

961

My Domestic Pets
BY
V. C. Gopalratnam.

23595

The Majesty of The Law
BY
L E O.

961

The MERRY MAGAZINE



28 MAY 1933

Vol. I

MADRAS, 25th MAY, 1933.

No. 10.

'FALLING' IN LOVE. 2143

(BY OUR OBSTINATE ARTIST)



At Sight,

Falling in Love!

48 Pages.

As. 2.

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THE MERRY MAG

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MADRAS, 25th MAY, 1933.

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SPARKS FROM OUR ANVIL

Justice McCardio, the famous bachelor-judge, was found dead at his London residence. At the inquest, a verdict of suicide while of unsound mind, was returned.

Moral: Do not be a bachelor, if you become a judge, and vice versa!

'No more dream that English will become the common language of the country. Hindi alone can solve the Hindu-Muslim problem,' says Mr. V. V. Srinivasa Aiyangar.

But he said it in English!

On the advice of Mahatma Gandhi, the acting President of the Congress has suspended the Civil Disobedience Movement for six weeks.

But the credit of having advised the Mahatma still belongs to The Hindu.

The next move is with the Government—say the leaders and the papers.

The Government's reply is, as usual, in the negative.

The simplest and most probable reason for the Mahatma's 21-day fast has not been mentioned by anybody, so far.

We think it to be his very natural desire to perform the 'hat-trick.'

Mr. C. Rajagopalachari wishes it to be clearly understood that Gandhiji does not wish to die.

Obviously, since the longer the duration of the fast, the greater the evidence of a determination to see it through.

'Whatever you do, you win'—says Pandit Jawaharlal in a telegram to the Mahatma.

We wish we could say it of the country.

The son of Iala Harikrishen Lal, who has embraced Islam, exhorts Gandhiji to do likewise, and bring with him the untouchable millions.

We understand that the Sanatanists are quite willing.

Anything for a change from the Hindu-Muslim problem, even if it be to one of Muslim-Hindu.

General Smuts describes Gandhiji as a great South African.

We predict that the time is not far distant when the Mahatma will also be hailed as a great Englishman.

Patel and Bose have issued a manifesto from Vienna declaring that 'as a political leader Gandhiji has failed.'

We ourselves would not have rubbed it in like that.

A news-item records the alarming spread of yellow fever in India.

Now we know the reason for the flight of gold from the country.

It is stated that a dead crocodile was found in the Thames near London.

One theory is that it died of a broken heart on finding the English people only too well provided with its tears.

A prominent European banker of Calcutta is reported to have characterised the new Indian Sterling loan as 'a rotten scandal.'

We are inclined to think that he is dissatisfied!

Referring to the Government's refusal to respond to the Mahatma's plea for conciliation, the Pioneer says that they are spoiling for a 'final fight.'

We hope it would be final, if and when it comes.

The Leader characterises the Government attitude as 'mulish.'

Somebody must bear the White Man's Burden.

The citizens of Trichy-Srirangam have resolved to present an address to the Rt. Hon'ble. Mr. Sastri in Tamil.

We understand that the reply will also be in Tamil, delivered with the impeccable English accent for which the Rt. Hon'ble gentleman is justly famed throughout the Empire.

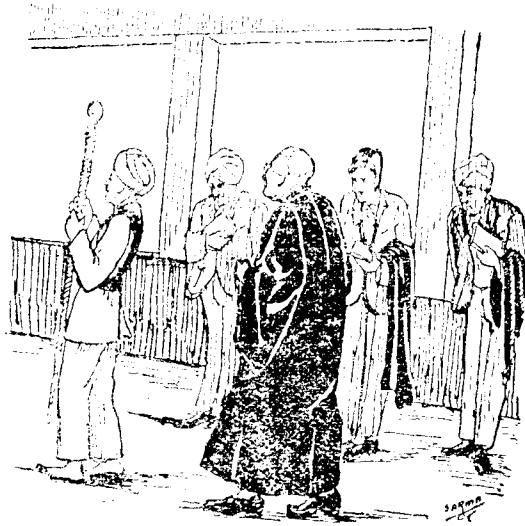
'In the council, he had the courage, if he could say so, to declare that the Government would help as much as it could.'—The Hon. Mr. Kumaraswami Reddiar, at the opening of the Khadi Exhibition at Ooty.

Many are the perils of our patriots in power.

THE MAJESTY OF THE LAW

(Leo)

THE Mace is symbolical. Its history goes back centuries behind and its origin and early life are lost in the mists of time. Impelled by curiosity, I once asked a learned friend— I call him friend, but he was almost old enough to be my grandfather—if he could tell me 1. What is the Mace? 2. Why is the Mace? and finally, 3. Why it thinks it necessary to stroll about the corridors so frequently, invariably followed at a respectful distance by an elderly gentleman in a very flowing gown and very elongated linen bands round his neck.



My friend looked at me rather uncertainly for a minute; he was not quite sure whether I was motivated by a genuine thirst for knowledge or whether I was attempting a gentle leg-pull. The trusting expression on my face was perhaps sufficient to convince him that I was a sincere seeker after Truth. "The Mace, my dear boy," he replied "is symbolical. It is, as a matter of fact, or—symbolical. It symbolises authority. It is the emblem of the Law. In effect, it is symbolical of the authority of the Law. In fact, my dear boy," he wound up in a final burst of confidence, "the Mace is symbolical." That made it quite clear—clear as mud. Sadly I turned away, only to be stopped short by a warning hiss. With the instinct born of constant practice, I stepped aside and stood still at rigid uncase, while the very Mace which had been exercising my thoughts, strutted past with its wonted

pomp. History rolled its pages back and stopped when, for a period, England enjoyed its brief holiday from the rigours of Monarchy. Was this the very piece of silver-gilt wood that was the object of the Protector's scorn when he came into the House of Commons and commanded, "Take away that bauble"? Probably not, since in those days, the English Parliament had not yet become the Mother of Parliaments and its children had not yet been born, to be the reluctant recipients of gifts of Speaker's Chairs or Maces or Rods. So, that explanation goes by the board.

Once more, I turned away and wandered dejectedly round. It was the time of day when Judges start their daily task and there was much coming and going and a great to-do and always this Mace borne aloft in the *chobdar's* hands pervaded the scene. My curiosity still unappeased, I strolled along once more, and within a few yards came up with another limb of the Law who was sauntering along, with very little to do and a very great deal of time to do it in. Him I buttonholed and to him I repeated my questions.

He smiled, a smile of lofty scorn, wondering that there should be anyone who was so woefully ignorant that he did not know what function the Mace performed. "Leo, my lad," he answered, "you may be clever and you may know all about almost everything under the sun. But, it seems, that there are still some things you know nothing about." "Yes, yes, my dear fellow," I countered impatiently, "I know all that. But, come to the point now and put me out of my suspense." "Why, you silly jiggins, don't you know that Judges of the High Court are appointed by His Majesty the King and hold office at his pleasure. Before they enter upon the duties of their office, they are sworn in and among other things, they swear to render true justice as between man and man, following the dictates of their conscience. The Mace is symbolical. It symbolises the judicial conscience. In accordance with the terms of his oath, every Judge follows his conscience, which is

symbolised by the Mace. So, you see, wherever the Mace goes, a Judge follows. And, conversely, wherever a judge goes, the Mace goes in front. Now, is it clear?"

In England, Judges of the King's Bench go out on Assize. One such was out on circuit accompanied, of course, by his Marshal and it fell to the latter's lot, one day, to show a party of the Judge's friends round the Court of Assize. One of the party was the inevitable sweet young thing with a disastrous habit of asking inanely irritating questions. The Marshal bore his cross as patiently as he could till finally they came to a corridor in one corner of which a lance was propped up against the wall. "Oh, Marshal," gushed the sweet young thing, "and what is that lance for?" "That, madam," said the Marshal imperturbably, "is the lance with which His Lordship charges the Grand Jury." What His Lordship, who overheard question and answer, later said to his Marshal, history does not tell us. We hope, however, His Lordship possessed a sense of humour, strong enough to forgive his Marshal his lapse from his usual decorum.

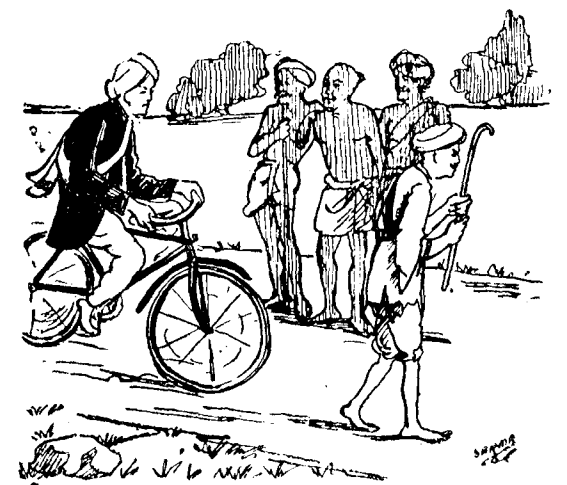
There was another Judge, Channell, J., who was learned in the law but rather weak in his aspirates. He was trying an Admiralty case and the question for decision before him was as to who was responsible for the sinking of a steamship, the *Helen* which had collided in the English Channel with another ship and had gone to the bottom with its cargo. Eminent Counsel for the plaintiff Co., talked about the *Helen* and the value of its cargo while His Lordship on the Bench wanted to know why the *Ellen* did not carry three starboard lights. Counsel for the defendant Co., said the blame must be laid at the door of the *Helen's* captain which caused His Lordship to turn round and ask if Counsel was accusing the *Ellen* of contributory negligence. Retort followed repartee and the usually calm judicial atmosphere of the Law Court was becoming unusually heated, when, during a pause in the proceedings, the Judge asked, "By the way, what is this ship called—the *Helen* or the *Ellen*. I have not been quite able to find out the correct name." In a flash came back the answer from Counsel. "It was originally the *Helen*, my Lord, but the aspirate has been lost

in the chops of the Channel." Laughter in Court and His Lordship had perforce to join in the general merriment.

The occasion was either a Coronation or a Jubilee and its importance was so great that it was decided that His Majesty's Judges should present a dutiful and humble address to the King on this auspicious occasion. The Judges held a meeting to draft the address and one present at the meeting said that the opening sentence should be—"Conscious as we are of our imperfections." Another Judge (it might have been Sir Charles Darling or perhaps it was not) turned round and quietly suggested the amendment—"Conscious as we are of *one another's* imperfections."

Again, was it conscious or unconscious humour of another learned Judge who was sitting in Appeal. A Bench of three Judges heard the appeal at great length and with much detail. The presiding Judge wrote and delivered an elaborate judgment, traversing all the points raised by Counsel. Judge number Two remarked, "I feel that I cannot usefully add anything to what His Lordship has said." And the third Judge laconically said "I agree."

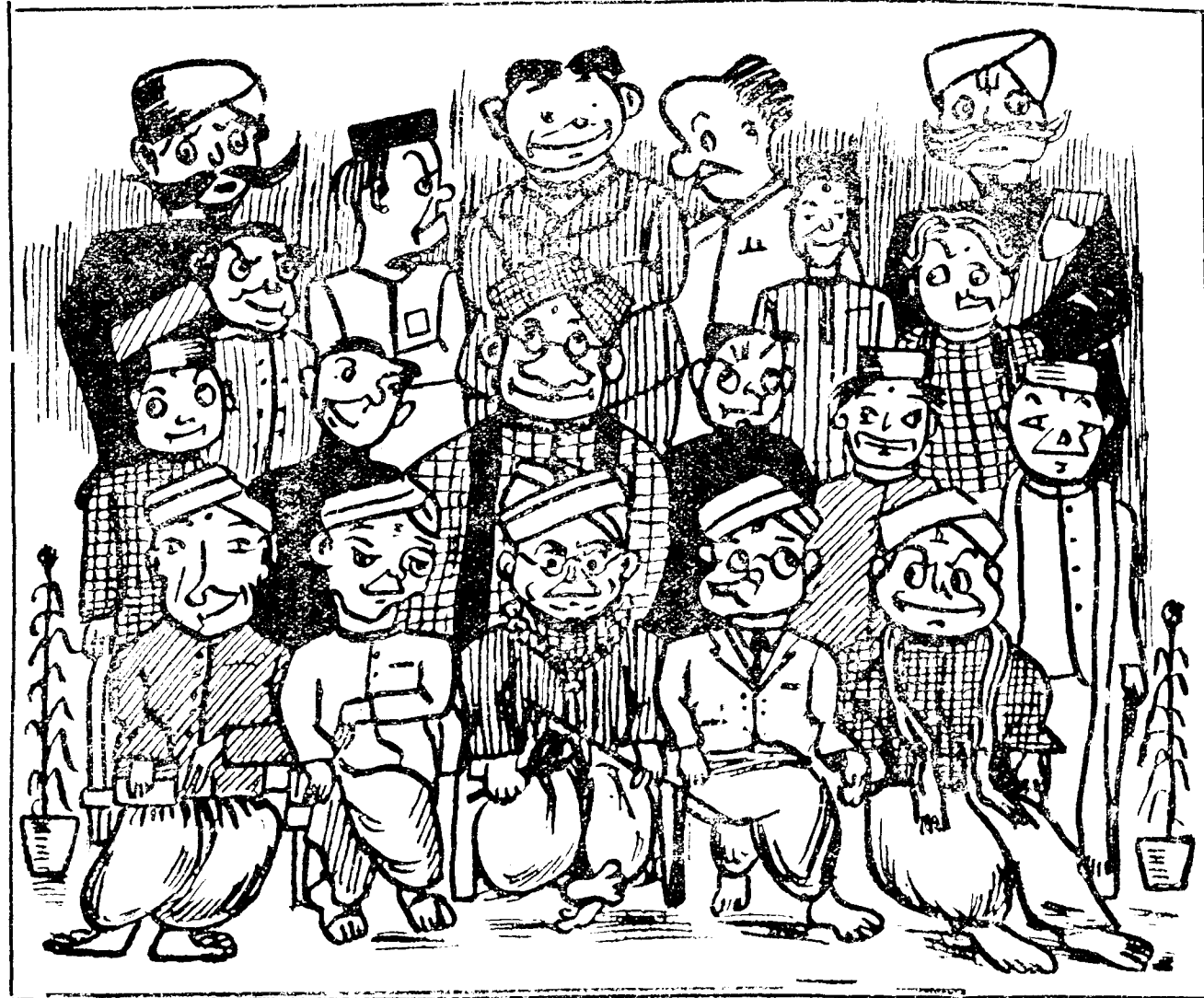
A young Advocate was appointed a Munsiff and sent out to fill an acting vacancy. Now, for the benefit of the uninitiated, I may say that in the official hierarchy, a Munsiff



bears the same relationship to a Judge of the High Court, as a curate or a minor canon bears to His Grace, the Archbishop of Canterbury. This Munsiff, then, I beg pardon, this

acting Munsiff went down and was inducted into the Munsiffal chair in the usual mean and dingy Court-house. Accustomed to the pomp and circumstance of the High Court with its spotlessly gowned attendants carrying burnished sticks of silver and its air of awe-inspiring grandeur, the triumphs of our Munsiff's ambition turned to ashes in his mouth. His own Court-house was an ill-ventilated and dilapidated building. That could not be helped. His *peen* wore no uniform. That, again, could not be redressed: a Munsiff's salary does not run to the expense of providing liveries for court attendants. But there was one thing the Munsiff *could* do and that was with regard to the Mace. He had an attendant and though the authorities might jib at a mace of silver or near-silver,

no exception could be taken to the Munsiff's own walking-stick. Behold then, His Honour setting out to go to Court. His Honour lived about a mile from the Court-house and punctually, every morning at ten, His Honour's peon would wait outside the house with His Honour's silver-mounted walking-stick in his hand. The Munsiff would come out, in state, ascend the bicycle held for him by another retainer and cycle slowly along the road at a steady 5 miles an hour, while, walking-stick in hand, the peon would half trot, half walk in front. The Court-house reached, another waiting retainer would take charge of His Honour's bicycle and then heralded by his walking-stick, His Honour would enter the Court-room, ascend the *dwis*, settle himself in his chair and proceed to dispense justice.



Farewell Entertainment given to the Headmaster by the Sixth Form Boys.

"MYSELF"

(NERA)

II

THE child is the father of the man. True. But what is more important to remember is that the man is the father of the child. Far too many of the tragedies of this life are due to the ignoring of this fact. It is too often overlooked that the man as the father of the child has certain definite responsibilities which he must bear in the upbringing of the child. Having been its cause in the past, he must provide for it in the future: he must look after it unremittently in the present. He cannot shirk his duties and go off on his own comforting his conscience under the very plausible shibboleths—self-help, self-confidence, freedom, evolution etc.

No self-respecting infant would allow its parent to neglect it amidst his own preoccupations. The other day when I told my child who was pestering me with questions which were obviously beyond me—"Don't disturb me now, darling, I am busy with office work,"—she quite rightly retorted, "Did you think of your office work when you wanted me to be born?"

Now I wonder what is the earliest recollection of one's childhood that one has. You can send that question to hundreds of famous men and women and fill the pages of your journal with answers thereto. There, I am giving away another brilliant idea. Looks to me I am a real philanthropist—giving away things I don't want. But anyhow that is not so bad as giving away other peoples' things—as some people do. Does anyone remember his own loud cry with which every child is said to announce his arrival in this world? Or does anyone remember the foolishly adulant smirking faces that bend over one's cradle and utter hopelessly incongruous babble without the slightest regard for the sensitiveness of a normal child.

One of the earliest things that frequently happened to me—I don't remember it myself—is that my mother who would be busy in the kitchen—in those days women were busy in the kitchens—used to seat me inside one of the big

ovens—unlighted of course. There I would sit warmly majestically surrounded on three sides by the earthen ramparts and stretching my legs through the oven opening and keep up a lively chatter all the while.

My own earliest recollection is that of being dressed up in a gorgeous velvet coat of a brilliant orange colour. That must have been when I was three or four years old.

The next thing I remember is two or three years later—toddling along behind my father to the Law-Courts—what scrumptious tiffins used to be provided for me in big wooden platters by his clients! My father was a lawyer in days when the clients had to please their lawyers; not as at present when the lawyers have to please their clients. And my father's clients knew that the best way to please him was to please me.

I well remember one occasion when for nearly a fortnight I regularly left the house in the morning with my school books, went round the school in front of the house, into the market at the back of the house, spent the whole morning eating little bits of jaggery in the stall of a sympathetic woman, returned some hours later and in due time to the house, looking thoroughly fatigued with the lessons of the day. One morning, as ill-luck would have it, I went off to "School" without taking my

morning coffee. My mother reported the matter to my father and he sent his clerk with the coffee to my school. There he was informed that I had not attended the school for several days. Then there was a regular hullabaloo. Search parties were organised. I was finally hunted down to the jaggery stall and captured after running round the market three times. I shall never forget the swish, swack, swack with which the cane came down on different parts of my anatomy and the extremely painful swellings which followed. My father firmly believed in the truth of the old adage "Spare the rod, spoil the child"—and I feelingly endorse it.



Park-keeper:—"Can you lend me a pencil?"

Visitor:—"Here you are."

Park-keeper:—"Now give me your name and address. I saw you pick a flower."

—The Passing Show.

Keep this copy of The Merry Magazine.
It may bring you 50 Rupees.

My Domestic Pets

(V. C. GOPALRATNAM.)

I am a great lover of the dumb creation. By the way, talking of the 'dumb creation,' every time I hear that phrase uttered, I am seized with a sort of apoplexy and by the time I am able to utter what I feel, I find that my feelings have passed away. But I would only say this to disprove the misleading conception embodied in the phrase 'dumb creation.' If, after my narrative, the President of the S.P.C.A. does not stone with his own hands every dog he meets in the street, it will be only because he does not find a stone handy. I would simply ask him to sleep one night in my room upstairs, just under the windows of which there is a small wooden structure belonging to my neighbour, in which he houses his pet dog. So much for 'dumb creation.' But, despite all this, I am a great lover of the so called dumb creation. Of course, accidents happen in the best regulated families. Is it my fault if my neighbour's former pet dog ate up by accident some food in which I had absent-mindedly mixed something, which I afterwards remembered was poison? Nor can I be blamed for the fact that when I threw some boiling water out of my window, his cat happened to be enjoying forty winks just beneath and exactly in the line of flight. But my neighbour does not understand. He has branded me as a dangerous homicidal maniac and often warns my people to be on their guard against me, while they are asleep.

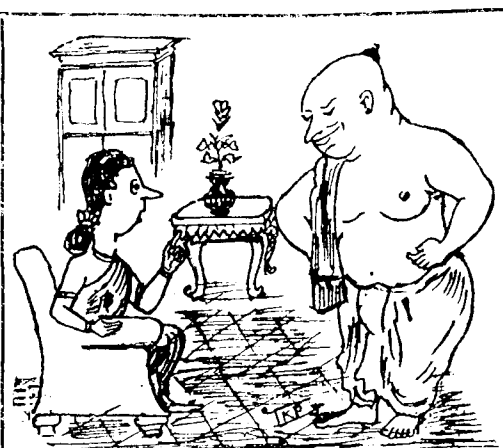
All the same, it cannot be seriously contested that I am a lover of the 'dumb creation.' The story of my pets will amply vindicate my claim.

My first pet was a mastiff. I bought it for Rs. 10 from a man, with the object of revenging myself on my neighbour. The man who sold it to me said that selling his beautiful pet was like

tearing out his heart and giving it away. But as he was quite hard up, he said he would make a gift of the dog to me in return for the paltry sum of Rs. 50. But, finally, for the sum of Rs. 10, he handed over the dog, its collar chain and a recipe to get rid of him if he proved troublesome.

I took my pet home, expecting to be congratulated on my bargain. But my wife, who from the window, had seen me and pretended not to see the dog. After I had stood, holding the dog by its chain, before her, for ten minutes, I asked her if she saw the dog. She replied that not only did she see it but she smelt it and was sure of hearing it before long, when it was not wanted. She called it an ugly, good-for-nothing brute, said that its face reminded her of a person who had eaten something that had violently disagreed with the said person's inside, and finally asked me to choose between the mastiff and herself, if the dog stayed, she went

out of the house and *vice versa*. I did not know what to do. The man who sold it to me had gone. Three persons passing on the road, to whom I offered the beast as a gift, made answers not at all to the point, but dealing with the comparative merits of the mastiff's face and mine. I dared not unchain it and let it go. For I had a great dread of lawyer's notices. While in this predicament, the postman came in with letters for me and before one could say Jack Robinson, my arm was almost wrenched out of its socket and the mastiff had attached itself to the postman. When I regained control over the dog, and drew it off, the dog had already gained half-a-pound in weight at the expense of His Majesty's Postal Department, while the postman was trying his very best to make a large handkerchief, which he had rolled into a ball, fill up a



I say, father, I will only marry the man who is prepared to go through fire and water for me."

"I see, I must hunt for a fireman."

decent sized cavity near his calf. But it needed something else to fill up that cavity, which was finally done to the satisfaction of all parties concerned, by a cheque on a certain Bank, to Mr. Postman or order, for a sum of Rs. 50 and adorned by my name at the foot.

That evening, I went out for a walk with my pet in the direction of Saidapet and Guindy. On reaching the railway line between these two places, I felt tired and chaining up the dog to one of the rails, I sat down and rested. But on getting up to continue my walk, I forgot the dog and walked back home. I remembered about him only that night at 1 A.M., and as it was too late, I turned over and went to sleep again. Two months afterwards, when going to Chingleput, I looked for the dog at the place where I had last tied him up, but could not find him. So I concluded he was lost.

My next pet was a grasshopper. Now do not turn up your nose. What is there in a grasshopper to evoke contempt? It is, after all, one of God's creatures. Can one not learn from it to be always merry and bright and to look always on the bright side of things? I bought my grasshopper from an itinerant vendor of game and poultry. By the simple act of buying, I saved the poor thing literally from the jaws of death—death here being a certain sleek, well-fed peacock. The heartless vendor of game and poultry took hold of this particular grasshopper before my very eyes and was on the point of introducing it into the gaping beak of the peacock, when I cried out "Hold! What will you take for the grasshopper?" He said "my usual terms are one grasshopper free with every live bird supplied, but as you are not buying a bird, you will have to pay Rs. 3." After a little higgling, he consented to part with it for five pies and I reached my house with my pet.

The moment my wife saw it, she began a lecture on domestic economy. She complained of my reckless extravagance in these hard

days when every pie was valuable. She frankly asked me how I could afford to have another mouth to feed when we were finding it hard to make both ends meet.

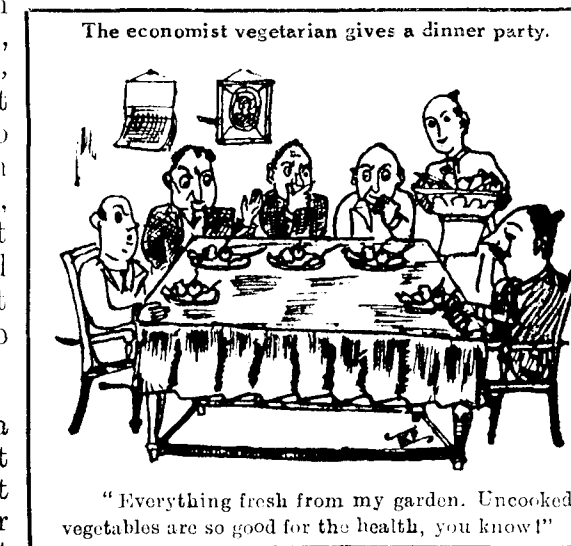
I nodded assent to all that she said, accepted blame for having recklessly spent the five pies on such a voracious creature as a grasshopper and casually remarked that I had completed arrangements to buy her a diamond necklace. Peace was at once signed and sealed and just then, the grasshopper also chirped. I interpreted this as a good omen and my wife and the grasshopper thenceforth were fast

friends. He remained with us for two months and proved his usefulness and intelligence in a hundred different ways. Once, when a burglar broke into the house at dead of night and everything was at his mercy, it was the grasshopper that came to the rescue. Just as the burglar was groping in the darkness, the grasshopper who was awake and had seen him, flying from a good height alighted with all his force and weight on the electric switch which being put on flooded the room with light. The burglar seeing the light put on but no one near, suspected a trap and ran away. This is only one of the many instances of its sagacity and presence of mind.

But all of a sudden one morning, I received a notice from the Revenue Officer of the Madras Corporation stating that he was informed that I was keeping a pet grasshopper and that I had not paid any tax therefor. He reminded me that I was liable to prosecution, if I did not pay the tax of Rs. 10 per half year payable in respect of the same.

This was a fair knock-out blow. I do not know what I would have done if by accident, ten minutes later, I had not placed a volume of Webster's Dictionary on the back of the poor grasshopper which was sitting on the table. Thus ended the career of my second pet.

I shall at some other time give you the life-histories of the grasshopper's successors,



The economist vegetarian gives a dinner party.

"Everything fresh from my garden. Uncooked vegetables are so good for the health, you know!"

Nathan Nods

(P. P. SAMUEL)

WHEN Poet Nathan readjusted his spectacles and focussed me on his retina, I knew he was going to make me wiser right away. He is a downright philosopher and distributes choice chunks of his philosophy with great liberality.

"Children," said he, "are my pet abomination. Yes, I draw the line at them. If I had any of your babbling, yelling, squealing kids about me I would never have become a poet."

"But Poetry is full of children and flowers," I remarked.

"Tut, tut," said the sage. "Moonshine pure and simple. I fear you have been reading the wrong poets. Do you see a single line in praise of children in my volumes of verse?"

"But Shakespeare....."

"Shakespeare be blowed," he sneered. "He is a hopeless back-number, poor fellow. Who reads him now-a-days except a few musty school-masters here and there? I should be as ashamed of being caught reading a play of Shakespeare as of being seen at Round Tanna (for instance) in a pair of Elizabethan trousers. But we digress. I tell you children are an insufferable nuisance. They paint you with chocolates and sticky stuff, shout till you are red and deaf, and keep on asking impudent questions. Here is a poem about them if you care to hear it."

"Excuse me," said I, getting up, "I really didn't know it was so late."

But Nathan had cleared his throat and begun his recitation.

Of all the bally biped things
(Including those supplied with wings)
A child's the very worst nuisance
Let him deny, he who has sense.

"That's cynical in tone and faulty in phrase," I commented.

"You have to make allowances for intensity of feeling," he replied, returning to his poem.

It paints your pants with different sweets—
In fact with anything it eats—
With chocolates, butter and jam
Till you are forced to cry "Oh damn!"

"That's rather unparliamentary!" I observed.

"But there is sufficient provocation to warrant it," he rejoined.

I got up and reached for my umbrella, but he gently pushed me back to my seat.

"A minute," he said, and continued his poem.

I hate children (both girls and boys)
Because they raise a lot of noise,
They whoop and goop, they squeal and yell
Till one gets mad and shouts "O hell!"

"But I suppose you were once a child yourself," I remarked, "and were a nuisance to somebody."

"I fear I was and am heartily sorry for it. Now if you will allow me I will continue."

"Wheeze away," I replied.

I hate children, I hate to hear
Their questions which are often mere
Nonsense. A fellow sensible
Won't care to answer such piffle.

"It's a wise father that can answer his child's questions," I suggested.

Nathan opened his mouth to utter something very profound but the words of wisdom did not escape his lips. A clatter and patter was heard outside the room and presently a nipper of four blew in.

"Daddy-y-y-y," he called. "Daddy, why does the train say 'choo—choo—choo'?"

"It says not only 'choo—choo—choo,' my son, but also dicky—dicky—dicky—duck. Haven't you heard it?"

It was then the boy was aware of my presence. He stared at me awhile and asked me why I grew whiskers.

"I grow not only whiskers but hair on my head as well," said I, adopting the Nathan way.

"What senseless questions these children ask!" I remarked, turning to Nathan.

"Not all," replied the sage.

"They are an unutterable nuisance, they are!" I cried.

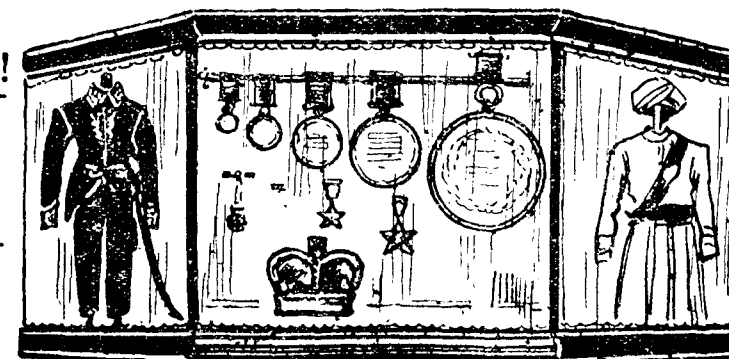
"Not all," rejoined Nathan, picking up the grubby child and covering its fruit-stained face with kisses.

By our Commercial Copy-writer and Lay-out Expert:—

THE DOUBLE DEPRESSION SALE!

WE EXECUTE!

very Joyfully
in Rotation
all your Orders.



WE HANG!

Round your
NECK
any Medal
you like.

!!

WE UNDERTAKE!

very Cheerfully to
make you some body

??

WHAT MORE DO YOU WANT?

A CROWN

without a

KINGDOM?

A HANDLE

to your

NAME?

A RIBBON

for your

COAT?

WE GUARANTEE TO RELIEVE
THE CONGESTION

of Your Bank Account

Owing to the extreme depression of spirits (neither alcoholic nor mediumistic) and in a manner of speaking, as a result of the suspension of the C. D. Campaign we are enabled to offer a large assortment of left-overs and remnants, secured at a time of Boom, at the best market price and now being literally thrown away at next-to-nothing prices. These excellent bargains are displayed in what is undoubtedly the best window-dressed premises in the metropolis.

Look! Look! Look at the miniature reproduction of our window above! A crown! Guaranteed a snug fit to your head! Going for less than a song! Will be gone before you make-up your mind. Let us therefore make it up for you. Medals galore! Let us have your chest measurement! We will select the most suitable size! A Uniform! There you are! From the graceful flowing folds of a Secretariat Daffadar right up the scale to a sword, belt and knee breeches! Roll up! It is now or never.

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We can fix anything from an Hony. Magistrate to a Kumara-rajah.

PAT BROS SONS & DAUGHTERS, LIMITED.
NADU STREET, NARAYANAVARAM, NORTH INDIA.

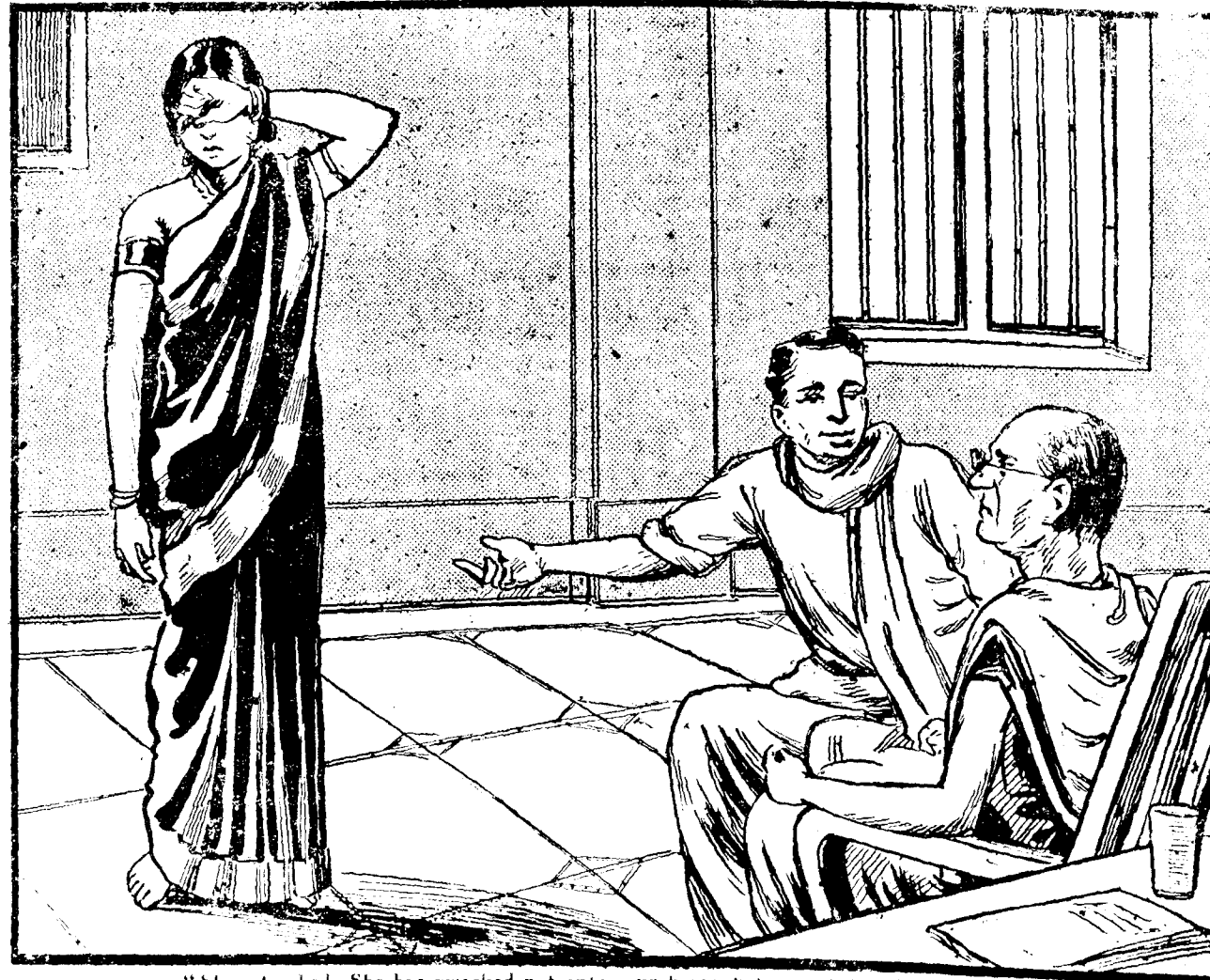
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BALA, THE BAD WOMAN

AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY

By DEISVI.

X. BALA IS BLACKMAILED



"She, oh, she! She has wrecked not only your home, but also that of the other man!"

In The Preceding Nine 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.

They reach Bangalore by car and stay the night in a cottage according to plan. Two policemen who have been chasing the lovers also arrive close on their heels and Bala's lover is threatened with arrest for "enticing away a married woman." She is very much upset. One of the policemen wires to Bala's father who arrives in a car overnight. When Bala wakes up next morning she overhears her father plauding with her lover. She breaks down and abandoning the well-laid plans of elopement, accompanies her father who takes her to her husband's home at Madras.

Bala's unsuspecting old husband, happy at the return of his young wife, attempts to give her *Puja Prasadam*s, but ominously the plate containing them falls down. He sees in the incident the displeasure of his patron-goddess.

LATER in the day came a telegram from my mother addressed to my father. "Much worried and upset. Return early," it said. Father therefore left the city in a hurry that evening. His parting words of advice to me were pathetic:

"Forget the past, child," said he and added: "Make the best of what the fates have in store for you. And whenever you want me, do not hesitate to send for me."

My husband returned quite early in the evening. He was in the best of spirits.

"I have always felt that you lacked something, Bala. I will give you three chances to guess what it is. Will you try?"

I was in a mood to humour him. "I shall try," said I and essayed the first guess.

"I think I am lacking in beauty. Is that right?" I asked.

"Hopelessly incorrect," said he, with a laugh.

"I could do with a little more character, perhaps?"

"Wrong again!"

"I have got it! I know what is lacking!"

"Come on! Out with it!"

"I am not at all good."

"No. You are too good for an old man like me. But, that is beside the point. While you were away, I was wondering if you had all that a young woman could desire. Then, it struck me, that I never gave you a decent pair of bangles. I ordered a pair and here they are! See if they fit, won't you?" He handed me a velvet case and I pressed the snap. The lid flew open and I gasped in astonishment. A pair of diamond bangles lay nestling inside the case.

"These must have cost a terrible lot of money," I remarked.

"Put them on and then I'll tell you if they are terrible or not."

As I fumbled with the bangles he helped me to put them on and when the last thread of the screw was securely tightened, he held my hand, with infinite tenderness, for just a fleeting second and dropped it with a sigh. "They are magnificent!" he murmured. A lump gathered in my throat.

"To-night I wish you would come to the terrace. I want to talk to you," said he and rose to perform his evening ablutions.

After the night-meal, I went to the terrace. He was there, surrounded as usual by books and newspapers.

"What did these bangles cost?" I asked him, extending my hand and showing him the bangles once again.

"Oh, bother! Don't you worry about that! I want to talk to you about a very serious matter."

"I am all attention," said I, sitting down on the floor.

"What is your conception of God?"

I was taken aback. What a question! I hardly knew how to answer.

"I have not thought about the subject at all. I think God is just a nice, kind, old gentleman," I said with a smile.

"That definition would fit me to a T and I wonder if you are, as usual, frivolous."

"Please!" I begged. "I am not frivolous and I won't be frivolous any more. Quite a change has come over me—for the better, I believe."

"Indeed, that is news: Who, or what is responsible for the change? Oh—I forgot—Was it due to the illness? What was the trouble?"

"I had a pain in the hip. A doctor examined me, but couldn't correctly diagnose the cause."

"We must look into it. Did the pain occur again?"

"No."

"Let us hope it won't. To turn again to my question: you see Bala, I am anxious that you should have clear conceptions of the why and wherefore of this existence of ours. You are unlike other women. You are capable of thinking for yourself. I don't want you to have wrong ideas of the deeper realities of life. That is why I asked you the question."

I recollected an incident and narrated it to him. "Some years back my Samskrit tutor read to me certain passages depicting the wrath of Kali. I felt at the time that if Kali was also the divine mother, Parvathi, the wrath was so unjust and cruel. I discussed with my father and my English Tutor the various qualities of our Gods and Goddesses and to be perfectly honest and frank, most of them seemed to me as human as most of us and cast in the same mould like us. I abandoned the subject as it was too deep for me and perhaps, we women, are constitutionally unfit to grasp metaphysics."

"You make a mistake there. Women are the only beings to whom is given the enjoyment of the experience of motherly Love. And God Himself is conceived as the fountain-head of all Love. There is no finer conception of Him than this. He is *Ananda*, bliss. And this noble aspect of His is called the *Devi*, his counterpart, the active dynamic *Prakriti*. Let us take a mother. Is it love or hatred that makes her give her beloved child horrid and nauseating drugs, when the child is sick? The child hates the medicine. Drugs are revolting to the palate and stomach: perhaps the mother forces down the medicine or chides the child? Would you judge therefore from her action that she hates the child or is being unkind to it? Those who say the Gods are angry forget this relation of parent and child. They lose sight of the deeper motives. Corrections are necessary. Misdeeds must be punished. Behind it all is a love that is full, just and impartial. There is no place in His scheme of things for the pet and the spoilt child."

"But if He is all-merciful, shouldn't He forgive the repentant sinner?"

"Ah! There you are! Most people think they can hoodwink God! In their selfishness, in their hectic pursuit of pleasure, they deliberately transgress the laws of Nature and God. Repentance comes late and is rarely sincere. You will find such people either railing against God or drifting down to Hell."

The Merry Magazine

"Is there a Hell?"

"Undoubtedly! It is not a separate world but is here, in our midst, even in the life we live. I saw one day a man in the grip of a loathsome disease. He was undergoing the tortures of Hell. He went after pleasure. He transgressed Nature's laws. He was suffering for it. Hell to him was a living presence."

"Well, I must once again repeat that my poor head is far too thick to ponder over these problems."

"I raised the question because I want you to take a little more interest in the *puja* I do. That interest ought to be sincere and heart-felt and not taken to oblige or please me. We take a great deal of interest in our body which, after all, will perish one day. Why shouldn't we devote a little attention to the dweller in the body, the *atma*, which is eternal?"

"That sounds sensible. I have never looked at it that way."

"Tomorrow morning, therefore, I want you to get up early. I shall wake you up. Be near me at the time of the *puja*. Keep a close watch on the workings of your mind, the trend of your thoughts during the *puja*. Let me know what you feel after the *puja* is over."

"Please wake me up. I should like to try the experiment."

"There is a good girl! You can now go to sleep if you are feeling sleepy."

I rose and left him.

That night I had a most unusual dream. In the dream, I saw the conscious part of me getting out of my physical body and hovering over it. I was the witness of a curious drama. There lay my body on the cot. Near my head stood a spirit, clothed in spotless white, surpassingly fair and with a kindly light in his eyes. Down the cot, near my feet, stood another spirit, clad in black, old and ugly, with a malevolent gleam in his eyes. I was apart and watched and listened. Said the dark one to the white:—

"She is a thoroughly bad woman. I am surprised that you should plead for her. Rightly or wrongly she was married to that old man. How dare she look at another man? Flirting and kissing and running away with him! Go! Let me take her! She is mine!"

"Soft, my friend!" retorted the white one. "Now, who is to blame? If a child plays with fire, is it the fault of the child? Did the little one's parents take sufficient precautions to watch and protect their offspring? And, after all, what is it that she has done? Just a little diversion: silly, perhaps, foolish, most probably. But she had the good sense to realise, before it was too late, that she was playing with fire."

"Oh, yes!" sneered the dark one. "Thank the police for that! But for them, she would be in her lover's bed, in his arms, just now."

"I have no interest in might-have-beens. What I care is that she is here, that she will stay here and will be good, kind and loving."

"You live on hopes. I prefer realities. Begone! Let me take her!"

"Not while I am here."

"Is it war then?"

"As you please."

"I warn you!"

"I am warned."

"Come on, then!"

The dark one sprang upon the white one spitting fire from his mouth. Like a magician he produced swords, spears and daggers and attacked the white one. The latter merely crossed his hands over his chest and closed his eyes in intense concentration. There issued from his body at first a soft subdued light, which grew brighter till it filled the whole room in an intense glare of blinding brilliance. I saw the dark one surrounded by the light, weakening perceptibly till at last he vanished completely, merged and dissolved, as it were, in the flood of light. The white one opened his eyes and laid a cool and soothing hand on my forehead. It felt like a benediction and I opened my eyes and marvelled at the dream. A rap at the door and I heard Erraiya calling out; "Amma! Amma!"

"What is it?" I asked him still lying in the bed.

"It is 5 o'clock and Aiyah asked me to wake you up."

"Tell him I will be ready in 15 minutes," I said and climbing down from the bed, sought the bath-room. Bathed and dressed, I sat outside the *puja*-room while my husband from inside went through the ritual part of the *puja*, chanting *slokas* all the while. The little knowledge of *Sanskrit* which I had acquired enabled me to follow the *mantras*. I could see it was a special *puja*. He had chosen his verses from many sources, but throughout it all, there ran a plaintive appeal for divine mercy and grace. I was deeply moved. This childish faith in his *Devi* was so pathetic. But perhaps I was wrong. "Except ye be converted and become as little children ye shall not enter the kingdom of Heaven." Didn't the Nazarene say that?

When the *puja* was over and when he came out of the room, I could see from his face that he was worried.

"What is the matter?" I asked him.

"Something is wrong!" he said absent-mindedly.

"Why, why do you think so?"

"I don't know. I feel that way. The camphor went out. The flame of the lamp spluttered and died. The *argyapatra* was upset by an accident. Look, look at that coconut! How irregularly it has broken into two!"

"What is to be done? Tell me."

"What can you or I do? We can only pray."

"Pray—Pray for what?"

"For Divine grace and forgiveness. Such a thing has never happened before," said he half to himself and mused, "Could it be the work of the dark one?"

I couldn't stifle a gasp at the mention of the dark one. He turned round and stared at me. "Why do you gasp like that?" he asked me.

"I am frightened. I am beginning to doubt if we women ought to take an active interest in these things."

"Well, well, of that more later. Leave me alone for the present. I want to think, alone."

I was only too eager to go, and left him.

From that day onwards, a distinct change came over my husband. He went about the house listlessly, like one who had lost a most cherished and precious thing in his life. He fell ill and had to stay at home and I learnt that illness rarely worried him in his life. Even when he was indisposed, he never missed the *puja*.

"Every day, as soon as the *puja* is over, I used to feel a great peace descending upon me," he told me, "and that would keep me going the whole day, calm and contented. But now, I have fallen from divine grace and there are great tumults inside me and I am feeling weak and run down."

"Why won't you call in a doctor?"

"It is a dis-ease of the Soul. What can these doctors do?"

"But there is no harm in consulting one."

"Very well: to please you, I shall send for a doctor."

When the doctor came and had examined my husband thoroughly, I was eager to hear his opinion.

"There is nothing wrong with you, sir. You are just run down. I have often told you that you must take a holiday. It seems to me that just now you can ill afford to miss one. Otherwise everything is O. K.!"

"Tell that to her. She it was, that was getting worried," said my husband.

"Worry? Oh no, not at all," replied the doctor.

"No *amma*, what you must do is to somehow start him on a holiday. I have tried my best, all these years. Let me hope you will succeed where I failed."

"You could command. I can only implore," I told the doctor.

"He is incorrigible. Aren't you, sir?" asked the doctor and with a cheery nod, he went out.

For over a fortnight after my return, my husband's indisposition continued. He was not regular in attending to his business. Most of the time, he would be at home. But not a single day did he stop the *puja*. While he was in the house, I tried my very best to make myself pleasant to him and attended to his comforts. Occasionally, he would ask me to read and though the books he chose were abstruse and dry as dust, I read them, not grasping the purport of what I read. He appreciated these little attentions and one day he surprised me by remarking:—

"Bala, one of these days you will fall hopelessly...—a cough choked him—and I stared.

".....in love with me," he concluded to my relief, "and that day you will make me regret....." another cough.....

".....my age."

"Some people are good at predictions after the event," was all that I said, as I literally ran from the room.

* * *

One Sunday morning, my husband told me that he must go to the shop as he had important business to attend to. He wasn't well and I demurred. He pinched my cheek, asked me not to worry myself and left. Sometime later, Nainu came and told me that a man by name Sambamurty wanted to see me. I asked Nainu who he was. Nainu's reply was characteristic; "How do I know? He wants to see you, *not* uncle," said Nainu significantly.

Sambamurty? Sambamurty? Where have I heard that name before?

"Where is he?" I asked Nainu.

"In the front-room," said the boy.

A vague fear was tugging at my heart as I traversed the hall and reached the front-room. I peeped in. It was one of the two policemen who visited the cottage at Bangalore on that eventful night.

On seeing me, my visitor rose and said in a sheepish and apologetic manner:—

"I had business in Madras and was wondering where I could stay. Then I remembered you."

"Very kind of you. I shall enquire if my husband has any objection."

"Oh, he is that kind, eh? I see! I thought you had him round your little finger!"

The man was very offensive, I didn't like him. I cut him short by saying: "I am afraid you think a great deal, wrongly."

"I daresay I do. I had expected a better reception than this."

"Why, may I ask?"

"For obvious reasons."

"The reasons are not so obvious to me."

He opened his brief bag and pulled out a fat envelope and patted it affectionately.

"I am in great trouble," said he, apparently for my benefit, but almost to himself.

"I am very sorry to hear it. Every one of us has some cross or other to bear."

"Mine is a heavy one. In fact, 5000 Rupees, heavy."

"I don't understand."

"My son-in-law who is employed in an European firm as a cashier has misappropriated that sum. Not all in one day, but little by little. All the money was wasted on a prostitute. I must save him. Else he will be jailed. Imagine a police-officer's son-in-law in jail! If I can only get hold of the money!"

"It is a large amount."

"That is the trouble. I asked your father. He couldn't manage so much. As a last resort, I have come to Madras."

"I wish you success. You have my sympathies."

"I want your help."

"What can I, a woman, do?"

"Lots."

"For instance?"

The Merry Magazine

"Your husband is a rich man. Rs. 5000/- is a trifle to him. If you put in a word, he will lend me the money and my son-in-law and my reputation will be saved."

I paused for reply. Was the man attempting to blackmail me or was he really in distress? I must be careful with him.

"Don't you think it would be very suspicious if I asked my husband to lend to a perfect stranger five thousand rupees?"

"Why? Why should he suspect?"

"Because it is so unusual. I have not asked him for anything up-till-now."

"All the more certain, that, should you say the word, I shall get the money."

"Supposing I refuse?"

"You can't do that!"

"Why shouldn't I?"

"I did you a good turn once. It deserves another."

"But aren't you asking too much of me. What did my father say?"

He ignored my question. "No, I am not asking too much from you. I am asking only a loan, not a gift."

"I shall consult my husband and let you know."

"When?"

"As soon as I can."

"The matter is very urgent."

"Very well, tomorrow then."

"You must do your very best."

"Must?"

"Excuse me. It is my anxiety that makes it appear as if I am rude. May I keep my things in this room?"

"Please wait a minute."

I went to the telephone in the hall and rang up my husband's shop. A clerk answered the call. I asked him if I could speak to his master. I was put through immediately.

"Is that you, Bala?" said a surprised voice at the other end. "Do you know this is the first time you have rung me up: the occasion ought to be celebrated. I never know sickness had its own consolations and compensations. What can I do for you? Do you know that that is the usual commercial enquiry?"

"One of my father's friends is here. He is a police-officer. May I permit him to stay in the house?"

"Most certainly. Why did you think I should be consulted? Your father's friend is my friend. Ask him to stay and dine. Give him the car if he wants to go out. I shall be there early this noon to meet him."

My husband was a genial host. Sambamurti was not slow to take advantage of his host's genial temper and ingratiated himself quickly into my husband's good graces, while I watched helplessly, trembling for the consequences. In the evening, they both left in the car for a drive. While they were away, I sat down and wrote a long letter to my father, appraising him of the arrival of

Sambamurti and telling him my fears and asking for advice.

That night, after meals, Sambamurti accompanied my husband to the terrace. I thought he would come down after a while, but he didn't. Down below, I fretted and fumed, for, I wanted to have a few minutes alone with my husband to speak to him about the loan. I was afraid that this friendship between my husband and Sambamurti might prove disastrous to me, in the end. I resolved, at last, to go to the terrace and at the sight of me Sambamurti was bound in politeness to leave the place. As I climbed the last flight of steps leading to the terrace, I could hear the conversation going on in the terrace and I stopped unconsciously and listened.

"I think I can throw some light on the problem," Sambamurti was saying in deliberate tones.

"I shall be eternally grateful if you will," my husband was saying. "The matter is very greatly worrying me. At this rate, it is bound to finish me, sooner or later."

"But—you know the consequences. After the diagnosis, an operation! The latter is always very painful."

"But there is the relief!"

"In your case, at what value would you put the relief?"

"Value? Hm! Incalculable! I am reminded of Jesus's famous words: 'For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?'"

"For the present, I shall indicate to you only the salient points on which I propose to build a theory. Later, I shall adduce evidence to prove the points, if need be."

"You are being very mysterious. I suppose it is your profession that makes it so."

"We will suppose you had a son. We will also presume that he was a thoroughly bad young man, absolutely debauched. Now, if the vibrations of such a person were to be present in your house, don't you think your *pooja* would be affected and the Goddess you worship, mightily displeased?"

"Most certainly."

I rushed down the steps precipitately. Sambamurti had started the game and the first injection of his poison was already at work. I could see he had me in his grip. He had the whip-hand. His game was to expose me to my husband. How he hoped to gain money thereby, I couldn't at that time guess.

Next morning, after my husband left for the shop, Sambamurti came to me, while I was putting away some clothes in a wardrobe.

"What progress have you made?" he asked me with a leer.

"You are so friendly with my husband that you can ask him for the money yourself."

"Are you going back on your promise?"

"I am."

"Why?"

"I prefer not to assign reasons."

"You are placing me in an awkward position."

"I am not aware of doing anything of the kind."

"You make me desperate!"

"And, what are desperate men, in awkward positions supposed to do?"

"They hit out!"

"Let them."

"It will hurt terribly."

"Let it!"

He went out of the room and came back with the fat envelope which I saw him nursing in the front-room on the day he arrived. He opened the envelope and pulled out the contents.

"Look!" said he and handed me the papers. They were the letters that were inside the pocket of the lid of the leather case containing toilette articles which I had used at the cottage in Bangalore.

"How did you—steal them?" I asked him, surprised at my lack of emotion.

He snatched the papers from me. "Rs. 5000/- before sunset! Else, these papers go to your husband and I will make him pay double that amount."

"Please yourself!" said I, as I walked out of the room. He tried to catch the end of my saree and I turned and stared him full in the face. "Well?" I asked him, not caring to hide my great contempt and loathing of the man. He shrivelled up.

"Oh, nothing!" he said and skulked out of the room.

* * *
Suicide! That was the only way out! I made a mental list of methods for ending one's life. Drowning? There was no well in the house or anywhere near it. Poison? So very difficult to get. Setting fire to oneself? With so many servants in the house, smoke would be noticed and they would put out the fire and save my life. Cutting one's throat? There was not a single decent knife in the house. My thoughts entirely engrossed in taking away my life, I never heeded how time passed. I ate mechanically, bathed mechanically and if the servants asked me any questions, I answered them mechanically. I was more or less an automaton. I avoided meeting my husband and Sambamurti.

Next day, at about 1 P. M., while I was in the bed-room, imagining how it would feel if I were to throw myself before a running train, Erraiya came and called me.

"The master wants you, *amma*."

"Where is he?"

"In the hall."

"Who is with him?"

"That Samba Aiyavaru!"

I didn't care to think why I was sent for. I had lost all interest in this world. The old Bala, was dead inside me. Only the body remained and that too would perish soon.

As I entered the hall, Sambamurti pointed an accusing finger at me. "There she is!" he said to my husband who was sitting in a chair. "Let her deny it, if she dares!"

As I entered the hall, my husband looked at me with a strange look in his eyes and in calm, deliberate tones asked me a question:

"You made me understand, Bala, that this gentleman was a friend of your father."

"It is true!"

"He has shown me some letters which I can't believe! Here they are! Tell me, please, that I was right in calling these forgeries."

"No—They are genuine and true!"

"Good God, Woman! Do you realise what you are saying?"

I stood still and silent. My husband fell back with a groan. Sambamurti started to fan the flame of my husband's wrath.

"She, oh, she! She it was that urged her lover to take her away. She has wrecked not only your home but also that of the other man! He forsook his only child—the child whom she pretended to love. It is a deep game, I tell you, and is not yet over....."

His words lashed me like a whip. I covered my face while he mercilessly went on.

"This return to your house is an eyewash. She has her eyes on your money. One day, you will be poisoned and she and her lover will then carry out the elaborate plans....."

"Shut up!" The words came from my husband like a thunder-clap. Sambamurti, fell back, surprised. "You have done your dirty duty," went on my husband, "and I am convinced that she has been bad. Now clear out and keep out! I'll 'phone to my office and they will give you a cheque."

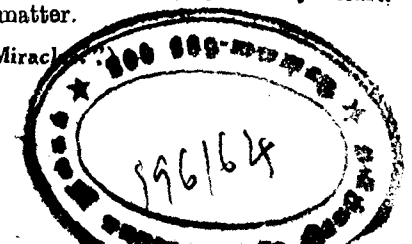
"I thought I was doing you a good turn and here you are, ordering me out. Well, well! That is the world!"

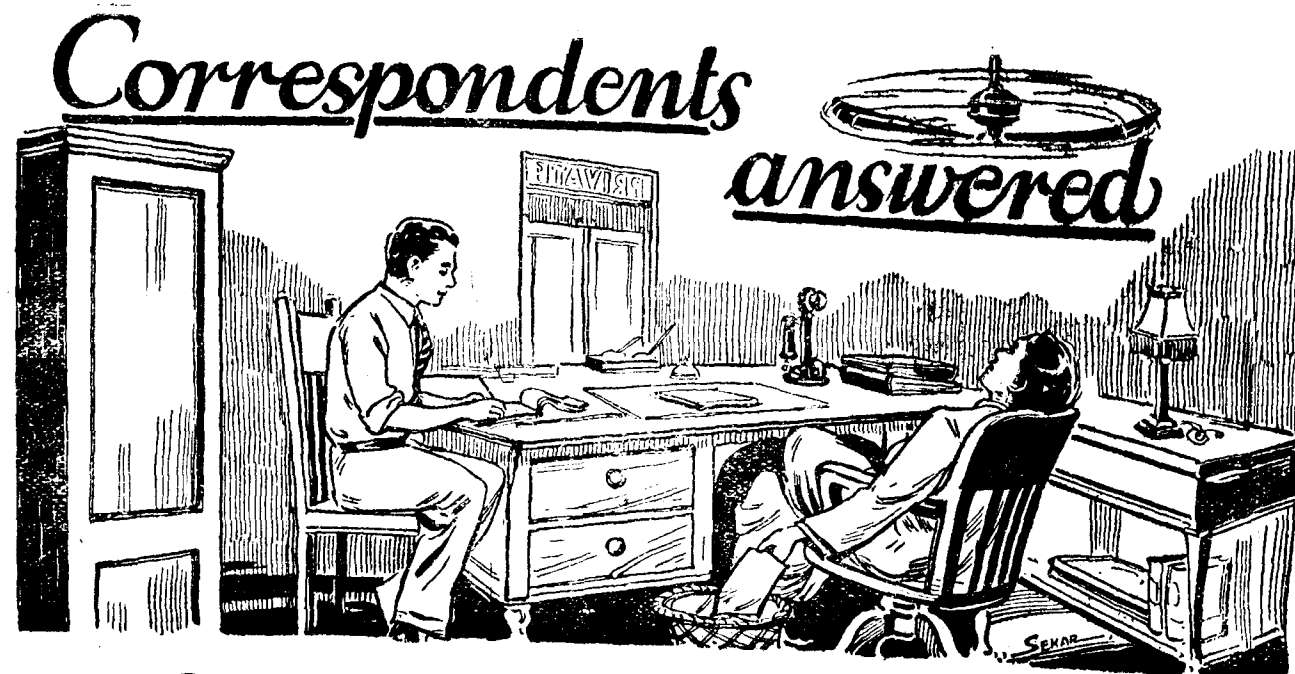
"Will you get out?" rapped out my husband again and I was terrified at the pitch of his voice and emotion.

Sambamurti for the second time skulked out.

"What would he do to me?" I asked myself again and again this question for what seemed to me an eternity. My husband had turned away from me and had covered his face with his hands, while his entire body was quivering with the strength of his feelings. "Go!" said he, his voice choking with emotion, "and let me not see you again!" Again I found myself calm and cool. There was neither sorrow nor pity in my heart. Nothing seemed to matter.

(Next Instalment: "The Worker of Miracles")





PURELY PERSONAL.

The intelligent reader has not been slow to take advantage of the opportunity offered by the introduction of this page. The purpose of this page is to shoot trouble. In other words, if a reader, intelligent or otherwise has anything heavy sitting on his chest (say, e.g., a nightmare) he sits down in his turn and gets the heavy thing off his chest to a piece of paper and promptly posts it to us. Thereafter the trouble 'becomes the property of the publishers' till such time as the Editor finds the time (if any) to shoot and bag it. (More often it is bagged without being shot.)

If you have troubles, send them on! We can meet them all and dispose of them in the best manner and market possible.

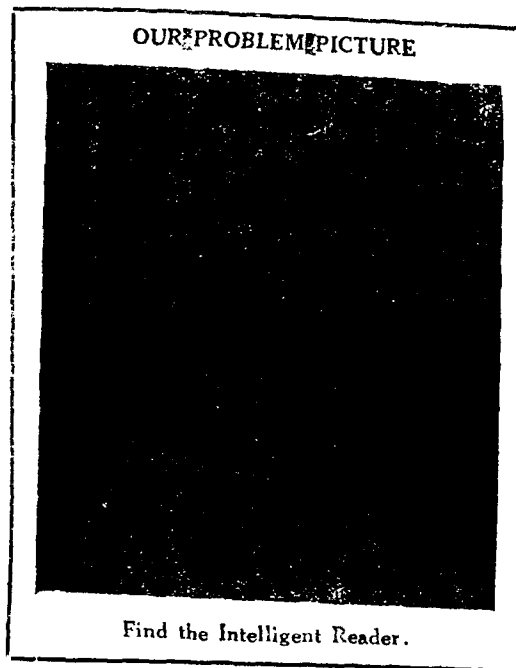
We started saying something about the intelligent reader and one of them asks us a very pertinent question. Says this bright brain-waver blessed with a superfluity of grey matter, "Now, my dear Editor, why doesn't your Magazine publish Problem Pictures?"

This is a very serious matter. Why doesn't this Magazine publish Problem Pictures?

(Thank you, dear intelligent reader, for the term, "problem-pictures") Quite a problem, true. Why, oh, why? We asked everybody and even asked ourselves. To be frank, we are not satisfied with the answers. We ought not to have been deterred by the fact that a great many necks have been twisted out of shape by trying to, "Find the lovers in an empty boat on a moon-lit lake."

We are not too proud to own to a mistake. Therefore dear intelligent reader, though it is out of place in this page, please find herein our best problem-picture. We may modestly claim that it is in a class by itself. Nothing can touch it, nor come anywhere near it. The Proof? You want the Proof? Wait. It is in the eating of the pudding.

Now, look at the picture carefully. Go to a secluded spot where you won't be disturbed. Shut out all other thoughts from your mind. Concentrate on the picture for three minutes. There is no need to turn it upside down or right side up. If within three minutes you are unable to find the intelligent reader, there is only one thing to do. Scissor the blasted thing out of the page and put a small mirror on top of it. Look at the picture now through the mirror and if even then you don't find the intelligent reader, it doesn't matter a finker's damn, as there is no prize for solving the problem.



Find the Intelligent Reader.

After which digression, we think we can now proceed to our regular business of trouble-shooting.

Here is a gem from an up-country reader:—

"I subscribed for an american corruspondunce course and thow I paid cash they let my down. What shall I do, sir?"

The trouble in this case is in taking such a course. It should be obvious that since there was nothing on top to let, the down, we presume was let. We really do not see why this corruspondunce—we mean dent, should complain.

(Rest crowded out—Editor)

STORYETTES

A well-known sportsman who had been shooting in Albania told B.-P. that he had been attacked by a dog and shot him. There was a strict law in the country forbidding this, so he quickly buried the dog. While he was doing this the owner came along.

"My goodness!" said B.-P. "What did you do then?"

"Oh, there was nothing else for it. I buried him, too."

The Chief Scout is also responsible for this entertaining anecdote about the Rt. Hon. Mr. Winston Churchill. Mr. Churchill has been in many tight corners. Once he found himself tucked under a sofa. The occasion was a banquet at which he made an inspiring speech. At the end of it someone moved that "this be enough of Winston," and he was unceremoniously pushed under a sofa and kept there, with a hefty subaltern sitting on top. After a short time Winston emerged from under one of the arms and uttered a phrase that must be considered historic in view of his subsequent career.

"It's no use sitting on me—I am indiarubber."

Major Nickalls is an Oxford Blue and his entertaining volume of sporting reminiscences entitled "Ours, Wars and Horses" abounds with many robust stories.

On one occasion when Harry Selbo-Lowndes went out for a hunt, the fox was hollowed away. Lowndes galloped up to a man on top of the hill who was holding his arm up and shouted: "Why the h—I don't you say which way he's gone, instead of standing there like a stuck pig?" He then found that the man was a scarecrow.

Another concerns a member of the Stock Exchange who bored everyone with stories about his wonderful house and poultry-run. One day this loquacious bore enlarged on the fact that a hen pheasant had come to feed with his chickens and was now in a wire cage. His friends decided that something must be done.

"On arriving home one evening, this man was met by his wife arrayed in her best clothes and greeted with the remark:—

"Oh, my dear, where's your friend Walker?"

"He replied that he knew no one of that name.

"But," said she, "you sent me a wire at midday saying: Walker coming to dinner. Kill the hen pheasant, and I've got such a lovely dinner for you."

Mr. Bob Curtis who was for many years Edgar Wallace's secretary tells some extremely delightful tales of his famous chief in his book "Edgar Wallace—Dash Way."

One morning the great author discovered that every number he had noticed since breakfast added up to twenty-nine. Three automobiles had passed by with

twenty-nine numbers. It was the twenty-ninth of the month. He had just received a cheque for twenty-nine pounds. Mr. Curtis was at once ordered to take the money down to Lingfield and put it on number twenty-nine on the card for the big race. Number eleven won in a canter; number twenty-nine was nowhere, but the boy in Edgar saw the joke.

"Did it never occur to you, Bob, that two and nine make eleven?" he asked.

"Does it occur to you," retorted Bob, "that two and nine is just about all that is left out of your cheque."

Mr. Wallace was really a prodigy. He wrote over one hundred and fifty books as well as plays and articles without number, could dictate 2,400 words an hour, and keep it up for thirty-six hours. That he was a great worker accounted for many a classical joke that had gathered around his name.

The telephone bell rang. Mr. Curtis took up the receiver and answered, "I'm sorry, Mr. Wallace has just started a serial and must not be disturbed."

"All right, I'll hold the line!" replied the voice.

Vice-Admiral Humphrey Hugh Smith, D. S. O., narrates many an amusing anecdote in his volume of reminiscences, "A Yellow Admiral Remembers." One of the raciest books ever written about the Navy. When he entered service it was the custom for the young candidate to be scholastically examined by a lieutenant. One of the stock questions in divinity was, "Who betrayed our Lord?" "Julius Caesar, sir," answered one candidate. "Well, well," replied the lieutenant, "it was some name like that. I expect you're right." And the candidate passed.

Sir Malcolm Campbell has a funny story against himself. He was sitting at a dinner party a year or two ago next to Mr. Harry Tate, the comedian, who remarked, "I was over in Daytona when you broke the record. I saw the car hit the edge of the water, and I thought it was all over. The way you held it was marvellous." "That was not me," explained Sir Malcolm, "that was Seagrave." "Was it?" replied Harry Tate; "then, who the dickens are you?"

Here is an entertaining story about the great man who wrote "Alice in Wonderland." Once Lewis Carroll, who was really Rev. Charles Dodgson, emerged from a heavy sermon at the University Church, and encountering the preacher, Dr. Stubbs, offered the loan of his umbrella because it was raining.

"No thanks," said the Rev. Doc., "I don't mind getting wet; in fact I like getting wet."

"You were dry enough in the pulpit this morning," was Carroll's retort.

Looking after Uncle

(T. L. EDWIN)

IT is, I hear, the same all over the world. You have a domestic staff functioning with admirable smoothness, month after month, and then one day, she is selfish enough to go and get married. That is how Lalitha and I were suffering. Meenakshi had departed from our kitchen, and Kamala blowed in and stayed a month. Then came Rupa, a good-looking girl, one of those sociable creatures, but she also had to leave for my wife got jealous. I was relating the servant problem to my friend Viswanatha Nair. He at once promised to get a Malayalee girl from Malabar. After a month we got her but had to send her back immediately for she began making eyes at uncle Sundaram, and we were afraid the old fool would fall for her.

Uncle Sundaram had money, plenty of money, which he had made on his coffee estate in Nilgiris. He was worth nearly a lakh, and if he didn't take a wife, we being only relatives left, would get the entire fortune. So it was up to wifey and me, to keep uncle Sundaram single, until he died, which could not be long, for he was nigh on seventy, and was fast breaking up.

But it was no easy matter. Since uncle Sundaram stopped the estate business, he had taken an increasing interest in women. The old fool was ready to marry the first woman that spoke to him nicely, and twice he had nearly done it when Lalitha and I weren't looking. The only safe way was to keep him away from designing females.



So we took care to engage only married women or old ugly women as servants. But Parrakutti, the Malayalee

servant lass, had somehow found out that uncle Sundaram was a gold mine, and she was not going to give up the fight easily. Though we had dismissed her for ogling uncle, she was always seen about the house. Soon she had the audacity to rent a small house opposite to our house. I went over to her house to tell her it was no good, her hanging round the old fool.

"You can't part two loving hearts!" said Parrukutti indignantly. "Look here," she opened her palm and showed us a gold chain, "he gave me that!"

"The old hypocrite!" shouted my wife "only yesterday I asked him for four rupees to settle the milk account, and he refused."

Parrukutti only smiled in response. "He is also paying my house rent and has promised to marry me within a month——"

"You brazen hussy!" cried my wife, "I'll see that he gives you nothing hereafter."

By this time a small crowd had collected and their sympathy was only on her side, chiefly, I think, because the neighbours were envious of us. We came back fully resolved to take uncle somewhere else, where he might die in peace. At that moment, an old woman named Kalyani, who had recently come over to the next house, said that she would look after uncle and see that the evil designs of Parrukutti were frustrated. We fell in with her idea at once, for no one would ever dream of marrying her for she was pretty awful to look at.

For three whole days we had peace. But the next day Parrukutti was exhibiting a Benares saree to the neighbours saying that my uncle had sent it to her. People began to sympathise with her and openly hinted that I and my wife were scheming people and would even murder our uncle for his fortune. Some were so impertinent as to demand that we should allow uncle Sundaram to speak for himself in front of some witnesses. Reluctantly we agreed. So Parrukutti and seven other neighbours came over with us upstairs to uncle Sundaram's room. Outside the room Kalyani was standing like a sentinel.

"He must on no account be disturbed!" she said severely.

"Never mind," I said, "let him speak out for himself. Parrukutti has public opinion at her back and if the old fool wants to marry her, let him go to blazes!"

"Let him speak for himself," interrupted Parrukutti. "Is it not fair, gentlemen?" The crowd made sympathetic noises. "Is this not sufficient evidence?" said Parrukutti exhibiting the necklace.

The crowd now made encouraging noises.

"He has promised to marry me as soon as he gets his freedom," went on Parrukutti excitedly.

The crowd now moved forward to see justice done.

My wife and I stepped back beaten and signalled to Kalyani to let the old fool out.

"The girl is mad!" said Kalyani contemptuously. "Not even a Muhammadan can get married twice the same day."

"Married twice!" cried my wife and I, both together, in astonishment seeing the hopes of inheriting uncle's fortune dashed.

"Yes," said Kalyani calmly, "we went in the car to the registrar's and——he gave me this certificate which will prove that we were married."

A farm in Connecticut is run entirely by electricity. The first light of dawn puts out the night lights. An electric clock sets going a gadget which opens the door of the poultry house. An electric "eye" counts the chickens. Another clock turns on a wireless set. A bugle sounds reveille.

The farmer touches another button and breakfast starts cooking by electricity. He then shaves with an electric razor, has breakfast, and drives away. As his car goes down the drive, it makes contact with a gadget which flashes a red warning light to a point 300 feet away where the drive joins the main road. It lasts for eighteen seconds, the time it takes to get there.

Returning at night, the farmer's headlights disturb another "eye." Floodlights illuminate the garden and the house, and electric chimes peal out a welcome. When he arrives, another "eye" opens the doors.

Electric "eyes" outside detect and announce visitors. In the nursery the children play with electric dolls, and the youngest has a muffled radio in her pillow which plays softly until an electricity bill is 2s. 1d. a day. But the account says nothing about milking cows, shearing sheep, feeding pigs, collecting eggs, or mowing meadows and hoeing turnips by electricity!

There is always a crop of queer inventions following on the heels of any war, and the Great War produced some of the queerest. One man sought a patent for enlisting the aid of birds. His plan was to train cormorants to fly to Essen to pick the mortar from Krupp's walls until they crumbled to dust.

Another brilliant idea was to replace shells by snakes which were to be scattered by pneumatic compulsion into the enemy's trenches. Yet another was a gun for use in



Now do you wonder why we have no servants in our house?

the Dardanelles campaign to fire square bullets at Turks and round ones at Christians.

The £ 88,000 left by the late Mr. John Galsworthy stands high in the list of literary fortunes. Sir Hall Caine, with his £ 250,000, stands far and away at the head of the list, but no other English novelist has left more than £ 100,000.

Mr. Stanley Weyman came near it with £ 99,400, but he, like Mr. Galsworthy, started life in comfortable circumstances. Apart from Sir Hall Caine, Dickens's £ 80,000 is the largest sum made by an English author's won efforts.

Charles Garvice comes next with £ 71,000, then Anthony Trollope with £ 1,000 less, and Miss Braddon with £ 68,000. Marie Corelli, in spite of her phenomenal sales, left only £ 24,000.

In France novel-writing brings richer rewards. Victor Hugo, for instance, left £ 300,000, and Edmund Rostand received £ 250,000 on one book alone.

A few hints to would-be swimmers, by Joe. E. Brown, the star of "You said a Mouthful:"—

Don't go swimming. If you must, imitate the poor fish. Be yourself in the water.

Breathe regularly, but not under water. Beginners should remember their directions, especially the way up.

Hands are important. You should reach for the water, not punch at it, which explains why people who live in boarding-houses make the best swimmers.

If you must flirt, do so near shore. You'll get in deep water quickly enough that away, anyhow.

On Going Home

(PRAKRIT)

MR. Satyamurti mentioned the other day that the capacity to listen was a sign of culture in a man. Dear reader, you are probably inclined to think that a good listener must be a man who has no capacity of his own and is therefore content to play second fiddle to others. Think of all the junior lawyers devilling in the offices of their seniors, who must perforce listen to their long monologues and allow themselves sometimes to be sprinkled over by their spittle; of the clerks who must digest the long homilies of their bosses, while their stomachs are gnawing with hunger; or of the medical assistants who must swallow the long tale of the senior surgeon's reminiscences, while chafing at the lack of opportunities for their own professional practice. If you wish to win the favour of another, who is obviously greater than yourself in public estimation, you should certainly listen patiently to whatever he has to say in your hearing.

Speaking for myself, I may state that I cannot write for *The Merry Magazine* if I were not cheered up by one or two listeners at home. You know the story of the great Moliere and his housemaid. She had the genius to applaud just the things that became popular later in the public theatres. Was it genius that she displayed in so discriminatingly right the good things in Moliere's work, or was it a stupid passivity? Stupidity of some kinds, mind you, of some kinds, is an excellent alloy in a man's character, making often for his success in life.

"What is your next theme for *The Merry Magazine*?" asks Damu of me.

"O, well anything will do. But this is vacation time, and I must write about going home," I answer.

"Do you mean the students going home for the holidays?" asks Damu.

"No, that is not so interesting. I am thinking of something different."

"Then, is it about lawyers and judges who leave the city for the vacation?" asks Damu again.

The Home of the Gods.

"Not exactly that, I mean a home which is common to all of us."

"O, I am sure you are thinking of Wordsworth who wrote in his 'Immortality Ode' of 'God who is our home,'" says Damu.

"Your scholarship is excellent, Damu, but not sufficient. Have you never spoken to an Englishman referring to his visit to England, after he has come to this country once?"

"Yes, I have. Mr. Netwood, the Headmaster of the Mission School at Nidragiri told me he was going home next April. He is a native of Devon, you know," says Damu.

"But, my dear fellow, England is home not to the Englishman only. It is equally home to any of us in India."

Judge Parker asks Mr. Sankara Sastri, on Sastri's return from England, "I heard you had been home, Mr. Sastri, when did you return to India?"

Sastri grins with supreme satisfaction, the line of his mouth extends from one ear to the other.

"Yes, my Lord," he begins involuntarily but corrects himself, "Yes, sir, I had sufficient curiosity to induce me to go and see England," replies Mr. Sastri.

The Triumph of Nationality.

Mr. Sankara Sastri is the modern type of the "England-returned" Indian. He wears the turban like any other untravelled Indian, and he alternates the *veshti* with trousers, according to convenience. Even his caste-mark appears across his face. A generation ago, however, you could not feel certain of an Indian going to England retaining his original identity on his return home (should I say 'from home'?). You have read that three or four centuries ago an Italianate Englishman was like the devil incarnate. We have not heard of an equally effective expression for the anglicised Indian. When a man returned from England in former days, his friends and relatives gazed with bewildered curiosity at the strange belongings which he brought with him. Hat boxes, smoking pipes, or new kinds of clothes were after all not so surprising, but live belongings in the shape of white wives appeared sometimes to shock everybody. The returned traveller had his Indian wife waiting all the time and the new acquisition helped to start trouble of various kinds.

The miracle about the modern Indian is that he remains an Indian even after returning from abroad. He does not develop a contempt for his swarthy wife even after viewing millions of white women. In fact he seems to remember his family with greater fondness while abroad, and he buys presents for each one of them, not forgetting a pearl necklace for his dark grand-daughter. On the subject of the sex passion there is some difference of opinion. Sankara Sastri felt his sex craving disappear entirely when amidst the women of Europe. Subramanyam tells his friends at the Nidragiri Club, every time he leaves for a holiday in Europe, "I must have a fling at life in Paris this summer." He has not chosen to make clear to us what 'a fling at life' means exactly.

The Baboon.

Have you heard the story of the baboonish big Indian official who toured in Europe, and on return refused invitations to dinner parties at the Government House? However high he rose in official status, the baboon remained a baboon to the end of his life. He was too clownish to manage decently the knife and fork at table. He sent the following message to the Government House: "My having gone to England does not alter my usual habits, and I regret my inability to accept invitations to dinner at the Government House." Lord Dammer who did not guess the incurable clumsiness of the baboon, began to cherish a high regard for the constancy of the Indian gentleman's ideals.

The Traveller's Veracity.

When Subramanyam returned from his continental tour his friends gathered round him eagerly to hear his personal stories. For the moment, narrator and listener seemed to be united in pure delight, the one appearing to tell his stories as candidly as the other listened and commented on it. But mutual suspicions begin to grow soon. The narrator edits his account carefully, and the auditor is even more ready to 'read between the lines.'

"Marseilles is a terrible place, you know. Men hang about the streets and invite you to what they call special cinemas," says Subramanyam.

"And what are they about?" asks Damu.

"Oh! they are perfectly horrid, numbers of naked women come about,—"

"So you rushed out from the place," suggests Damu.

"No, no, having gone all the way from India we wanted to satisfy our curiosity fully, and we stayed on. Finally we were robbed of all we had on our persons."

Subramanyam begins again, exclaiming, "O, the cabarets in Europe! What pretty girls you meet there! you just pay for some drink, and you get such a jolly nice time of it."

Subramanyam had said he was going to Europe to recruit health, but he looked such a wreck on his return, and his monetary embarrassments were so trying that Damu made his own inferences on the matter.

Wanderlust

Years ago, a man aspired to become a big man in some profession of life, but modern aspirations point to a novel ideal. Politics is the most exciting ocean to swim in, and among the prizes none is so pleasant as that which provides you with free trips to remote parts of the world, to Honolulu, Madagascar or the West Indies. By going to England you have the chance of learning that 'Piccadilly' is accented on the penultimate syllable in pronunciation. If you go to Europe you learn about the fiords of Norway and the Black Forest in Germany. If you go to Canada you discover that Montreal is accented on the last syllable, and Ottawa on the first, in pronunciation. The most attractive profession in modern times is to be the travelling agent to the government of a country, if you can secure such a place. The difference between a commercial agent and the representative of a government is that the former is judged by the results of his activities, while the latter has only to retain the good favour of a great patron. We are told that our political ambassadors are very miserable every time they return to India. They acquire a lasting passion to be always on the move and feel themselves quite unfit for honest occupations in their own country.

Fingers or Toes

A very enjoyable aspect of the pleasure of going home is of course the preparing for it. You begin to visit every fashionable shop in the city to get the properest clothes for your use. You discard the poor Indian tailor who has served you faithfully for years, because you feel that only

Europeans know to make correctly the clothes that are to be worn in Europe. You feel profoundly flattered when the English tailor 'sirs' you obsequiously at least thrice in the course of a single sentence. But he is not also afraid of assuming equality with you, for he mentions for your benefit what particular clothes he would wear on what particular occasions. Then there is the ordeal of wearing shoes. Sankara Sastri's feet had never known the constriction of laced shoes until he thought of going to England. Sandals had failed to impart the necessary discipline to his feet. He began to suffer unbearable pain when he first put on shoes. It was a marvellous experience for him when the fit of his shoes was determined by X-ray examination at the English shop.

"The pressure on the last two fingers is rather painful," complains Sankara Sastri when trying on the first pair of shoes.

The English assistant suppresses his surprise completely that Mr. Sastri refers to his 'toes' as his 'fingers,' for after all, Sastri's buying capacity was enormous. Mr. Sastri did not correctly distinguish between the 'arm' and 'hand' either, but his European tour would certainly serve to set right his vocabulary in these details.

The visits to Cook's.

The joy and glory of going home is partly in the visits you pay to Cook's office before you start on your tour. You surround yourself with a plethora of guide books of different countries, of the glazed and illustrated kind, for months together before you decide the details of your holiday tour. When you fix the daily itinerary of your tour, months before you actually begin it, you feel a sense of your own personal importance which you had not suspected earlier. It is a rare privilege to hand over your cheque and receive the ticket for the passage which you keep in a special pocket-book supplied to you by the tourist agency. You want a separate day to receive the travellers' cheques made out to you in different denominations by the kindly agency, so full of solicitude for your convenience.

Dear reader, you must agree that going home has two sides to it, the joyous side whereby you get an exhilarating holiday in Europe, the pathetic side by which you come to regard going away from your real home as going home. When you think of going home there are two points of consideration which are wholly irrelevant and which I hope will not trouble you. It is foolish that you should ask yourself what exactly your aim is in going home, and what exactly should be the sacrifices you make for it. Anyway it is a most exhilarating experience to go home. We, who have not the good luck of going home, must only rail at those who do go home. If you have the good fortune, you may get into the Bombay Express at the Central Station one morning and have your photo appear in the Madras newspapers the same evening. A large company of friends will see you off at the railway station and you will be smothered with flower garlands and presents of fruit. If you are not going home yourself, I advise you not to miss the opportunity of seeing off some friend of yours going home at the Madras Central Station, for it is a rare and enjoyable sight.

The Pill Doctor

(B. R.)

DR. Seshiah, M. B. B. S., was writing some prescription when I entered in. The rubber garland was, as usual, gracing his neck. When he prostrated before his grandmother during his marriage celebrations eleven years back, she exclaimed, "How my eyes are pleased to see you now! May she live long that garlanded you and may I always see you like this!" Well, her wish was fulfilled and it took the form of a stethoscope. The cigarette held in his left hand was emitting whirls of probably medicated smoke.

"Good morning, doctor." I wished him.

"Well, Good morning. Just a minute. Please sit down," he replied and continued his scribbling.

After a minute, he turned towards me.

"The cold is still persisting, doctor," I said.

"Let us repeat the mixture," he replied and handed the slip back to me after dating it.

By frequent visits to gentlemen of this brand and due to my dogged perseverance, I had become proficient in giving the finishing touch to any prescription. Of course, it is this last item that is all-important in a mixture, forming almost 99% of it. Though it is not proper etiquette to disclose the trade secret, I can just tell you about it, if I can take you into my confidence—Aqua 4 oz. The rest one per cent consists of some salts and tinctures and I am not ashamed to confess that I don't know these details. I have many a time tried to decipher these items, which I

would have done but for the doctors' wonderful penmanship, for though they profess that they are using only the English alphabets, I should think they are using a script understandable only between themselves and the compounders. By the way, I may also tell you that, as it has always been my policy not to take up any job unless I felt confident that I would be a cent per cent success, this 1% failing in me deterred me from becoming a full-blown doctor, consequently saving me the expense of a signboard.

With the mixture in my pocket, I returned home. Kamala was still sniffing into her kerchief, in fact into any clothing she could lay hands on, with occasional outbursts of sheeplike sneezings.

"The same water again. This dirty cold hasn't left me, though it is now a week. Can't you get me some medicine from Shantilal Babu", she murmured.

As regards Shantilal Babu, I never had a mind to approach that gentleman. But her remarks set me thinking as to the origin of her cold.

Bigger men have said that great ideas have struck them at odd moments in their life. Really, next morning when I was cleaning my teeth, I came to a logical solution of this problem. My mind went back to my schooldays of twenty-five years ago, when I had read something about the Law of Conservation of Energy or Matter—whatever they call it. When there is an increase in one place, there is a corresponding decrease in another. When you are at your meals, your stomach bloats up, but the plates get emptied up. Just like that.

It was the month of May. Like a thief peeping over a wall, the mercury was standing at 120 degrees and peeping at 125 degrees F. The hot wind was literally burning our cheeks and ears. The mosquitoes were making our life hot for us. Even the sambhar that Kamala was preparing was pretty hot. When everything around and about her was hot, what can she have but cold left with her? Provided we have the time to think about, there is no room for doubt that, we scientists, can by logical reasoning flout out the diagnoses of all the doctors in the world.

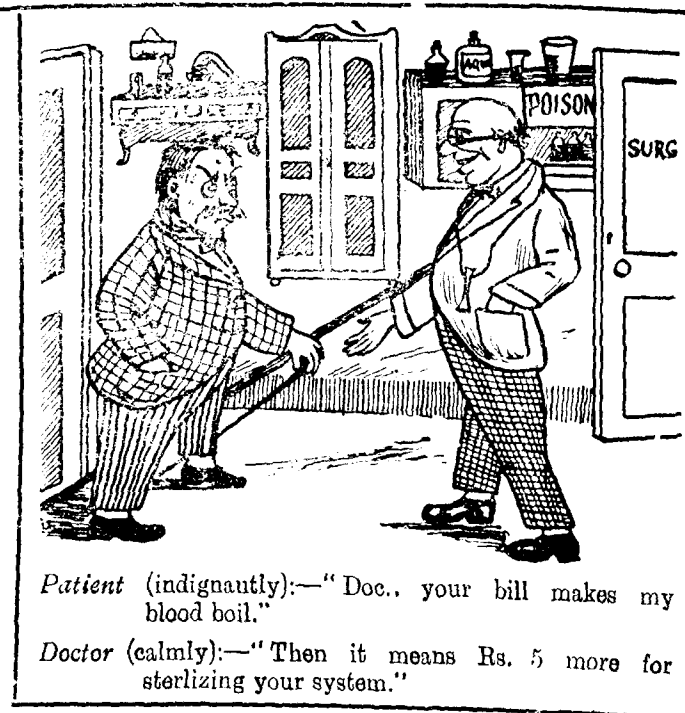
Anyway, since I did not want my wife to be sniffing about for two months till the weather cooled down, I made my way to Shantilal Babu.

Shantilal Babu was a Homeopath. The very name was dreadful to me. It sounded something like Romeo, reminding me of tragic consequences. So, till then, I had nothing but antipathy for this category and deferred my visit to them until the inevitable happened.

"Namaskar, Doctor Sahib," I said.

"Namaskar, kindly sit down. What is the matter?" he asked.

I traced the history of my visit in ten words and expecting him to write out his prescription as Dr. Seshiah



Patient (indignantly):—"Doc., your bill makes my blood boil."

Doctor (calmly):—"Then it means Rs. 5 more for sterilizing your system."

used to do, I had a look around me. There was no trace of aqua anywhere. On all sides were admirals full of bottles containing small pills and tablets and I began to wonder whether they were smaller editions of naphthaline balls or aspirin tablets.

Contrary to my expectation, the doctor commenced a prologue. "I surmise," he said, "this is the first time you are consulting a Homeopath. In our pathy, we have got different medishin (medicine) for different persons. for the same complaint. A medishin intended for a thin person won't suit a fat man. So would you please give some more details. All this is strictly confidential, only between you and me." So saying, he heckled me with a volley of questions. And I felt myself like the Home Member in the Council at interpellation time, when the Andampalli shooting case was under discussion.

"Is she fair, fat or slender?" he began.

Dr. Seshiah had never troubled me with such questions and I think that no gentleman of a doctor ever would. Is it proper etiquette to ask one these questions about his own wife? Even supposing that it is the misfortune of anybody to have married an uncouth, deformed, owl-eyed, eagle-nosed &c. &c. ass of a woman, you honestly tell me, can you expect him to express the fact?

"How are her eyes?" Why, the dark-browed lotus eyes that captivated my twenty years back, were still the same, shining before me with the same appeal.

"How is her tongue?" Well, I can find nothing wrong with it. When I brought her *rasagulla* and *sandesh* the evening before, she immediately declared that they were really sweet.

"Is she getting a headache?"

"I think so," I replied.

"There should be some pain also at the side or near the eyebrows. Does she cough?"

He was going on *ad infinitum*.

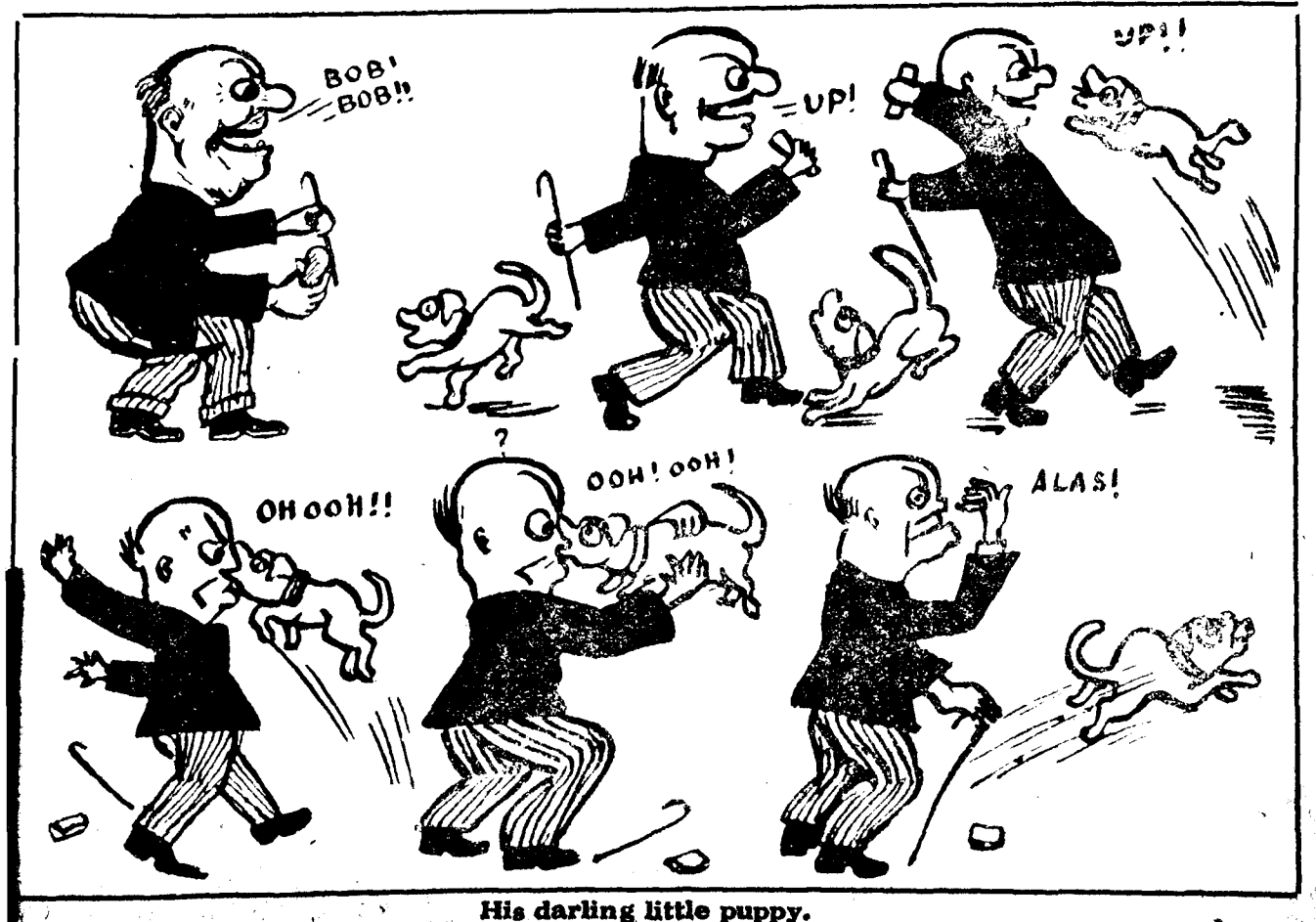
When this series came to an end, I felt just like the Home Member. But it was the Hon'ble that came to my rescue. In the same vein, I said "Notice, sir" to all these questions and with a sigh of relief, reached home.

I was at Shantilal's after an hour and gave him some details. Like a lawyer before commencing his argument, Shantilal turned over the leaves of a leather-bound volume and stopped at one page. Owing to the elaborate prologue he had given before, I expected him to be reading something under the heading 'Kamala', but when I had a glance at that page, I was disappointed. However, after deeply consulting his book for ten minutes, he took one of the bottles, carefully examined the label on it and gave a few white little pills.

"This is the proper medishin, Mr.....and a very good one. It will have immediate effect," he remarked.

Kamala was all right next morning. There was an end to the accumulation of kerchiefs in the corner and of the dhobi's murmur too.

Supposing I had told him that I wanted medicine for a dark, fat, plumpy 'girl', do you think he would have given me a black pumpkin-like pill? The experiment is worth trying one day, isn't it? If you are inquisitive, I will let you also know later.



His darling little puppy.



He had no love for his wife's pet dog, yet when it mysteriously disappeared one day, he offered twenty-five pounds reward for its recovery.

"But I thought," said the news-agent to him, "you hated the dog like poison."

"I did."

"Why on earth, then, are you offering such a big reward for its safe return?"

"I like to please my wife."

"That may be, but twenty-five pounds is pretty sure to bring the dog back."

"I think not," replied the husband, with a knowing wink, "unless someone saw me bury it in the garden."

The two friends were plodding bravely along the winding and dusty country road.

"I feel like tea," said one breathlessly. "What's the time? My watch can't be right, it's always losing."

The other smiled.

"Mine isn't much use," he replied. "It's always stopped."

His companion groaned irritably.

"Well, it's much better than mine," he replied. "It is right twice a day."

The professor was lecturing upon the distribution of world population. He mentioned that only in the West Indies were males to be found in excess of females.

"A happy state of affairs," he said playfully; "not unlike the state which existed in this community of ours before lady undergraduates were admitted."

At this point several women students present, affecting to be offended, rose to leave the class.

"One moment, please," said the lecturer. "There is no occasion to go yet. The next boat for the West Indies doesn't leave for a week."

A man carrying a gun, and accompanied by a seedy-looking dog, was overtaken by a motorist who ran over the dog and killed it. The driver of the car was profuse in his apologies, and asked the man if two pounds would be sufficient to compensate him for the loss. "Yes, that'll do," said the man, who pocketed the money. The motorist was relieved at being let down so lightly, and as he got into his seat he said, "Well, good day, and I'm sorry to have spoilt your sport." "I am after no sport," said the man. "I was just taking the dog into the wood to shoot him."

The agent gazed critically at the Chettiar's car.

"What did you give for that?" he asked.

"The Chettiar shrugged his shoulders.

"Nothing," the Chettiar replied. "I took it for a debt. A fellow owed me two hundred rupees."

"H'm!" murmured the agent. "Do you stand much chance of getting the other hundred and ninety-nine rupees back?"

An English class was given the task of writing four lines of dramatic poetry. One boy wrote:—

"A boy was walking down the track.

The train was coming fast.

The boy stepped off the railroad track,

To let the train go past."

The effort was returned with the comment that there was no drama; it was too commonplace. After long concentration the budding poet submitted the following:—

"A boy was walking down the track,

The train was coming fast.

The train jumped off the railroad track,

To let the boy go past."

A young and nervous candidate for the Navy was being examined by a board of admirals, and in the course of a test of his general knowledge he was asked: "What kind of animals eat grass?"

The youth pondered long over the question.

"Surely you must know the answer to a simple question like that—What kind of animals eat grass?" the admiral repeated.

Then a flash of understanding illuminated the lad's countenance.

"Oh, animals, sir; I thought you said admirals," he replied in a tone of relief.

Most of us find ourselves in awkward positions at times. It was especially awkward for a gentleman who paid a visit to the prison and was asked by the superintendent to say a few words to the prisoners. He was at a loss as to what to say, and when the inmates were assembled, he was more flustered than ever. "Fellow citizens," he began, and then he realized that that was incorrect. He made another effort. "Fellow convicts," he exclaimed, and that seemed worse than before. He became desperate. "Well, anyway," he said, "I am very pleased to see so many of you here this afternoon."

In Romantic Role

(V. GANAPATHI)

EVERY one of us can admire and appreciate a romantic character. But how many of us can really be romantic? How many of us are born romantic and how many are romantic by inclination? First of all, what is the correct and full definition of "romantic"? Can you give me the idea in a few significant words? If you ask me, I say "I submit. It is a term indefinable. It is more understood than expressed. You can go on enumerating the constituent elements of a 'romantic' temperament, *ad infinitum*."

Some are born romantic, some achieve the romantic spirit, and some have it thrust upon them. To the last class belonged our poor, dear Balu. By nature reserved, endowed with latent potentialities to adapt himself to the spirit of the age and of environment, he was susceptible to external influence. And there lay his tragic weakness!

A modest, humble and tender youth, coming from an obscure village, may not satisfy the requirements of a "hero" in the common and full acceptance of the term. But Balu undergoes a series of progressive changes, physically, intellectually and emotionally—and becomes a "hero" not by mere appellation, but by virtue of actual deeds of enterprise.

Plain, tufted Balu became, within a year of his college course at Madras, a cropped, collared, tied, suited and spectacled young man. What was the chronological order of the various talkies that appeared in the city of Madras, during the year 1932? Consult Balu for that. Who were the actors and what were their respective merits? Everything at the tip of his fingers.

Not one of the talkies did Balu miss. Let alone his inherent incapacity to drudge along with his professor, through 'King Lear' or Wordsworth, here was the thing that suited his taste and inclination admirably. He quite identified himself with the 'hero' of every piece. After a full two hours' enjoyment of the "all singing, all dancing, all talking" show on the screen, Balu would emerge out of the theatre, a changed man. He would

translate his mental excitement into direct action. A throw up of the head, and a jaunty gait with a haughty bearing, would attract attention.

A few months' regular attendance at the theatres—and Balu was not Balu. He was all romance, all dashing and all dynamic. Never for once would he board a tram or a bus in its statical condition. There is a tinge of dashing romance in boarding a conveyance while in motion—this was his idea. He always started from his residence in town at 8-45 p. m. to catch the 9 p. m.

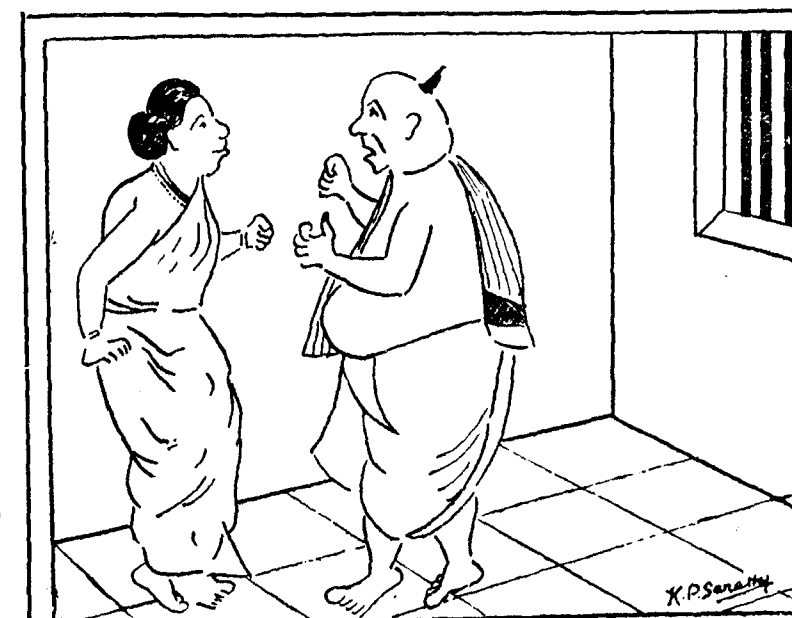
train at Egmore.

"You don't know, there is a real romantic spark in catching the train just at the very moment it begins to leave the platform," he said. I also believe there is that suspenseful and tense excitement which is really enjoyable—provided you get your place in the train finally. But never has Balu been successful in catching the train. All romance is lost if you fail to achieve the end of it all.

Balu's study of cinemas and talkies involved him in countless disappointments and dangers. The heroes in the plays do get into pretty nasty holes,

but they always manage to get out all right. Thrilling dangers, hair-raising encounters with monstrous beasts and reptiles, terrible situations, in the midst of a conflagration, in the middle of the ocean without even a single bark, true. But practically every story rounds up with presenting to you finally, the happy hero with his happy bride. Balu was far too much mistaken to apply these things to actual life. The tragedies and enigmas of life are far beyond our control or easy manipulation, unlike in these stage-plays. They are all "got up" things. In fact, what you hope for, what you anticipate, in the normal course of things, turns out to be just the reverse in the end.

Anyway, Balu was too much impressed by this "Screen Romance" to shake off his convictions easily. He fancied he was none the less qualified than his "Dashing Doug" and "Cheerful Chev." So, he was on the keen look out for an opportunity to present itself, for the gratification of his 'romantic' craving.



Wife:—"Dear, it seems the burglar is in the next room. Let me see, you go and knock him down."

Nervous husband:—"Certainly, dear, I am going to break his neck if I don't find him."

The Merry Magazine

His first romantic idea was "falling in love at first sight". Why, this is a thing that poets have glorified, novelists have been interested in, and all men in fact have been excited over. "The look and the counter-look, the smile and the return smile, the meaning glance and the resonant vibration—ah! romance is here," idealised Balu. The only drawback was that there was no resonating object for his romance. He was ready doubtless, to straightaway fall in love, and at first sight too. But with whom? There came the difficulty.

Still Balu would not give up his romantic idea. He posted himself at the bus stands and the Beach, to find some one to fall in love with. Oh, these jealous men! Every girl he saw, was accompanied and zealously escorted by a man. The repulsive sight of a man for Balu in that mood drove him desperate.

He drew the line for the first day's adventures, and returned home, much disappointed. But unprepared as he was, he met a sweet, solitary, lady-passenger in a bus, clad in khaddar; and his romance was re-inflamed. He got in. Gallantry was an element of Balu's romance. He took care, therefore, of her hand-bag and parasol. He commenced a little verbal exchange with a polite greeting. She was communicative in that she answered Balu's queries about the national movement, temple entry, and sex-equality, which he thought, would serve somewhat to carry on conversation.

The bus reached Central, and the girl quietly got down, thanked Balu, received back her emblems of dignity, and trotted off to the General Hospital. Balu got down too. But to dog the footsteps of a girl in that open place, when especially she was going ahead with pronounced indifference, was something to which he could not easily reconcile his retiring nature. Yet, he did not want to turn away. He stood there "dividing the swift mind this way and that" perplexed. "To follow or not to follow?" was the most important question of the moment for him. "Budge" said his conscience. "Budge not" said the Devil. After a minute's keen contest, conscience won—a rare instance, but true.

So Balu gave up his first 'romance'. His ever-yearning heart, however, could not easily retire to the background. And he was therefore craving yet for some romantic adventure with just a tinge of heroic dash. Many of us, why all of us, live on borrowed ideas. And so did Balu too. Great writers of romantic fiction were mercilessly analysed by him. And Scott served him usefully. He realised that in many of his novels, Scott always brought the hero and the heroine together for the first time, at the most dramatic and critical point of the latter being attacked by a bull or a boar, or in some such terrible danger. Balu took the tip and worked on it.

"Hello, my friend, I come to seek a small favour," he earnestly solicited of Gopal, one day.

"Yes? What is it? I do not know if I can do much if it is a matter affecting my purse."

"No, no, my dear friend, just lend me....."

"I told you. No lending business at all. 'Neither a lender nor a borrower be', don't you know?" replied Gopal in that intellectually reflective strain.

"I want no loan, dash it, Gopal. The matter needs a little mustering up of presence of mind, and only of that I need a bit from you. I want you to hazard a throw on my behalf, and to be at the same time, exceedingly cautious." Balu reassured Gopal.

"I do not quite catch you."

"You see, I have a little brilliant plan. You must lend me your helping hand. And remember, Gopal. I once saved you from drowning..."

"Drowning? Me? When?" Gopal exclaimed in great surprise.

"Oh, was it not you then? It must have been somebody else. Just a mistake of fact. Never mind, will you promise to do me this little favour and keep it a secret?"

"If you mean that you are going to rely on me for doing something about which I should not breathe a single word to any soul, well, I should not dream of doing any such thing," answered Gopal.

"Can't quite work that out, my friend. I do not follow you. Will you keep it a secret or will you not? Which do you mean?"

"I mean that I would most certainly maintain the cover of secrecy to what you want me to do, provided of course, it is not against my conscience and sense of honour, and decency and propriety."

"Oh, I am relieved. It is a straightforward thing. You see, it is like this. I am madly in love, romantically in love, with Leila. Can you serve as a 'catalytic agent'? Just figure in for a moment and bid good-bye to the entire affair."

"In what manner? Let me have your plan."

"Every evening, precisely at 5.30 p.m. the father goes out with his daughter for a walk. You see, just manage your steering wheel in a manner to almost graze Leila's skirts. At the moment, I will dash forward from somewhere and rescue her. The girl will feel greatly obliged, and the father, pleased and grateful for my act of deliverance. They will thank me, we will get one degree closer. Trust me to work that up. Meanwhile, you are off the place. Follow me?" said Balu.

"Quite. I give you credit for inventive genius."

"Smell any difficulty?"

"None, except my part of the whole job."

"Easy. Just follow my directions."

"Well, I begin to like the 'romance' therein."

And so the next day, at 5.30 p.m., Gopal could be seen parking his car at the farther end of the Beach, waiting in ambush for the appearance of Leila and her parent.

As usual, the father and the daughter, in their evening stroll, were walking along in measured and easy steps along the margin running to the left of the Beach; and invariably as every one has to, they did choose their point of crossing, which was just ten yards ahead of Gopal's car.

The self-starter was pressed, the gear was shifted and with a rattle, Gopal's Singer Junior began to move with a jerk. A gentle but sure pressure on the accelerator, and a swerving of the steering wheel to the left—and the radiator front almost kissed the flowing garb of Leila. Car

behind, car to the right, car to the left, and yet a fourth, almost running over her. In the midst of these, Leila was paralysed for a moment. This was Balu's most psychological moment. He made a dash forward, extended his hands in eager longing to grasp at the tender form. The danger did appear to be imminent, and he felt the ebullition of all his spirits. He was all enthusiasm while rushing forward to effect the rescue. But the Madras girl as she was, Leila nimbly and serpent-like, eluded all these four agents of destruction and got on to the pedestrians' platform, safe.

All is well that ends well. But here, it was not quite so simple. Just a second more, and Balu was straight under the front wheels of Gopal's car, firmly in the grasp of the fully blown up Goodyear tyres.

His eyes bulged out; his mouth opened wide; and he felt that the hand of Death was pressing him down.

"Oh," he groaned, under the crushing wheels. People gathered, not an unusual phenomenon in Madras, where you find an instantaneous crowd gathered—how people pour in and from where, God alone can explain—if only you tumble against a jutting peg. "You bungler," Balu yelled, addressing the stupefied Gopal.

Five minutes later, the Singer Junior was carrying the wounded man with multiple fractures, a compressed toe and broken ankles, and Gopal at the wheel, whose hands were describing a Simple Harmonic Motion.

And to the General Hospital they came. For Balu were secured a corner, a mattress, a doctor and a nurse. Gopal left him there and with a concerned "hope to see you alright soon" bade him good-bye and returned home.

Balu blinked and looked around—and whom should he meet as his nurse but the very girl whom he chose for his "romantic debut"? With her unmeaning smile

which she bestowed on all and sundry, she kindly enquired "What is wrong, my young friend?" And Balu with a grin replied "romantic fracture."

A fortnight elapsed after his admission and once again Balu found himself on his legs, but never more for any romance.

One day, Balu began giving a descriptive definition of "romance" before a gathering of friends.

"Romance" he said "is the goading spur which drives you right in front of dangers, takes you to the verge of self-destruction—often engenders the utter immolation of conscience and total annihilation of all self-esteem. It leads you before the front wheels of a running car. It makes you beg, borrow or steal money to pay the bus or tram or the cinemas. It is, in short, the creator, preserver and destroyer of your vigour and activity." Balu got ardent and spirited over the topic.

"Before God and before men, I solemnly affirm" he continued, "This is the truth, and nothing but the truth. If any of you should doubt it, I am prepared to substantiate my statement by concrete evidence, *videlicet*, the much-rocked-about soul before you—due to this 'romance.' Do not talk to me of romance and expect to find me complaisant. Romance is dangerous, romance is fatal. If still you disbelieve or do not agree, well, I should prefer leaving the matter for final settlement, to our mutual fists."

I came away with quite a new idea of "romance", perhaps, romance varies with individual opportunities and tastes. I have my idea of it—and you can have yours. On one point we all agree; "Romance is Romance".

Now for your verdict. Is not Balu a "romantic hero"?

A very successful actor is showing a friend over his very handsome home on Long Island Sound. "This," he says, "is the living room. This is a guest room. This is another guest room. This is still another guest room. This is my wife's bedroom." On opening this, the wife is seen in a very compromising position with another man.

The actor just shuts the door and continues over the rest of the house. More guest rooms, bath rooms, etc., until they come to the library. The actor says to his friend: "How about a cocktail—let me fix you one." Says the friend, "But what about the fellow in your wife's room?" "Oh, to Hell with him," says the actor, "let him fix his own cocktails."

An American producer was filming a Biblical scene. Things were not going too well and he stormed and raved about the studio.

"Listen to me, you guys," he shouted. "I'm paying a thousand dollars a day for this sound apparatus, and I mean to get my money's worth. When those Ten Commandments are broken I want to hear 'em break! Get me?"

A motorist one day gave a farmer a lift in his racing car. They were travelling at seventy-five miles an hour,

when the car skidded and hit a tree. The car was wrecked, but the two men were thrown clear. The old farmer got up, and began to light his pipe. "That certainly was fine, sir," he said, "but what bothers me is, how do you stop when there are no trees about?"

An amusing story is found in "Phantom Fame" which gives us the laugh-making confessions of Mr. Harry Reichenbach, the American publicity expert.

An American circus company got into difficulties and wrote of attachment were issued against the lion tamer and all that was his. The intrepid Colonel Mondy thereupon made over the cages to his wife.

"You can have the lions and tigers if you like," he told the sheriff when he came to attach the property, "but you can't have them cages!"

"Well, then, how're we going to take the animals?" asked the sheriff.

"That's easy. I'll open up the bars and they'll go right with you!" Mondy started to open the locks.

"Just a minute!" cried the sheriff, angrily. "If I catch you meddling with Mrs. Mondy's cages or opening her locks, I'll have the law on you!" And with great dignity and authority he got on his horse and rode away.

The Multimillionaire

KRISHNA R. GURUSWAMI REDDIAR, M. A. (CAMBRIDGE) M. A. (DUBLIN).

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The Multimillionaire was the wealthiest of a land of plutocrats; he was the prince of multimillionaires.

He thought.

He had no wife, he did not marry, he was single, he was alone.

He calculated his millions, he calculated his span of life.....

Man is mortal, he thought.

He thought man is mortal; he can but exist for the five score years in the extreme limit—not for millions—he was good at calculations; he thought..... he acted.

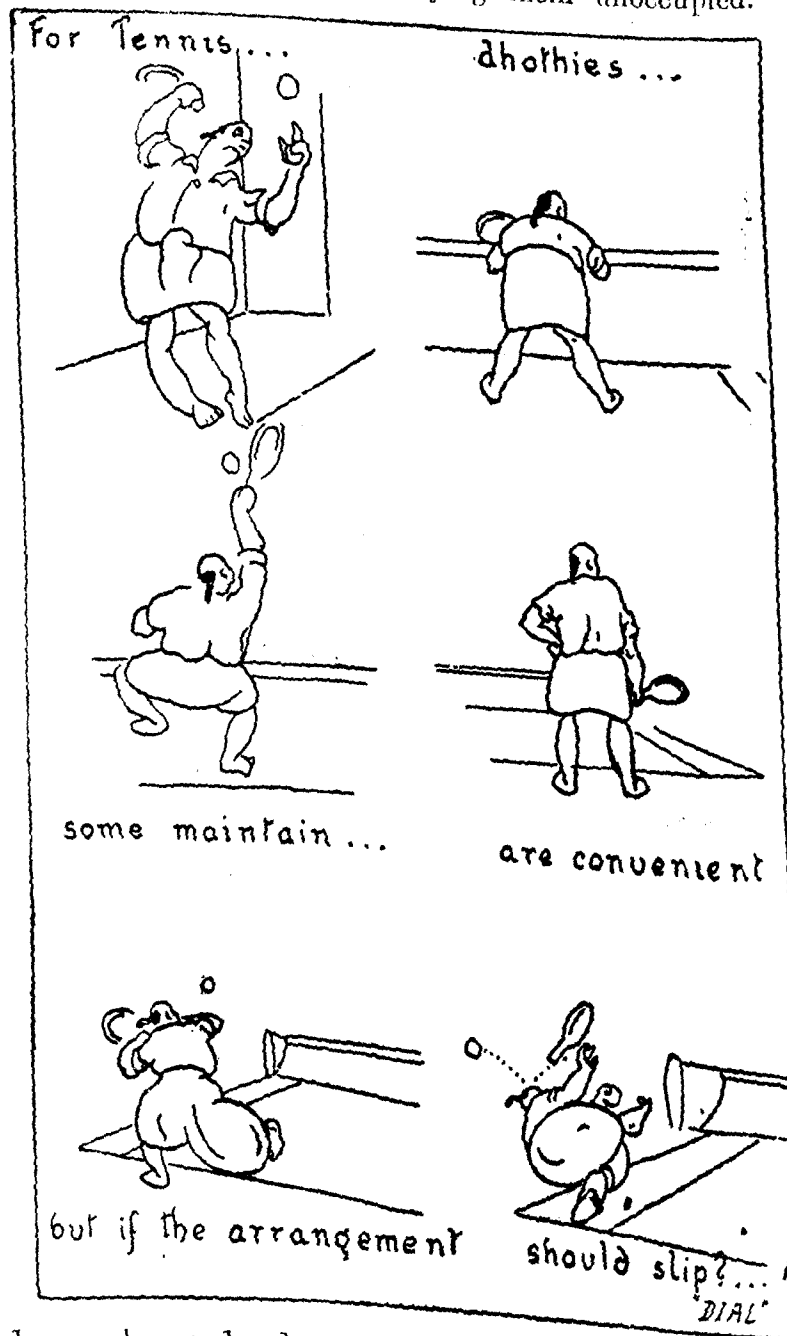
Year after year he built extravagantly rich buildings and immediately after, he dynamited them into thin air..... the multimillionaire.

And thus year after year, he, the multimillionaire continued to spend his millions—millions upon millions.

People talked, people wondered, people were aghast, people were dumb, people could do nothing. Waste! Waste!! Waste!!! They said so and held their breath and so did the Government and the State.

He had distributed his millions arithmetically over the number of years he could

humanly exist and was year after year building rich, extravagantly rich, buildings and destroying them unoccupied. And that was his occupation.



The count was perplexed the world was puzzled and people were astonished—but they could do nothing..... Nobody could do anything.

What was the motive? What was the intention? What was the idea? What was the purpose? What was the spring and source of the multimillionaire? Conduct—persistent continuity of temporary constructions and systematic destructions?..... Why did he will so?

The multimillionaire, years after, after years, died—man is mortal—the multimillionaire had thought and acted.

And his secret will was opened from an astoundingly mystifying casket. His will read, "Man is mortal. When he dies his wealth does not go with him." The gaping multitudes were breathless! And when the news spread, millions upon millions were gaping and breathless.

The Magic of the East

(MATT DE CARLO)

A blue limousine with a statuette of the wing-footed Mercury on the cap of the radiator pulled up by the steps leading to the main entrance to the Central Station. The thickly nickel-plated fittings of the bonnet, wind-screen and hood scintillated with a thousand rays under the powerful lights of the electric lamps.

A door was flung open and from the cosy interior of the motor sprightly stepped out a young man in uniform. He was not more than twenty-five, stood five feet ten, stalwart and handsomely built, with a clean-shaven face. He asked a couple of porters to take care of his luggage and see them carefully deposited in a first-class compartment in the Bangalore Mail.

Lieut. Claude William Henderson had arrived in Madras from Colombo only that morning. He had written to his Colonel at Bangalore that he would be arriving there the next morning, though his due date of reporting himself to duty as a subaltern of the Royal Sussex Infantry was three days later. He strode along the corridor of the Central Station and was about to book a first-class fare to Bangalore Cantonment when his eyes were arrested by the sight of a girl with auburn curly hair, slim and slick, in a sky-blue crepe-de-Chine travelling costume, coming towards the booking-office. For the space of a second he stood fixed to the ground, then immediately regained his self-possession and his lips curled into a half smile.

He was sure he had not met during the whole twenty-five years of his existence, a more beautiful, charming girl than this one in the sky-blue travelling costume. In a glance he took in all the features of this winning specimen of feminine grace and youth. A faultless clear oval face, with a small rounded chin, lips like ripe cherries, a thin straight nose and a pair of expressive blue eyes. What a sweet face and what a lovely figure! Fresh from Sandhurst and with the whole wide world before him, Lieut. Henderson was intoxicated. He saw a mischievous smile slowly mounting to her eyes and he responded with his half smile and all unconsciously he bowed. It was all the magic of the East. Slowly with lingering steps he followed her to the booking-office and heard her asking for two second-class tickets to Champion Reef.

"Champion Reef?" he unconsciously repeated. Where on earth was this Champion Reef? Must be somewhere near Peshawar or Goleconda, and whom the devil is the other ticket for? A chilling premonition slowly crept into his mind, a disconcerting suspicion assailed his boyish heart. His half smile suddenly died out and his handsome bright face began to cloud in a frown. Is she married? Is she really? All unawares he stamped his left foot. The girl turned back and met the half smile which, though a shade sad, had immediately returned to his face. She nodded.

Her nod decided his fate. He plunged—plunged headlong. Unconsciously he drew nearer to that goddess who appeared before him all unexpectedly and wonderfully from the enchanted regions of the mysterious East.

She purchased her tickets and tripped along the smooth floor to the platform. Henderson thought that she was waiting like smoke from the sacred incense of a shrine and not tripping—what a sprightly girl, full of vim and gusto. He rushed to the booking-office window and demanded a second-class ticket to Champion Reef. The booking-clerk, a seedy-looking gentleman in spectacles, with slight grey hairs, eyed him rather suspiciously.

"Very, very sorry sir, all the second-class berths are booked. No second-class tickets can be issued by the Bangalore Mail," chirped the man behind the counter rather malevolently.

This exasperated Lieut. Henderson. He never anticipated such an impediment.

"Look here, give me a first-class ticket to Champion Reef," said Henderson. The booking-clerk with an understanding smile handed over the ticket.

Lieut. Henderson rushed in pursuit of the goddess who had appeared and so soon disappeared. He found her near the bookstall. There was another huge figure by her side, with a paunch and slightly bald head and slightly short in stature. Henderson heaved a sigh of relief when he saw this victim of hypertrophy. He saw his goddess purchasing a few magazines and novels. He also followed suit. But the elderly bald-headed gentleman did not show an altogether happy countenance. The presence of the Lieutenant of His Majesty's Overseas Forces upset him. He grunted and then cast a fiery glance at him.

"Come along, Kaity, there's only five minutes more for the train to steam out of this beastly hole. I want a comfortable corner to stretch myself down and dream—yes, of those jolly good bygone days, come along, child," he called her.

Kaity! what a sweet name! He asked his porters to shove in his things in the same compartment in which she got in. Then slowly he approached the compartment in a nonchalant air.

"I'm sorry, young man, there's no room here for you. All berths are reserved," said the thickest gentleman gruffly.

"I beg your pardon. I know. Mr. Barby who had booked a seat has just rung up the station master and told him that he wasn't going tonight—I shall occupy his berth, if you'll have no objection."

"All right," granted the old gent and quietly reposed.

Henderson entered the compartment. His berth was opposite to hers. He sat down in an indifferent attitude and began turning over the pages of the March issue of the Pearson's Magazine. Slowly he raised his eyes and cast a glance at the girl opposite. Then he mustered courage and fell to it rightaway.

"Are you going a long way?" he asked the girl very respectfully.

"Oh, no," she answered very sweetly, "only to Champion Reef—we change at Bowringpet."

"Indeed! how fortunate. I also happen to go that way," said Henderton.

"That's very good——"

"What the hell is very good? I want to sleep, mind you, and dream, and I wonder how on earth I am going to do it if you two young people go on chirping all the time?" asked the elderly gentleman irritated at the disturbance.

"I beg your pardon—we didn't mean to disturb you at all," apologised the chivalrous knight.

"Oh! that's it—eh? You needn't take sides, my lad. I am a plain man, and I don't like fellows in uniform. Never liked them all my days. Oh! my heart is thumping, thumping yes, that's it, thumping," and he opened his rattan basket, took out a decanter and poured out some Highland nectar.

"Help yourself, lad, it will help your heart to go strong like Johnny Walker."

"No, thanks. I don't generally drink after 9 p.m.," answered Henderton.

"You expect me to swallow that pill? I know you Tommies, always spilling fibs," he said coolly emptying a glass.

"Try and go to sleep, uncle. That'll do you good. You haven't had your mid-day nap today," entreated the girl.

"Well, if you two young people will stop your chirping and spooning, I s'pose it's better," said the outspoken gentleman.

"Oh, uncle what terrible things you are talking. Please do go to sleep," pleaded the girl again.

The gentleman grunted, turned on his side and was quiet.

A few minutes sped past. Kaity's novel had fallen on her lap, so also Henderton's and in their mutual effort to pick them up their eyes met. His full of love, devotion and admiration, hers shy, yet expressive.

"Is Champion Reef a charming place?" he began. He couldn't control himself.

"Sh—Sh—Sh—" she said, placing a lovely finger on her cherry lips, and waved her hand towards her uncle. Lieut. Henderton nodded knowingly. After a few minutes again he blurted out with his half smile. It was all the magic of the East.

"Will you be staying there long?" he asked almost in a whisper.

"I don't know. Perhaps a week, a fortnight or a month may be," she answered. Her voice seemed so like a nightingale's, singing its burden of love, and this

disarmed him altogether. He forgot all about his letter to his Colonel. He forgot where he would go after reaching Champion Reef and what he would do.

"What the hell—" roared the heavy uncle shooting up from his berth like a bullet. "Won't you two young fools allow an old man to have his night's rest? If you two chirping crickets won't keep your mouths shut, I'll chuck you out through the window. Oh! my heart is thumping, thumping. There's no air inside this beastly hole," he complained and opening the door stood on the foot-board.

The girl was terribly alarmed. "Uncle, uncle," she cried "please do come in. We won't disturb you—" "Oh, help, please help," she cried looking towards Henderton. In a flash he was near the old gentleman and catching his collar, pulled him inside and put him down on his berth.

"Now, sir, if you won't keep yourself to your bed, I'll pull the alarm chain, stop the train and hand you over to the guard." This piece of admonition sobered the old gent and he calmly went to sleep.

Till they reached Bowringpet neither spoke. Kaity was silently admiring Henderton's strength and his figure. The very thought thrilled her. They reached Bowringpet and while waiting for the train to Kolar Gold Fields, Henderton asked her whether she was going there on a holiday.

"Yes, I am. My brother is the chief engineer of the Gresham mines. Now may I ask you what you are doing at Champion Reef? Is there a regiment stationed there?" She asked.

Lieut. Henderton of the Royal Sussex Infantry found himself in an altogether awkward hole. What on earth was he going to answer her? He felt himself going shorter in stature.

"You see," he began to bungle. "I am due at Bangalore day after to-morrow. I had two days at my disposal. So I thought I'd go on a jaunt—sort of spree, you know" he began.

"But you seem to know nothing of the place. There's no decent hotel there which will put you up. Have you any plans for your stay there, excuse me for putting this question," she said enjoying the situation with all her mischievous spirit of youth rising to the occasion.

The situation became very embarrassing to Lieut. Henderton. He was convinced he was a confounded chump. He thought he would make a clean breast of it and leave the result to fate. But somehow he couldn't brace himself up to the situation.

"I see from your luggage labels that all your things were intended to be booked to Bangalore," continued Kaity.

Henderton didn't know what to say.

"The fact is—er—the fact is—er—er—"

Kaity burst out laughing. This was a first-rate joke. Henderton's face with his half smile on it was going blue and white by turns.

"Hullo, what on earth are you laughing for like this, Kaity. What's the joke? Hullo, Lieut. Henderton, I believe, awfully glad to meet you. How do you do?" asked a young man who had just joined them.

Henderton was dumbfounded. Who was this charming, jovial youngman?

"Quite all right, thank you. How are you, Mr—?"

"George Winter—Kaity's brother. My friend, Capt. Simpser, was telling me the other day they are expecting you. By the by where are you staying?" asked Winter. Henderton felt himself falling from the frying pan into the fire. Before he could blurt out anything Kaity came to his rescue.

"He has nowhere to stop, George. He was going to Bangalore, but somehow at the Central Station he changed his mind and wanted to see Champion Reef."

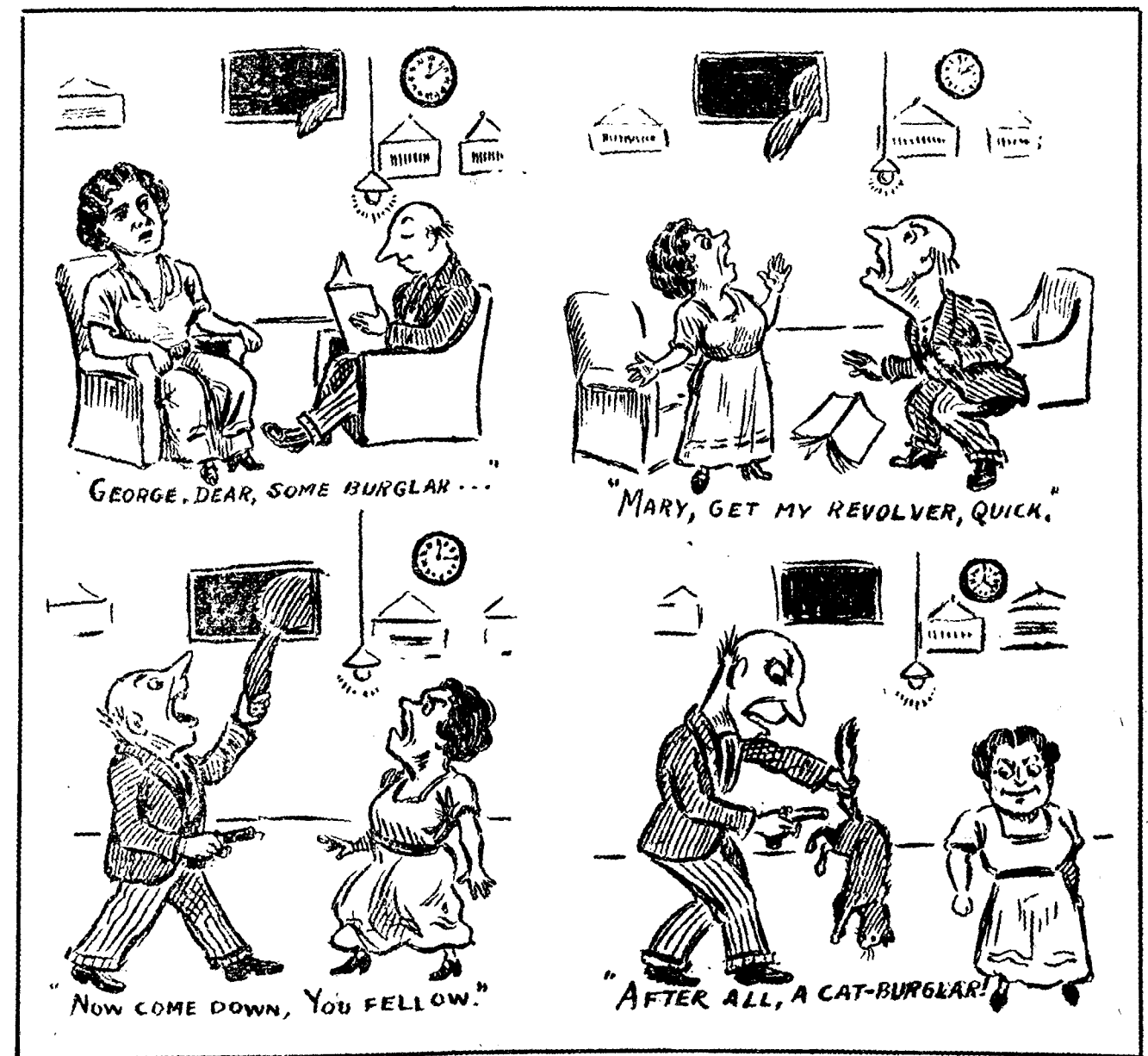
Winter knew what was that power that drew him towards Champion Reef. He liked Henderton. He appeared to be a jolly good chap.

"In that case, Lieut. Henderton, you can have the shelter of my roof as long as you stay at Champion."

"I shall be delighted and ever so many thanks. It was awfully kind of you," said Henderton.

"Wasn't it really?" asked Kaity, her lovely eyes full of mischief and love.

Lieut. Henderton understood.



THE CAT BURGLAR!

Scotland Calling!

An Englishman lost his hair. He worried considerably and spent pounds on lotions and hair restorers. A Scotsman lost his hair. He sold his brush and comb.

In Glasgow there were four brothers, and one left for foreign parts and amassed money. After being away for twenty years he decided to return home and asked his brothers to meet him. When he arrived at the station he found on the platform three old men with long beards. At first he thought they were strangers, but on closer inspection found they were indeed his brothers, and greeted them kindly. "But why, O why, ae ye all grawn sich whiskers?" he asked. "Hoots, mon," said one of the three, "did ye no ken when ye went awa that ye'd ta'en the razor?"

A Scot rang up a doctor and said that his infant child had swallowed a six penny piece. "I'll come now," said the doctor; "how old is it?" "1861" replied the man from Aberdeen.

Scottish Employer (to old workman): "Hoo lang hae ye served in us noo, Donal?"

Donald:—"Verra near forty years, sir."

Employer:—"Aye, aye. Weel, as a token of oor appreciation, ye can noo consider yoursel' on the permanent staff."

The president of a cricket club happened to be an undertaker, and a dinner was given in his honour on his retirement. In replying to the toast of his health, he said that he appreciated their kindness to the full, and, although he wished the company present long life and happiness, if one of the members of the club should happen to die, he would undertake to bury him free of charge. There was a loud report at the end of the table, and it was found that a Scotsman had shot himself.

A Scotsman was crossing the Channel and began to feel seasick; so he inquired of the captain how he could ward it off.

"Lean over the rail and hold a shilling between your teeth," replied the captain.

A Scotsman went into a Western Union Telegraph Office to send a wire, and was told that he had to pay for his message, but that his name went free. He thought it over for a while, and then said in a broad Scotch accent: "Ye may or may no' think it, but I'm an Indian, and ma name is 'I won't be home till Saturday.'"

A Jew and an Aberdonian decided to go into partnership, and bought a bus. The next morning both turned up as conductors.

Two Scots went to a variety show in London. Being in funds that day they took front row seats. During the conjurer's turn, one of them was asked to go on the stage to assist in a trick.

On their way home after the performance Jock, who had been on the stage, said:

"Well, Angus, laddie, he was a grand conjurer."

"Worst I've ever seen," said his friend.

"Maybe, maybe," said Jock; "but I gave him a dud ten-shilling note and he gave me a good one in return."

A Scots divine asked a prominent member of his congregation if he would consent to act as an elder of the church. At first he refused, as he didn't feel equal to taking part in the prayer meetings. The minister assured him that he would only be expected to say a few words, and he agreed to accept the office. He then wrote out a short prayer and pasted it in his hat. Shortly afterwards he attended a funeral, and on reaching the house of the deceased, he was asked to "put up a wee bit prayer," as the minister had not arrived. He agreed quite willingly, and went into the hall for his hat. He bowed over it reverently, and the audience also listened reverently. To their surprise, all they heard was, "Guid Lord! It's no' my hat!"

It is said that farthings were first coined in order that Scotchmen might practise benevolence.

It was nearing Christmas time, and a Scotsman's family of youngsters sat round the fire wishing for the good things that Santa Claus might send them. The father listened for a time and then said he would go for a walk. Shortly afterwards the family was startled by a loud pistol shot, and the father came in, looking very grave. "What was it?" everyone exclaimed. "Well, children," said the father in solemn tones, "I grieve tae say that Santa Claus has jest shot himself."

A Jew once succeeded in begging a half-crown from a Scotsman, but he subsequently died from lead poisoning.

A lady of curious countenance had married a Scotsman, and after the ceremony he approached the parson with some trepidation. "How much do I owe you for this?" he asked. The parson also was a Scotsman, and knew his business. "How much is it worth to you?" he countered. The bridegroom blushed, gave a sidelong glance at the parson, and pressed a shilling into his palm. The parson looked at the shilling, then at the bride, and gave him eight pence change.

TICKLERS

(TUT-TUT-TUT)

LITERARY.

1. Annotate:—

- Be good, sweet maid; let who will be clever.
- The devil can quote scripture for his purposes.
- Satan reproving sin.

GENERAL.

2. Write short notes on:—

- The Disarmament Conference.
- The future of Burma.
- The Railway Rates Tribunal.

PERSONAL.

3. What do you know of:

- H. H. The Aga Khan.
- Rajah Bahadur Krishnamachariar.
- Moulana Shaukat Ali.
- Mr. S. Srinivasa Aiyangar, C. I. E.,

ANSWERS TO TICKLERS

LITERARY.

- (a) This is Gandhiji's exhortation to Miss Speigel, when she returned to seek his forgiveness, after breaking her retaliatory fast.
- (b) This is our reflection when we read in the papers that Japanese aeroplanes flew over Peking and Tientsin, and scattered leaflets promising to rid China of the curse of militarism, from which she has been suffering for centuries. We fear that Japan is only too likely to guarantee the peace of China, even as Britain does that of India.
- (c) The latest instance of this edifying spectacle is furnished by Mr. Lloyd George waxing indignant over 'the abominable treatment of Germany by the Allies on the question of disarmament'. The Welsh Wizard is apparently still anxious to call spirits from the vasty deep. He might or might not have won the last war; but he was certainly responsible for the peace imposed on Germany, which has led to the present crisis.

GENERAL.

- (a) This is a kind of parlour-game which has been steadily growing in international popularity. It is played according to few simple rules. Once at least every quarter, a new proposal to limit armaments must be advanced by one or the other of the European countries. It is immediately and enthusiastically welcomed by all statesmen as courageous and far-reaching. Ministers travel by land, sea and air, exchange views, and prepare the world for the dawn of an imminent millennium. Answers are given in parliaments that the proposal has been agreed to in principle. Then experts take it in hand, and suggest amendments each anxious to do his neighbour in the eye. A sub-committee considers the objections and reports in camera. A plenary session is held and a break-down is camouflaged in a cloud of words. Finally, the Conference adjourns—to meet again!

As foggy as the present. The Anti-Separationists do not want to be exploited by European big business; while Separationists do not want to be exploited by the Indian small trader. Both agree in denouncing the new constitution promised to them. The net result of their negative enthusiasms, is the same as in India,—to stultify themselves as a nation, and to perpetuate the status quo indefinitely.

P. S. If you have any shares in Burma-Shell (I don't think you are so lucky) my advice would be to hold on like a leech.

(c) This is one of the resting points in the labyrinth known as The Government of India. Its functions are mysterious; but there is no mystery about the princely salary of its president. The incumbent is alternately a Hindu and a Muslim, with special claims on the gratitude of the Government.

PERSONAL.

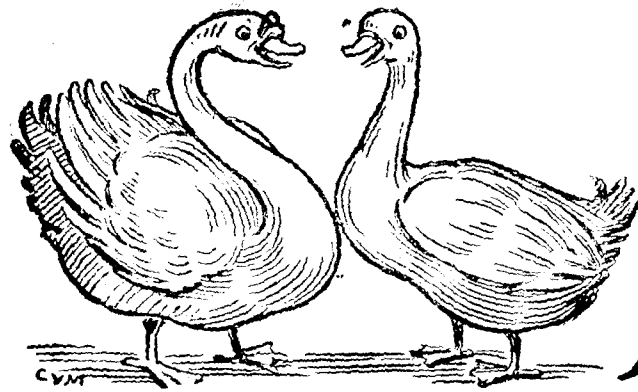
(a) The spiritual head of a very important section of the Muslim community. Can be with them only in spirit, on account of his numerous international engagements. He believes in Speed, but only on the Turf, of which he is a shining ornament. Politically he has demonstrated to the satisfaction of Sir. S. Hoare that the part is greater than the whole.

N.B. The initials H.H., stand for 'His Highness'; not for 'His Holiness' as one might naturally (and mistakenly) imagine.

(b) One of the curiosities of the Legislative Assembly. A professional sanatani without any of the saving graces of the sanatana code. His temper is as short as his name with its appendages is long. A great master of bathos.

(c) The hero of an Odyssey diverting to himself and painful to others. Is perpetually on the move, literally and figuratively. Is now busying himself with conjuring an 'honourable peace.' But his notion of honour being an abject surrender of others, it would be interesting to see what success, if any, attends his self-chosen enterprise. His friendship is more to be feared than his enmity.

(d) An extinct volcano.



SENSE & NONSENSE

Lord Byron's reference to Scotland in his poem, *The Curse of Minerva*, is indeed anything but complimentary. But then Scotland had borne him hard. The Wizard of the North in his *Lay of the Last Minstrel*, refers to his native land as 'the meet nurse for a poetic child.' Well, that Caledonia was not when Lord Byron first tasted the waters of the Pierian spring. His maiden attempts received a 'bad press' in the Scottish reviews. And so on goes the story of the genesis of what is perhaps the most vituperative poem in the English language, I mean, the *English Bards and Scottish Reviewers*.

But how is it that to every Englishman, Scotland is "a land of meanness, sophistry and mist"? Every Tom, Dick or Harry takes pride in entertaining the greatest contempt for the land of Calvin. Readers may here recall Dr. Johnson's famous definition of 'oats' and his contemptuous reference to the natural views of the Northern Kingdom. And Dr. Johnson is, according to Prof. Rayleigh, a typical Englishman, at least in his attitude towards Scotland. The Englishman is ever prepared to concede that 'a man is a man for a' that'—but not if he be an Aberdonian. No wonder, therefore, that the comic literature of England abounds in uncomplimentary jokes about the Scotsman. Elsewhere in this issue will be found a collection of the juiciest of them. It must however be remembered that we do not ask our readers to share the Englishman's view of the land of the thistle. We dare not, with the 'racial animosity' section of the penal code what it is, so long as Ramsay continues to be at 10, Downing Street. 'Scotland Calling' is presented to our readers only as a collection of jokes—finished products from the devil's workshops. Hasn't someone referred to idle brains like that?

But here, however, is an incident from real life. Should you feel inclined to challenge its veracity, Mr. J. C. Cannell, the famous criminologist of England, would fain bear me out.

"The Scot was on a visit to London. He made the acquaintance of a well-dressed and apparently wealthy stranger. They became friendly and one day the stranger took the Scot to one of the most expensive restaurants in the West End.

"They lunched sumptuously with champagne, liqueurs, and cigars. While they were sipping their coffee a man sitting at another table came across to the Scot's new acquaintance, and they "recognised" each other as "old college friends."

The Scot was interested in the reunion, and smilingly assented when stranger No. 2 suggested that they should

have another bottle of champagne. While this bottle was being disposed of, the two men began to talk of investments, and produced large sums in notes.

"Now listen," said the Scot. "I may be a raw Scotsman from Aberdeen, but I am not a fool. I have seen through your game. You are confidence tricksters, and I knew it all the time, but I saw no reason why I should not have the benefit of the excellent lunch you have provided."

Not that every Scot is so clever in looking after the bawbees. There are some who are as foolish as a woodcock and you know, a fool and his money are easily parted.

Mr. J. C. Cannell himself tells the story of how another Scot foolishly played into the hands of the crooks in similar circumstances.

"My daughter warned me against people like you when I started South. Should either of you, gentlemen, ever visit Scotland, I shall be glad to return your kind hospitality. Here is my card. Good-morning, gentlemen."

When he returned home next day he told his daughter the story with great glee.

"But why did you want that hundred pounds you wired me to send?" asked the girl.

The Scotsman jumped up in alarm.

"What hundred pounds?" he demanded.

Then the girl explained that she had received a telegram with his name attached, asking her to send immediately to a certain address a hundred pounds, which he needed for a business deal. She had done so.

The card had helped the crooks to secure their ends.

It will be of interest to note in this connection that though Scotland claims so many of the British Premiers and Archbishops of Canterbury, it has provided in the last 100 years only two Chancellors to the British Exchequer—Sir Robert Horne and the first Lord Ritchie.

They say that this is the age of science and cry with Adam Smith that 'science is the great antidote to the poison of superstition.' But superstitions die hard and a good many of them continue to live on, the great striders of science notwithstanding. In fact if people were to believe half the superstitions still current, there would be nothing in life that could be done with safety. 'Superstition is the religion of feeble minds' observes Burke in his *Reflections on the Revolution in France*. But even those who claim to be strong-minded are not without at least

one weakness of this kind. True, the unthinking Hindu shudders when a cat crosses his path but equally true it is that the rationalistic Englishman turns pale when someone spills the salt.

And I make no apology for extracting in this connection the following from *Answers*.

"Sir Henry Segrave carried a rabbit's paw during his record-breaking bursts, but forgot to take it with him on the day he found a watery grave. Bert Hinkler, about whom nothing has been heard since he set out to fly to Australia, had as his mascot a three-legged black cat. He left it at home when he set out on his flight. The late Tsar of Russia had a ring which contained a piece of the true Cross. He attached great importance to the ring, but on the day he was assassinated he forgot to wear it.

"Sailor's fears of sailing from port on a Friday became so strong at one time that the British Admiralty determined to scotch the superstition once for all. A ship's keel was laid on a Friday. The vessel was named Friday, launched on a Friday, and captained by a man named Friday. It was never seen again once it had sailed from port."

So there are more things on Heaven and Earth, Horatio, than are dreamt of in our philosophy. By the way, what's your bogey? Mine is *Rahukalam*.

And now to what I read sometime back about the administration of Gibraltar. The British authorities there, it seems, are not far from being superstitious. There they have a special officer whose business it is to take care of the apes in the colony. A grant of money is included in the official budget estimate every year.

These apes, which number ten, are the last wild monkeys in the whole continent. But that certainly is

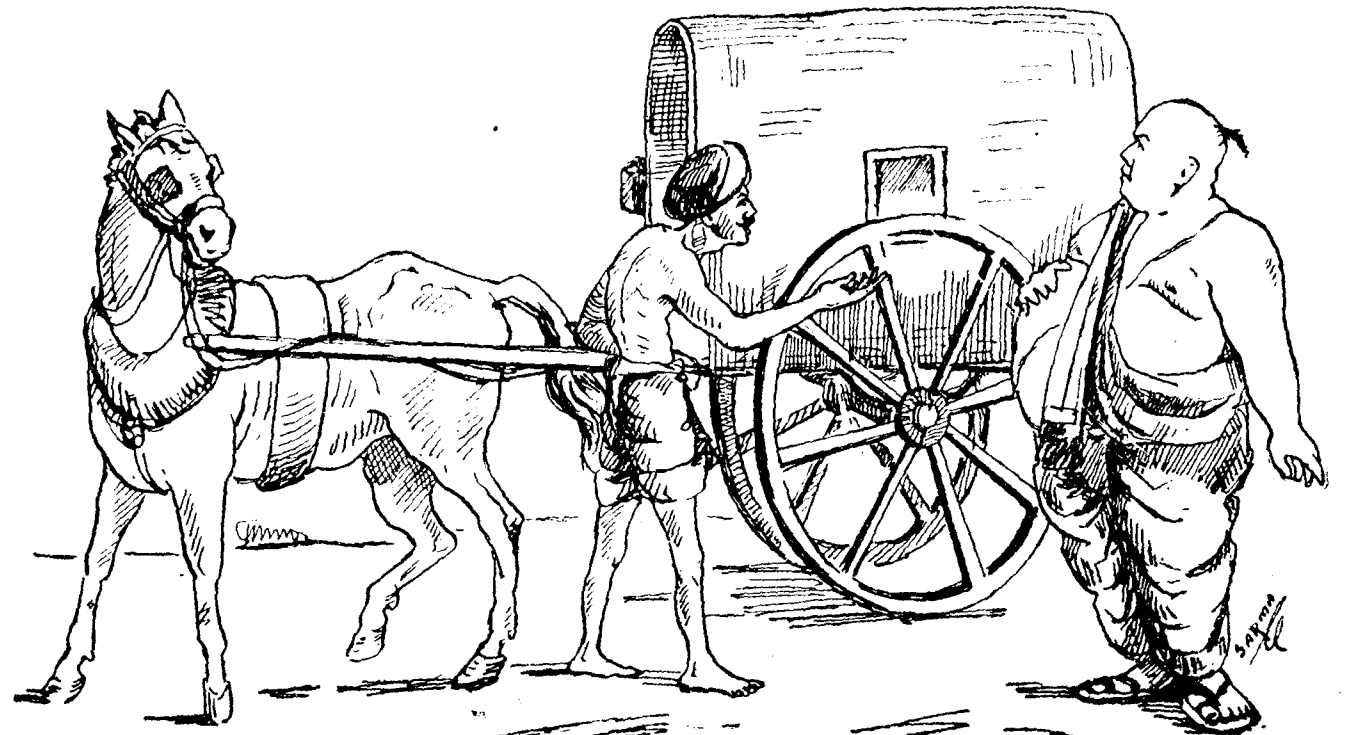
not the reason why they are preserved so carefully, or why it is an offence to injure or molest them notwithstanding the damage they do. Even Darwin's theory is not helpful, for the people of Gibraltar are not given to ancestor-worship. And no Ramasany Aiyer has hitherto come forward with the claim that our Ramayana has got something to do with it. The animals are favoured however for a special reason. A legend is current there which says that "as long as the apes inhabit Gibraltar, Britain will keep possession of the Rock."

That takes me to a closely related subject, namely, ancient prophecies and their importance. Of course we all know the old old story of the Gordian knot. And here is something more, that, I expect, will be of interest to you.

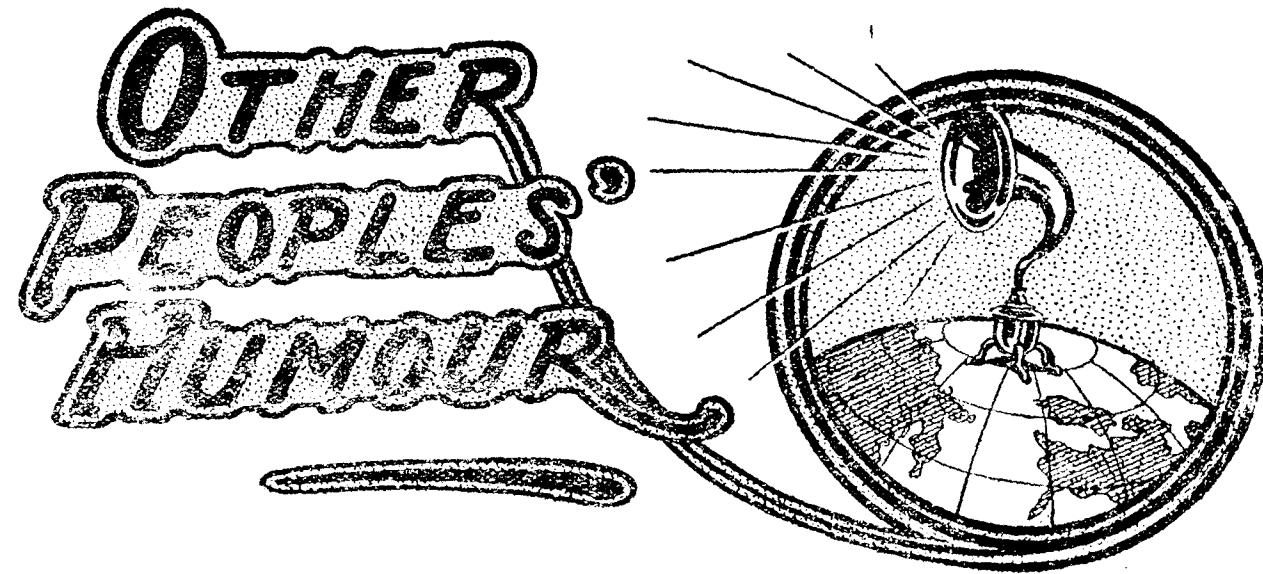
When, during the Great War, the Palestine campaign drew to a successful close, Lord Allenby (then only a General) walked into Jerusalem barefooted. This caused not a little surprise to those, who did not know that to the Arabs, this was much more impressive than any other mode of entry would have been. There was an old prophecy, remembered throughout the East, that the deliverer of the Holy City would not pass through its gates on horseback.

And here goes another one.

"The fact that Nile water is now carried by a pipe across the desert into Palestine is also connected with an old prophecy. The water is required, of course, but the tradition that the Turk would not be driven from Jerusalem until the Nile flowed into Palestine was not forgotten when the scheme was carried out. So the pipe carrying Nile water clinched Lord Allenby's victories in the field."



"Sami, please get a little behind so that the horse does not see you."



"Now, I want Albert to have a thoroughly modern and up-to-date education," said his mother, "including Latin."

"Yes, of course," said the headmaster, "though Latin is, as you know, a dead language."

"Well, all the better. Albert's going to be an undertaker."

—Ottawa Citizen.

A bookmaker had had a bad day—a very bad day. After the big race he covered the distance between the course and the railway station in record time, beating the pursuing crowd by many lengths.

Unfortunately he was stopped by a policeman, and that is how it came about that he was compelled to spend the night in a cell.

There were so many lodging at the King's expense at the time that the bookmaker's case did not come up until late the following afternoon. He was in a fever to get out before the big race was run. When he knew the race must be over he tried to find out which horse had won, but none of the policemen would tell him.

When he reached the dock he addressed the magistrate.

"Sir!" he exclaimed, "will you tell me what has won the Apricot Stakes?"

"Silence!" roared a court official.

"What!" said the bookmaker. "Didn't know there was such a horse in the race!"

—Tit-Bits.

The business man's son, his school honours thick upon him, intended to teach the world in general, and his father in particular, the manner in which modern commerce should be conducted.

"You may rely on me, daddy," he said on his first day at the office. "I will devote my whole life to the interests of the business. It will be my ambition to keep the family name free from stain."

"That's the spirit," said his father. "Ask the office-boy for some polish and go and clean the brass name-plate on the main door."

—Novel

Jones had officiated at the opening of a flower show. In the morning paper he read as follows:—

"As Mr. Jones mounted the stage all eyes were fixed on the large red nose he displayed. Only years of patient cultivation could have produced an object of such brilliance."

—Boston Transcript.

An absent-minded professor fell in love with a young graduate and married her.

They went on their honeymoon, and in the morning the professor awoke, looked at the other occupant of the bedroom, and said in a shocked and incredulous voice: "Miss Grey, what are you doing here?"

—Pearson's Weekly.

A Scot shoemaker felt that he was getting old, so he decided to make his will.

"Take down what I tell ye, man," he said to his legal adviser.

The lawyer nodded, and the Scot commenced:—

"I'm leaving two thousand to Bill Thompson at Aberdeen; he used to be an apprentice wi' me, ye ken, but don't put that down. I'm leaving fifteen hundred to Sandy Simpson at Stirling, and another fifteen hundred to —"

"But wait a minute," interrupted the lawyer. "Surely you haven't got all that money?"

"Money?" queried the Scot. "Who's talking about money? It's boot-tacks I'm leaving them."

—Sarnia Observer.

The park barrell-thumper was in fine form. Gesticulating wildly, he held his audience spellbound with his long words and fine phrases.

"Trade, ladies and gents," he shrieked, "is dead. Dead as a doornail!" He leaned forward and peered at a little man in the front row of his audience. "You, sir," he said, "can you tell me a case where the demand exceeds the supply?"

"Yes," said the little man without hesitation, "when it's an income-tax demand."

—Answers.

Mr. Editor

To the Reader.

Greetings. To those of you who have just commenced your holidays, I wish you a very happy time; and to those of you who have finished, I merely say, "Aren't you glad to get back to work?" As for your poor Editor, he doesn't get much of a respite from his arduous task, but there I mustn't grumble. And now to the business on hand.

Ourselfs

The other day, I met an old friend of mine whom I had not set eyes upon for a fairly long period,—to be exact, a matter of some seven years or so. He is an ornament of the Subordinate Judiciary and in his day, was a famous Tennis player. He asked me what I was doing with myself and I blushingly confessed that I was adding to my other sins that of editing a periodical, humorous by name and humorous in fact. Would you believe me, the blighter answered that he had never heard of *The Merry Magazine* and that he would like to see a copy? Such is fame. Anyway, when I came to the office next day, I sent a slip down to the Manager's department, directing the clerk to send a copy of the latest issue to my friend. And back came the answer, "Nothing doing. Not a single copy in stock. We were sold out on the day of publication....."

From My Post-bag.

Here is a letter which I read with considerable interest. I am passing it on to you.

DEAR EDITOR.

Here is an idea.....You need not pay for it unless you are itching to. Why not run a competition for your readers to continue Bala's story and decide her fate? Our society is full of Balas and Kumars and old hubbies and things are all so much in the melting pot that nothing seems to be standard in marital relationship. Of course you will argue that nobody could do the story half as well as 'Deisvi' does.....granted, we all take our hate off to this literary genius, but you are taking too heavy a responsibility on your shoulders. I suppose you don't know much about the outside world, sitting in your sanctum and leaving us all in suspense for a fortnight at a stretch, but take it from me, Bala has created a greater sensation than the bomb affair. I suppose Deisvi is an old hubby or I suppose he is a jilted lover and wants to have his revenge on society

by making all Balas elope with Kumars. The issue at stake is too momentous. Make it a round table conference affair and let us see if the Gours have it or the Raja Bahadur Krishnamacharis get the popular vote. Incidentally it will enable you to discover the latent literary talent in Madras. Half the trouble with us is that we can think of romance only in terms of gowns and not sarees. We start writing about Hindu life and can only say something comical about the South Indian Railway or a safety razor. That there is plenty of material for story writing in normal Hindu life without having to overstrain the conventional brother-in-law theme has been amply proved by Deisvi. Now, give your readers a chance and save yourself the terrific responsibility of either the old men or Kumars wanting to settle accounts with you. If you make a habit of such serials, you will have to make the Merry Magazine a weekly. 15 days is too long to wait. Do you know many of your readers do not sleep a wink nowadays thinking of what is going to happen to Bala and then, you have no right to play about with our feelings like this..... giving us a sea-side romance one time and then suggesting that true love is not in Bangalore but in the Bath we have been accustomed to all along. I hope it is not Kumar that is going to blackmail Bala.....Or has Deisvi got something else up his or her sleeve? (By the way, do women have sleeves?)

(Sa.) JIPPY.

I think Jippy's idea of inviting our readers to conclude the story is a very good one but unfortunately other considerations have precluded my putting this idea into practice. Anyway, I agree entirely with Jippy in this matter. Do you?

Third Eye Competition.

You will remember that last time I promised that I would print here some more of the entries in our Third Eye Competition. I have room only for the following:—

The problem of the location of the third eye has been troubling me for some time past, and started long before the Editor of this magazine offered the prize.

In fact the trouble began when I read in some novel by somebody (Are we expected to remember all we read in

novels?) that one of the characters had a third eye. He had it at the back of his head, in the position occupied by the twins in front. This position is extremely inconvenient. First there is my tuft, which I, as an orthodox Hindu, am not willing to sacrifice. My hair would naturally cover up the eye not to mention the perpetual irritation likely to be caused by some stray hair butting in. You may suggest that I may move the tuft on to the crown of the head; but I live in the East Coast and Sanatanism would be shocked if I change the position of the tuft even by the breadth of a single hair. Further there is the question of headgear. I am called to order if I do not wear a head dress, whenever I move out. No use for an eye perpetually covered up.

Next I thought of the posterior of the neck and the back. Twentieth century civilisation demands that I should cover up my body. Have you tried travelling in the tram or getting into an office bare-bodied. The conductor or peon holds you up. I am not a giraffe or a rubber-jointed acrobat to be able to twist about to enable the third eye to see other parts of my body in the posterior.

The rest of the body up to the ankle is also unavailable as decency demands a covering. The eye on the foot is of no practical use and I would rather go without it.

Then remain only the hands. I may at once dismiss the right hand. I need it for practically all my activities, writing, eating, playing games and so on and so forth.

So we have left only the left hand. (Is it because of this that it came to be known as the left hand?) Even there, the exact location has to be pondered over. The palm is needed for other uses. The fingers alone remain. The thumb and forefinger are in constant requisition, to wit, to pinch you, to hold the needle when threading it, or the fountain pen when filling it. The middle finger owing to its chunky bigness and the ring finger on account of its swollen head (it wears a diamond ring) may be discarded.

Ah! the little finger. What a find! The tip is the very place. Elegance and slinness are there. Not much of strain on it for other uses. Nature seems to have ordained it for the location of the third eye. I could make it travel to any part of my body, open the lids and see. It is in fact the "EYE FINGER." Imagine its usefulness if you are troubled by some foreign matter in your ear or nose. Your finge (finger plus eye) could easily locate it. What a blessing!

Next, how to protect it? I have patented a special cover on the lines of the tailor's thimble. It is known as the EYEFINGIMBLE (EYE plus FINGER plus THIMBLE). Just pass the word and my factory will work night and day and turn it out in trillions.

Ramakrishna Sarma, Madras.

The Taj Mahal Jig-Saw Puzzle

By a regrettable oversight one piece in the puzzle was omitted in our picture in the last issue. In the present issue that error has been rectified. Entries already received therefore will not be judged. Readers who have already sent entries are advised to submit fresh ones. Closing date has been extended to 10th June, 33.

Supply A Letter Competition

The third puzzle letter SOJ has been wrongly printed. It should have been SEJ. To obviate any chance of confusion in this connection, the missing letter 'T' is printed in our coupon published in this issue.

Poetry

There must be many amongst you who have a gift for versification. At least, that is what I believe, though evidence to that effect has been conspicuously meagre. Anyway I would like a little poetry for a change. So next time the Muse moves you, let it move you in poetic form, which is merely another way of telling you that I would like readers to submit some light verse, of course, humorous. If you can't be humorous in numbers, at least let your poetry scan, also let it rhyme and again also let it be pure poetry and not prose poetry. One or two writers in English like DeQuincey and Cardinal Newman have done that sort of thing but I would warn you that it is unsafe to attempt to run before you have learned to walk. If it is going to be any encouragement to you and if I receive a sufficiently large number of entries, I shall award a small prize of Rs. Five for the best poem received.

Pictures

The response to my request to readers to submit pictures and cartoons has been very disappointing. I know some of you sometime get very good ideas for a drawing but are not trained enough to put the idea into execution. Send me your idea and if I think it good enough, I will pay for it and have the drawing done by our own staff of trained artists.

Lucky Numbers

I have not received claims from some of the owners of Lucky Numbers in our April issue. If any numbers remain unclaimed after the 3rd June, 1933, fresh numbers will be announced.

Rs 200 Cash must be won!

"SUPPLY A LETTER" Competition

Puzzle words.

Dich
Arrett
Sej
Kab
Ob

Rela
Lcea
Ratc
Utl
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 printed on this page.

Rules and Conditions

An entrance fee of annas four, payable in cash or in half anna stamps, must accompany each entry submitted. Solutions must be filled in, on coupons. 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.

THE MERRY MAGAZINE

Supply A Letter Competition Coupon

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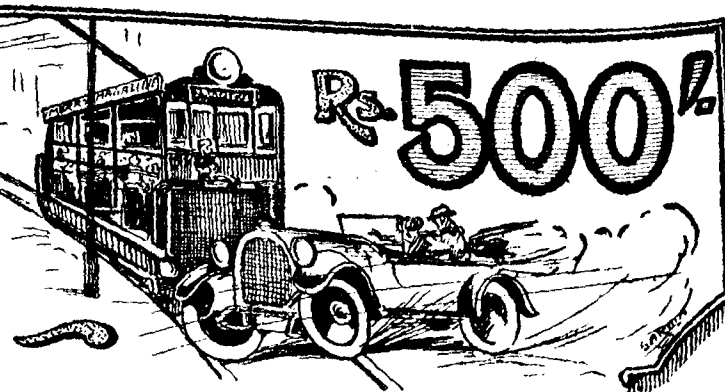
In entering this Competition I agree to accept the Editor's decision as final and legally binding.

Signature.....

Address.....

This coupon must be filled in and sent to the Editor so as to reach him not later than 4-6-33.

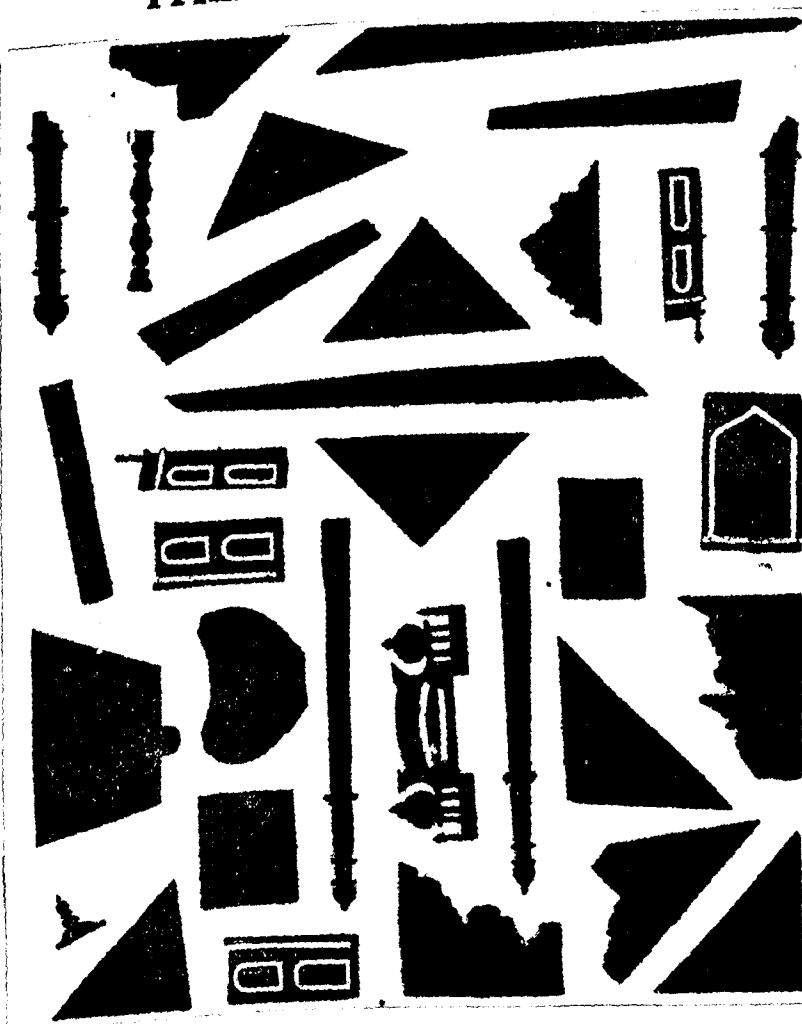
FOR MOTOR & TRAM ACCIDENTS



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:—

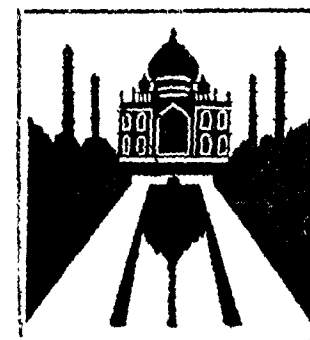
1. The terms of this Insurance apply only to accidents to automobiles, tram-cars or motor buses.
2. The accident must have occurred within the municipal limits of the city of Madras.
3. The beneficiary must have been a passenger in the automobile, tram-car or bus that met with the accident.
4. Death 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, The Merry Magazine" Madras, so as to reach on or before 10-6-33.

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.



WIN Rs. 100 GUARANTEED

JOLLY COMPETITION No. 8.

Prize amount will not be decreased on any account.

Very very easy to solve. Just Try & See.

1. PRIZE Rs. 75 (All correct) 2. PRIZE Rs. 25 (One mistake)

ENTRANCE FEE:—Annas eight for each entry or Rupees Three for any number of entries sent in a cover by the same person.

The following are the names of some places found in India. Substitute a letter for each dash to get at the names. Some have no alternatives at all.

1. RAJAH — UNDRY	2. — — LGONDA	3. CALCUTT —
4. HU — LI	5. NAG — UR	6. MADRA —
7. KARN — L	8. KASHM — R	9. — ARWA
10. P — — NA	11. — — NI	12. KA — UR

RULES OF ENTRANCE:—Correct solution is one which agrees letter for letter with the key solution already deposited. Key solution will be published in the "World News" of 11th June 1933. Solutions should be sent on plain paper and must reach us on or before 6th June, 1933. Results within a week. Entrance fees should be sent by M. O. only. THE PRIZES ARE GUARANTEED AND WILL NOT BE DECREASED ON ANY ACCOUNT. In case of ties prizes will be equally divided. A competitor can have any number of shares in the first prize. Manager's decision is final and legally binding on all matters connected with the competition. All communications, money orders etc., to be addressed to:—

N. S. Nataraj, Manager, Jolly Competitions, Nannilam (S. I. Ry.)

Rs. 75 for Lucky Numbers

No entrance fee

No conditions

All copies of the Merry Magazine bearing date 10-5-33 & 25-5-33 have a number printed on the front page of the wrapper. No one number will be found in more than one copy. Six numbers have been selected at random from amongst these numbers and kept in a sealed envelope, in the Editor's possession. This envelope will be opened and list of winning numbers will be published in the Merry Magazine of 10th June 1933. The Editor will buy back the copy containing the first winning number for Rs. 50 and five others containing the rest of the numbers for Rs. 5 each.

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

Copies must be intact.

Merely 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.

HYGIENIC RUBBER GOODS

Improved Washable Paragon Sheaths.

FOR MEN. Single and Reinforced Double Top.

Price 1st Quality	...	Rs. 2 0 0 each.
" 2nd "	...	" 1 8 0 "
" 3rd "	...	" 1 0 0 "
" 4th "	...	" 0 12 0 "
" 5th "	...	" 0 8 0 "

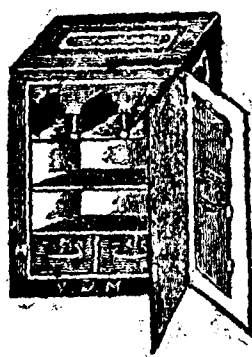
Solid Rim Improved Check Pessary.

FOR WOMEN. Seamless with Solid Rubber Rim.

Price 1st Quality	...	Rs. 3 0 0 "
" 2nd "	...	" 2 0 0 "
" 3rd "	...	" 1 8 0 "

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V. DORAISWAMY MUDALIAR,



IRON SAFE
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MADRAS.

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Annam Coril Street,
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IS SOLICITED.

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makers, line and half tone
block makers, etc. etc.

50, WALLAJAH ROAD,
MOUNT ROAD, MADRAS.

A trial order is solicited.

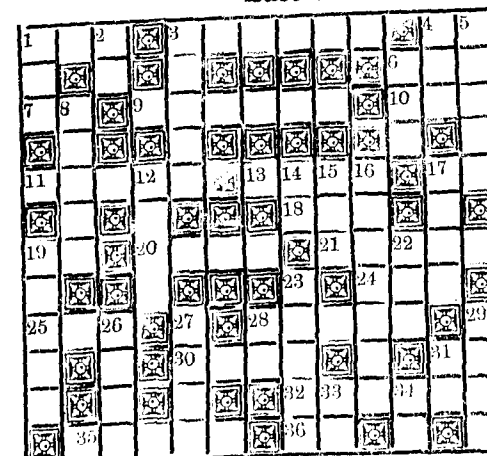
SKILL!

HOBBY!!

INTELLIGENCE!!!

WIN Rs. 450 Guaranteed in Sphinx Competition No. 1.

Sealed Key Solution and the entire prize money have been deposited with "My Magazine of India," Madras.
Last date of Posting Entries Monday 5th June 1933.



CLUES ACROSS.—(1) EGO. (3) strong. (4) LE. (6) REX. (7) AS. (9) stiff. (10) OAT. (11) struggle. (13) PITH. (17) FA. (18) TEE. (19) AT. (20) fresh water fish. (21) NATCH. (24) LEO. (25) fresh water fish (curt). (28) AORTA. (30) the yellow part of an egg (22) ERYNGO. (35) arrest. (36) LE.

CLUES DOWN.—(1) ERA. (2) ON. (3) strong. (4) LEA. (5) EXTRA. (6) ROT. (8) restrain. (12) (14) IT. (15) TEN. (16) HEALTHY. (17) FICO. (19) suit. (22) TEA. (23) YOKEL. (26) refine. (27) unfledged hawk. (28) AL. (29) genus of webfooted aquatic birds. (31) for example. (33) RE. (34) not. (Actuals are indicated in capitals thus: EGO: ERA).

Direct clues from Chambers XXth Century Dictionary. All forms such as Scottish, Spens, etc., are treated as direct. A, An, the, to, any have been omitted in the beginning of the clues. Words within brackets relating to the derivation of the meanings need not be taken.

RULES OF ENTRANCE.—(1) Rs. 2 for the first entry and Rs. one for each subsequent entry. (2) Rs. 150 will be awarded for correct solutions. Rs. 100 for solutions with a single error and special prize of Rs. 100 for the first all correct solution received on or before 26th

May 1933. Rs. 100 for the largest number of entries received before 30th May 1933. (3) The last date of posting entries is Monday the 5th June 1933. (4) The prizes will be divided in case of ties and a competitor can win only a single share except the special prizes. (5) Two half anna stamps must accompany the solutions for result sheet. (6) Money order receipts for entrance fee remitted must accompany the entries. (7) The prize amount will not be decreased and the decision of the management must be accepted as final and legally binding on all matters. (8) All entries (in any readable form) and fees (by Money order) should be posted on or before 5-6-1933. (9) Send your entries early to get the special prizes. (10) A correct solution is one which agrees letter for letter with the key solution deposited with "My Magazine."

Address all your communications, money orders etc. to:—

The Manager, **SPHYNX COMPETITIONS**, Post Box No. 23, G. T. Madras.

WIN Rs. 250 GUARANTEED

IN

Missing Letters Competition No. 4.

Sealed Key Solution deposited with "World News" Madras.

Last Posting Date 2nd June, 1933.

1. SOL —	... alone.
2. — — R —	... master.
3. ALL — —	... walk.
4. — — — E	... mistress.
5. H — THE	... small heaven
6. — A — E	... healthy.

Note.—All clues are direct from Chambers XXth Century Dictionary and all forms are treated as direct. A, An, the, to, etc. have been omitted in the beginning of the clues. Results in a week. Words from brackets not taken.

Rules of Entrance.—(1) Entrance fee Rs. 1 per entry & Rs. 10 for any number of entries. (2) Rs. 150 will be awarded for correct solution posted on or before 2nd June, 1933, and Rs. 100 for solutions with one error. (3) The prize amount will NOT be decreased in any event but may be increased at the discretion of the Manager. (4) A correct solution is one which agrees letter for letter with the sealed key solution deposited with "World News" Madras, and in case of ties prizes will be divided. (5) The decision of the Manager must be accepted as final and legally binding in all matters and all entries (in any readable form) and fees (M.O.) must be addressed to:—

Manager,
The Madras Crosswords Bureau,
41, Broadway, G. T. MADRAS.

WIN Rs. 250 GUARANTEED

IN

Missing Letters Competition No. 15.

Sealed key solution has been deposited with "World News" Madras.

Last posting date 7th June 1933.

1. G — — —	... Money
2. F — — —	... Waterfall
3. — OLO —	... Game
4. R — — — BLE	... Governable
5. — A — —	... Prison
6. — UFIC —	... Pertaining to Cufa
7. ST — — — ERING	... Hesitating in Speaking

Note.—All clues are direct from Chambers XXth Century Dictionary and all forms are treated as direct. A, An, the, to, etc. have been omitted in the beginning of the clues. Results in a week. Words from brackets not taken.

Rules of Entrance.—(1) Entrance fee Rs. 1 per entry and Rs. 10 for any number of entries (2) Rs. 150 will be awarded for correct solution posted on or before 7th June, 1933, and Rs. 100 for solutions with one error. (3) The prize amount will NOT be decreased in any event but may be increased at the discretion of the Manager. (4) A correct solution is one which agrees letter for letter with the sealed key solution deposited with "World News" Madras, and in case of ties prizes will be divided (5) The decision of the Manager must be accepted as final and legally binding in all matters, and all entries (in any readable form) and fees (M.O.) must be addressed to:—

Manager,
CHAMBERS COMPETITIONS,
3, Appasami Lane, G. T. MADRAS.

1	2			3	4
	O				A
				5	
6		7		8	
9			10		S
11					12
A	G	H	O	L	
		13	W		14
					C

RULES:—A correct entry is one which agrees letter for letter with the key entry deposited with "The Merry Magazine" Madras. The prizes are liable to alteration as entries permit at the discretion of the Manager. Ties will be equally divided. Entries may also be sent on plain paper. Only one letter should be inserted in a block. In the case of alternate entries, only the word or words affected from the first entry need be shown. For other particulars apply for leaflets to the Manager, to whom all entries and Money Orders should be addressed.

Address in full.....

Lakshmi Crossword Competition, Teppakulam P. O., TRICHINOPOLY.

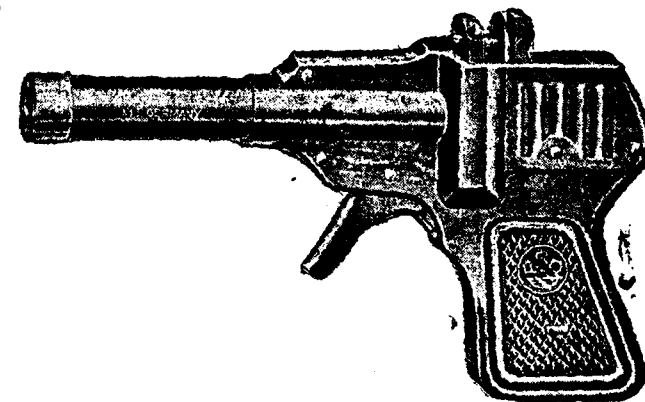


When ordering please mention "My Magazine."

A large, circular, heavily textured object, possibly a coin or medallion, with a small ring or handle at the top. The surface is covered in a dense, grainy pattern, and the ring at the top is simple and circular.

THE CANADIAN WATCH PEOPLE,
GEORGE TOWN, MADRAS

P. B. 119, Madras.



P. B. No. 119, MADRAS.

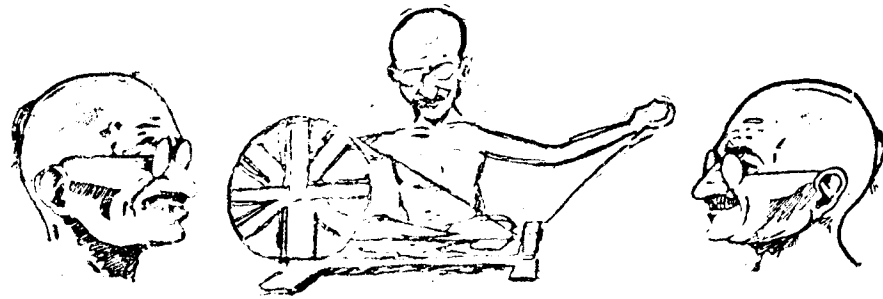
A necklace with a diamond-shaped pendant featuring a portrait of a man. The pendant is dark with a light-colored portrait of a man's face. The necklace is made of a dark, textured cord.

GENUINE WATCH Co.,
P. B. 119, Madras.

George Town, Madras.

A black and white illustration of a fountain pen and two pocket watches. The fountain pen is positioned horizontally at the top, with its nib pointing to the right. Below the pen are two pocket watches. The watch on the left is round with a decorative case and a loop at the top; its hands indicate a time around 1:50. The watch on the right is octagonal with a similar decorative case; its hands indicate a time around 1:50. The entire illustration is enclosed within a decorative border.

P. B. 119, G. P. O. Madras.



MAHATMA'S MESSAGE

தாட்டினமே

காந்தி

கை பானம்.

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