposition ten thousand times and I just escaped it by swallowing a second scream—one of delight this time—that rose to my lips.

By now, other eyes than mine had been drawn to the field of the black Ant’s activities. The sum was suspended in various stages of completion. With bated breath and fast-beating hearts, forty youths watched. The inspecting Ant was the cynosure of all eyes, the centre of all our hopes, and the lodestar of our fates. After investigating the various folds in the turban of the enemy, Mr. Ant turned his attention to “fresh fields and pastures new” and after a little preliminary skirmishing and manoeuvring, made but one dart straight into the left ear of our persecutor. Then, at the same moment, the following things happened:

Mr. P. jumped up as if he had received a 300 volt electric shock. An ink-pot on his table, unable probably to contain itself, jumped up also and shed its drops of inky joy. Forty voices made but one Red-Indian war whoop.

Mr. P.’s emphatic efforts to ‘shake off’ his assailant resulted in his turban falling down on the prostrate ink-pot, demonstrating the close similarity between book-

muslin and blotting-paper in their absorbing virtues. And Mr. P. very nearly sprained his neck.

Then, numberless recipes began to be offered gratis to Mr. P. who was executing a sort of Zulu war dance. Then, little Mani in his squeaky voice said, “No sir, it won’t come out like that. The black Ant has very powerful mandibles by which it grips objects with great tenacity. Did you not make me stand on the bench for three hours for omitting this sentence in my composition ‘On Ants’?”

Fat Muthu suggested drowning the Ant by pouring into the ear iced-water. Lean Kittu preferred boiling water because that would combine drowning and scorching. Precocious Paddu, who was already learning chemistry at home under a private tutor, gave us a lecture on the properties and comparative merits of Nitric, Hydrochloric and Sulphuric acids. “Any one of them,” he said “can simply dissolve a thing like a stupid black Ant.” Seenu, who anticipated Sir John Jellicoe, suggested a blockade and letting the Ant die of sheer starvation. Ramu doubted Seenu’s wisdom, as he said the Ant may come out of the other ear. Fat Muthu removed that difficulty by imploring that both the ears should be blocked. Mr. P. whether he heard these well-meant suggestions or not, was dancing about in mad agony and trying to take out the Ant by his forefinger which was about the thickness of the middle part of a ‘Flor de Spencer’. Perspiration was streaming down his face like a huge cataract. When Vengu went near him and put forth a plea for killing the Ant by inserting a lighted match Mr. P. actually kept quiet. It was only when stupid Subbu, in all earnestness proposed importing an Ant-eater from Australia that Mr. P. lost his temper and swore that he would make him (Subbu) eat the Ant when and if it came out, and stalked out of the class pursued by Balu’s only remedy, to wit, an operation by Dr. Nair who was then very much alive.

In two minutes Mr. P. came back with the mortal remains of a black Ant on his palm. Stupid Subbu shut tight his mouth, resolved to go on hunger-strike rather than—Ugh! But Mr. P. did nothing by way of enforcing his threat. He sat on his chair and looked long at the Ant on his palm. He never asked us how it was that all of us knew so positively that it was a black Ant. To give him his due, he was a very clever man and could put two and two together to make five, there was also the fact that none of us had gone beyond the second step in the sum, though there was time enough to finish it before Mr. P. was afflicted. We were neither rebuked nor punished. It was a supreme moment in Mr. P.’s life. And from that day, believe me, no teacher in that school was more popular with the boys than Mr. P. and from that day too, the black Ant has become to me an object of regard and affection.

2138

An Ant-ic

BALA, THE BAD WOMAN

AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY

By DEISVI.

IX. THE RETURN OF BALA



A plank tripped him up, he lost his balance and the plate clattered ominously to the floor.

In the preceding eight instalments.

Bala is given in marriage to a man old enough to be her father. She attains age and comes to live with her husband. He is an orthodox man and somewhat erratic. Bala's marital life is not at all normal. To all intents and purposes her husband behaves like a father to her. One day he tells Bala that her horoscope is bad and that the indications are that she would lead a "husbandless life".

Looking idly out of the window, one day, Bala sees a girl (Radha) run over by a car in the street. She renders first aid to the child.

Going out in the car another day, a strange man smiles at Bala. This man appears in Bala's dreams and makes love to her.

Bala sees on the Marina, her dream-lover and Radha walking hand in hand. She learns that he is Radha's father. While sitting all alone near the water's edge behind a boat one evening, Radha's father accosts Bala enquiring for the whereabouts of his child. Bala takes him to task for telling stories to the child, but he takes her in his arms and strange to say, Bala doesn't repel him.

Bala repents and resolves to stop her silly romance as she calls it and arranges to leave the city for a short stay at her father's place. Her father arrives in the city and while Bala and her father are seated in the train ready to depart, Bala's lover walks up the platform and introduces himself to Bala's father as her doctor.

Under the parental roof Bala pines for her lover and is melancholy and morose. She writes to her lover asking him to take her away and he promptly arranges for an elopement. He visits her as her doctor and cleverly manages to send her away on a lonely drive. The car develops convenient engine trouble about a few miles from Bala's native city to enable her lover to have a cross-country jaunt and join her. They gather some luggage left at a railway station and proceed towards Bangalore. On the way Bala develops a pain in the hip. On reaching Bangalore a lady-doctor is consulted who examines Bala and finds, among other things, that Bala is a virgin. The news is a great surprise to Bala's lover and while he is still agitated over it, at the cottage which he had selected for the night's sojourn, two policemen call and threaten to take back Bala, as a complaint had been lodged with the police about the "kidnapping" of Bala.

To say I was dazed at the turn of events, would be putting it very mildly. Where would this lead me to, I asked myself. Into a police court? I shuddered at the very thought. My lover noticed it and remarked;

"Well, gentlemen, I ought perhaps to tell you that this lady is ill—very ill. In fact, she came out of the doctor's hands only a few hours back. I don't think all of us are helping her to get better, nor do I think we differ on the point that she should get better. Her health must be our first consideration. Don't you agree?"

"Her health—and reputation," observed the taller of the two men.

My lover turned to me. "You know that small leather-case from which you helped yourself, while you were brushing-up. In a pocket inside the lid of the case, you will find a packet—of powders and instructions. I think it would do you much good if you will help yourself to one: meanwhile, I shall try to fix up this little misunderstanding with our friends here."

I was only too eager to run away and, without a word, I turned and left them.

There was a fat unaddressed envelope in the pocket in the leather-case mentioned by my lover and I opened the envelope with trembling hands. There were a number of papers pinned together and the first of these was a letter to me. Here it is:

Bala, dear,

I am writing this in case anything should happen to me. Now, don't get alarmed. The worst that could happen is confinement in a police lock-up for kidnapping, abduction, enticing away a married woman or some such silly charge. Who would set the law in motion, I don't know. It may be your father or your husband. My plans to-day are such that, before the long arm of the law reaches us, we would have reached our destination which is Bombay, and would have also gone through certain formalities which would place us beyond the pale of the law.

The Zamindar of Brizapur, of whom you might have heard, as he lives only a few miles away from your city, is a very good friend of mine. I have told him everything about us and I hope you don't mind. He thoroughly approves of our action and takes a very great interest in us and in our future. As I wrote to you, I shall come and see you as your doctor. The Zamindar has promised to give me his car for such time as I may want it. I shall somehow manage to send you for a lonely drive in the car and the driver, Abdul—a gem by the way—has detailed instructions. I will join you near the toll-gate. I have sent all the luggage to a wayside station. We will pick it up and proceed to Bangalore. We stay the night at Bangalore and then proceed by train via Poona to Bombay which is our destination. I have rented a small cottage there and engaged servants.

I am most anxious that whatever we do, we must not transgress such laws as are prevalent in this

country. My chief reason for this respect for law is only to avoid the publicity which transgression of law is likely to bring. But, unfortunately, I am told that there is no such relief as divorce for a Hindu wife. I have consulted lawyers, social reformers and a number of other people interested in inter-caste and widow remarriages and as far as I am able to gather, if we should require some sort of a sanction for living as man and wife, there seems to be no alternative left for us, except to change our faith. I cannot foresee what your own feelings in the matter would be, but I do hope you will persuade yourself that one might just as well call oneself a follower of the Bearer of the Cross as glibly as one says one is a believer in the Gita or the Zend Avesta, when one realises, however little it may be, the oneness of God. If you approve, I propose converting ourselves to the Christian faith and then getting married.

I am no prude. Do not for a moment think I care for public opinion. My suggestion is entirely to protect ourselves and prevent our being dragged into legal quagmires and featured in the newspapers.

These, in brief, are my plans. But if I am either arrested or locked-up, I do not want you to get disheartened and return either to your parents or your husband. They will use all the arguments the situation is capable of, and frighten you with the extent and nature of punishment they have in store for me. You will find below two names and addresses. The one is that of the Zamindar I have referred to above: the other is a good friend in Bombay. In the event of my arrest, telegraph to these friends the magic words, "Help Balakumar" and you will be surprised at what they can do.

You can implicitly trust Abdul. I have secured his services so that he may be of help to you in Bombay. He knows Tamil and Hindusthani and you will find him useful in interpreting your orders to the other servants in our Bombay cottage.

Our cottage! And there in the porch, I picture to myself, you and me sitting, holding hands: You cannot realise how eagerly I am looking forward to being there with you!

I am sure you would want to know what arrangements I have made about Radha. It was a wrench to part from her. Oftentimes I have called myself a selfish brute for deserting my child and my old mother in the pursuit of my own happiness. And as often when I thought of you, of the life that you were leading and of my promise to bring as much of happiness and sunshine into your life as I possibly could, I found it extremely difficult to select the path I had to tread. But after anxious searchings of the heart, I found a little light and I am nourishing it in the hope that it will grow even like our love and shed its radiant lustre to illumine all our lives.

To the outside world, it might appear that I am a hypocrite: that I delude myself that I am selfless,

But you, my own Bala, ought to know how much I love Radha, and what agony I had to endure before deciding to forsake her. If I have erred in deciding it so, may God have mercy on my soul!

My mother is another person in whom I had to confide. She doesn't approve of our plans. She foresees only disaster. She positively forbade me from doing anything which would bring all of us into 'disrepute.' She wept when she realised that she couldn't make me change my mind. It was pitiful. I had to be harsh to her.

I have a sister at Trichy. My mother and Radha have gone to live with my sister. I have made ample provision for their comfort.

A word or two about money. I am not very rich but I have enough to keep us in comfort for a couple of years at least. And if you have no objection, I think I can manage to earn some money during the hours when I am not engaged in convincing you of how much I love you.

Abdul has enough spare cash with him to meet immediate requirements. I have given the Zamindar of Erizapur a couple of thousands with instructions to hand it over to you in case anything should happen to me. You can trust the Zamindar implicitly and seek his help without any hesitation.

I want you to proceed to Bombay, strictly following our plans, should I be detained by the Police. I shall join you in a few days. Abdul will take you in the car and will look to your comforts. I know you have courage enough to make the journey alone. I am only afraid that in your anxiety about myself, you may hesitate and I dread to think of the consequences. You are too precious to lose and I should hate myself for being a bungling ass.

I am sure the enclosures to this letter will interest you.

As I write this in my office, late in the evening, I feel I am on the threshold of great happiness. You, my angel, are my guide and I, your slave. It is a bondage that is delicious and enchanting! Would to God that it continues to be so for ever and ever!

For ever, your own,

Kumar.

There were tears in my eyes as I finished reading this letter. That in God's free earth two people cannot fashion their lives as they think best, without law and society butting in at every step, was to my mind a tragedy. But such, as I could see, was the naked truth.

Proceedings in a court of law! I never anticipated such a calamity. Perhaps I would be put in the box and examined and cross-examined. I would rather die first than figure in a police court. And changing our faith with as much facility as one changes one's clothing! The idea was so shocking that I wondered how he could think of it! Was it necessary at all? I don't know and he

ought to know better than me and I was sure he would not have suggested it, except as a last resort.

I sank into a chair and read the rest of the sheets. One was a copy of a letter written by my lover to my father. He had acquainted my father with all the facts, appealed to his good sense with a request to leave us alone and not put obstacles in our path. The second sheet contained a declaration signed by my lover expressing his firm resolve to embrace the Christian faith and a similar sheet was there, intended perhaps to be signed by me. Another piece of paper contained the names and addresses. Yet another contained a list of his assets and I was surprised to find that they were considerable.

Putting all the papers away carefully back into the pocket, I allowed my mind to go in retrospect over all the incidents that had happened, ever since I saw him that eventful day when he smiled at me, while I was going out in the car.

To think that a wretched horoscope should have been the cause of it all! Of enlightened people who wouldn't have a girl as a daughter-in-law, because, forsooth, her horoscope was bad: of dotting parents—afraid not of a horrible daughter but of a horrible horoscope—throwing her away on an old man: of the incompatibility of age, mind and purpose: of affinities, and like attracting the like: of the course of true love, keeping true to the much-hackneyed proverb and never running smooth. What a world!

I decided that, whatever happened, the affair should not go to a court of law. I dreaded the publicity. I couldn't go through the ordeal. If anyone was to be blamed, it was I. It was I that encouraged him and made him break his home. It was I that made him forget his vow to devote his entire life to his child. And now here I was, in a fine mess, with the prospect of figuring in a police court and dragging every one of them there, into the bargain.

My mind was made up. I would rather kill myself than bring misery into the life of so many. With a wet towel I mopped my face, dried my tears and proceeded to the verandah.

My lover looked up at the sound of my foot-steps.

"Feeling better?" he asked me.

"Somewhat," I said and questioned him with my eyes. One of the policemen was absent.

"Mr. Naidu has gone out to get instructions on the wire. Our friends in their hurry have mislaid the warrant. Mr. Sambamurthy here has been kind enough to stay, to keep us company. Abdul has come back and is fraternising with the driver of the other car. If you feel sleepy, you can retire. The bed has been made-up."

"I want to tell you something."

"You shouldn't. 'Anything that you say will be taken down and used against you.' Don't you know that one?" And he smiled.

"Then I think I had better talk in my sleep," said I and sought my bed.

I was so exhausted in mind and body that soon after I stretched myself in the bed, I went to sleep. It was late in the morning when I woke up. The strange surroundings, the cold and crisp morning breeze, the birds chirping in the compound, brought back, little by little to my mind the events of the day before and the plight I was in. I heard voices in the hall and listened, reluctant to leave the bed.

"Have you no heart? Would you ruin an old man's life and make what little of it is left, miserable? I trusted you. You were my honoured guest. Would you, like a thief, steal my daughter and bring her to ruin, an object of ridicule and scorn. I pray you, I implore you, leave her alone! Even now, it is not too late! Only the two policemen know. They are good friends and can be trusted to keep a secret. Let me take her! Let me talk to her! God! You don't know what that child has been to me in my life! Our only Bala, her mother's pride, oh, we never could have imagined she would come to this. She was so happy with her husband! I saw it with my own eyes! Please, please, have pity on an old man and stop this foolishness!"

It was my father's voice. He must have arrived overnight. That policeman, the Naidu, must have wired to him. I trembled in my bed: got up and bolted the door. I didn't want to hear any more. I didn't want to see my father. I wished the earth would open and devour me. I flung myself on the bed and shed bitter tears.

* * *

Looking back on the happenings of that eventful day in the cottage at Bangalore, I cannot help feeling that I must have been very hysterical. I had neither bathed nor eaten the previous day. I had developed a pain in my body. The long drive in the car had made me tired. The visit of the policemen in the night was a great strain on my nerves. And to crown all, the plaintive appeal of my poor father I had overheard, wrung my heart and I lost control of myself. I had become, for the moment, just a baby who was afraid—terribly afraid—and longed for the safe refuge of a mother's arms. I opened the door, and sobbing, panting, with faltering steps, I reached the hall where my father and my lover were. I heard my lover say, ".....the world will still call her a bad woman!" I flung myself at my father. "I am not a bad woman, father! I never was, nor will be! I swear to you it is true! Oh, please, please take me away! I hate myself, I hate everything!"

He gathered me in his arms and patted me affectionately. There were tears in his eyes.

"There! there! dear child! Do not cry. I know you are good and you can never be bad. The fault is entirely mine and we won't say anything more about this hereafter. Come, let us go!"

He turned to leave the hall, holding me close to him. I never looked back at my lover, as I had not the courage. Before I had advanced a few steps, I heard him calling me.

"Bala!"

Just that one word! It still rings in my ears and will haunt me all my life. I covered my face with my hands and ran out of the house. My father came panting after me and helped me into a car waiting outside.

I never looked back. With head bent down and tears streaming down my face, I sat still, till the driver was found and could start the car. As the car lurched forward, I felt a giddy sensation. The outside world became a swirling maze and I collapsed into the arms of my father.

When I recovered consciousness, the car was still in motion but we had not left the city. My father gave me some water to drink and asked me, "How are you, child?"

"Where are we going?" I asked him with terror in my eyes.

"Anywhere you like except—" and he mercifully left the sentence incomplete.

"Take me to Madras—" I pleaded.

"I will. But don't you want to see your mother first?"

"No, No," I shook my head, the tears once again welling up. "I can't see her. Take me, oh, take me to Madras,—to my husband!"

"Alright, dear. Calm yourself and do not weep. I will take you to Madras. To the station, driver!"

Arrived at the Bangalore City Railway station, I sought the ladies' waiting room and there washed my face. My father lent me one of his towels and brought me coffee and eatables. He was kindness itself. Not a harsh word: not a word of reproach. But I could see that he had suffered terribly during the preceding twenty-four hours and I was the cause of it.

"I should like to send a telegram to your mother and also another to your husband, if you insist on going straight to Madras. What do you say?" My father asked me.

"Let me word them for you," I said and taking the paper and pencil he had ready, I wrote out the following telegrams. To my mother I wrote:

"Bala safe. Nothing wrong. Taking her Madras Evening Mail. Book her trunks Madras earlier train. No anxiety."

To my husband we sent the following message:

"Bala slightly indisposed. Bringing her Madras Mail. Send car station. No anxiety."

I spent the rest of the day inside the waiting room and father kept me company. We were silent most of the time. Once when I attempted to beg of him to forgive me, he very gently put his hand over my mouth and stopped me from speaking.

"Not a word, child, of what is past. I understand everything. The blame is entirely mine. Now, let us drop the matter and talk of something else."

"But, mother——"

"Sh! I will speak to her. You are right, after all, in not going to her just now. She wouldn't understand and would create a scene."

We had a compartment all to ourselves. Father never left me alone, even for a moment. I slept in the upper berth while he kept an all-night vigil down below. He was the best, the kindest, of men and I wish every girl had a father like him.

When the train steamed into the Central Station early next morning, to my great surprise, my husband was there, on the platform. He was beaming and happy. There were Erraiya and Manikka equally pleased at my return and beaming too.

"Where is your luggage?" asked my husband.

"It is following us. We were in a hurry," father explained.

"Then let us get along," said my husband and we went out to the car waiting outside.

What a relief to be inside my husband's house which I had once hated, thought I, as I disrobed, preparatory to a bath: and how I longed for that bath and a change of clothes! Bathed and dressed, I stepped out of my room and ran into my husband.

"Your father is still bathing. Come, let me give you the *prasadam*. You don't look ill at all. Why then the telegram?"

It was young Ramu's first ride in a railway train, and the succession of wonders reduced him to a state of hysterical astonishment. The train rounded a slight bend, and, with a shriek of its whistle, plunged into a dark tunnel. There were gasps of surprise from the corner where Ramu was seated. Suddenly the train rushed into broad daylight again, and a small voice was lifted in wonder.

"It's to-morrow!" exclaimed the small boy.

The manager of the big business firm stormed into his head clerk's room and banged a fist angrily on the desk.

"This is outrageous," he cried ominously. "I distinctly told you, you could only take seven clear days' holiday, and here you have at last put in an appearance on the eleventh day. What is the meaning of it?"

"Oh, yes, sir," said the head clerk coolly enough. "I have an explanation. Three of them were *loggy*."

One night a stoker, while emptying a heavy iron ash bucket over the side, was washed overboard. He was only rescued with great difficulty because he persisted in holding on to the bucket. An officer shouted from the bridge, "You fool, why didn't you let go the bucket?" "Fool indeed! I like that!" answered the stoker, indignantly. "If I had let it go, you'd have been the first to stop the value of it out of my——pay!"

"Are you sorry I came?"

"How could you say that? I missed you very much."

He took me near the pooja room and there, as usual on a small table outside the room, was the usual silver plate, with some flowers on it. He reached for the plate and turned and while doing so, a plank tripped him up, he lost his balance and the plate clattered ominously to the floor scattering its sacred contents.

"That is a bad omen!" said my husband recovering his balance and then looked at the closed door of the Pooja room. He was silent, grave and absorbed in thought for sometime. Then he joined his hands in supplication and addressed the closed door thus:

"She is a child. We are all of us your children. Can a mother deny her grace to her own flesh and blood? We err in our ignorance. If the very fountain of mercy were to dry up, what is to become of us?"

He gathered together reverently the flowers scattered on the floor and as reverently touched them with his eyes. He gave me a few petals, remarking:

"The Mother is displeased. It doesn't matter with whom She is displeased. What matters is, Her displeasure. To-morrow we will plead hard with Her. Learn to love Her. She is your Mother: mine: Mother of this Universe!"

(Next Instalment: "Bala is Blackmailed.")

John Philip Kemble, like Mrs. Siddons, in private life, could not always forget that he was off the stage. He, too, had the trick of talking in blank verse, and the story is told of him entering an umbrella shop, selecting a walking-stick, and saying to the shopman: "This likes me well. The cost? the cost?"

On one occasion during the performance of Verdi's opera *Macbeth*, Madame Viardot was playing the part of Lady Macbeth, and when the performance reached the sleep-walking scene, and the Doctor entered to go through the well-known dialogue, a voice from the gallery was heard inquiring: "Well doctor, which is it—a boy or a girl?"

Macready had a trick of talking under his breath during the progress of a scene, and often at the end of his lines. Once, in a costume play, he had to point to a young man who was playing the part of a beau of the period. The youth who had been cast for the part was untidy and slovenly in appearance, and by no means pleased with Macready when he made his entrance. The tragedian looked hard at him, before eulogising him as he should have done, and when he did speak added one of his own habitual asides so loudly that the house roared with laughter. "See where the young prince comes," said Macready, "a very noble youth, of handsome face and gallant bearing. God forgive me, look at his dirty neck."

OTHER PEOPLES' HUMOUR

The tramp knocked on the door of the country cottage and woefully begged the cottager to give him some food.

"Why don't you get a job?" she asked him.

"I'd like to, ma'am," said the tramp; "but there ain't any going."

"But I heard to-day that Farmer Jones is in need of a right-hand man," she said. "Why not try there?"

"H'm!" sniffed the tramp. "That's jist my luck, lady, I'm left-handed."

When the reformer had proved to his audience that England was just about as bad as she could be, the grim-faced man at the foot of the little platform passed a remark:

"H'm," he said bitingly, "what you seem to want is a place where everyone has to be good by law."

"That's it, my good man," said the reformer, "a place where smoking is not allowed, where strong drink is unknown, where no one worries about food or clothes, and where everyone has to keep regular hours." He paused after a while. "Oh, to find such a place as that."

"That's easy," said the grim-faced man. "I've just done a twelve-month's stretch in a place like that."

—Pearson's Weekly.

A young wife said to her husband the other day: "I've decided to give you a manicure set, a lovely rose bowl, and a hearthrug for our wedding anniversary, dear."

Then she looked at him affectionately. "And what," she asked, "do you think of giving me?"

"I thought," he answered, rather curtly, "of giving you a safety razor."

—Boston Transcript.

Old Gentleman:—"You're an honest boy, but the money I lost was a pound note, not twenty shillings in silver."

Lad:—"I know, sir, but the last time I found a note the man didn't have any change."

—Business Week.

Foreman:—"Do you think you are really fit for hard labour?"

Applicant:—"Some of the best judges in this country have thought so."

—Wall Street Journal.

"Will you marry me, Edna?"

"No, Jim. My ideal man is very different from you. He must be as strong as Hercules, must bear the burden of the day without complaining, must never be cross with me, must never listen to anything that may be said about me——"

"I quite understand, Edna. What you want is a deaf and dumb railway porter."

—Der Lustige Sachse.

She:—"You see that girl? She's just got 500 pounds for a short love story!"

He:—"Good Heavens, that's a lot of money for a short story! Did she sell the cinema rights of it?"

She:—"No, she told it to a jury!"

—Humorist.

Mrs. Subub, having lost the key of the kitchen clock, went with her husband to get another. Mr. Subub waited across the road while his wife went into the jeweller's. Presently she came out.

"Got it?" asked Mr. Subub.

"No," said his wife.

"Why not?"

"Well, Mrs. Swagger was in there buying pearls, so I couldn't ask for a key for the kitchen clock."

"What did you do, then?"

"Oh, I just inquired how long it would take to clean a diamond tiara."

—Boston Globe.

"My gosh, Bill," groaned the managing editor of the sensational newspaper, "nothing scandalous has happened for twenty-four hours. What'll we do for the front page?"

"Aw, don't get discouraged, Steve," the city editor comforted. "Something'll happen. I've still got faith in human nature."

—American Legion.

The concert party was third-rate, and visitors were reluctant to patronise the show—except one little man who had not missed a single performance. His continual presence had been the only gratifying speck on the horizon, but even his support could not keep the show going.

On the last night the manager stepped before the curtain.

"Ladies and gentlemen," he announced, "before taking leave of you we wish to thank our friend here in the front row for his esteemed patronage—he has not missed a single performance!"

The little man rose and stammered his acknowledgments.

"It's awfully decent of you," he said modestly, "but, as a matter of fact, this is the only place where my wife has never thought of looking for me."

—Tit-Bits.

The reformer was holding forth on the evils of tobacco.

"You go into a tobacconist's shop," he said, "and you place sixpence on the counter. You get a packet of cigarettes. But you get more. In their wake come beer wine and whisky——"

"I say, guv'nor, who's your tobacconist?"

—Novel.

BRAIN-WAVES !

OR

Confessions of a Convalescent

(NEIL A' CANTEN)

I had always been what the world calls a "gay dog". Mine had been the primrose path throughout and I had roamed through the garden of the world, plucking a rose here and uprooting a lily there. Till twenty-three, I do not remember to have done a single hour of honest work. And then the Divine Command sank into my soul. "In the sweat of thy brow, shalt thou eat thy bread." I thought I would work. It should be quite welcome, at least as a change. The next week, I accepted a lecturer's job in a College. My first night in the new place found me sweeping off the cobwebs from my books and from my brains, and the next morning, I was thundering on in the College about Shakespeare and Shelley, to a set of unsophisticated little turnips, who thought that the first was the name of a patent medicine and the second, of a town in Siberia. The hungry sheep looked up and wondered at the feeding. All the beautiful ideas which I had cherished about the dignity of labour and all that were blown off in a week or two. It was the first time in my life that I had been obliged to work and I found it pretty hard. Reader, have you ever tried digging a burrow on a piece of hard rock with a tea-spoon? If not, it is enough if you become a college-lecturer. The inhabitants in my new place, whatever their virtues, were certainly not epicureans in the matter of diet. For the fare provided in my mess could be only injected into the body like arsenic and my keen appetite was smothered.

At last, I thanked my stars when the Christmas holidays set in, after three months of gruelling work on half rations, and I hankored for rest—none of your holidays, when you fly from one pleasure to another in a hectic rush, holidays which are busier than your working days—but perfect rest, when I would do nothing, absolutely nothing.

There was a time, when I used to weigh ten stones, at least as recorded by a weighing machine on a railway platform. But since that is the only machine which has flattered me by registering ten stones and the pointers of all others I have tried have refused to budge a pound further than nine stones two, I presume that the machine on the platform was one intended to weigh firewood. However, it stirred in me an ambition to reach the

coveted ten-stone mark. Not an advertisement of a tonic slipped by in the papers, that I did not try. I took to exercise vigorously. I umpired in two football matches, purchased a new cricket bat and began to get up and down the stairs thirty times a day, instead of the usual twenty. But still, my weight did not budge a pound. The avordupois seemed to be working with malice prepense and growing elastic to keep my weight stationary. At last, in despair, I consulted Dr. Pat, who knew my constitution as well as he did the inside of his

pockets. I wanted rest, a good appetite and a few extra pounds of weight.

"Have you tried De Jongh's Cod Liver Oil?" asked Pat.

"Yes." I remembered it only too well.

"I would suggest Phospho-lacithin."

"I have tried it."

"Have you tried Euston's Syrup?"

"Yes."

"Why not try Haemo-drak-somalt? It is a new Indian preparation."

"I have already tried it."

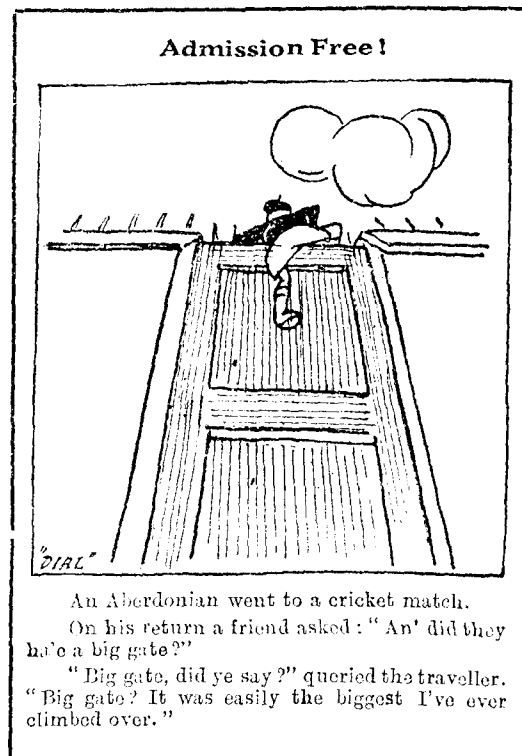
Pat stared at me as though I was a pharmacy rat.

"Have you tried.....?"

"Yes."

But he was a clever man, was Pat, and was not to be put off so easily. He was a man of ideas. He pulled me aside and looked me up and down. "What you

want," he said in that methodical way of his, "is perfect rest, a good appetite and a few extra pounds of weight. Well, I have a brain-wave. You can kill three birds with one stone. Mind you, it is far beyond the Pharmacopoeia, but I think it is worth trying. Why not have an attack of typhoid? You know, it will keep you in bed for a month or so, and after an attack, the convalescent puts on weight. And as for appetite, call me a Chinaman, if you don't eat the inside of your hat, by the time you are through with it." "By jingo", I exclaimed, "if that isn't an idea, I don't know one. You will beat Sir Isaac Newton all to nothing, Pat!" Pat was the sort of chap, who, I thought, would win the Nobel Prize shortly and then commit suicide for want of other realms to conquer.



An Aberdonian went to a cricket match. On his return a friend asked: "An' did they ha'e a big gate?"

"Big gate, did ye say?" queried the traveller. "Big gate? It was easily the biggest I've ever climbed over."

I satisfied myself that none of my friends got married during the next two months, for I was not prepared to miss a feast, if I would help it. And then I made up my mind to get an attack of typhoid. But how? Aye, there was the rub. I had a sturdy constitution which would defy the attack of a planet of typhoid germs. But Pat rose to the occasion like a potential Nobel Prize-winner. "Your first step," he said, "is to make your system very weak, to form a Reception Committee, as it were, for the typhoid germs. Your next, is to take a cup of coffee from any of these restaurants in the town, and there you are."

"But how the dickens am I to weaken my system, Pat?" I asked. "Shall I get up and down the stairs two steps at a time, and increase the number to fifty per day?"

Pat was not impressed.

"Three steps at a time, four, five.....?"

"Say," said Pat, gripping my arm, "I have another brain-wave. The Highwaymen play the Freebooters in a three-day cricket match; you, I know, are the Highwaymen's first string. Go ahead, and play with a vengeance for three days."

I looked at Pat in admiration. He had a solution for every problem. Brain-waves, he called them! Why, his brains must be a regular Atlantic of such waves!

Now in fairness to the world and myself, I must clear up my position with regard to cricket. To any ordinary player, a three-day match would mean, say, a day and a few hours of fielding, and a few hours, at the most, of batting—lunch and tea, of course. But to me, it means three full days of play, for when I am not fielding, I am batting. I am supposed to be an "A1" opening batsman, because on one occasion, I went in first and carried my bat through the innings for four runs! Talk of stonewalling! The dullest blockers in the game are but tyros beside me. One day the local daily flattered me by printing in bold head-lines "Neil hits the first boundary of his career", much as if I had scored a century. As a matter of fact, that boundary was not my fault. The ball in question was about to bump on to my face, and self-preservation, which is the first instinct of human nature, dictated a stroke, which, coupled with the mis-fielding of my player, fetched me the first boundary of my career—and my last so far, though I have been playing cricket for the last four seasons. Whatever it is, whenever our skipper wins the toss—and he does it most often—his first words invariably are, "Neil, put your pads on". Neil, of course, puts his pads on, takes his place at the crease, and "keeps his end up" till stumps are drawn or the whole of his team has played itself out. Never mind his individual score!

So in the encounter between the Highwaymen and the Freebooters, I batted for a day and a half for my seven runs and for an equally long time, I was fielding at point. And you know what fielding at point means. Whenever you are not chasing a ball, you are standing in the posture of sitting in a chair, without of course, the chair behind you. And I ran about the whole field, under the pretence of backing up another fieldsman whenever a ball was thrown in,—and all this in a field and weather

which was as hot as Sahara, and without my hat to boot—I had deliberately left my hat behind, because I wanted to "weaken my system". And I felt my work made easy for me, when I learnt that the lunch and tea supplied to us were from a local restaurant, who advertised their wares as "Our sweets are the best for typhoid. Money refunded if inefficacious." And if after all these, a bus-ride of forty miles home, in a tin-pot which seemed to move on iron wheels on a road which was something between a railway-line and a dirt-track would not invite typhoid, I don't know what would.

The next day I was in bed, sure as shot, with a slight temperature. The doctor was called in, not Pat, but our family one, and to spare him any trouble in diagnosing my case, I told him that it was typhoid and that there had been a typhoid epidemic in my college recently. That satisfied him, the simple soul!

I lay on my bed, propped up with pillows. "Perfect rest," said the medical man, "no reading, no talking, not even turning round on your bed—and mind you, don't count the rafters on the ceiling. Don't exert yourself in any way." What! Did the doctor think that my capital of the grey matter was only a teaspoonful, that he should consider it a mental exertion for me to count the rafters. However, I let that pass. "Whenever you want anything, press this bell," continued the medical man. No solid diet, but buckets of coffee, milk, barleywater, lemon-squash and orange-juice." Right doc., that is exactly what I want. Another candidate for the Nobel Prize. I thought. Two of my brothers were deputed to nurse and tend me.

I had a short sleep full of dreams, and when I woke up, things had altered pretty much. I felt my limbs were very stiff and the room was full of people, some of my friends and relatives, all wearing a sad look. I wondered what the trouble was. And the calendar on the wall! Why, it showed the 30th of December, and I remembered it was only the 26th. Surely, I hadn't..... And then the doctor, spoke. For four days, it seems, I had been lying unconscious and in a state of delirium. I had been talking about many things, mainly about Shakespeare and Shelley, "and if this is a specimen of the sort of lectures you deliver in your college," said the doctor, "I am not surprised that there was a typhoid epidemic amongst your students. The wonder is how they did not develop symptoms of tuberculosis." My temperature had, for the last four days, wavered between 105° and 106° and the doctor, it seems, had seriously thought of writing for a thermometer which they use in fire-kilns. My friends looked as if they could light their cigarettes by holding them to my forehead. And when I ran my fingers over my head, I found to my consternation, that my beautiful wavy hair had been cut as close as a comb would allow it. This, I was told, was done when I was lying unconscious, and was the handiwork of my father. And as I knew that my dad did not hold a Diploma of Certified Barbers, I guessed even without looking at a mirror, that my hair would look as if it had been cut by a carpenter or a launderer. All my friends, except one who owed me some money, wore that mournful look, which seemed to say, "You are gone, my

dear fellow. I will smoke a tin of cigarettes to your memory every year this day."

Was it so bad as all that? Had I been imprudent in inviting an attack of typhoid? Was I going to be cut off from life like that? Had I caught a Tartar? Did Pat deserve the Nobel Prize after all? But no, it can't be. My friends could not realise that the whole thing was a joke—how could they? But typhoid, I was sure, had a sense of humour. It was sure to catch the joke. It would know that the whole thing was a conspiracy, and I had invited it with open arms. It was too much of a sport to play such a mean trick on me, as to dispose of me for good. And I was right. Typhoid *did* catch the joke and the temperature gradually began to fall.

And then idyllic rest! Just what I had always wanted. This was the first time in my life that I had been confined to bed and I liked it immensely. All my friends and relatives came to visit me now that I was sick, and showed me a regard which they would not have dreamt of doing, when I was well. They hushed their footsteps when they came into my room and spoke only in whispers. I was flattered and nodded to my visitors, much in the way of an Emperor acknowledging the homage of his vassals. Every wish of mine was anticipated and catered to. I was even fed by other hands. Yes, it was good to be sick. I derived a malicious satisfaction in ordering that scapegrace of my brother Teddy about. The fellow had always defied me and now that I had the upper hand, he shall have no rest, I said, not even a wink of sleep. Whenever I saw him sleeping soundly at night after the day's labours, I would wake him up and ask him for a cup of milk. Not that I wanted any milk, but I wanted to deprive him of his sleep.

Gradually, my temperature fell to normal. During all these days, not an atom of solid food had passed my lips. I had been living mainly on barley-water, milk and orange-juice. I knew now, how greater people had gone on fast for twenty days at a stretch, taking only salt-water. Now, I haven't a word to say against barley-water and I admit, milk and orange-juice are very good things in themselves; but one *can* have too much of a good thing. Pat was right. I was feeling as hungry as a hunter and would have eaten the inside of my hat, if that article were anywhere near. The flavour of the delicious things that were being prepared in the kitchen reached me, and I was hankering for some rice and curry.

"Doctor," I said, "I want some rice-and-curry."

"No, you can't have it".

"I tell you, I am dying for it."

"You see, your intestines....."

"I have no intestines."

"You can't digest....."

"I can digest the Himalayas."

But, the medical man stood his ground like a Spartan, and it was only due to the intercession of my mother, that he at least allowed me to take some pepper-water. Well, even that is something to have fought for. At last, after a month, I arrived at the normal rice-and-curry stage, *via* the pepper-water, the buttermilk and the oat-meal stages. Needless to say that every inch had to be fought for with the obstinate doctor, who seemed to believe that my intestines were made of cobweb which would be torn asunder, if I took any solid diet.

At long last, I took my first bath after the illness. The doctor now allowed me to move about on the bed and gradually even to move about the room with a crutch. And what a wonderful experience it was! A regular second childhood in locomotion! I know now how I had learnt to walk when I was a baby. First you crawl, then you toddle, next you attempt to walk supporting yourself on the wall, and at last when you have succeeded in making your first non-stop solo walk across the room, you know what Amy Johnson felt like, when she landed in Australia! You enjoy being a child again with the experience and developed intelligence of an adult.

The period of convalescence was a halcyon period. All the tonics in the world were there to recoup my health. Horlick's, Ovaltine, Panopton, Sanatogen, Wincarnis, Benger's Food, chicken-soup, egg-flip! My word! If you want to enjoy some of the best things in the world, you must be a convalescent after typhoid. The result of it all was, that at the end of the month, when I weighed myself, the pointer went up straight to the ten-stone mark and *stayed there*. And though I am feeling fit as a fiddle and am game for a cycling-tour round the world or the Mount Everest Expedition, the doctor gasps and talks something about relapses, when he sees me getting up the stairs only two steps at a time.

And how deliriously happy I felt when I walked out the first time after the illness! The air smelt as sweet as a tonic, the sky looked bluer, the grass and the foliage greener. All the world looked like a wondrous magic palace whose gates had been thrown open to me. Surely, it is worth while going through an attack of typhoid if it leads to such an orientation of view.

I have had all I wanted. I have had an idyllic two months of perfect rest. I have arrived at the coveted ten-stone mark, and as for my appetite, I can give a clean handicap to Gargantua and win in the encounter. The only fly in the ointment is that my close crop gives me the appearance of a pilgrim recently returned from Palni or Thirupathy. I dare not stir out for another month when I will have my long beautiful curls again. You know my dad had not taken a degree in the "Barbers' Training Course. Postal Tuition Our Speciality", and verily, as the Bible says, the sins of the parents are visited upon (the heads of) the children!

Vitamin P

(KALYAN)

I spent the New Year Day with my uncle. My aunt fondly asked me, "What shall be today's sweet?" She could never believe that I have been growing all these thirty years; she thinks I am the same little youngster whom she fondled years ago; so, just to impress her, I replied casually, "Oh, anything! One gets less and less keen about these things as one grows, you know!" She smiled as only a motherly aunt could, and went away. But the fact is, despite all my airs of superiority, *pal-poli* is my weakness; and she knew it. And preparation of delicious *pal-poli* is her strong point too; and I knew it.

Well, it was *pal-poli* that day,—or you have not been following the story! But, how in Heaven's name, does she manage to make them so juicy and delicate? They are flaky like cream crackers. They are absorbent like Bengali *Rasgullas*. They are viscous like honey. And they melt in the mouth like ice-cream! Ah, if only I could learn the art, I would join the Ritz or the Savoy as the confectioner-in-chief, and draw my easy 2000/- a year.

And so, when I reclined in the easy chair, after a heavenly New Year dinner, I was in a mood to give the whole world as *jageer* to my aunt. Only, she didn't want it. She was quite satisfied with her 8' by 10' kitchen and her round of simple duties—and the ability to make *pal-polies*. My thoughts were light and happy, and skipped from theme to theme. But soon, they became more and more vague, due to what you may call the New Year afternoon drowsiness. Sounds became hazy and pictures ill-defined. Thus, I drifted on, food, however, being the main theme.

You cannot think of food without thinking of vitamins. I thought of vitamins. I lingered on A, B, C, D, E, F, and a possible G. I wondered when Z would be reached. Very soon, I feared, considering the present rate of progress. Another instance of the insufficiency of the English alphabet. The vitamin-mongers ought to have chosen a longer bodied alphabet, say, Sanskrit, with its vowels, consonants, vowel-consonants and compound-consonants. Anyway, that was not my business.....I wondered what would be the functions of the vitamins yet to come. The present chaps were having specific physiological duties, but what about the fellows yet to come?.....Ah, some of the grey cells are beginning to work.....yes, yes.....stretch the groping feelers a little more!.....Go on, go on, ah, I am beginning to see some light.....Is it possible, of course it is very remote, but is it possible that the new-comers will have psychological functions to perform?.....The idea is yet nebulous, but let me try to give some shape to it. Perhaps vitamin H, say, will develop the Historical sense in man, vitamin M the Mathematical sense, vitamin I the Introspective sense, vitamin Y the Inquisitive sense (?), and so on. That will be a grand age. Just the right type and the proper number of men to take up the various social duties will be evolved by the Universities.

Of course in the early stages of the experiment, there will be mistakes, in which case, the President of the future Government will probably advise the principals of colleges somewhat as follows:—

"DEAR SIR,

I find that the masses are becoming too intellectual and less emotional, which means that in the next war, our 'patriotism propaganda' will fail and we will get no soldiers. Please use a little more of vitamin— and a little less of vitamin—in your boarding houses.

Yours etc.——"

"DEAR SIR,

There are too many romancists and fictionists about and too few sound essayists and moralists. Please rearrange the diet of your students in consultation with the Director of Vita-dietetics.

Yours etc.——"

"DEAR SIR,

You are aware that the Industrial and Mechanical bias which your present diet table gives is the cause of the hopeless and disgraceful failure of our "Back to the Land" scheme. Please hereafter use the accompanying table which is expected to give an agricultural and rural bias and report results on the form prescribed.

Yours etc.——"

"DEAR SIR,

May I remind you that I have not yet received the quinquennial figures *re* your biased psycho-vita-dietetic researches.

Yours etc.

P. S.

Is your own diet loaded towards indolence, procrastination, and take-easy-ism, if I may say so?

"DEAR SIR,

I am afraid that you have been using the wrong tables all these four years in your University Hostels. The last batch of clerks whom you supplied to the State Banks (and whom you described as the merest calculating machines, with no sentimental nonsense about them) dress in dreadful futuristic style, scribble exotic poetry on their ledgers, answer the clients in rhymes! Please hand over the tables used by you to my secretary who is bringing this letter.

Yours etc.——"

Keep this copy of the Merry Magazine with you.
It may bring you 50 rupees.

The Merry Magazine

"DEAR SIR,

In continuation of our correspondence re the Mars Expedition, the necessary sanction has been obtained and the party will start operations in about five years. The astronomical, engineering and other Departments have started investigations. Please put fifty young men selected from different scientific branches on a special diet as per tables enclosed and report on them quarterly on form H. A-4. Please bestow personal attention to this matter.

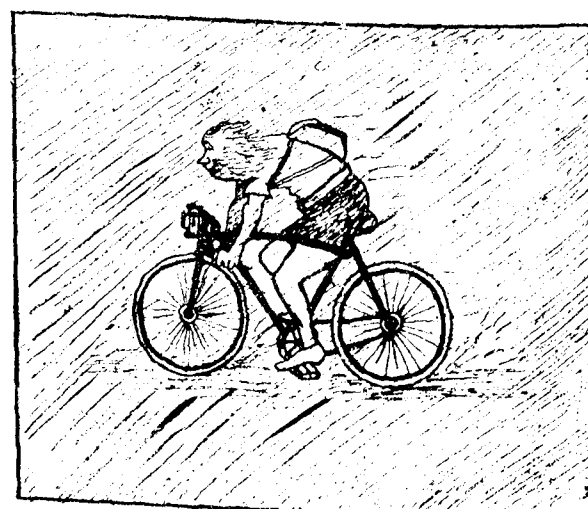
Yours etc.——"

At this stage, I heard my uncle say as from a long distance, "Look at this fellow smiling in his dream." That woke me up and I found my long stretched list of vitamins shrinking back to P. But on careful scrutiny, I saw that at least one of my newly evolved vitamins remained unannihilated. On examination, I found it was vitamin P which stimulates the sense of Phantasy and Prophecy in man. On analysis I found that *Pal-poli* is strong in vitamin P; and, of course, you know that I had taken an overdose of it.

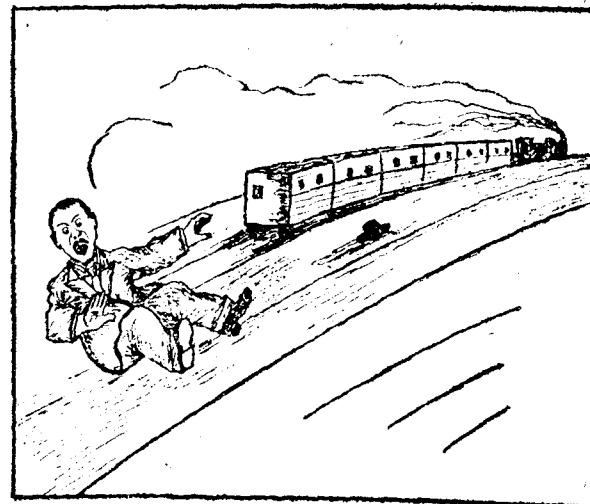
THE LOGIC OF PROHIBITION



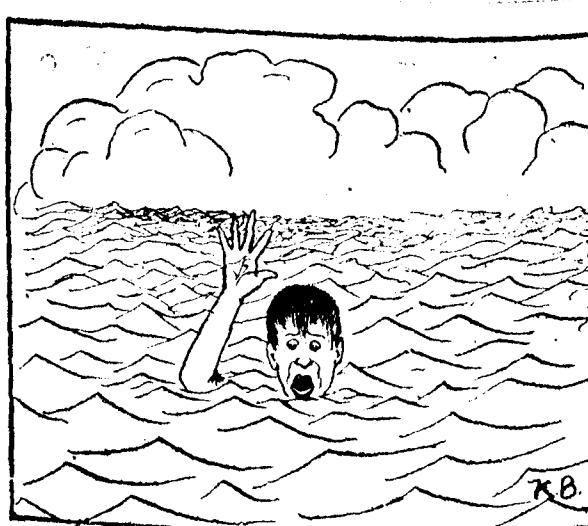
Revolutionaries in Bengal disguise themselves in unusual clothes to escape apprehension. The Bengal Government has therefore promulgated an ordinance making it unlawful for an Indian to wear any clothes other than his customary ones.



It stands to reason therefore that bicycling after nightfall must be made a punishable offence since bicycling after sunset is a fruitful cause of dangerous accidents.



And of course all railway travelling will have to stop since passengers occasionally fall out of running trains with results not particularly beneficial to them.



And then Government should prohibit bathing, since deaths by accidental drowning are by no means infrequent.

MUSINGS ON MAIDENS

(G. VENKATACHALAM)

(6) The Japanese Girl

WALTER Pater once defined a cultured woman as "one who can touch the greatest number of men in the greatest number of places." A vague and 'indefinite' definition, a definition that has not even the semblance of a half-truth. Women in the orient, at any rate, give the lie to it. Eastern women have a culture of their own, and they contact the "least" number of men in the "least" number of places, whatever that may mean. Even their knowledge of the wide world and their experience of men are as limited as possible, and yet they are innately, intrinsically cultured. Now it is a difficult thing to define culture. It is not acquired nor can it be obtained by money or learning. It is not a mental attitude nor is it a social pose. It is not possessing of wealth, living in luxury, commanding comforts, owning mansions and automobiles, giving parties, entertaining friends, making speeches, writing books, sitting in the councils of nations or even ruling over the destiny of men. One may possess any or all of these and yet be uncultured. Culture, like character, is inborn, and is the individual uniqueness of the soul. It is the flowering of life, the perfection of mind, heart and body. It is certainly a heritage.

The Japanese girl is a good example of this innate, inborn culture. She is the product of a carefully cultured civilisation—not just a bye-product due to the fortuitous concourse and mixing of races, like the American or the Anglo-Indian. That's why the American girl, with all her progressiveness, modernism, charm and attraction, is not cultured in its truest and best sense. Culture is disciplined life, and the daughter of the Land of the Rising Sun is the result of such a discipline. It has its drawbacks and limitations even as wild, free and unfettered life has its own dangers and difficulties. The gypsy is a good example of the latter type, fascinating, care-free, reckless, impulsive and unmoral. One is like a well-laid out garden, with neat paths, attractively planted avenues, grassy lawns, flower-beds, trimmed plants and water-fountains, while the other is like a virgin forest, with its pathless tracks, canopied branches of trees, soft leafy slopes, climbing creepers, singing birds, babbling brooks, running rivulets and magical lights and shadows. Both have their places and charm and both add to the richness and beauty of life.

Nippon is a land of vivid green fields and pale purple hills, of silver trees and red temple gateways, of robed priests and smiling children; and amidst this enchanting setting lives and moves the Japanese maiden, kind, gentle, small, neat, artistic, spotlessly clean, bright as a flower and sparkling like sunlight. She is the offspring of Utamaro's dreams, Fujiama's meditations and Cherry Blossom's laughter. Oval face, slit eyes, brown pupils, egg-shell complexion, small mouth, compressed lips, tiny hands, short stature, stately gait and uncovered head—these describe the physical personality of a typical well-born Japanese girl. Bright-coloured and flower-patterned *kimonos* and gold-embroidered *obis* constitute her gala

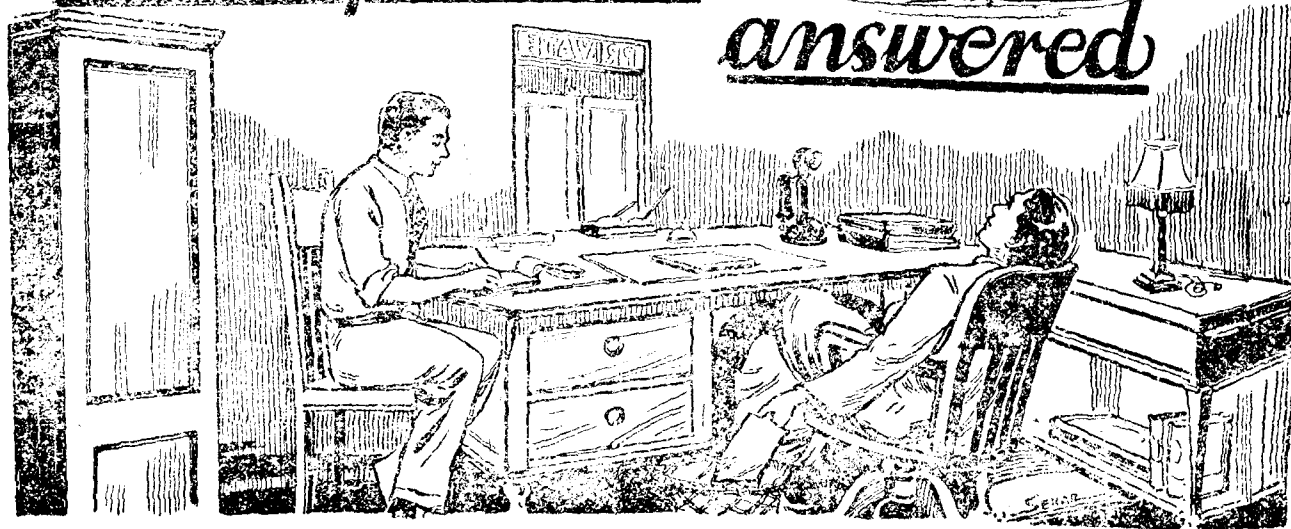
garments. She is unshod at home but wears a kind of native-made sandals for outdoor walks. A group of gaily dressed Japanese girls is like a bed of tulip flowers in motion.

The Japanese girl is an artist in life. To her life is a series of beautiful symbols, which she has to learn, understand and perfect from childhood. They are not mere meaningless ceremonies to her as Vedic rituals are to the Hindu girl, but part of her social upbringing and cultural expression. She may not be smart and seductive as her American sister, or as cute and clever as her Indian comrade, or as skillful with her fingers as her Chinese neighbour, but her outstanding character is her filial piety and devotion. She may be secretive, dull and uninteresting in many ways but she is attractive, like a peacock, in her raiment, in her poses, gestures and movements. She talks softly and in whispers, and her acts are graceful with subtle suggestiveness. She lives surrounded by beauty. Her box-like room of opaque paper-walls and smooth polished floor, with pale golden mats, red lacquer trays and tea-sets, and one, just one, spray of flower flaming in a corner, is a home of ideal beauty and simplicity. Cleanliness, absolute cleanliness is the keynote of her life. No dust-laden corners, no cumbersome furniture, no glittering tinsels, just plain walls with one *hakimono* of Hokusai or Hiroshige or a wood-cut print of Korin or Taikwan to adorn them. Even tea drinking is an art with her, and the Tea-Ceremony is an interesting social ritual over which she presides with grace and dignity.

The *Geisha* is a unique, national institution in Japan. She is not a courtesan, in the ordinary sense, nor is she a professional dancing girl, like the *devadasi* in India. She is both these and yet something more. She is a conventional entertainer and a traditionalist in her art. She is not looked down upon but is honoured and respected and has her distinct place in society and life. She is welcomed freely and openly by all, high and low, rich and poor, and her one function is to please all with her charm and her art. The dance itself is simple and is generally executed by a group of girls to small private audiences. It is not an elaborate science like the *Natyasastra* of India or rhythmical bodily movements like the *Ballet* dance of the West, but just graceful slow movements, soft steps and appropriate gestures. The *Geisha* girl lives for the community and she has no existence apart from the community. She is no idle gossip, nor does she thrive on scandals, like girls of her calling in other countries. She is a pagan at heart and loves freedom and nature. She is not a hot-blooded, strong-willed, wayward type of courtesan, common in other lands, out to wreck life and ruin men, but a honourable professional coquette whose job is to amuse her patrons. She is neither moral nor immoral but just unmoral; she is companion to *suki*, comrade to *cha* and a beautiful necessity to the Samurai.

Correspondents

answered



Working Partner, Oregam:—

Please do not take the law into your own hands. We sympathise with you. These sleeping partners never go to sleep. That is no reason why you should put them to sleep. No. We can't and we won't tell you easy methods of doing it. Go to court if you feel strongly about it, but, for Heaven's sake and yours too, see that you court a decent lass and promise not to worry us again about a sleeping partner who sleeps too much. This one is likely to.

G. E. M. Gooty:—

Your initials give you away. Whether you are a Green Flyed Monster or just General Electric Munuswamy, we don't care. But what we do care about is the thing which has caught you. It is just like measles. The male gets it oftener than the female of the species. The vulgar call it jealousy.

We positively forbid you from committing suicide. To pretend that you are after other women, would be futile. It has been tried before. Duels are so out of fashion and there is some penalty for manslaughter. We will tell you exactly what it is, later. But at the moment it would be helpful if you will tell us whether the lady whom you suspect is properly married to you. Our information is that you are not. There are rumours at large of a run-away and a hectic chase, without a kill. Why then, the green eye? And what about an eye for an eye?

Enterprise, Ernakulam:—

Wish we knew the man with a lakh of rupees, spare cash. Our personal opinion is that such a man does not exist: and if he does exist, we can speak from experience, he would be as elastic as granite with a passion for G. P. notes and rent-yielding real-estate. If we were you, we would not pine for this man, however congested his bank account may be. Start at the bottom rung of the ladder. Stand on your own. There is nothing like it: If we may give you a tip, open a small confectionery shop adjoining a primary school. You will be surprised

at the numerical strength of your patrons, and your grandmother—in fact any grandmother—can produce the requisite capital and the used-up Horlicks glass bottles. Shall gladly furnish any further information on this subject, if you are interested.

Unlucky, Ambasamudram:—

You must excuse us. We are not permitted to express an opinion on Talismans. The fair one who takes down this reply to your letter wears a charm. Well, charm for the charmer: there seems to be reason and rhyme in it. The boys who will eventually set in type what has been dictated and taken down, wear all sorts of gadgets in various parts of their anatomy. The Machine stop, the Bindery, etc. are surcharged with a subtle, mysterious, eery, undercurrent emanating from the many talismans worn by the workmen therein.

No, the makers of Talismans don't wear them. The reason is exactly the one which applies to doctors. No doctor ever takes his own medicine. The purveyors of Talismans make their pile. What do they want a Talisman for, except to sell it to people like you?

Defaulter, Dindigul:—

Cheer up. You are in the majority! A thumping majority! Most assesses, (That's a coinage from the fertile brain of the Income Tax office) have not paid their taxes. Reason is simple: there is no money. The Income-Tax office is not modern. They don't accept cigarette prize-tickets and worn-out razor blades. They prefer to destrain them (another current coin from the same broadcast station) The I. T. people are optimists. Their computation of profit is as approximate an aim to the ambitions of your lifetime. It is the indication of the goal you must attempt to reach and shoot. But, poor souls, as they make their flights of imagination—mind you, for your welfare—they cross the boundary between fact and fiction and mistake the one for the other. Result. Demand notice. Frame it and hang it up in a prominent place. Who knows, you might put it as cover for an overdraft?

A TOSS-UP

(FELIX SUM)

'A ticket on Rajagopal,' said I pushing two rupees inside the counter. It is some comfort that tickets here go not on numbers but on names eliminating errors of hurry, I remarked to myself as I folded up the ticket neatly and put it into my lucky purse, into that very pouch, where I had, a little while ago, put the ticket on Miss A. B., which paid me thirty-six rupees for two rupees. The trend of botting was much against me, I knew, but then one must have a flutter on "flukes" now and then. As I looked up at the rising board, I saw that so many as 3216 tickets had been sold on Grant, while only 513 had been taken on my choice. Lal was offering evens on Grant and 4 to 1 on Rajagopal. But I was in luck now.

I rushed to the double-event side and elbowing my way into a crowd succeeded in securing two tickets. Grant and Alladi, Rajagopal and Alladi, Alladi being a dead cert., in the sixth court.

What a deafening noise! "Come, on Grant," "Come on, Grant." Grant was pounding away his arguments amidst the cheers of the spectators. Even the accused in the murder case must have had some betting surreptitiously, for he looked wild with joy as Grant was advancing not by lengths, but by leaps and bounds. But I was not disheartened. I knew this was a stayer business and Grant had been heavily handicapped from what I had known of the facts. Sure enough, R would overtake him at the bend, with his more favourable draw and once in the straight romp home, winning hard held. It is high time he should catch the judge's eye after all his previous lapses.

As for the other leg of the double, Alladi was sure to make a start to end affair of it, being a class by himself. Indeed, just as on Ramah, many were ready to put their shirts on him. Gee! this would be a grand day for me. My Vaitha shall have a chocolate sovereign—no, a pound of sovereigns.

I was looking hard at my tickets: my eyes seemed to swim giddily. I heard the shout "Well passed, Amavasai." The football was now ably sent flying by Raghavan the leftwing. I felt a quiver and looked again at my ten-rupee ticket. It was the Christian College I had

backed. Bravo! Desikan! With Desikan in the full back can a goal be scored? How Old and Amavasai tried and how Desikan and Henderson kept them away. It was all so thrilling. The legs of every one of us were kicking imaginary footballs and in unison. "Ah! there! there! Ambrose is pushing on. The Christians have scored a goal." What a relief! What may the dividend be, I wonder! Not much—I had backed a favourite, I believe for there was no toteboard here. But then sometimes you know a favourite has no friend and you get good dividends.

I strolled to get a cup of that thing called coffee for two annas. The Refreshment section has been going

The Other Side of Things



The temple priest anoints the idol.

from bad to worse, said I. But then, that is just what many others have been saying among themselves these six months nearly. A Ways and Means Sub-Committee must be formed. The General Body must be moved—yes, must be moved.

There was a commotion and a rush at the ticket windows. The winner was sure to be the favourite—the hottest favourite. The second favourite G. C. V. was also sure to materialise. Not much to be gained by backing these. But then what a great advantage here! Twelve committee members are to be elected out of thirty-six so kindly nominated, proposed and seconded by friends. So very good of them to give a wide field. Surely leaving out the top three or four, the inevitables, I don't mean the necessary evils, the rest are likely to return handsome place money. I took amongst others, *inter*

alia to be more dignified,—for to tell you the truth, I generally have many irons in the fire, but only the damn (no Zoroastrian here, I suppose. If any I apologise) blazing fire used to turn all of them to ashes, believe it or not—a ticket on Sarma. It is simply outrageous, remarked my Chetti friend, a shrewd judge in those election affairs. "Nay" cried I "hath he not created recently a diversion by proposing a third vice-president and putting the two in a fine state 'to withdraw or not to withdraw' and so forth. But perhaps he did not like to miss a chance of the tote and the betting by yielding to an uncontested election. He is sure to be in the minds of

all and may touch a place." Well, it was a long, long affair and after all, the judges announced the results. The better of yourite turned winner: the second favourite came next. Sarma came twelfth. Ahoy! there will be a handsome payment, shouted I looking at the final board.

Will you believe me? The tote paid Rs. 91 for a ticket on Sarma for place. (There were no win tickets sold on him and an electric totalisator must, to be mathematically accurate, show infinity for his win.) My joy knew no bounds. I danced up and down. I even burst into song.

"Sarma, thou never wert
Shall I call thee wondering voice?
Or rather Abolard the second twice."

A most original un-original dash, hash or mash. (May the shades of Shelley and Wordsworth forgive me!)

I hopped up to the pay-out: there were but three or four near the window, the rest gazing a little farther away at us in admiration. I handed in the ticket and the clerk commenced counting the five-rupee notes.

"Ugh! Ugh! dear! your coffee is ready: it is nearly four o'clock: you said you wanted to see somebody at five." It was my wife who had waked me from my slumber. What a rude shock! And what a moment! Just as I was about to get a good sum of money. It was too too cruel to dash the cup from the lip even in a dream. Only now could I understand Coleridge: only he could write

O sleep! it is a gentle thing
Beloved from pole to pole.

I had travelled in a realm that had no Time nor Space. From the High Court of two years ago to the

Pat went into a hospital for the first time, and seeing one man, asked, "what's the matter with you?"
"I have got a bad arm, and it's got to come off," said the man.

Seeing another man, Pat asked him the same.
"I have got a bad leg and it's got to come off," said the man.

"This is no place for me," said Pat. "I have got a cold in my head."

"I could not stand the neighbourhood: it was so unfashionable."

"And could you think of no other way to improve it than by moving?"

Stage Manager:—"You received a tremendous ovation. They are still clapping. What did you say?"

Actor:—"I told them I would not go on with my act until they quieted down."

Christian College of twenty years ago and then to a clu evening of a year ago.

I woke to the stern, relentless reality of a few anna and a race acceptance shoot beside me. Yes, I had a important engagement—engagement only on my side. I intended seeing my friend B. R. to borrow some money, at least five rupees, one rupee for entrance and four rupees for a win and a place. I bestirred myself and being highly superstitious, ran my dream over again in mind and took up my almanac and other books for interpretation. But that wretched book was uncomfiting: mine was a day-dream and it had no presage. Oh! why did I not dream my dream in the early morning! Can I apply the law of analogy and say that a dream just before waking up will have effects as predicted for the early morning?

But apart from dreams, don't you reader seriously agree with me, how very different and charming life would become, if totalisators and bettings were introduced everywhere. Surely, the Athletic Association Sports at the Park Fair time, the various tournaments, the Municipal or the Legislative Council (which may be on the Derby scale) elections will all become the livelier. Just imagine the cry, Sriji S. Satyamarthy 2 to 1; Dewan Bahadur Gopathy Narayanaswami Chetty 5 to 1. Does not the very sound thrill you?

You may say probably I have the gambling spirit in the extreme. Being in *extremis* it may be somewhat true. But it is the true John Bull spirit—by the way, I owe John Bull a grudge for having carried away a lot of my money,—and as a loyal citizen, I cherish it. Haven't you seen the picture of a bull having thrown up a man by its horns in the air, and two passers by noting a Sancho-Panza figure uprising like a balloon in the mid-air, betting "Heads or Tails?" If not, go to the nearest library and turn over the pages of the back volumes of the *Punch*.

At a lecture the speaker orated fervently: "He drove straight to his goal. He looked neither to the right nor to the left, but pressed forward, moved by a definite purpose. Neither friend nor foe could delay him nor turn him from his course. All who crossed his path did so at their own peril. What would you call such a man?"

"A tram driver," said a man in the audience.

"Doris was telling her girl-friend about her recent misunderstanding with her fiancé."

"It was really too bad," she said. "I ended by telling him that I did not want to see his face any more."

The girl nodded eagerly.

"And was he fearfully upset?" she asked.

"That's the terrible part about it," said Doris. He wasn't a bit upset. He just jumped up and switched off all the lights."

"Said the Sparrow"

(E. M.)

WE hear quite a lot of heat-waves of recent years. The commodity is not much favoured among us as we are intolerably well off in heat even otherwise. But one fancies that it is a veritable godsend to our good cousins over the seas and across the Tropic. To them, it conjures up no doubt blissful visions of holidays, ice, sea-sides and bathing costumes. Quite an agreeable prospect, I am sure. The holiday would not come in amiss at any season, neither the ice. As for the sea-bathing, it does seem, from the idyllic pictures of bathing beauties flaunted prominently in our papers (from the smiles they wear and the clothes they do not wear) that the parties consider it glorious. On the whole, the probability of a new heat-wave on an unprecedented scale this year cannot hold any terrors to those dwellers of the north.

For ourselves, the forecast is anything but agreeable. In our corner of the world tucked away into a hollow far from any decent townstead, ice and ease are like miracles. They simply don't happen. Bathing is become a problem already for shortage of the liquid concerned. The problem would only be aggravated in the event of a probable heat-wave. Italian sunshine would go out to England, but the only visitors we expect are dust and small-pox and we have long ago lost all hopes of a hitch in their programme. The cock would sooner come down the chimney than these Indian summer visitants break their appointment.

Our news-sheets have given Hollywood yet a new flash head-line. The meddling axe, it seems, has polluted that carefree atmosphere. Salaries are going the way of all salaries. Though shop-keepers over there may rue this situation, the Marriage Registry Offices should be much relieved. Unless the price of a license is going to be spliced, these officials have a sporting chance of getting a well-earned rest. Divorce Courts may as well close down for a time. Sub-editors will be pining away, now that a welcome news-item has passed over to the land of shades, there to jostle roughly with many a less exciting event whom it had once thrown thereinto. Such is life and a slice of it that has not yet got into the silver screen. If an enterprising camera-man would catch our idols on off hours, the probability is that we shall get some surpassingly unreal acting—of nonchalance!

This irony of acting reminds me of another. A few weeks ago we had a local troupe giving us a new version of a vernacular story. The dramatic version was full of anachronisms, all of a very blatant nature. This representation, however, was interesting as about the only

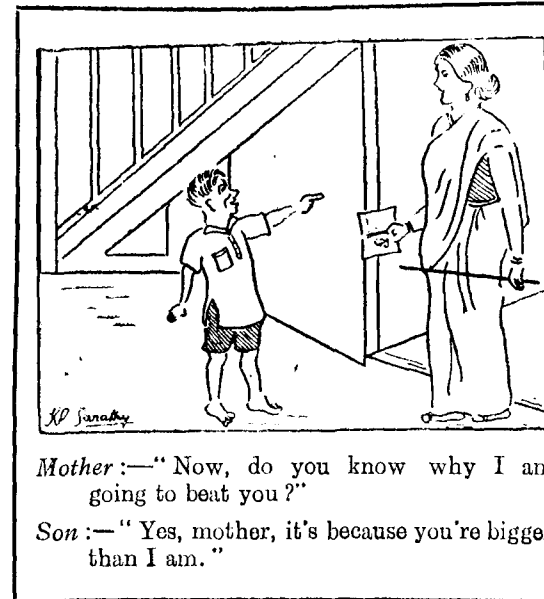
attempt at realism on the local stage. In one of the scenes the umpteenth degrees of coercion practised by our police were all exposed. By a pure coincidence there were many custodians of Law and Order present there. Curiously enough, they had just done some rigorous work in suppressing a disturbance in the theatre and the immediate reproduction of their methods on the stage must have been highly disconcerting. Why another riot did not happen that night, fostered this time by the wounded dignitaries, is beyond my comprehension. The only possible explanation that strikes me is that our Policemen do have a sense of humour, if somewhat warped.

Hyperbole is the stock-in-trade of local journalism.

But the power of the journalistic eye-glasses is dangerously high. Edgar Wallace somewhere speaks of the highest paid reporters as having to report of events as they should have happened, relinquishing the tame job of telling the truth to the common ones. The position is reversed hereabouts. Our editors have the knack of picking up reporters with greatly distorted vision. But, if the optical deficiencies of these friends were confined to errors in size, we could perhaps forgive them. But an atrocious degree of colour-blindness is not a pardonable virtue. It may be contended, however, that they are (like Shaw in another connection) the few men of normal vision. Allowing them to be rare specimens, we must

still beg to have them exhibited in their proper background, to wit, an asylum.

That the partitions between genius and madness are not only thin but translucent, will be readily granted. For it is possible at times to catch a glimpse of the one through the other. Our streets are frequently haunted by geniuses who might, under happier circumstances, have revealed to us the right side of the partition. The number of such unfortunates has been of late on the increase. I wonder why. On the other hand, we see numbers of lunatics crowding our platforms and school-room chairs, who might with a fairer Providence have had the bigger chamber at the far end of the partition turned about to our view and then been consigned to the proper treatment they so richly deserve. I can tell you, for instance, of a mathematical genius and writer who presides over a college section and whose cerebral infirmities are betrayed by the sound of his laughter—which is a unique cross between a hyaena's laugh and another being's bray. Let us hope the above iniquities may find speedy redress.



Mother:—"Now, do you know why I am going to beat you?"
Son:—"Yes, mother, it's because you're bigger than I am."

A Comedy of Errors

(M. G. MENON)

I was away from town for over three months and so I could not go earlier to my good old chum, Sankar, and congratulate him on his becoming the proud father of a boy.

"My best wishes, old lad, heartiest congratulations", I greeted him. Sankar expressed his thanks and invited me to have a look at his wee little son. I have never found anything interesting in babies; I believe Darwin must have seen quite a number before he came to his famous conclusion regarding the origin of man. Anyhow, as I did not want to displease my friend, I told him that nothing would give me greater pleasure than a glimpse of his little darling.

A few minutes later, Sankar, his wife and the baby appeared. "How do you like our little boy," Mrs. Sankar smiled. I said he was splendid; I do not know where I got that valuable tip from, but I remembered in time not to mention any child as it in the presence of its fond parents. I couldn't help examining the child; my mind soon wandered back to the great Darwin. "Was he right after all? Did he give a fair chance to puppies, piglings, mice etc., etc., before honouring the monkeys with undue importance?" My thoughts were interrupted by a question of Mrs. Sankar as to whom the child resembled most. She was a beautiful woman and I did not know whether it was safe to trace any resemblance between her and this ugly little thing. I decided to have a go at my friend. "Very much like Sankar, isn't he?" I remarked. I thought it unjust on his part to look displeased. "How do you mean?" he growled. I did not know how best to acquit myself from such a situation and so I asked him to wait and see; to carry conviction behind such a shallow argument, I cited several cases of a similar type where I had proved to be right in the end. "Must be in the end when everything is burnt to ashes," broke in my friend. Mrs. Sankar said that it was his guilty conscience which was responsible for his temper. "Now that I think of it," she continued addressing her husband, "the child has your eyebrows, nose, and....." "Mars," I helped her; she agreed. My friend was furious. "Look here, I will tell you the whole thing," he began, but his wife asked him to hold his tongue and said that she was a fool not to have suspected it all these days. A request on my part to reveal what the pronoun "it" stood for, went unheeded. I was in a

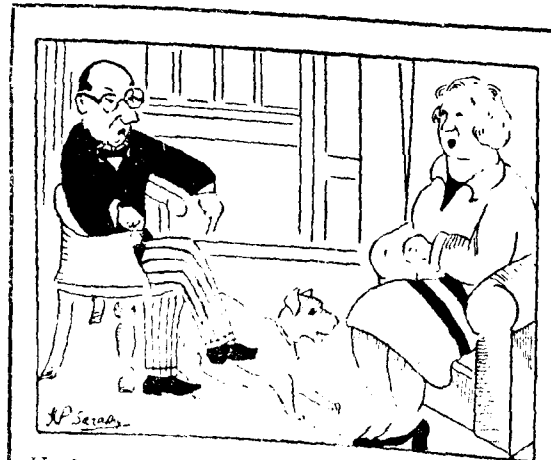
fix to know where the hitch was; everyone seemed to be so unhappy that I thought it high time to confess my ignorance on the subject to see if that would set matters right. I said I was only joking and that I hadn't the least idea of such things. Mrs. Sankar asked me not to shield her husband and that she had observed him making signs to me when we were under the impression that he was looking elsewhere. After this unjust and unfair accusation a very unpleasant silence followed.

I waited for a few minutes and seeing no improvement in the situation, was about to take leave of them when Sankar jumped up from his seat, all laughter. He whispered something in his wife's ears, but his mind

did not prove to be contagious for she continued to remain gloomy. He did not seem to mind it; he left the room and soon reappeared with another child. It was as ugly as the other from my point of view though fairer in complexion. "You know our gardener, Rangan and his pretty flirt of a wife", my friend asked me. "Well, just tell us whom this brat resembles; it is their child". Here at last was a rare chance when I could fire away my candid opinion without offending anyone. I was not to be fooled by the complexion of the child. Moreover Rangan's wife was pretty. "With all its fairness, it is a miniature Rangan; the same ugly nose, drunken eyes....."

".....". "You are a good-for-nothing fellow," snapped Mrs. Sankar before I could enter into further details, "you know nothing at all". Her husband reminded her that she had, just a few minutes back, told him that temper was the outcome of a guilty conscience. At this they looked at each other for some time and then both started laughing; I thought my very existence was forgotten, when my friend turning towards me explained, "The first child was our gardener's and this one, our own little darling. We wanted to play a trick on you and so we got his child instead of ours; from your wonderful powers of tracing resemblances my wife thought....." "Shut up," his wife interfered laughing, "precious lot you know about what I thought."

Both of them looked so happy and I felt such an idiot that, ignoring their repeated request to lunch with them, I departed. Poor old Sankar, but for his presence of mind what a tragedy would it have been!



Husband:—"That cur shall never obey you".
Wife:—"I will make it obey. You too were a little troublesome at first."

PHONOGRAPHY

(V. GANAPATHI)

"STENOGRAPHER"—Yes, that dignified term signifies one who practises phonography. Phone, sound; Graphoin, to write. Simply write what you hear; no spellings, no punctuation to worry about, while writing.

Dickens wondered, and has expressed his wonder, at this wonderful system, the outcome of an inventive brain. Just a line, and it means "Government"; a curve, and it gives the septa-syllabic "indivisi-bility"; a stroke of the pen, and you get "retrenchment"—wonderful indeed!

So, our T. S. Gopal is really a wonderful person, for he can write shorthand with innumerable dots and strokes and curves and circles. I remember the days when he began the rudiments of this art. Halve the line, double the line, cross the curve, thicken the stroke—these were his spasmodic outbursts. Once in his dream, I heard him exclaim, "Top to bottom—Circle S hook, upward R"—and none of the four that were aroused, was able to understand a bit.

He called himself a Shorthand-Typist immediately as he found himself enriching the list of the independent "unemployed." He held his tenure of membership there for no shorter a period than two full years, with that title. He was not satisfied with this ordinary nomenclature. Talk to an utter stranger in the bus or tram, and before four words are exchanged, you find he is a Shorthand-Typist. Greet a friend at the beach—he has become a Shorthand-Typist. Observe a young man walking in the open street—he draws outlines, in the open air, of the words he reads in the wall-posters, for he is a Shorthand-Typist. 80 out of 100 are Shorthand-Typists. The term is so commonplace. So Gopal called himself a "STENOGRAPHER"—a rather lofty-sounding word. He went about calling himself such, for some more months.

This indifferent world did not pay the poor devil his due. None did so much as seem to acknowledge his merits, however much he advertised himself. He was driven to the point where he felt he would be nowhere, if he did not apply himself earnestly to the 'hunt' for a

job. And he did take on himself this patience-trying task of entering offices where there were no "No Vacancy" boards to greet him at the entrance, and where there were no peons posted near the office door. You know, these peons are endowed with an extraordinary power of psychological insight and they can at once spot out the "job-hunters." Many young men have had this annoying experience of being questioned by the peons as to whether

they required them to pass in any applications, immediately followed by a sneering remark that if they did, they would do well to beat an honourable retreat. Gopal again felt the sting of disappointment and his endeavours proved futile.

The next phase, he desired to find himself in, was the zone where Shorthand-Typists or Stenographers came to be known as "Reporters". And here he felt he was meant to be one such. He had the 'push' in him to apply for this place. "Aim high, beyond your reach, and you will gain something, though less than what you aim at." This is a good bit of advice. And so Gopal got the post of an ordinary, personal and general Shorthand-Typist.

Here was a formidable factor for Gopal. It is not very difficult to take down notes, but to write them again on the machine! To write a word according to the pronunciation is easy indeed, of course always providing the speed is not beyond sixty words per minute. Pronunciation helps to grasp just the sense of it all but the actual word!

Again, Nimonea or Nemonia will give you the phonetics. Why then Pneumonia? It is but fair to read what you write, without omissions, slurrings or elisions. But, oh! this most crooked English language! Why Psychology and not simply Sycology? In those days when people are developing economic tendencies, why waste letters? A dignified 'P' with its majestic sound elsewhere, silent and powerless here! Why Pharmacopoeia instead of simply Pharmacopia? Gopal could not solve this intelligent interrogatory, though it owed its origin to himself.

ONE MOMENT!

This copy of
THE MERRY MAGAZINE
may be worth

Rs. 50 to You

Every copy of the Merry Magazine, bearing dates 10th May, '33 and 25th May, '33 bears an unduplicated number. Six different numbers are selected at random and kept sealed in an envelope by the Editor. These are the winning numbers and they will be published in the issue of the 10th June, '33. The Editor will buy back the copy bearing the first winning number for Rs. 50 in cash. The five other copies containing the other numbers are worth Rs. 5 each. The copy you are now looking at may contain the winning number. So,

KEEP YOUR COPY.

The Merry Magazine

And again, these bosses! They never bother themselves about spellings or pronunciation. They simply dash off whatever occurs to them at the moment and throw out their ideas in a flash, and the Stenographers are expected to catch them, collect them and put them down, transform them, give them shape and above all, have got to conform to the most orderless and lawless grammar. My sympathy goes out to those poor Stenos.

"Bark you must, if you have to act the dog", though for the nonce. And so, no grievances or complaints. You must carry on. Gopal, therefore, reconciled himself in a sort of way to the position he was able to secure after all.

He was managing his work easily enough, when it was mechanical typing, just giving a decent alignment to the script. But words to be symbolised, and symbols to be transcribed! There was the Gordian knot for him.

On the seventh day after his appointment, to his great dismay, a few private letters were dictated to him. His master wanted to have a berth reserved in the mail train for his missus who was leaving for Ooty for the season. Her latest choice, the Karachi silk saree, had lost colour; and her over dutiful husband, in obedience to "the power in her eye that bowed the will", had agreed to send it to the dyers to impart to it fresh, fast colour. So, Gopal's master gave these two letters, among others. He took them down somehow, typed them somehow, and produced them before his master. They were:

1. To
The Station Master,
.....
SIR,

I shall be very thankful if you will kindly arrange for a berth for my wife. Let it be male. I may add that she will prefer it to be a single one.
Thanking you,
Yours faithfully,

"I know how to settle this unemployment problem," said the club wag. "If we put all the men of the world on one island, and all the women on another, we'd have everybody busy in no time."
"Well, what would they be doing?"
"Why, boat-building."

Foots, praising the hospitality of the Irish, after a trip to the sister kingdom, a gentleman asked him if he had ever been at Cork. "No, sir," replied Foots, "but I have seen many drawings of it."

Late one afternoon, an insurance agent secured admittance to the office of a big businessman by dint of perseverance.

"You ought to feel flattered, young man," said the businessman. "Do you know I have already refused to see five insurance agents to-day?"

"Yes, I know," replied the agent. "I am all of them."

2. To
Messrs. Spounder & Co. Ltd.,
.....
SIRS,

Herewith a Karachi silk. Sorry, will you please die, as early as possible?

Yours etc.,

"Hey, come here," thundered the boss.

If there is such a thing in this world as "nervous breakdown", poor Gopal almost had it at that moment.

All humble, he stepped in with a suppliant "Yes, sir".

"You are fired," roared the boss.

"Sir?"

"YOU - ARE - FIRED. GET OUT" he burst out again, and handed him a five rupee note for the seven days' work done, and another five rupee note, in lieu of seven days' notice.

Gopal found himself next moment in the good old open street, renewing his proximate configuration with "All cars stop here" boards and "At the Roxy" posters, wondering how and why he was there. He is still wondering "Why fired? I typed all right—just what I had written down."

"Yes, my boy, quite right. But it was your Phonography or Stenography that let you down. C. S. is what you want. Yet, cheer up, good-bye". Will any of you console the poor soul like this? Oh, please do.

"This lobster has only one claw."
"Yes, sir; it lost the other one fighting."
"Well, take it away and bring me the winner!"

"Yes, my dog's so intelligent that when I forget to feed him he brings me a forget-me-not out of the garden."

He was usually a quiet and peaceful boy. One day to his mother's surprise, he arrived home from school with a discoloured eye and a torn shirt.

"Gracious!" she exclaimed. "What have you been doing?"

"It's that new boy next door," the little boy whimpered.

"You've been fighting him?" asked his mother. He nodded.

"I am very much ashamed of you," she said, "and disappointed in that little boy next door. I thought he had such a nice face."

"Yes, he did have," put in the little boy earnestly, "but he hasn't now."

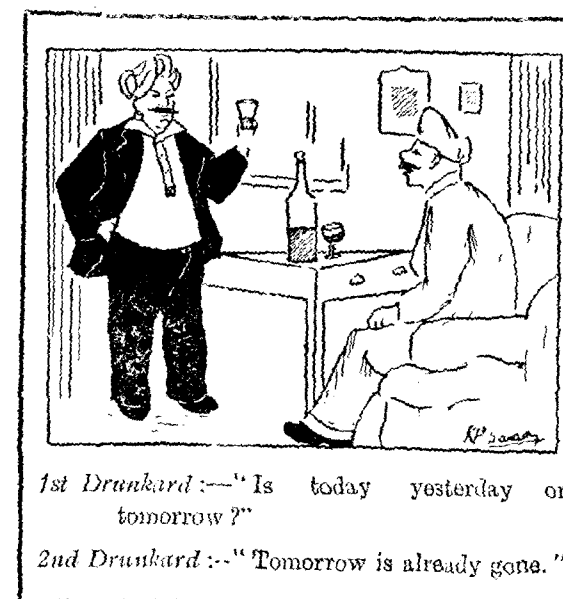
The Brinjal Seller

(R.)

It was in an open cottage with beds of chrysanthemums in full bloom all around.

I was racking my gray cells with a cross-word puzzle, trying to emulate an illustrious friend of mine who can think only in terms of words with aberrated meanings, and my poor ill-in-bed wife was trying to get through her latest 'thriller' before the doctor came in, when suddenly, I was brought back to things mundane by a voice which said something about brinjals. I wondered if it was any solution to 'seventeen across' and looked up. And so did my wife.

We saw a decrepit old man, probably round about eighty years of age—who, if he had been asked, would not have been able to enlighten us on the point or else would perhaps have told us that he must be twenty or thirty years old—with peaked features, sunken eyes and grisly hair. His forehead was deeply and repeatedly furrowed. From his pierced earlobes dangled a pair of out-of-all-proportion silver rings. His arms were wiry and his fingers were claw-like. His legs, which were bare up to above the knees, were covered over with white road dust. He had the usual loin-cloth tucked up in the orthodox coolly style. But the upper garments with which he was trying to cover his nakedness took my breath away. He had both a shirt and a coat on. But through both one could see almost the whole of his tanned and withered body. There had been attempts at patching up and it was only these irregular rectangular areas of variegated



1st Drunkard :—"Is today yesterday or tomorrow?"
2nd Drunkard :—"Tomorrow is already gone."

cloth that were entire and it was these that held the strands of shreds together. Their better days must have been aeons ago. On his head was poised a basket and though we had bought some brinjals a few minutes previous, my wife said, "Let's buy some from this dear old man." He flopped his lovely, luscious basket of beauties down judging from the compassionate smile in my wife's eyes. He weighed out two heaped up pans full and demanded two pice for the lot in full settlement. Our earlier purchase had been comparatively costly. I paid him the price and my wife said, "Why don't you give the poor old thing one of your old coats?" I went into an adjoining room and brought out a fairly decent, homespun shirt and gave it to him. The poor man thought it was a question of pulling his leg but, when he was assured that it was for him, he was profuse in his gratitude, fell

at my feet and prayed to all the gods and goddesses for the good wife's speedy recovery. And he went away—toddling.

We both started on our brooding thoughts and talked about the sacredness of poverty for sometime and then tried to go back, she to her novel and I to my cross-words; but my mind was all on the old man and the cross that he was bearing.

The doctor had come and gone. The old brinjal-seller was back at our steps and said that, as he had been late in coming with his wares, he had not been able to dispose of the entire contents of the basket. Would we care to buy the rest of it? We could have it at our price. We agreed to help him in his trouble, but we would not take any unfair advantage. We asked him to weigh out and his calculation of the cost was two annas and I gladly paid it. He touched both his eyes with the

silver piece tenderly and placed it carefully in a compartment of a small cloth-purse with a dangling string about it and was about to tie the purse on to his loin in accredited style when the idea of counting up profit apparently occurred to him. He sat down on the edge of the steps and counted out the lot—and blinked in thought.

He counted again.

And his eyes seemed to protrude from their hollows. He uttered a strange gurgling sound. And the sound which arose in his throat was throttled before it reached his lips. He was a perfect picture of grief and horror.

He managed to get the words on to his lips. "Appah! I bought the brinjals wholesale for one rupee and I have got only eleven annas!"

Five annas don't lose! And the wiseacres tell us that the average income of an Indian is one anna odd a day.

Suddenly he swayed and reeled and before I could rush up to him, fell off the steps, like a log, on to the bed of chrysanthemums in full bloom. And that was how he died!

A smile developed on his face, where there had been grief and horror; and he was at peace with the world—a world that had given him eleven annas for the rupee!

And that was how he had his bed of flowers after all—he who had had a bed of thorns all his life!

Man, as he is created

(P. RANGAPRASADA ROW, M. A.)

Man is blessed with many wonderful powers. He can produce wonderful works of imagination and art. He can create marvellous works of poetry and fiction, can make airships fly in the air, send wireless messages from place to place, and make the locomotives fly fast on land with a wonderfully quick speed. But one great power, a power greater than all these, is denied to him, by the all-wise Almighty, the power of getting to himself whatever he wants from the bazaar or elsewhere by mere wish.

A friend of mine, a deep student of Philosophy, but not of the world, once told me that this arrangement of the Creator was not good, and that one should get what he wanted by merely wishing for it. I argued with him long thus, and at last convinced him of the wisdom of the present arrangement of things in this world by the all-wise Creator.

Supposing one has the power of getting things from the bazaar or elsewhere by mere wish, then everything would be turned topsy-turvy. There would be nothing left in the bazaar, the markets, and the coffee-hotels to buy or eat.

The brinjals, drumsticks, potatoes etc., in the vegetable market would not be in their places on the stalls but fly away, like winged birds, to some Iyer, Iyengar, Chetty, or Sastry, who wished for them, and the mutton, eggs, fish etc., in the mutton and fish markets would follow suit. That would indeed be a funny state of things. In the coffee-hotels, the iddis and thairvadais, would fly over the heads of the frequenters of the hotels, to their great disappointment and loss of the proprietors.

It should indeed be a funny sight to see varied armies of iddis, thairvadais etc., flying in the air to their respective stations, followed by battalions of drumsticks, brinjals etc., soaps and soda bottles bringing up the rear, not to speak of the turbans, caps, hats, boots, and shoes, which would be seen flying here and there, like stray and fugitive birds.

All would be a medley of confusion and disorder. There would be vegetable markets without vegetables, mutton markets without mutton, fish markets without fish, coffee-hotels without coffee and refreshments, newspaper offices without newspapers and so on. Caps, turbans, hats, boots, shoes etc., would be dancing in the air on their passage to the persons who wished for them. In the midst of them, newspapers, magazines, and reviews would be fluttering, like so many birds of varied hues on their way to a similar goal, thus enhancing the diversity and grotesqueness of the scene.

Persons, unsuspectingly taking a seat on a chair, would fall heavily to the ground, the chair suddenly disappearing from its place. People, about to descend a ladder, would suddenly find the ladder vanishing from their sight, and losing their balance, would be precipitated to the ground, after a double somersault. Therefore the almighty Creator, foreseeing all these evils, wisely denied man, the greatest of all powers, that of getting his things by merely wishing for them. Honesty and virtue would be then at a low ebb, for many, succumbing to temptation, would wish for things not lawfully their own, and getting them easily without the trouble of breaking into houses or shops, where these are available, throw dust into the eyes of the Police, who would be at a loss to discover the mysterious thieves.

My friend acknowledged the validity of my arguments and fell to praising the Almighty for His great wisdom in the present arrangement of things in the world. If the present arrangement was otherwise ordered, there could be no meetings, cinemas, dramas, exhibitions, entertainments and so on, for the contents of the places, where these are held, would disappear from their places before they commence their proceedings or operations. Virtuous men would suffer greatly by such a pernicious arrangement, and wicked men would triumph and derive great benefits thereby. God save us from such evils!

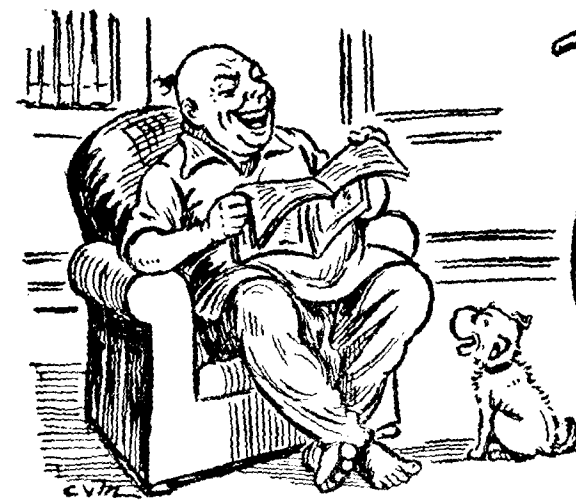


Honest man:—"I found this watch on the road."

Policeman:—"Why did you take it without the owner's permission?"

What to do with an idea?

Send it along to The Merry Magazine. The Editor may be pleased to have it. The idea may be made mutually profitable.



THE CREAM OF THE JEST

In his amusing history of "The Haymarket Theatre" Cyril Maude tells a delightful story of Munden. He writes: "Munden was another of those low comedians whose faces formed no small part of their fortune. The son of a poulterer, he tried his hand as apothecary's assistant and attorney's clerk before he took to the stage. Unlike the other low comedians of his day, his chief amusement was the theatre. His grimaces were absolutely irresistible, and the audiences of the day literally yelled at him. One night when playing Obadiah in *The Committes*, the audience found him funnier than ever. Obadiah has to be plied with liquor by Teague, and Munden made such extraordinary faces over the draught that the whole house, including the actors on the stage, shrieked with laughter. The scene over, Munden went off the stage, and no sooner was he hidden from the sight of the audience than he began to bellow like a bull. 'Bring me a stomach pump!' he roared holding his sides, 'I'm a dead man; I've been poisoned. Lamp oil, lamp oil, every drop of it!' And lamp oil it proved to be. The property man had mistaken the bottle for one filled with sherry and water!

"Munden was asked afterwards why on earth he had allowed the whole contents of the bottle to be poured down his throat, when he could so easily have shown that something was the matter. 'My dear sir,' he replied, 'there was such a glorious roar at the first face I made upon swallowing it that I hadn't the heart to spoil the scene by interrupting the effect!' " Cyril Maude comments: "I need not add that Munden was a conscientious actor."

Electrician (to assistant):—"Hi! Take hold of one of those wires."

Assistant:—"Right."

Electrician:—"Feel anything?"

Assistant:—"No."

Electrician:—"Good! I wasn't sure which was which. Don't touch the other, or you'll be electrocuted."

"Did you write this unaided?" the editor inquired of the young poet.

"I did," said the poet. "I wrote every line of it."

"Then I am very pleased to meet you, Lord Tennyson," said the editor. "I thought you died many years ago."

John Toole dearly loved a joke. On one occasion he went into the General Post Office in the city and asked for a penny stamp. The clerk brought out a huge sheet, and Toole said: "I want *that* one." "Which one?" said the clerk. "*That* one," replied Toole, pointing to the centre one. A long argument ensued. Toole saying that in purchasing a stamp he had a perfect right in law to choose the one he fancied, and so emphatic was he on the point that he had his way, but not before he had created a disturbance, and clerks from other counters had left their work to see what was going on.

At a country festival where the *Messiah* was performed, the singer to whom the aria, "O Thou that tellest," had been assigned, anticipating a favourable appreciation of his talents, wrote at the end of the solo (the chorus following immediately) the words: "Wait for the applause." This he wrote not only in the conductor's copy, but in every one in the orchestra. At the end of his solo the conductor stopped, and there was a dead stop. "Why don't you go on?" said the singer, in an agony of disappointed vanity. "I am waiting for the applause," was the calm and sarcastic reply of the conductor.

Thormanby, in his "The Spice of Life," tells of an amusing performance which he himself witnessed at the Globe Theatre. A member of the aristocracy had taken the theatre for his *cher amie*, a very fine-looking handsome woman, who wrongly imagined that she was an actress. Her protector, not only took the leading part, wrote the play in which she was to act the leading part. It was a terrible fiasco. The piece was utter trash, and the leading lady made it worse by her atrocious acting. When the gallery "gunned" her, she lost her temper and answered them back, which did not tend to improve the prospects of the piece. One of the scenes represented a woodland glade. She appeared, carrying a small dog in her arms, which she presently set down. Her pet wandered to one of the painted tree trunks—and—well, a veil must be drawn over what followed! Suffice it to say that there was a roar of laughter from pit and gallery, and even the stalls could not refrain from joining in the laughter. When the curtain fell amid a storm of hoots and jeers, there arose loud derisive calls for the "leestle dawg," "the most nat'ral actor in the whole company!" The play was withdrawn after a run of two nights!

"Newspaper Parasites"

(DR. CYNICUS)

THE easiest method of gauging the circulation of a newspaper or a journal, is by reckoning the number of copies sold. It is obviously a simple arithmetical calculation, but it involves a strange fallacy—for every newspaper or journal actually sold, there are at least half-a-dozen readers or more. Your calculation is therefore entirely vitiated! The actual number of copies sold is absolutely no indication of the popularity or circulation!

Take any club or association for instance, consisting of a large number of members. One or two issues of a daily, a few magazines and a few weeklies are subscribed for and placed on the table. As each member has a prescriptive right to the privileges of membership on account of the fact that he pays a monthly subscription (he might be heavily in arrears, that does not matter!) no possible objection could be raised, even if two or three of them experience a desire—however inconvenient or ungentlemanly it might be—to peruse the same paper, all at the same time! But there are occasions when this tendency on the part of a fairly large number of individuals—namely, to peruse the columns of a paper without paying for the privilege—becomes most irksome and annoying! A man pays an anna or two and purchases a newspaper from the book-stall or the street vendor; and by virtue of the fact that he has deliberately parted with a moiety of his wealth in exchange for a commodity he requires, he has an inherent right of proprietorship over the article he has taken possession of, and is therefore under no obligation whatsoever to share his purchase with anyone else even temporarily! It is the fundamental principle upon which the whole law of private property is based, but in this particular case, namely, that of the newspaper or magazine, there are a good many people who appear to hold the view, that whoever be the actual purchaser, anyone has the right to demand the privilege of perusing its columns! This argument is apparently based on the assumption that news as such is common to all. It is conveniently forgotten, however, that when once it becomes a salable commodity, it ceases to be a common factor over which there could be no private ownership! The news, by itself, may be shared by many—but the paper which contains the news printed on it, can certainly not be subjected to this kind of a universal relationship. Further, this theory is extremely annoying when translated into practice.

I have very often suffered considerable loss of time and money on account of what appears to be a fairly universal characteristic, in this respect. When of an evening, I chose to shell out an anna and purchase a copy of the local daily paper I used to be surrounded by a host of parasites who would pounce upon me from all the directions, each with a request, none too politely worded, for this sheet or that of my paper. For sometime, it was a novel experience, and I quite enjoyed the spectacle of nearly half-a-dozen individuals—apparently well-educated and in decent circumstances—looking up to me for this kind of a literary charity. I was a great man, indeed, for, with an indifferent nod of my

head and a supremely contemptuous air I would dole out each a sheet of the paper!

But soon I discovered that I was being made a regular fool of. For, I observed, as the days passed, the same gentlemen invariably crossing my path, at just the moment when I happened to purchase my evening paper. With just the same sort of idiotic mendicancy—which, however, rapidly degenerated into a highly presumptuous tone of intimacy—they would flock round me (like greedy vultures over a carcass) and put forth their requests in some such fashion:—"May I just have a look at that paper for a minute?" "Would you mind showing me the editorial sheet for a moment?" Or, this was probably a fellow who was addicted to gambling on the turf. I noticed, he was almost the very first to accost me with his "Mister, will you kindly give me the sporting page?"

As I said at the beginning, I enjoyed the humorous aspect of the situation for some time; but one day it happened (the day just before the Governor's Cup Day) that the 'Sporting gentleman' literally snatched the paper from my hands and quietly walked off with it—not however with the object of cheating me as I suspected at the moment—but just in search of a quiet corner where he could sit down undisturbed and copy down the track-notes. Another fellow, who was interested only in swallowing the opinions expressed in the editorial column (probably because he was incapable of forming a judgment of his own!), came along almost immediately in the wake of my friend of the Sporting calibre, and sheet number two, disappeared from my hands! The others followed in quick succession as if at a preconcerted signal and distributed among themselves the remaining sheets. Even the advertisement page was valuable, for, a haggard-looking youth—probably one of the ranks of the swelling number of unemployed graduates—begged of me to show him the "wanted columns"! He was certainly very polite and I had not the heart to refuse!

It was getting late, I had been waiting for nearly half an hour, but the scattered sheets showed no signs of returning to their rightful owner. It was a most annoying predicament that I found myself in. During the interval I was standing on the road ruminating upon the ethics of borrowing. My friends of the "Newspaper borrowing species" had each disappeared in a particular direction. I could not give chase for, there were six fugitives involved, nor could I at the same time follow all of them in all the directions of the compass! I had suffered the loss of an anna in addition to the annoyance; and I took a vow from that moment never to lend my newspaper!

In an extremely irritated mood, I purchased another copy, and was just attempting to board a moving train, when, another of the species of parasites referred to above pulled me up by my sleeves in the most audacious manner and said, "A minute please, how is the political situation in Bengal? Just let me have a look at the telegrams,"

Well, it was the last straw on the camel's back and I literally shouted at the top of my voice.

"Political situation be d—d! Why don't you purchase a paper for yourself and read to your heart's content? If you are so poor, here, take this and go to the devil for all I care!"

Suiting the action to my words I plunged my hands into my pocket and flung a two-anna-coin in his face!!

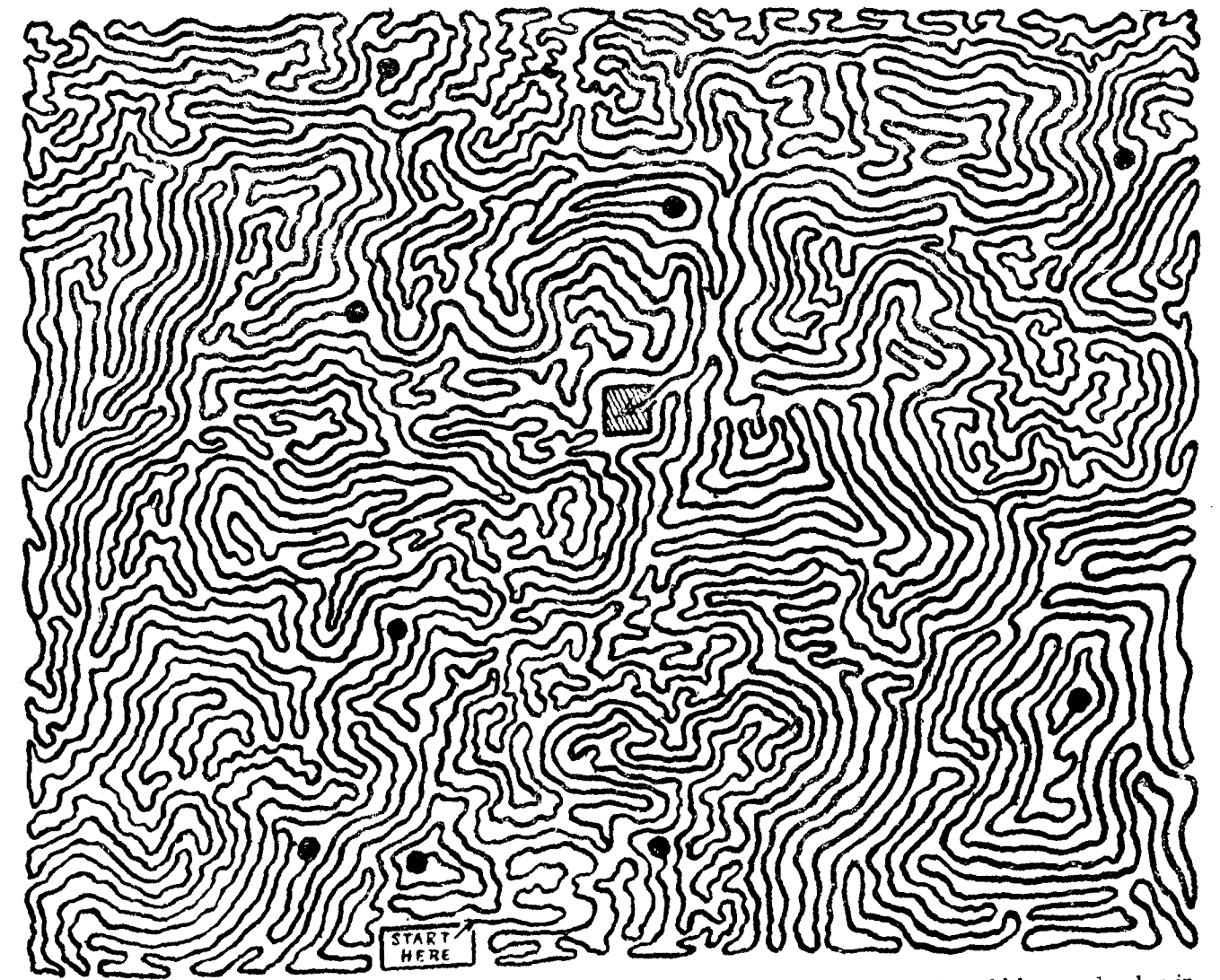
"What do you mean by insulting me like this?" came the fierce retort. "Do you think I am a beggar?"

But I was not to be defeated so easily. I was determined to do something radical; from words, therefore, we easily trespassed into the region of blows. A huge crowd had collected as though it was an exhibition bout, the tram-car could not resume its journey (the motorman was one of the most interested spectators and took upon himself the duties of an umpire!), vehicles had stopped all around in spite of the deafening shrieks and shouts of the

traffic sergeant! The situation had become uncontrollable. Law and Order were in danger and neither of us had the least desire to yield!

At last, the help of the Police had to be requisitioned and it was with very great difficulty that we could be separated and the crowd dispersed. We were both marched off to the Police Station, but when an explanation was offered as to how the whole trouble originated, the Inspector simply burst out laughing. Apparently, the whole thing appeared as a huge joke to that functionary and we were let off with a polite warning to behave better in public thoroughfares. I was able to convince my friend that the initial mistake was his in annoying me at a moment when I was considerably irritated. We shook hands and parted but, on reaching home, I discovered that with all his air of wounded pride, the gentleman had coolly pocketed the two annas!

[Moral:—Do not lend your copy of the MERRY MAGAZINE to any of your friends. Insist on their purchasing a copy or becoming subscribers!]



The small square in the centre of this picture represents a copy of the Merry Magazine which a reader has inadvertently left in the labyrinth. He is however hopeful that it has the lucky number, and so seeks your help. Will you help him? Start from the bottom as indicated by the arrow and proceed. If, however, you are blocked by a black dot on your route, make a fresh attempt. The reader thanks you in advance but regrets his inability to offer an award.



A very rich uncle sent McTavish five pounds and asked him to send his twin sons, aged seven, for a week's holiday, as he had never seen them.

When McTavish received the letter and notes he became very thoughtful.

A few days later a small boy presented himself at his uncle's house and handed him a note.

"Dear uncle," it read, "here is Donald, one of the twins. The other is exactly the same, so I didn't think it was worth the expense to send him."

For about an hour a man from Denver had been boasting to an Englishman about the magnificence of the Rocky Mountains.

"You seem very proud of them," observed the Englishman.

"Sure I am," replied the man from Denver. "And I ought to be, since my ancestors built them."

The other thought this over for a few moments. Then he asked "Did you ever hear of the Dead Sea?"

"Yes, indeed," replied the man from Denver. "I know all about the Dead Sea."

"Well, did you happen to know that my great-grandfather shot it?"

A couple of men were chatting in a club smoking-room about a friend and his motor, and this dialogue ensued: "He seems to be pretty well satisfied with it," remarked one.

"Oh, yes," replied the other; "he hasn't paid a copper for repairs in all the nine months that he's had it, he told me."

"H'm," sneered the first one, "I heard the same story from the fellow that did all the repairing."

The giant liner was ploughing its way across the Ocean. Near the bridge stood a rather nervous-looking passenger who, when the captain came out on deck, went up and touched him on the shoulder.

"Could you put my mind at ease, captain?" he asked.

"What's it?" asked the captain.

"Well," said the passenger, "What would happen if the ship struck on an iceberg?"

"The iceberg would go on as if nothing had happened," replied the captain, with a shrug of his shoulders.

"Oh, thank you, captain!" said the passenger, with a deep sigh of relief. "I feel much relieved now."

Hansum was visiting a sick friend in hospital. When they were left alone in the ward, he said:

"Jove, old man, that's a fine-looking nurse you've got!"

"Is it?" asked the patient wearily.

"Yes; hadn't you noticed?" Hansum asked, looking very surprised.

The other shook his head.

"Great Scott!" ejaculated Hansum, "I'd no idea you were so ill."

The bachelor was paying his recently married friend a visit.

"Well," said the latter, after they had inspected the flat. "What do you think of it?"

"Pretty good," praised the bachelor, "but there's one thing that has struck me as rather strange. Why did you choose a flat with such a tiny kitchen?"

The married man winked artfully.

"You're the first man I've told this to, so keep it quiet," he whispered. "It's so small that I can't get in there to help my wife when she is doing the washing-up."

He watched the door of his new establishment open to admit his first client. Business had started! A good impression must be created upon him!

Hurriedly he grasped the telephone receiver and became engaged in an animated conversation. Then, an appointment having been arranged, he replaced the receiver, and, beaming on his customer, asked: "What can I do for you, sir?"

A moment's pause and then: "If you please, sir, I've come to connect the telephone!"

They had bought a second-hand car and were taking their first trip in it. After covering several miles the driver became aware that something was amiss. He stopped the car.

"I say, my dear," he said to his wife, "have a look at the tyres on your side and tell me if there's anything wrong with them."

"Oh, it is quite all right," she said, after a careful scrutiny. "The rear one's flat at the bottom, but it's round enough at the top."

You would like to know

On the crude instrument by which Morse was enabled to patent his famous code, a scoffer inscribed the words "Old Fool," and of course the "Old Fool" gained the last laugh.

Every Rolls-Royce undergoes, before leaving the works, the severe test of being driven full speed up a hill seventy miles long.

Newly married couples in Horschel, a German town, have to plant two fruit-trees for the municipality to celebrate their wedding.

Mosquitoes carrying the germ of malaria are used in the treatment of general paralysis. It was thought that paralysis was incurable till Professor Wagner-Jauregg of Vienna made this discovery.

A healthy man doing moderate work requires every day about 4½ oz. of dry nitrogenous, 3 oz. of fatty and 15 oz. of sugary and starchy food besides 1 oz. of saline matter.

The first woman to be called to the Bar of England was Miss. I. V. Williams and the ceremony took place at Inner Temple on May 10, 1922.

Birmingham runs a Municipal Savings Bank, and even makes advances to customers who want to buy live-stock, fruit-trees, seeds and fertilisers.

The real names of the famous Marx brothers have now leaked out. "Groucho" is just a nickname for Julius, "Garpo" for Arthur, "Chico" for Leo, and "Zoppo" for Herbert.

A genealogist has now discovered that the ex-Kaiser, the most nationalistic of all Germany's rulers, is actually of French descent.

The brain consists of a mass of nerve cells called neurons. There are some 9,000 millions of these cells and they exercise—some individually, some in groups—full control over every part and every function of the body.

John Galsworthy's famous "Loyalties," is only now being filmed by Mr. Basil Dean. It will be recalled that a decade back the screen rights were purchased by an American company and that, because the author refused to change the chief character from Jew to Gentile, the story remained unfilmed for seven years after which the rights reverted to the author.

There is in Paris a cow named Flora which has four horns, four nostrils, two tongues, two back-bones which join at the tail. She also has three eyes, and an X-ray photograph has revealed the presence of two brains which act independently.

Richard Trevithick made the first steam locomotive ever run on a railway line in 1804. Its speed was five miles an hour.

By lighting and heating a beehive by electricity the output of honey has been increased by as much as 17½.

Last year's output of films was the lowest for twenty years; there was, however, an increase in the number of British films.

Basic English is the new world language. It is nothing more than simplified English with a vocabulary of 850 words.

A mud pie contains vast quantities of disease germs. Those of lockjaw number about 3,600,000; of measles 2,450,000; of diphtheria 1,800,000; of small pox 900,000; of dysentery 900,000; of pneumonia 500,000 and of tuberculosis 600,000.

The world's total of motor-bicycles is placed at 2,750,000, eighty-five percent of them being in Europe.

We are said to be acquiring gradually the power of shutting our ears to noise; this is Nature's response to the increased noise of modern life.

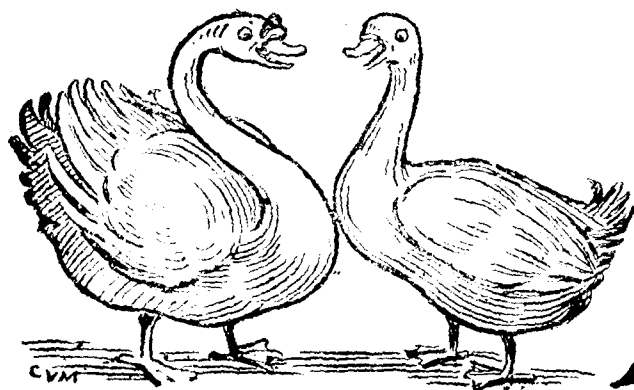
More than one out of every five ships of the world's tonnage is laid up just now; so low has the world trade fallen. Another factor in the decrease is that nations other than British have doubled their tonnage in recent years.

The strings of a tennis racket are made of sheep-gut. Twenty-one feet of gut are issued for the down strings and seventeen feet for the cross strings. Fourteen sheep are needed to provide this amount of gut. So you needn't grumble about the price when next you buy a new racket.

The Braille system of embossed dots, which enable the blind to read by feeling with the fingers, was invented just 104 years ago by Louis Braille, the blind French organist.

Now Braille books cover every sphere of literature. There is a weekly newspaper entitled 'Braille Mail,' a Braille edition of wireless programmes. Braille typewriters also are now in use.

The world's busiest railway is the London-Brighton train service.



SENSE & NONSENSE

"The shades of evening were falling fast and I strolled into a dark alley. All on a sudden I was held up by a pair of the light-fingered gentry. A man pinioned my arms while the other gave me a box on the ear. I opened my mouth to shout for help and in a moment they were gone with my precious set of teeth." That is the unhappy experience of a mofussil friend of mine, and the rest of his letter is an acrimonious invective against the municipality for its failure to light up the smaller streets. Well, the friend has my fullest sympathy but I must point out that the blame must really be laid at the door of the Chancellor of the British Exchequer and the Finance Member of the Govt. of India. Had not Britain gone off the gold standard or had only Sir George Schuster put an embargo on the export of the yellow metal, my friend would not have met with this accident.

Speaking of the gold standard reminds me that Uncle Sam too had thought it fit to take the leaf from John Bull. And I make no bones in confessing that I do not understand anything about this 'going on and off the gold standard' business. And I wonder if anybody else in this country does.

The other day, I saw in an English weekly a good joke about this gold standard business. It will at least amuse my readers if it does not enlighten them. And here it goes:

Elector:—"What does the Gold Standard mean, sir?"

Politician:—"Well, when you are on the Gold Standard, it means wine, women and song."

Elector:—"But if you are off the Gold Standard, sir?"

Politician:—"Ah, that's another story! It means beer, the missus and the gramophone!"

But I have been digressing for which I seek your pardon. I have good news for the friend who lost his gold teeth. Mr. Claude Cotyer, a British inventor, has designed an electric welder which makes stainless steel lie down and behave itself just as easily and readily as gold. Steel dentures are now the fashion in England and they are better, cheaper, and stronger than gold. That's welcome news to the friend, isn't it? In future, his teeth should cost less but last longer.

The world's strangest journalist, says Reuter, is in Shanghai. He is the editor of a Chinese daily, though he does not know even the Chinese alphabet.

"Wanted—a War Budget to-day—a budget that will declare war on unemployment," writes Mr. E. Roffe Thompson in a British weekly. This recalls to my mind what the Welsh Wizard did just a couple of decades ago. He introduced a budget in the House of Commons with the words: "This is a War Budget. We have declared war upon poverty and disease." How we wish Sir George Schuster would do likewise. If he introduces a war budget declaring war on poverty and unemployment instead of on the poor man's salt and the needy clerk's pay,.....well, it's crying for the moon. Things will go on as they are. Only every budget means a war in my household.

That leads me to envy Lord Runciman and join issue with him. He recently made an acknowledgment in public of his wife's share in the shaping of his career. Commenting on this, an English weekly writes, "It affords yet another example of the way in which happy marriage to the right woman assists a man of ability and ambition." The right woman! Aye, there's the rub. Mr. Ramsay MacDonald's tribute to his wife is also famous. "To turn to her in storm and stress was like going into a sheltered haven where the waters were at rest, and smiling up into the face of Heaven." There has possibly been no finer tribute of this kind since Disraeli wrote after his wife's death, "Marriage is the greatest earthly happiness, when founded on complete sympathy. That hollowed lot was mine and for a moiety of my existence."

Well, that is one side of the picture. Milton complained with poignant grief that a wife was "a thorn intestine, far within defensive arms, A cleaning mischief, in his way to virtue, Adverse and turbulent."

And another poet wrote, "He raised a woman to the skies, She brought an angel down."

That's again the story of Browning's *Andrea Del Sarto*. Adam fell because of Eve and in the Shelley-Marriet episode, history repeated itself.

In this connection I am reminded of a really good joke that I came across in a foreign journal and I reproduce it below.

"I owe all I have to a woman" said Mr. A when he met his friend. And Mr. B naturally inquired, "your mother?" and expected the reply, "no, my better half." But the actual reply of Mr. A must have really stunned him. Mr. A owed what all he had neither to his mother nor to his wife, but to,—could you guess?—Yes, his landlady.

Mr. A was right. The times are so hard. Financial stringency and economic depression, these phrases have now got on our nerves. The grim wolf is knocking at our doors and it is hard to make both ends meet. Yes, and as the old lady said, just when they are going to meet, some crack-pot Government comes along and moves the ends. For my part, I shall not consider Sir George Schuster a successful Finance Member unless he makes Rothschilds of us all,—be it through Ottawa Pacts if need be, never mind.

By the way, in a recent issue of the *Tit-Bits*, I chanced to read an amusing story about Baron James de Rothschild. It concerns the dinner to which he invited the great poet Heinrich Heine. Heine was not very talkative during the meal, and James thought it a good move to produce a bottle of Lacrima Christi, one of the most famous of Italian vintages.

"Well," said James, anxiously, "how do you like it?"

"It's very good indeed," replied Heine, without enthusiasm.

"Ah!" exclaimed the Baron, "you do not seem to know what you are drinking. It is Lacrima Christi, and it is made from grapes which grow at the bottom of Mount Vesuvius. That's why it tastes so fiery. And every drop of it is worth its weight in gold." Heine still seemed unimpressed.

"Baron," he said at last, "Do you happen to know the meaning of Lacrima Christi?"

"No," replied James.

"It means 'Tears of Christ.'"

"Well, what of that?"

"Yes," said Heine, "Tears of Christ, because Christ weeps at the sight of a couple of wicked Jews like us drinking this expensive wine, while thousands of poor people in Paris are starving." And to that the Baron could make no reply.

Mylaporeans employed in the heart of the city are reminded of the factual Moplah tragedy or the fictitious Black Hole of Calcutta, every evening as they return home in the buses or trams. I have some good news for them. According to a continental doctor, straphanging and the other discomforts of rush-hour journeys are

good for the health, as the jostling and bumping, though tiring, is beneficial to the liver.

Mr. De Valera has again reduced his salary as President of the Irish Free State from £2,500 to 1,500. Dev has probably made a virtue of necessity and that possibly is the best news Jimmy has had for the past few weeks. His aggressive policy had hit the Emerald Isle (!) so hard.

The Editor's Lament

Getting out a magazine is no picnic.

If we print jokes, people say we are silly.

If we don't, they say we are too serious.

If we publish original matter, they say we lack variety.

If we publish things from other papers, we are too lazy to write.

If we don't print contributions, we don't show our appreciation.

If we print them, the magazine is filled with trash.

What in thunder is a poor editor to do, anyhow?

Like as not, someone will say we pinched this from another magazine.

So we did!

Scores of old soldiers aged between seventy and eighty, says a news-item, are rushing into matrimony because the Chilean Government has decreed that no further pensions will be paid to the 1879 Pacific war veterans unless satisfactory proof of marriage is produced.

The Fascist authorities in Venice, says another news-item, have decided to present bedroom and kitchen furniture and 12 months' rent to newly married couples.

Whatever the Malthusians may say, there is a sound economic principle behind this solicitude for the newly weds. Would but the Madras Government follow suit and issue instructions to the Services Commission that in the matter of appointments, those who have lost 'single blessedness' must be given preference over those who still enjoy it!

Mr. Compton Mackenzie will go down in literary history

as the world's most economical novelist. He wrote the manuscript of his novel, "Guy and Pauline," by hand, then wrote "Sylvia Scarlett" on the other side. He's Scotch, of course!

Genevieve Tobin, who was recently playing a role in Gloria Swanson's "Perfect Understanding" asserted at a Hollywood party that no two men kiss alike and that she can usually tell with her eyes shut who is kissing her.

After such a boast, no wonder that practically every male star present volunteered to help her prove her theory.

TAKE IT FROM ME

Golfballs were first made with horsehide cases stuffed with feathers.

Frowning causes wrinkles, because it brings into play some fifty muscles on the face.

Cobra venom is only fatal if injected into the blood stream; it is quite harmless when swallowed.

Cobra venom is also a certain cure for cancer, and bee poison for rheumatism and sciatica.

Members of Parliament who are persistently absent from the sittings of the House are liable to imprisonment in the Clock Tower at the order of the Speaker.

The Tower of London is *not* in London. It stands in Stepney.

His Holiness the Pope has a gold telephone.

The Maharajah of Patiala has 300 motor-cars in his garage.

There are 30,000 written characters in the Chinese language.

'Candle power' is a misleading term. Of late it has been decided that 'lumen' is to take its place.

The temper of parents is inherited by their children.

Many children who are naturally left-handed stammer.

Baron Lionel de Rothschild was the first Jew to enter the House of Commons.

An oyster may turn from male to female and back again as many as four times within thirteen months.

The Mexican sword-tail fish undergoes a periodic sexual reverse.

The longest-lived of all animals is the whale. It has been known to live for five hundred years.

Whalebone is not bone at all, but an elastic substance found in the mouths of whales.

The world's biggest race course stand is the new Kempton Park stand. It is built in the cantilever principle, 240 feet in length, 100 feet in depth, and 65 feet in height.

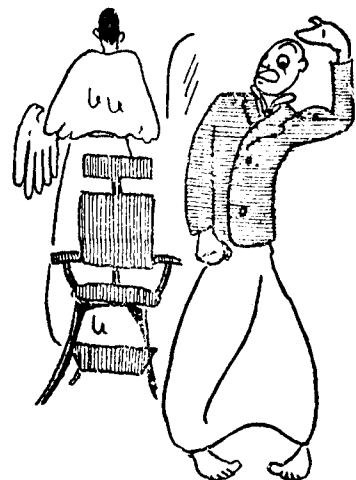
BARBERS



The only ones



who welcome



wholesale cuts.



The teacher was giving a lesson in mathematics. He happened to question a student, Gopal by name, who was all along inattentive.

The teacher:—Now, Gopal, suppose I lend your father rupees ten on condition that he should return the sum to me by monthly instalments of rupee one each. How much will he give me at the end of four months?

Gopal:—Nothing, sir!

The teacher:—My dear boy! I am afraid you don't understand my question!

Gopal:—My dear sir! I am afraid you don't understand my father.

—K. Ramaswami, Madras.

A certain well-known Professor of English Literature, who never lost an opportunity of having a gibe at his students, was one day conducting a class on 'Nineteenth Century Prose,' when an ass braved lustily outside the compound. Suddenly stopping his lecture, with a smirk on his face, he told the students "Hi! your friend is calling you. Attend to him first." Up shot an answer from the dim recesses of the back benches in a clear ringing voice "No, sir, it is only your echo." The Professor appeared crest-fallen, and never more tried to poke fun at the students.

—P. V. Gopalakrishnan, Vepery.

The clerk in an office turned to the new office boy and said, "Boy, go into the next room and look up 'collaborate.' I am not quite sure about the spelling!"

The boy disappeared and did not return. The clerk put the letter aside and took up some other duties. Presently he remembered the boy and went out to look for him. He found him studying dictionary with great intentness.

"What are you doing there?"

The boy looked round. "I forgot the word you told me, sir," came the reply, "and I am hunting for it."

C. V. Sarma, Madras.

Boy:—"My marks, please?"

Prof:—"Three."

Boy:—"What, sir?"

Prof:—"Three."

Boy:—"Out of?"

Prof:—"Mercy."

—P. R. Subramanian, Srirangam.

Master:—Where is that unaddressed cover which I have left on the table?

Servant:—I have posted it.

Master:—Why did you post it? Didn't you observe that it is without an address?

Servant:—Yes, sir, I observed it, but I thought that it was a reply to one of the many anonymous letters you have received. R. Sankarar, Ambasumudram.

The boss, when admonishing his clerk in the presence of the whole staff called him a blackguard. The clerk replied.

"Sir, I am not such a big blackguard as my boss"—here he stopped, but added finally "takes me for."

Boss:—"Man, put your words closer together." N. Subrahmanyam, Madras.

A certain witness was being examined as to his knowledge of a shooting affair.

"Did you see the shot fired?" the magistrate asked.

"No, sir, I only heard it," was the evasive reply.

"The evidence is not satisfactory," replied the magistrate sternly, "stand down."

The witness turned round to leave the box and directly his back was turned he laughed derisively. The magistrate, at this contempt of court, called him back and asked him how he dared to laugh in the court.

"Did you see me laugh, your honour?" queried the offender.

"No, sir, but I heard you" was the irate reply.

"That evidence is not satisfactory," said the offender. And this time everybody laughed. —N. T. Chockan, Mysore.

"Triplets" announced the nurse as she emerged from the room.

"Ah, I can hardly believe my own census," exclaimed the expectant father who had half-a-dozen children.

—S. Gopal, Mylapore.

Chettiar:—da! bandy. How much do you charge for the station?

Bandiwalah:—Only four annas, sir.

Chettiar:—For this load here?

Bandiwalah:—Nothing.

Chettiar:—Then carry this load in your cart and I will walk all the way.

—R. A. Padmanabhan, Pollachi.

Suri:—Dear Balu, my contribution to the Merry Magazine has been accepted. Do you know?

Balu:—Is it? What have you sent, cartoon or article?

Suri:—Subscription.

P. A. Thanikachallam, Madras.

Teacher:—"Ramu, what will you do for water when you happen to travel through a desert?"

Boy:—"If I will imagine the sweet and delicious dishes served in my sister's marriage, water will spring out from my tongue!" P. Vasudevan, Cuddalore.

A small boy asked his father how wars begin.

"Well," said his father, "suppose that England quarrelled with France."

"But," interrupted the mother, "England must not quarrel with France!"

"I know," he answered, "but I am taking a hypothetical instance."

"You are misleading the child," said the mother.

"No, I am not," he answered.

"Yes, you are."

"No, I am not."

"Yes."

"No."

"All right, dad," said the small boy, "I think I know how wars begin."

C. M. Vairavelu, Chintalripet.

Yama:—(riding on his animal and throwing out his sling) Your time is up. Get ready to go with me in 15 minutes!

Habitual borrower:—(absent-mindedly). That is all right. But can you lend me fifty rupees repayable strictly in a month with double the current rate of interest? My known reputation will be ample security. M. K. N. Iyer, Saidapet.

'AU REVOIR'

(ATTICUS)

MR. A. Rangaswami Aiyangar, the editor of 'The Hindu' was the recipient of numerous congratulations and addresses on the eve of his departure to London to assist in the deliberations of the Joint Committee. By a curious remissness on the part of the reporting staffs of the Madras Daily press, the functions have not been given the publicity they deserve. We therefore offer no apology to our readers for making good the omission.

The ball was set rolling by the members of 'The Home Farm League' of which he is the life-President, after the demise of the late lamented Kasturiranga Aiyangar. They gave him an enjoyable dinner, to which non-members were however not invited. The toast proposed on the occasion, in honour of the chief, referred *inter alia* to the gratification of the members at the recognition by the authorities of the special claims of the League for representation on the Advisory Committee. Mr. Aiyangar responding said that much as one might deplore the fissiparous tendencies of the times, we could not overcome them by ignoring them, but by making the most of them, even as others were doing. He assured them that he was going in his personal capacity, and that therefore there could be no just cause for disappointment in any quarter.

The next function, a tea followed by a *conversazione* was arranged by the staffs of 'The Hindu' and associated journals. They stressed the fact that the Government was after all forced to recognise the power of the press, and expressed the hope that he would leave his indelible stamp on the ultimate outcome of the Joint Committee Report. Mr. Aiyangar replying said: 'Popular notions of the power of the press are always exaggerated. We, editors, have either to live up to an impossible standard of perfection or live down a legion of fortuitous and imaginary defects. Let it not be forgotten that we are also human, and that we have the same failings and virtues, the same hopes and ambitions as ordinary men. I shall not be so rash as to promise you anything. But you may be assured that I will never betray the interests which all of us have at heart.'

Then, H. E. the Governor of Madras sent for him at Ooty solely to wish him *bon voyage* and quick return. His Excellency was about to suggest one or two useful tips on board the steamer to overcome sea-sickness, when Mr. Aiyangar smilingly assured him that he was a capital sailor, having had previous experience, as a delegate to one of the Round Table Conferences.

The Madras Music Academy conveyed its felicitations with suitable accompaniments. They hoped that as a patron of their ancient art, he would, as occasion arose, prevent deadlocks by singing the committee into unanimity. Mr. Aiyangar replied that he was not sure if he was better qualified than other delegates in this particular, and reminded them that C. P. would be there. He would gladly follow such a versatile leader.

The members of the 7th of April Club passed a unanimous resolution thanking the Government for nominating Mr. Aiyangar, and resolved to appoint him as their spokesman before the Joint Committee. Mr. Aiyangar expressed the hope that the membership of this infant organisation would grow out of all computation by the time he returned, and that it would popularise the policy inaugurated by them until it became national and all-Indian.

C. R. wrote a hurried post-card: 'Must you really go? Sorry to lose you even temporarily: but I know you'll come back (no pun intended.) By the bye, do not buy in London what Londoners buy: but buy a complete Khadi outfit, specially designed by me for the benefit of our erring and errant patriots. You may or may not be a Congressman: but be Indian, and BUY INDIAN.'

The Rt. Hon'ble Mr. Srinivasa Sastri rang him up on the 'phone, and said: 'Heartily congrats. What is my loss is your gain!'

Sir A. P. Patro sent the following message by radio, somewhere from the Mediterranean: "Et tu Brute! However did you manage it? But we shall meet at Philippi. Cheerio!"

Mr. Editor

His Page

The Third Eye Competition

The third eye competition has elicited a number of very amusing answers. A prize of Rs. 5/- is awarded to Mr. K. V. Ramaswamy Sastri, Vellore, whose entry is printed below:—

The Third Eye

O! where t'affix an extra eye?
I seek an answer from the sky.
But the sky an answer does refuse,
I so invoke thee, mighty Muse.
I will not have it on my feet,
For there the sandals have their seat.
For 'friends' may tread upon the eye
And say "Excuse me, sir." O! my!
Nor in the forehead shall it be,
For Shiva's wrath will fly at me
And burn me, sure—Oh Lord! not I
To stake a life for a single eye.
My mamma says to me 'Aluck!
Would God have fixt an eye on the back.'
No, ma, I must have coat and shirt.
The teacher's cane the eye may hurt.
Oh Muse! Where shall I have it then?
Why not inside the abdomen?
It will do enormous good to man.
A better way speak if you can.
Ye Gods! Ye Mortals! Bless my brain!
Let doctors but from joy refrain.
Their stethoscopes, X-rays and all
For ever doomed are they to fall.
What need then for gastronomy
Or for the dev'lish doctor's fee.
We can know when the belly is full,
When not; and health will be the rule.

Considerations of space prevent me printing on this page some more of the amusing answers I have received. I shall try to do so in the next issue.

Our 'En' Competition comes to a close now. Two readers, Messrs. V. V. Ramadurai and G. Giridhar Prabhu, have tied for the first prize. The full results will be found on page 331.

Our serial story 'Bala' will conclude in our issue of the 10th June. Mr. G. Venkatachalam ceases his "Musings on Maidens" after the next issue. Further contributions from the pens of these talented authors have been promised and will be printed in succeeding issues of our magazine.

Lucky Numbers

The sealed envelope containing the lucky numbers for April has been opened and a list of the numbers will be found on page 294. Please claim your prizes early. I am continuing the Lucky Number scheme this month also. There will be a first prize of Rs. 50/- and 5 other prizes of Rs. 5/- each. The six numbers for May have been selected at random and kept in a sealed envelope. Your copy of the Merry Magazine may contain one of them. All you have to do to qualify is to buy a copy of our magazine every fortnight and keep it. After the publication of our issue of the 25th of this month, the envelope containing the Lucky Numbers will be opened and the numbers published in our issue of the 10th June.

In this issue, we have started a new feature "Answers to Correspondents." I want to remind my readers once again that I am always glad to hear from them and to do my best to answer all letters received.

For example,

To the Editor of the Merry Magazine,

Sir-Very much honoured,

Having been given the understanding that, in order to fructify the Merry Magazine, your honour is gracious enough to bestow monetary gifts upon and into its multitudinous and voracious devourers, I most humbly beg to encompass these my humble articles, in this my most insignificant epistle. Should I be deemed so fortunate as to merit your most noble apprehension and well-recognised attention to my humblest ambition, in some pretension I shall, as in duty bound, pray for your long posterity and fertility for the Merry Magazine.

I beg to remain,
Your most insignificant servant,
Tirugnanasumbandabisheganathan.

And here is another specimen from my post bag.

SIR,

You have mentioned on the wrapper of the last issue that where a reply is required, a stamped and addressed envelope must be enclosed. This is an unkind dealing to your poor readers. In these days of poverty and sufferings, one anna and three pies means a great to us. Of course you need not send reply to us by post. You can very well reply to us in your editorial page. Henceforth if you do this, it will be a great help to us and we shall ever be grateful to you in this matter.

Then you mention the subscription number will be found on the right-hand top corner of the wrapper. But I find only two numbers. One on the top of the front page of the wrapper, the other at the right-hand side of the front page of the wrapper about 1/3 length from the top. The former, I suppose, is the lucky number and the latter the magazine num.

ber. If I am wrong in this, please state the number on the next issue and also a reply on the stamped envelope matter.

Yours faithfully,
T. A. R.

Dear T. A. R.,

If I were to answer all my correspondents on the Editorial page in order to save them an anna and three pies postage, I would have to fill about four pages of my magazine and the cost of doing so would be many hundred times an anna and a quarter. It was said, I think, of Addison or some contemporary of his, who was appointed to a minor Government post, that many of his friends came to him and asked him to render them certain services, the fee for which would ordinarily have been two guineas, which amount formed part of the perquisites of his office. Mr. Addison invariably used to reply to his many friends who applied to him for this volunteer service, "By doing this for you without charge, you gain two guineas which sum I lose. I have a large circle of friends and acquaintances. By rendering this service free to all my friends I would be a loser to the tune of two or three hundred guineas whereas each one of my friends would gain only two guineas." I would advise T. A. R. to read the above carefully. As for the second part of his letter, T. A. R. is right with regard to the numbers on the wrapper.

A New Competition

I am starting another new competition in this issue, somewhat on the lines of the Third Eye.

"If you are asked to exchange one of your limbs for another limb corresponding to yours in animals or peculiar to animals only, such as horn, trunk, tail, or claws, which would you exchange and for what?"

A prize of Rs. 5 will be awarded to the reader, who, in the Editor's opinion, sends in the best humorous answer. Closing date, 1st June, 1933.

To Our Lady-Readers.

On page 334 will be found details of a fascinating Jig-Saw Puzzle. And our lady-readers are invited to try their hands at solving this puzzle which will provide them with a lot of amusement. Meanwhile, may I state here again that I am always pleased to hear from my readers, more especially the fairer section of them.

'Supply A Letter' Competition.

Your special attention is drawn to the 'Supply a Letter' Competition, details of which will be found on Page 332. The Entrance Fee has been specially reduced to 4as. payable in half-anna stamps and the Prize Amount has been increased to Rs 200. So, roll up in your hundreds and pocket the prize. It only needs the exercise of a little intelligence on your part. The coupon will be published in our next issue.

The prize of Rs. 3 for the best joke is awarded to MR. P. A. THANIKACHALLAM, Madras.

Results of 'EN' Competition

The all-correct solution is

- | | | | |
|-------------|--------------|-------------|------------|
| 1. ENGINEER | 3. ENDOWMENT | 5. ENCLAVE | 7. ENGAGE |
| 2. ENTICE | 4. ENVENOM | 6. ENDANGER | 8. ENGRAVE |

Two all-correct solutions were received and the first prize of Rs. 75 has been equally divided between

Mr. Giridhar Prabhu, Old Kent Road, Mangalore, (S. K.)
and Mr. V. V. Ramadurai B. A., B. L., Vani Vilas, Park Town, Madras.

The following 19 competitors have submitted entries containing one error each. Money orders for Re. 1-4as. have been sent to each of them.

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. Mrs. E. CASMIER, 20-Church Road, Vepery, Madras. | 11. R. KRISHNASWAMY, 1/39 Nagappier Street, Tiruvateeswaranpet, Triplicane, Madras. |
| 2. T. SUBRAHMANYAM, No. 21, 4th Street, Mannargudi. | 12. K. GOPALAN, Sub-Asst. Surgeon, Nachiar Koil, Tanjore. |
| 3. R. B. CHANDRAN, 1-39 Naguppiyor Street, Tiruvateeswaranpet, Triplicane P. O., Madras. | 13. N. HANUMANTHA RAO, 2, Krishna Iyer Street, Nungambakkam, Madras. |
| 4. R. ARUNACHALAM, Examiner, District Court, Chingleput. | 14. T. SANKARALINGAM, 15-Mantapam Street, Erode. |
| 5. M. SHANMUGASUNDARAM, 11-Nattunuthu Kumarappa Mudaly Street, Mylapore. | 15. R. LAKSHIMANAN, c/o S. Kulathu, Panagal Buildings, Saidapet. |
| 6. S. S. DORAIRAJAH, Merchant, Ramnad. | 16. C. V. BHARATHI BAI, c/o C. Venkata Rao, B. A., Retd. Annruthunahal Superintendent, Yelwal Road, Mysore. |
| 7. S. DEVARAJULU, Proprietor of Gurudev Co., 119-Dindigul Road, Madras. | 17. A. S. RAO, Loco-Works Manager's Office, M & S. M. Ry. Perambur. |
| 8. T. S. KRISHNASWAMY, 6-Luz Church Road, Mylapore. | 18. S. M. KRISHNASWAMY, 30-Butterworth Road, Teppakulam Post, Trichy. |
| 9. M. NARAYANAN, Springara Bhavan, Rama Vilas Agrahar, Mysore. | 19. M. R. VENKATARAMANA IYER, 54-Krishnappa Naick's Agraharam, G. T., Madras. |
| 10. K. A. ADISESHAYYA, Clerk, Excise Office, C & M Station, Bangalore. | |

Rs 200 Cash must be won!

"SUPPLY A LETTER" Competition

Puzzle words.

Dich
Arrett
Soj
Kab
Ob
Rela
Lcea
Ratc
Utla
Ykli

Clues.

An infant
To draw back
Joke
A ridge
Worn round the neck
A light
Pure
Foot print
A leap
Soft

Here you have a simple but fascinating puzzle. By rearranging the puzzle words and adding only one more letter to each, you will get at words which conform to the clues given. Thus, for instance, by adding 'L' to the first puzzle word you can rearrange it to *child* which means *an infant*. All you have to do is to proceed similarly and find out the single 'letters' that must be added to the other puzzle words and fill them in the proper order in the coupon that will be published in The Merry Magazine dated 25th May, '33.

Rules for 'Supply A Letter' Competition

An entrance fee of annas four, payable in cash or in half anna stamps, must accompany each entry submitted. Solutions must be filled in, only on the coupon that will be printed in The Merry Magazine dated 25th May '33. Any number of solutions may be sent but each must be accompanied by the entrance fee of four annas. Where copies of The Merry Magazine are not available, competitors can send in their solutions on ordinary paper but an entrance fee of annas six is payable with each entry thus submitted. All entries must be received by last post on 4-6-33. Any received later will be disqualified. Entries from local competitors will be received in person at our office till 6 P. M. on that date. The first prize of Rs. 150, will be awarded to an all-correct solution and the second prize of Rs. 50 to the one which the Editor considers the next best. An all correct solution is one which agrees in all respects with the one in the Editor's possession. Failing an all correct solution the first prize will be awarded to the nearest correct entry received. In case of ties the prize money will be equally divided. A winning competitor can receive only one share in a prize. No responsibility can be accepted for any entries lost, mislaid or delayed. No correspondence can be entered into or interviews granted. The decision of the Editor on all matters relating to this competition is absolutely final and legally binding, and is an express condition of entry. Persons connected with the Merry Magazine and its associated journals are not allowed to compete.

Coupons must be filled in legibly and sent intact. No alternatives alterations or corrections whatever will be allowed. Competitors must write on the envelopes the words 'Supply a Letter' Competition. All entries must be addressed to:—

THE EDITOR. SUPPLY A LETTER COMPETITION.
THE MERRY MAGAZINE OFFICE, 2/140, Broadway, Madras.

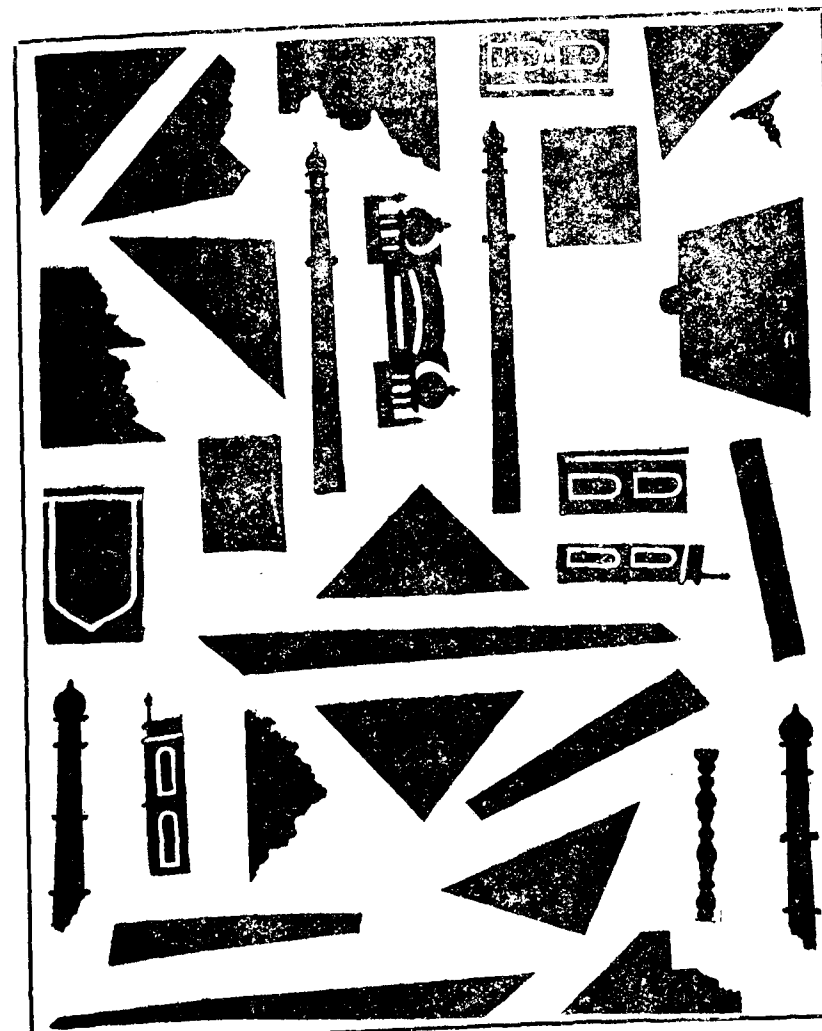
FOR MOTOR & TRAM ACCIDENTS

Rs. 500/-

The Editor of The Merry Magazine undertakes to pay a sum of Rs. 500/- to readers of this magazine who become permanently and totally disabled on account of motor or tram accidents or to their families in the unfortunate event of their death, subject to the following conditions:—

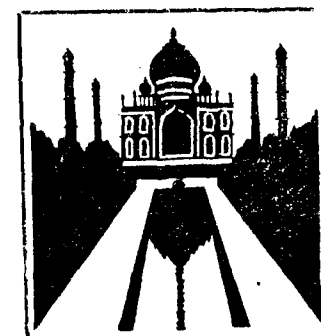
1. The terms of this Insurance apply only to accidents to automobiles, tram-cars or motor buses.
2. The accident must have occurred within the municipal limits of the city of Madras.
3. The beneficiary must have been a passenger in the automobile, tram-car or bus that met with the accident.
4. Death or total disablement must take place as a result of the accident, within thirty days of the occurrence thereof.
5. The claimant shall at the time of the accident have the current number of The Merry Magazine, with the insurance coupon therein signed, on his or her person.
6. The claimant must have left at home in safe custody a set of six consecutive issues of The Merry Magazine, with the Insurance Coupons therein signed by him or her.
7. The claim for the accident benefit must be received at The Merry Magazine Office within a week from the occurrence of the accident.
8. If the accident be fatal, the legal personal representative or heir may send in the claim which must be accompanied by (a) the set of seven issues of The Merry Magazine (the current number and the previous six consecutive issues), with the Insurance Coupons in all of them signed by the victim (b) a succession certificate (c) a testimony to the occurrence of the accident by a Police Officer not lower in rank than an Asst. Commissioner and (d) a certificate signed by two respectable gentlemen attesting to the fact that the latest number of The Merry Magazine was on the person of the victim when the accident took place.
- (9) In case of permanent total disablement, the claim must be accompanied by a certificate to that effect from a Surgeon of the General Hospital, Madras, in addition to certificates (a) (c) & (d) mentioned above.
10. Should more than one claim arise out of the same accident, the assured sum of Rs. 500 will be equally divided among the claimants.
11. The Editor of this Magazine reserves to himself the right to decide if a claim satisfies all the above conditions.
12. This Free Insurance Scheme will be in operation until otherwise notified.

THE TAJ MAHAL JIG-SAW PUZZLE.



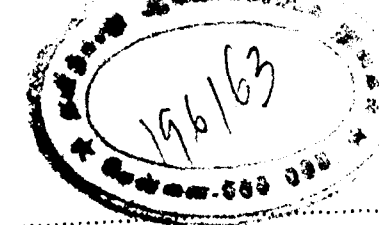
Cut out the pieces and arrange them together to form a picture of the Taj Mahal at Agra. To guide you, the complete picture in miniature is reproduced on this page. Be careful to cut out the sections accurately so that they fit together properly. When you see you have completed the picture paste or gum the pieces down neatly on a piece of paper, then write your name and address underneath. Post your picture enclosed in an envelope to "Taj Mahal c/o Editor, Merry Magazine" Madras, so as to reach on or before 1-6-33.

There is no entrance fee. Only lady readers are eligible to compete. Six of them who send in accurate and best completed pictures will be enrolled as free subscribers for a period of six months. The Editor's decision will be final.



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No conditions

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Copies of winning numbers must be sent to the Editor by registered post or may be handed over in person.

Copies must be intact.

Mere forwarding of the wrapper containing the number will not be sufficient.

Don't cut or tear out anything from the Magazine except, of course, coupons for competitions.

To avoid disputes or misunderstanding about ownership of Lucky Number copies, it is hereby clearly announced that prizes will be given to the *Sender* of the copy bearing the Lucky Number. So, if you lend the Magazine, you do so at your own risk. All you have to do is to buy a copy and keep it.

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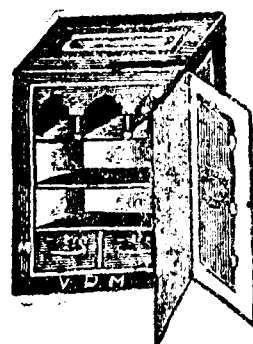
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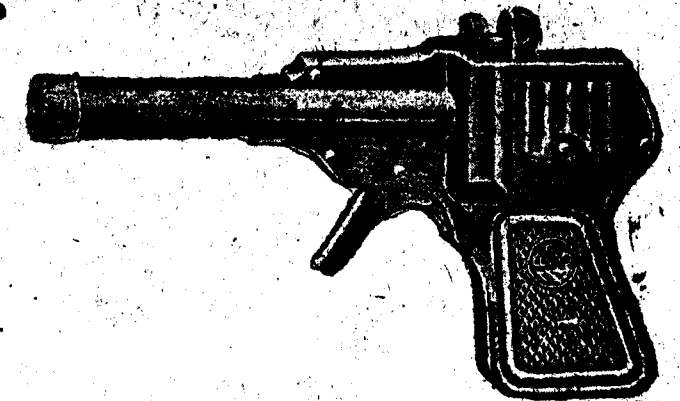


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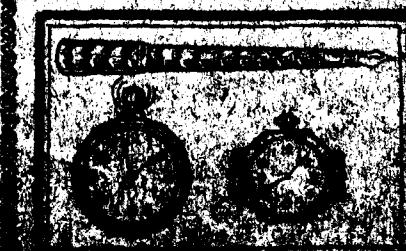
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