

THE MERRY MAG

Vol. I.

MADRAS, 10th OCTOBER, 1933.

No. 19.

SPARKS FROM OUR ANVIL

At the inauguration of the United Ireland Party by General Duffy and Mr. Cosgrave, a letter from the Dean of Cashel was read which concluded thus: 'May God save Ireland; He alone can.'

It looks as if God has not yet joined the new party.

Sir C. V. Raman says that people in this country read news-papers without buying them.

In the more advanced West, of course, the correct thing to do is to buy news-papers to save the coupons.

This reminds us of another fact concerning news-papers in the West. More of them are printed than are either bought or read.

Speaking at the Centenary celebration of Raja Ram Mohun Roy at Coimbatore, the Rt. Hon'ble Mr. Sastry made a reference to Milton's *Areopagitica* as an unpronounceable title for a book.

We are curious to know how the impeccable speaker pronounced it.

A news head-line says that Sir John Simon defended the League. It must have been an exhilarating experience for the Foreign Secretary.

A British official wireless, announcing the reinstatement of Tshekedi, the chief of Bechuanaland, proves to the satisfaction of everybody that both the deposition and subsequent restoration were just and proper.

The mofussil correspondent of a contemporary wrote: 'The Rev. Mother played an important part in the pounding of St. Mary's convent.'

Is this an example of the use of the container for the contained?

Moulana Shaukat Ali is reported to have stated that 'communalism is a temporary fit of insanity.'

It must have been a discovery of a lucid interval.

Her Excellency Lady Willingdon regretted inability to inspect some Khaddar-Silk samples, since every minute of her stay in Simla had been booked in advance.

She must have borrowed a minute from her Private Secretary to dictate her reply!

('Sir Mirza Ismail: Tribute paid in Mysore Assembly.')...says a headline.

Sir Mirza has never concealed his opposition to passing it on to the Government of India.

The Morning Post has published an alternative scheme to the White Paper.

This marks the height of the English silly season.

It is now believed that Larwood would be available for the next Test series.

There is no confirmation of the report that the booking of passages for the Australian team has been provisionally cancelled.

The Census Commissioner says that the women of India do not give their ages correctly, out of a superstitious fear of premature death.

Women in the West, on the other hand, would rather die than give their correct age out of a more superstitious horror of being considered middle-aged.

We understand that Mr. Chakkarai Chettiar is seeking election to the Madras Mayoralty.

We are relieved to say, we cannot help him or his sartorial tastes.

A contemporary asks its readers whether it does not make life worth while.

We did not realise the risks involved, until we perused it!

Speaking at the meeting to celebrate Gandhiji's birth-day, Mr. Satyamurti is reported to have said: 'The words he (the Mahatma) uttered fled before them.'

We are bound to deprecate generalisations from individual experience.

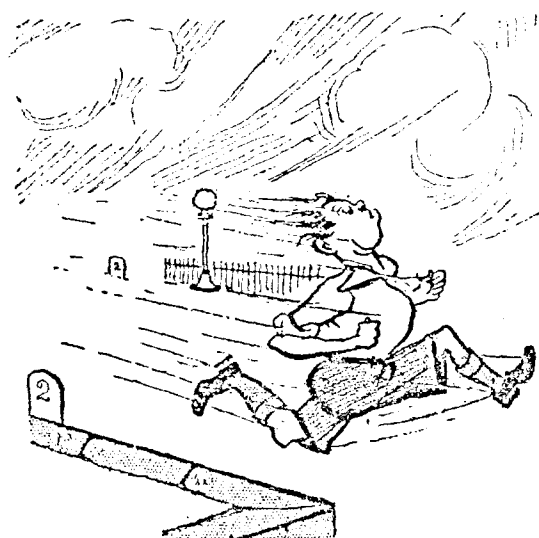
MYSELF

(NERA)

Can you, by taking thought, add a cubit to your stature? Or does grappling with dumb bells or struggling with chest expanders develop brawn? Find Nera's answer below—Editor.



ASKED a friend of mine the other day why he didn't take any exercise, not even walking, for example,—let alone cycling, rowing, riding, tennis, cricket, foot-ball, hockey, golf etc. He replied, "My dear fellow, I am not born a civet-



.....rushing along.....

cat, to keep on walking up and down, up and down." And when you come to think of it the civet-cat does not seem to be any the better for all that walking up and down, does it?

Take any strong, healthy, active animal in this creation, outside captivity. Does a tiger or a lion seek to develop its strength by swinging Indian Clubs? Does an elephant try to increase its girth by doing cross-bar exercises? Does a panther attempt to enhance its agility by jumping about with a punching ball? Well, why should man—any more than any other animal!

I can quite understand—and very much appreciate—extensive roaming, at one's own sweet will and pleasure, in the open country, along winding rivers or up wooded slopes. But, for all this intensive exercise with apparatus and appliances, isn't it really an indication of restraint and lack of freedom, a necessary evil of cramped surroundings, a sure sign of degenerate times, a concomitant of an unhealthy civilisation?

I know of an otherwise eminent person who not only preaches but actually practices walking, it is really running, six miles every morning. Not walking like you and me, mind you, like steady, sober, dignified people, dressed with meticulous care and quietly sauntering along, swinging a stick, stopping every now and then to talk to friends and relations on the way but, clad only in shirts and shorts, working one's arms and legs like a violently agitated wind-mill, cleaving one's way through the air, oblivious to the rest of the world, its art and its beauty, natural or human.

You have only to go to the Marina at 5 O'clock any morning to see how banelessly catching, that sort of suggestion can be. You will see men and women, boys and girls, of all ages and sizes, of all conditions and ill conditions, rushing along as if their very life depended on getting from one furlong stone to another, in the shortest possible time. A scientist tells us that the morning air is least laden with bacteria and the evening air most so, hence, it is argued, the great value of a morning walk. But, for all that, I remain unconvinced.



quietly sauntering along

There are other places where bacteria cannot possibly flourish, owing to the intense heat. And I am not anxious to gather either.

Can you imagine anything more unhealthy, more depressing, than to get out of one's nice, warm bed at an unseemly hour in the morning and, ill fed and ill clad, sprint along a dusty road and return home along with the municipal carts? Now, I like somebody to tell me to lie in bed as long as it is humanly possible for one to do so and get out of it only to have it re-made. I am emphatically of opinion that the longer people, some people anyhow, remain in their beds the better for themselves—and certainly for the others who have perforce to live with them.

Appropos of exercise—take my elder brother. He is an interesting case in point. He is well over six feet two inches in height, and remarkably strong and hefty. Do you think he got all that muscle and brawn by grappling with dumb bells, struggling with chest expanders and practising tortuous callisthenics every morning and evening? Not a bit. Nature—and his parents—endowed him with a strong physique. He lived as nature intends all healthy animals to live. He grew as nature alone can make one grow.

He eat wells and, I am happy to say, enormously. But, being a natural boy, and so, dissatisfied with even the ample rations a fond and indulgent mother gave him, he tried often to increase the supply, *ad libitum*, by planting in the backyard, and carefully tending and watering for days, all the choice vegetables.

He lived mostly in the open and had a special fondness for trees. As a boy, he used to run away from home, on an average about twice a week. After frantic search he would be discovered perched up on top of some tree outside the town. Well stocked with a goodly

collection of stones, he would throw them with perfect accuracy and most damaging effect at anybody who was luckless enough to spot him and try to catch him. After the stones were exhausted, of course, he would be caught and brought home; like a captive hero. I remember my father used to tie him to a bed-post for some hours thereafter in the vain hope of reforming him.

But, what are trees for, if not for children to climb? What are stray ponies for, if not for children to ride? Why do people carefully leave their cycles outside and uncared for, if they do not want the next healthy normally constituted youngster, who happens to come along, to do a three mile race on it?

True, he failed with persistent and admirable regularity in his examinations. But that was because his examiners did not know how to value properly the greater human qualities. The main thing was he lived and thoroughly enjoyed every moment of his young and daring life. How often I wished I could do the same.

Later, he became a member of an amateur Dramatic Society. Those were days when we had no real actresses on the stage

and had to be content with pseudo-actresses. There was another member of the same Society who was very short and thick-set. So the tall one was known as North-South; the short one was known as East-West. These two used to act the part of husband and wife, the tall one, the wife; the short one, the husband. In one of the favourite scenes, they would come on to the stage, the short one solemnly carrying a ladder, set it up against the tall one, try to climb it and kiss his partner.



..... set up a ladder against the tall one

(Continued from page 776.)

3. (a) One of the few record breakers in Indian Sport. Won the singles title in Tennis of the S. I. A. A., tournaments; winning two love sets in record time. The first Indian Lady player to appear in shorts on an Indian tennis court, thus putting to the blush our un-enterprising male stars. She has thus conclusively demonstrated India's fitness to enter the International sphere.

(b) Ex-Chief Minister to the Government of Madras, in the transferred half. One of the few heroic

Indians who co-operated with the Simon Commission. Remained a minister for the full, natural term, unlike his colleagues, who did not or would not adapt themselves to their environment. Is now engaged in a pilgrimage of Tamil Nadu, undertaken with a view to obtain absolution for his past political sins. Is like Barkis, "willin" to come back to office. It does not seem likely however that the electorate will be given the chance to help or hinder him, in the near future.

WHAT'S IN A NAME

(THANGAVELU)



R. Munuswamy Naidu finished his breakfast and took up the paper. He read about a smash and grab raid at Round Tanna, and he glared fiercely at his wife.

"I'd like to see them try their smash and grab tricks on me," he snorted, laying the newspaper on his knee and jabbing at it for emphasis with a soft fat fore-finger. "In fact, I earnestly hope they would try my shop."

"Would you really?" asked his wife, without looking up from her work at the sewing machine.

"Of course, if I knew them, I'd tell them to try it on me any time," he said. "The real trouble is," he continued, "people are afraid of a little expense. A little spent in precaution pays in the end. That is why I engaged a hefty Gurkha. Ofcourse he costs me thirty-five chips a month, but then look at his reputation."

"Really, is it so?" said the better half tacking the 'V' shaped neck of the jacket she was making.

"I have also taken other precautions. I have a burglar proof safe bought last month from 'Steel's,' and every door and window has frames of hardened steel. "Be prepared," is my motto, and prepared I am, against every form of attack. Now I can keep any amount of cash at home, or in the shop."

So saying he threw the paper away, and picking up his turban placed it at a rakish angle on his bean, and with a hasty embrace bade farewell to his spouse for the rest of the day and departed for his shop.

Mr. Munuswamy Naidu's jewellery shop was situated a little down Popham's Broadway. It was a flourishing shop, for the Munuswamy family had been in the business for more than eighty years and had known many big families in the city. Munuswamy's income was about Rs. 12,000 a year.

It was nearing eight in the morning one day, when he alighted from the tram; he found the Gurkha and his two assistants already in the front hall.

Precisely at about 9-30 A.M. a car driven by a smart man wearing a white turban, drew up near the shop. The Gurkha ever alert stepped up to the vehicle with the dignity of a Chinese mandarin and opened the door, with a slight bow which while registering respect, yet retained nobility, for a Gurkha though always courteous, is seldom servile.

A burly middle aged man immaculately dressed in a costly silk reshtie with gold thread border and a coat hanging down to the knees after the fashion of Suits emerged from the car, looked haughtily around and entered the shop, and went straight to the proprietor.

"Good evening, sir, may we know your needs?"

"Well, it is like this, to-morrow is my wife's birth-day and I want to make her a present of a ring. One of those varieties with three stones. I would prefer one with a diamond in the centre and with two sapphires in the sides. My wife's favourite colour is green." Mr. Naidu beckoned to an assistant and after a few whispered words the latter returned with a case.

"Well, sir, here is the very thing you need. The case is a beauty and was made in France." The customer examined it and turned to the proprietor.

.....offered to write for him

"May I know the price?" he enquired. Mr. Munuswamy Naidu launched upon a serial, describing the origin of the stone. He described how it had adorned the pendant of Miss. C. T. Jagadambal, celebrated dramatic star, and how she had given it to her friend, who had presented it to another of his friends, who—

"Cut it short" interrupted the customer, "I have to visit The Hon. Venkata Sastri I. C. S. and have tea with him."

This further raised the customer in Mr. Naidu's estimation and he answered carelessly:

"I'll let you have that for Rs. 450". "Nonsense" snapped the other, "I'm a good judge of stones, and I have been to Amsterdam. It is not worth more than 400 Rs."

"Well, make it Rs. 420" said Mr. Naidu. "No" barked the burly customer and felt in his pocket. Instantly the smile faded from his lips, and he withdrew his hand-empty. For the first time Mr. Naidu noticed there was a bandage on the thumb of the right hand, and concluded that the man, when he dipped his hand inside his pocket, must have hurt the injured part. But any such doubt was quickly dispelled when the customer said,

"I say, I have left both purse and cheque-book at home."

Not a muscle of Mr. Naidu's features moved; not for a moment did his elegant friendliness desert him—but there was a hint of a suspicious gleam in his eyes.

"What a nuisance," continued the burly man, "but I've got it! I'll write a note to my wife and get my chauffeur to take it."

This speech gave confidence to the jeweller and he at once said, "May I send the ring also?"

"That wouldn't help me for I have to buy a few Karachi sarees as well". Mr. Munuswamy Naidu drew a sheet of paper and ink from a shelf, and waited while the customer brought forth his fountain-pen, and vainly tried to pen a few words with his left hand.

"Good heavens! I'll not be able to write a single word. You see I injured my thumb while closing the safe yesterday evening." The jeweller muttered condolences and offered to write for him. The customer thanked him in an aristocratic way and said. "Just send me Four-fifty from the safe for purchase of a jewel etc."

The jeweller penned the above and turned to the customer.

"Name, please," he asked.

"What! Do you not know me? Why I fancied even a child knew Rao Bahadur Munuswamy Chetty!"

The jeweller observed that it was his name also and signed it "Munuswamy." The note was taken to the chauffeur and after a hurried whispering to him from the customer, the car left. Meanwhile the jeweller and the customer were engaged in pleasant conversation about the White Paper, the Ottawa conference, the release of Mahatmaji and of course the prevailing trade depression.

Within twenty minutes the car returned and the chauffeur handed a bundle of notes to the gentleman, who after paying for the ring, took it and left the shop in his car. Mr. Munuswamy Naidu was well pleased with the day. So later when he closed the shop and came home, he was very agreeable and told his wife that in spite of the depression he had managed to sell for nearly six hundred rupees.

Munuswamy was dining. "Business was good to day" he volunteered to his wife. "A Chetty bought a ring for four hundred rupees. I get a profit of one hundred." "Just the price of the saree I'm longing for" interrupted the better-half. "Shut up!" snapped the jeweller.

"At first I thought the Chetty gentleman was a crook, for he said that he had forgotten to bring cash. But wrote to his wife for five hundred and the chauffeur brought it in a jiffy."

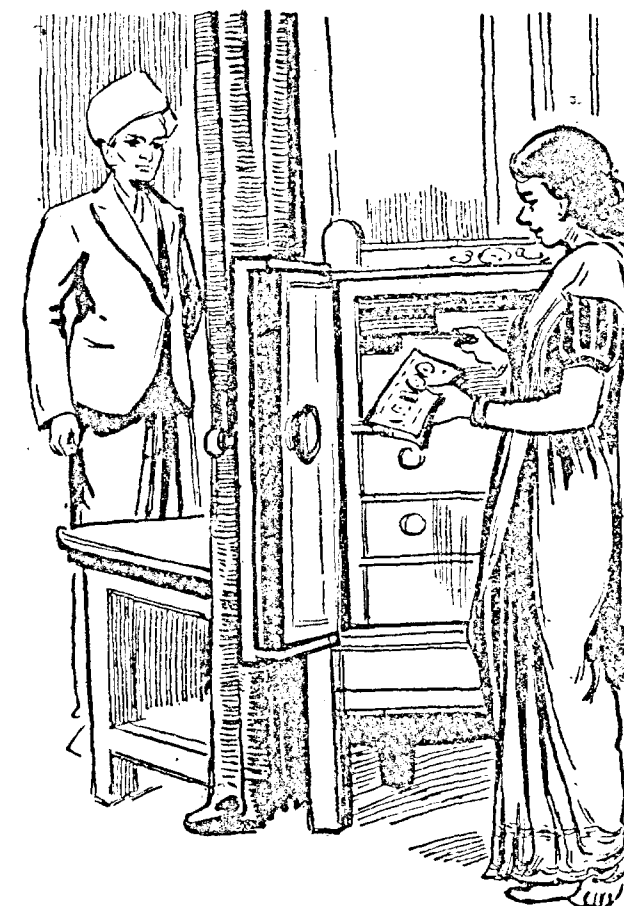
"Was the chauffeur a tall man?" enquired the Mrs. tremulously.

"Yes," replied the husband, beaming. "Did he wear a white turban?" enquired the Mrs, now very pale.

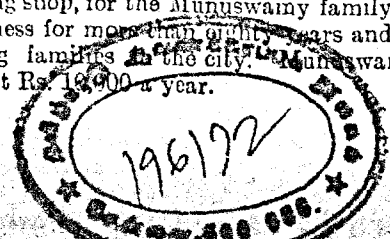
"I believe he did. Why? What is the matter?"

"The matter! A man answering to your description came and presented a note to me saying it was from you. Well, the writing was yours and the signature was also yours. I paid 500 from the safe."

The jeweller sank upon the sofa with a groan.



.....paid 500 from the safe.



THE EDITOR
OFFERS

Rs. 1000

IN THE

ALL-INDIA MERRY MAGAZINE

LITERARY COMPETITION

A prize of Rs. 1000 will be awarded to the best humorous sketch or short story submitted before 1st January 1934

No Entrance Fee. No limit to the number of entries.

1. All persons residing in India, Burma, Ceylon, Straits and F. M. S. are eligible to compete.
2. All entries must be typewritten.
3. Two copies of Mss. must be sent.
4. Only humorous sketches or short stories are wanted.
5. Mss may be about 5000 words long
6. The closing date is 1st January 1934.
7. The copyright of winning Mss as well as of others used by the Editor will vest in the Editor of the Merry Magazine.
8. The Editor reserves the right to divide the prize if it is found that the entries finally selected are of equal merit.
9. Other Mss. used by the Editor will be paid for at the usual rates.
10. Mss will not be returned.
11. The names of gentlemen who have consented to serve on the Committee of Judges will be announced later.

PEOPLE IN THE PUBLIC EYE

II. SIR MUHAMMAD USMAN



Descended of a family of renowned Unani physicians, gave early promise of his future greatness by showing an indifference to all the learned professions. Started his public career as Secretary to the Madras Christian College Old Boys' Association. Was indeed one of the most substantial alumni of that far-famed institution. His great gifts of public speaking were developed as a result of the unique opportunities that came to him to propose votes of thanks at public gatherings. Without fighting an election or soliciting a vote, without making promises and afterwards breaking them, he sailed into his present office on the crest of a tide

*'whose compulsive course
Ne'er feels retiring ebb, but keeps due on'*

to greater honours still in the lap of the gods. Has contributed not a little to the stability and weight of the administration during a period of unprecedented storm and stress. Has had the honour of being 'extended' indefinitely,—a graceful act on the part of the Government which enables both parties to the contract to look up to each other with a lively sense of favours yet to come.

Recreations: Reading the Arabian Nights and other old-world romances like the Spanish CID, which is perhaps his first favourite.

Hobbies: Slimming, whenever he is not engaged in reproducing the favourite records of His Master's Voice.

Our greetings to him will always be: MAY HIS SHADOW NEVER GROW LESS.

TICKLERS

(TUT-TUT-TUT)

1. Annotate:—

- (a) "I weep for you," the Walrus said:
I deeply sympathise.
With sobs and tears he sorted out
Those of the biggest size,
Holding his pocket-handkerchief
Before his streaming eyes.
- (b) Chiefs who no more in bloody fights engage,
But wise through time, and narrative with age,
In summer days like grasshoppers rejoice,
A bloodless race that sends a feeble voice.
- (c) 'God's in his heaven,—
All's right with the world.'

2. Write short notes on:—

- (a) The Gandhi-Week.
- (b) The All-India Sanatana Dharma Sammelan.
- (c) The Capitation Tribunal.

3. What do you know of:—

- (a) Miss Leila Rao.
- (b) Dr. P. Subbarayan, M. L. C., LL. D., etc.,

ANSWERS

1. (a) We wonder if our readers have noted a remarkable phenomenon that has appeared in the political horizon recently. Retiring and retired Governors, Anglo-Indian news-papers and others whose comfort has been wrung from the sweat of the poor and the lowly, have suddenly developed a touching sympathy for the neglected, down-trodden Indian peasant. One hundred years of British rule that 'found them poor at first, and have kept them so' are sought to be undone by platitudes uttered on post-prandial occasions, and conjured away by replies to congratulatory addresses. The Government of Bombay has issued a pamphlet, outlining a scheme of Rural uplift, which is full of good intentions. But there is not a word of lightening the burden of taxation in the whole of it. The district officials are to broadcast the contents of the pamphlet, and the peasants saved from the machinations of designing demagogues. Can it be that this is nothing more than a stunt to safeguard the coming constitution, by helping the new electorate to choose as its representatives safe men? We shall wait and see.
- (b) A manifesto has just been issued containing the miscellaneous signatures, as Sir Harry Haig would have put it, of a number of soldiers who have 'served' in the Indian Army. The question that they have answered to their entire satisfaction is: 'Can Britain hold India?' Nothing could hold them back from rushing in where their betters fear to tread. They are of opinion that Britain's ability to hold India, by the sword, is implicit in the whole situation. The trouble is that many large sections of our countrymen are labouring under an impression that India is for Indians and that whatever Britain's intentions in the past, there is now a genuine desire to

'help' us to be masters in our own house. These Generals are doing their best to disabuse our minds. Ultimately, no doubt, they are bound to succeed. For when what is 'implicit' in the whole situation becomes explicit to every Indian, there would be no room for soldiers or statesmen to lay such a flattering unction to their souls. Sydney Smith answered such insolent ignorance for all time, when he described Mrs. Partington engaged vigorously in pushing away the Atlantic Ocean.

- (c) This is the refrain of a song, just now very popular with a number of people who belong to the Justice party, or who are anxious that the Justice party should belong to them. Among the number are one vocal and two silent ministers. But there is an undercurrent of uneasiness which is slowly gaining strength. A gentleman, with a turn for playing practical jokes, went and registered the Justice Party, the other day. It has been taken so seriously that Sir A. P. Patro has cancelled his passage to England, and proposes to be on the spot, if anything should turn up. We await, with curiosity, further developments.

2. (a) An annual celebration of the birth of an insufficiently clothed person for whom we have an unaccountable reverence and affection. A man who has brought on his own head the sorrows of a nation, and acquainted himself for our sake with grief. An astute person in his own way; for he managed to be born in the month in which we celebrate our Deepavali. This is to enable those who are unwilling or afraid to celebrate his birth, at least to buy Khadi once a year. Let it be a rule henceforth to such of our backsliders to consider the festive occasion as celebrating, not the mythical deliverance of the people from a mythical tyrant, but as affording material relief to starving millions by purchasing Khadi.
- (b) Old friends with new faces; a high-sounding organisation whose chief tenet is to growl aloud and grovel in private. It has resolved, among other things, to raise a rupee fund, to relieve unemployment among its members. Considering that about 150 people attended the Sammelan, the chances of collecting anything appreciable seem none too rosy. And then, is not the formation of futile organisations like this employment enough? We should have thought better of it if mendicancy, instead of mendacity, had been the cause of its birth.
- (c) Between ourselves, this is a dead secret. A committee of unexceptionable judges was appointed some time last year to go into the question of allocating between the Indian and Imperial Governments the cost of past imperial military adventures. The findings have not been published yet, on the principle, perhaps, of putting off the evil day. We shall not meet the trouble half-way.

(Continued on page 771)

E(A)VES DROPPING



"Eve's dropping again," as Adam said, when his wife fell off a tree.

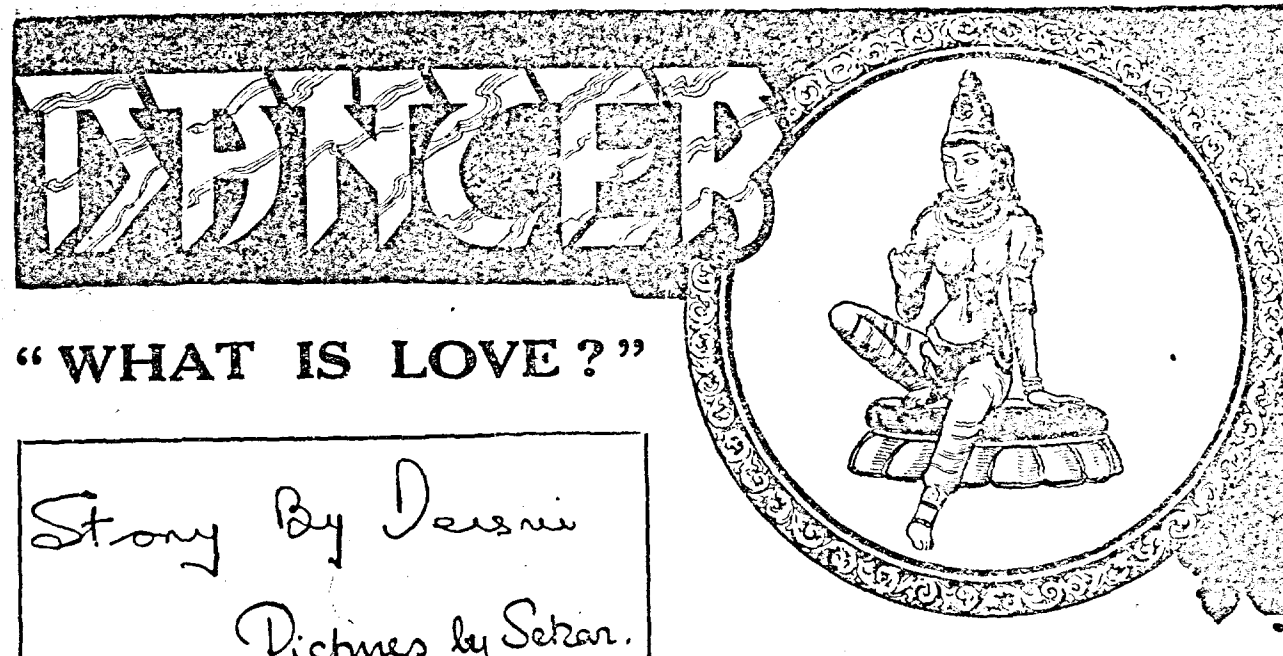


IV

In the Previous Three Instalments.

In Deripatam, a famous place of pilgrimage lived Rajam, a Deva-dasi and her little daughter Deva. The latter had a boy-friend Seenu who used to escort her to school. Maddu the village bully, dreaded by the entire school, teases Deva; and Seenu has to interfere and fight him. Maddu is vanquished but he nurses a grievance. He arranges for the inveiglement of Deva and Seenu near the haunted fourteen-pillar mantapam with the object of branding Seenu and breaking Deva's legs. Deva's guard, Sattai, is scared at the sight of an apparition and by the strange noises issuing from the Mantapam. Deva swoons: Seenu runs to her rescue but a heavy blow is dealt on his head and he crumples to the floor.

Now read on.



"WHAT IS LOVE?"

Story By Desnu
Pictures by Sekar.



It has already been said that Murugesam, assistant to the temple-piper was a pessimist. Constant and steady blowing into the drone-pipe had bulged out his cheeks and dilated his nostrils. A wife who nagged him eternally and a master-piper who bullied him, in and out of season, contributed not a little to his dismal outlook on life.

When Murugesam went into the temple at sunset, he was asked by the chief-piper to fetch the silver-plated pipe, as a visitor of importance was expected at the temple. To go to the chief-piper's residence and answer all the questions of his wife before she would hand him over the silver-pipe, took time. It was quite dark when Murugesam emerged from the West Gopuram and approached the fourteen-pillar mantapam. Yells, groans and shrieks emanating therefrom spurred him on, for, in all his life, he had never met a ghost and had always longed to encounter one. He had heard that the fourteen-pillar mantapam was haunted. Here was his chance to meet a ghost, at last.

Two little boys scampered past him, yelling in fear, as they ran. He could see a dark thick-set figure bending over another, lying prostrate on the ground. Yet another inert form lay near by. Murugesam hurried to the spot, shouting: "Hey! What's happening here?"

For answer, the thick-set figure rose with a furious howl and assumed a threatening pose.

"If you are a ghost or anything related to one, let me tell you I am not afraid. What are you doing to these children?" asked Murugesam very sternly.

"Go or I'll eat you!" muttered the ghost in a deep sonorous voice.

"Silly!" said Murugesam. "I am suffering from indigestion myself and you never can digest me. You certainly look like a young ghost and new to the business. Leave these children alone!"

"Go!" said the ghost in anger and clenching its fist hit Murugesam on his chest.

Murugesam saw red. He raised the heavy silver-plated pipe and brought it down hard on the skull of the ghost. With a thud, the ghost fell down and rolled on the floor.

"Funny kind of ghost!" said Murugesam to himself and was wondering what to do next, when he saw a party of men approaching him with lit torches and lamps.

"Hi there! Come this way!" Murugesam shouted. Among the party was Rajam, Panchaksharam and Sattiappan. Sattai was still trembling with fear and two men had to hold him erect.

"Don't, don't go there!" Sattai wailed. "It is the ghost calling and sure enough, it will devour all of us. I know the Ghost. It is a very fat ghost!"

The party approached cautiously. One of them called out: "Who are you? Answer!"

"I am Murugesam, piper. Come on! Here are three children dying!"





...a voice from above called out, "Seenu!"

Rajam was the first to advance. Others followed in her wake. In the flare of the torches Rajam recognised Deva and Seenu. She ran to Deva and picking her up heaved a sigh of relief. "Thank the Devi, my Deva is living," she muttered fervently.

The ghost laid low by Murugesam was lying with its face to the ground. One of the party turned it over and cried, "Look! Look!"

It was Maddu. But he had attached a moustache to his face. His face was made-up otherwise also, with paints of assorted colours and looked very grotesque. Panchaksharam was puzzled.

"Lift these two boys, some of you and carry them to my house. We will enquire into this matter there."

At Rajam's house, after Deva and the boys had regained consciousness, little by little, the plot was unravelled. An infuriated Panchaksharam forthwith took Maddu to the police lock-up and lodged a complaint. Eventually Maddu was put up before the Stationary Sub-Magistrate who sent him up to the Borstal School. With Maddu out of the way, his gang broke up and Deva and Seenu attended school regularly without let or hindrance and their devotion to each other grew with the days.

Quite a trifling incident determined the future career of Deva in her eighth year. She was a precocious child. She asked innumerable questions and every night Panchaksharam had to tell her stories before she would go to sleep. And Panchaksharam told her stories of the *Thiruvilayadal*¹ of the Lord, of Kannappa who gave an eye, of Markanda who became immortal, of Thakshayani's chagrin at the *Yagna*² of Thaksha, of the Lord agreeing to carry loads of earth for the sake of a succulent pudding, of His indolence and the caning by the Pandya and Devi listened wonder-eyed, drinking in the tales with avidity.

One day, when she was barely eight years old, Deva was playing all alone by herself among the *vahanams* inside the temple when a small ring slipped from her finger and rolled on the floor, under the pedestal of the *vahanam*. All her efforts to find the ring proving futile, she rushed home and told her mother of the loss.

"Which *Vahanam* was it?" asked Rajam.

Deva couldn't recollect the name. She stood silent for a while, head inclined and biting her thumb, racking her brain for the name that wouldn't come to memory. Then, she knelt on the floor and mimicked the pose of *Adhikara nanthi*. Rajam burst into laughter.

"That is *Adhikara Nanthi*, Deva, and you imitate it so well. Do it again, dear!"

Deva did it again, much better this time and much to the delight of her mother. Then, at her mother's instigation she mimicked various poses from the carvings in the temple-pillars, of Nataraja the eternal dancer, of Krishna on Kalinga, of Bairava the terrible and Rajam hugged her prodigy and mentally resolved that her Deva, who showed so versatile an aptitude for mimicry, should be trained in the art of *Bharatha Natya*.

Madurai the training-master was sent for, the next morning. And before him and Panchaksharam, Rajam made Deva exhibit the self-acquired art of her little daughter. Panchaksharam was vastly amused. But Madurai shook his head discouragingly.

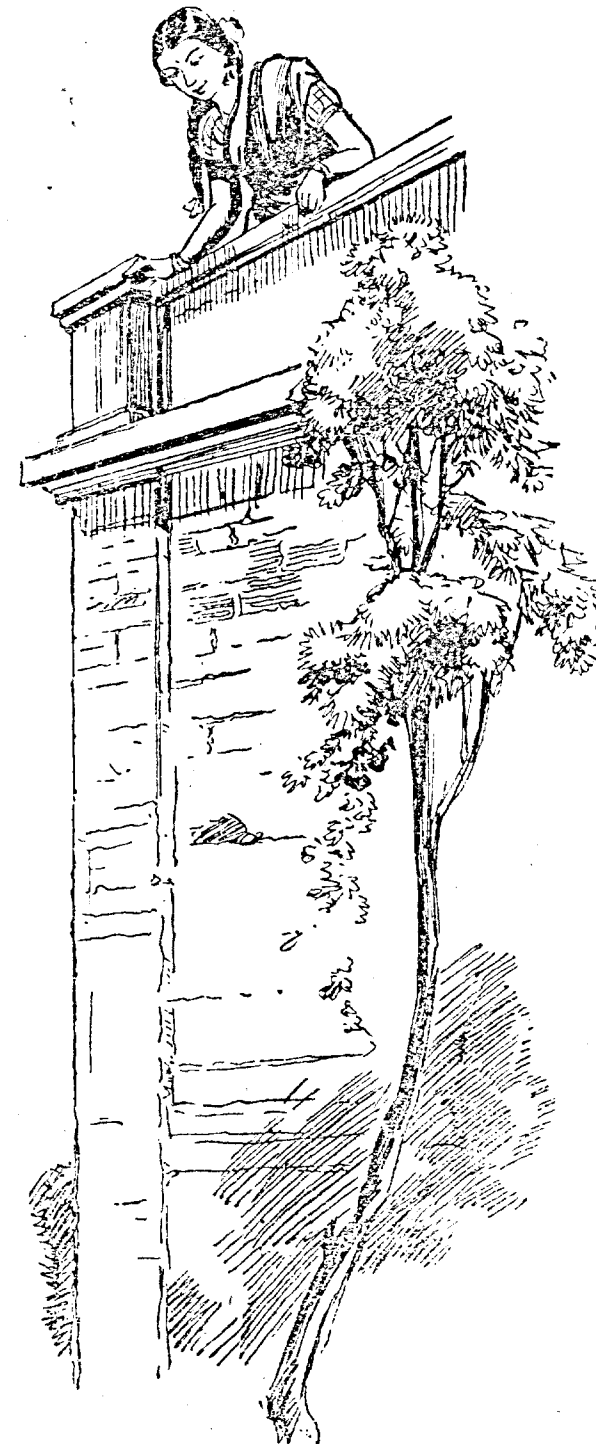
"It is nothing to go by. Any child can do these fool tricks. Have you made up your mind, once for all, to train her as a dancer?"

"I have."

"Very well. I'll see what I can do. I'll look up the *Panchangam*³ and start her on an auspicious day."

Thus did Deva become a dancer. Early in the mornings the tap-tap-tap of sticks conveyed to the passer-by that a young Dasi-girl was being broken on the wheel of a classic art. The school continued to teach Deva the three R's with a smattering of English thrown in. And as Deva grew, Panchaksharam and Rajam found it hard to make both ends meet. They sold all that they could sell, borrowed more than they could ever repay and awaited with hope the day when their Deva would grow up into a woman and meet her lord and master. Who would he be?

The years rolled on. Seenu lost his parents and went to the metropolis, at the invitation of an uncle, to pursue his studies there. Deva, having attained age, stopped attending school and was devoting all her attention to perfecting herself in dancing. Madurai was immensely pleased with his pupil.



"That girl!" he was never tired of exclaiming. "She sure is going to make everybody talk! You wait and see!"

Seenu came to Devipatam during the Christmas vacation. Life in the metropolis had changed him a great deal. His hair was cropped. His attitude towards life had changed. He was twenty-two and unmarried.

His uncle had sent him to Devipatam to get certain documents registered and also to interview some of the defaulting ryots. He was passing Rajam's house with never a thought of Deva or her existence, when a voice from above called out: "Seenu!" He turned and stared at the vision of a ravishing young girl of fifteen who, from the terrace, was beaming at him with real joy.

Seenu walked into the house like a man in a trance. How beautiful she had grown! And what a pity, he thought, that so fair a maid should be destined to be knocked down to the highest bidder. He was curious to learn from her, what she thought of it all—especially of her future life.

"Look, *amma*, here is Seenu!" said Deva running inside and fetching Rajam.

A mat was spread and all three sat down for a chat. Seenu was fidgety. He felt uncomfortable in the presence of Deva and became tongue-tied. Rajam plied him with questions, to all of which he replied in monosyllables.

"And why aren't you married yet, *sami*?" asked Rajam.

"My uncle wants me to marry his daughter but I don't want to."

"Why, isn't she pretty?" queried Deva with a mischievous smile in her eyes.

"Not as pretty as.....you," essayed Seenu, gathering courage.

"Your uncle has been kind to you. He has brought you up and educated you and I think you ought to meet his wishes and marry his daughter," said Rajam.

"But if he doesn't like her, why should he marry her *amma*?" asked Deva.

The conversation was interrupted by the arrival of Sonachalam. Sonachalam called himself the rich man's friend. He was the *factotum* of the minor Zamindar of Palayanoor. The minor Zamindar was famous all over the district as the fastest sower of wild oats and a thoroughly dissipated and disreputable specimen of the aristocracy. At sight of Sonachalam Rajam stood up and bade Deva also do so. Sonachalam sat on the mat facing Seenu on whom he bestowed a supercilious look as he cleared his throat.

"How are you, *amma*?" he asked of Rajam.

"Very well indeed, thank you. To what good fortune do we owe this visit from you?"

"All in good time. Who is this young gentleman?"

"If I am in the way," said Seenu rising, "I shall make myself scarce."

"No, no. Please sit down," said Rajam. "It is years since we saw you and I want to ask you about a great many things." She turned to Sonachalam. "Please proceed, *aiyah*, to state your business."

"I suppose that is your daughter?" said Sonachalam appraising Deva and noting mentally her grace of limb.

"Yes, *aiyah*, and I am very proud of her. She is my only daughter."

The Merry Magazine

"You have every reason to be proud of her. Already, the countryside is ringing with her praises. I came merely to verify if the rumours were true. It seems she sings and dances like an *apsaras*." ⁴

"You are very kind."

"When is the *Pottukattu* ceremony?"

"Next *Chittrai*, if all goes well."

"Has any gentleman definitely promised to take her under his protection?"

"None, *aiyah*, so far, though there has been the usual talk in interested quarters."

"If I am not inquisitive, may I know who all have approached you?"

"I don't think it is usual to tom-tom these names. If it would be any satisfaction to you, I should like to assure you that we have a very open mind about the subject."

"That is enough for me. I want you to remember that my master is second to none in patronising such really deserving cases. That is why I came here to-day."

"Are you speaking for yourself or for the Zamindar?"

"Well, the Zamindar has heard so much about your daughter that he is simply dying to see her."

"In which case," interrupted Deva pouting, "I shall take good care that he doesn't see me and I shall await the result."

"Sh!" silenced Rajam. "Don't heed her, *aiyah*. She is a child and doesn't know what she is saying. I must consult the *aiyar* in all these matters and we shall let you know later, our decision."

"When may I come again?"

"You needn't bother. We shall send you word."

"Anyway, I don't think there would be any harm, in my coming and seeing you next week. What did you say your daughter's name was?"

"Deva."

"Well Deva, when you see the minor Zamindar, and his car, you will be telling another story."

"Thank you. I know many good ones."

Sonachalam grinned and went out.

"Disgusting," said Seenu, who was silent throughout the conversation.

"What is disgusting?" asked Deva.

"That people should want to buy you as if you were a horse or an ox."

"It is so everywhere," said Rajam. "You know Panchangam Venkatesa Aiyah's son Rama Subbu. It seems he passed the B. A. examination in the first-class and how many people do you think came to this village from the four-corners of the world offering their daughters and all their wealth? You may not know that Rama Subbu had his face marked with small-pox and looked like a scare-crow. And yet, he got a nice young girl and Rs. 5000 as *varadakshina*! ⁶ What do you say to that?"

"I don't approve of these things."

"But Seenu, if you were me, what would you do?" asked Deva.

"That is a difficult question to answer."

"I am not satisfied with what mother says about my—disposal"

"Don't say that, Deva," said Rajam pained at her daughter's remark.

"And *Aiyah* is so vague," continued Deva. "I don't understand why mother and *Aiyah* should be so anxious to send me away with minor zamindars and major landlords. I can dance well. I can earn a living. I will be slave to no man. Why shouldn't I do as I please?"

Rajam recognised at once that Deva was lapsing into one of her periodical tantrums. She sought adroitly to change the subject.

"Will you be staying here for some days, *sami*?" she asked of Seenu.

"Oh, about a week I expect."

"Do come in the evening when Madurai Mudaliyar will be here. You can then see Deva dance."

"Mother, may I put on the special dress?" asked Deva eagerly. "You haven't allowed anyone to see me dance till now and I would love to put on the new dress to-day."

"You may, my dear," agreed Rajam smiling.

But that evening Madurai did not turn up. Deva had dressed herself elaborately and Seenu stood transfixed on seeing her. As Rajam was busy cooking the food for the night, Deva and Seenu went on to the open terrace and there, squatting on the floor in the evening twilight, talked about their school-days.

"By the way Deva, do you still love *Sundal*?" asked Seenu.

"I don't. I hate it now. You see, I have grown."

"I see that only too well," said Seenu with a sigh.

"Why do you sigh?" asked Deva.

"You are ravishingly beautiful!"

"Is that a matter for sorrow and sighing?"

"Yes, in a way. I wish you were a Brahmin girl so that I could marry you."

"I too wish you were a minor Zamindar or a Chetty with pots of money, so that I could be under your protection."

"Is money of any consequence when a man and maid love each other?" asked Seenu, looking at the sky. where, one by one, stars began to appear and twinkle.

"Oh, Seenu, do tell me what love is! You have read so much and you ought to know. What exactly is love? -I have asked mother and she says love is all moonshine and nonsense. If I ask *aiyah* about it, he asks me to shut up. What is love, Seenu?"

"What did your mother tell you about love, Deva? There used to be a tradition about the mothers of all young *dasis* initiating their young ones into the intricate art of gold-digging."

"What is gold-digging?"

"You seem to be quite too simple for a *dasi*-girl. What exactly has your mother said about love?"

"She tells me that we *Dasis* are all wedded to the Gods and that our husbands are immortal. Our body, it seems, is dedicated to the service of Gods. And any man whom we receive with full heart, who steps into our bed-room, ought to be loved and revered as a husband. He ought to be treated as a honoured guest. Making him sit on the bed one has even to prostrate before him. And while he lives and stays in the house no *Devadasi* worth her salt dare invite or receive another man. And so on and forth."

"Humbug!"

"Why, is it all wrong?"

"I can't say for certain, because, I have no experience in these matters. But there used to be a tradition, as I said before, that young *dasi*-girls were trained by their mothers to be heartless vamps. Your mother, I see, has put other ideas into your head. I am sorry for you, Deva."

"Why, indeed?"

"You see, the whole thing hinges round money. You are being treated like a chattel put up for auction. The highest bidder knocks you away."

"I wouldn't consent to any such thing happening."

"Why, what can you do?"

"Unless I personally like the man, I would refuse to have anything to do with him."

"Describe the man, please!"

"He must be young."

"Good!"

"Fair.....!"

(How did Rajam react to the sight on the terrace? Read the next instalment.)

SEPTEMBER LUCKY NUMBERS

Have you a copy of the Merry Magazine, bearing any of the following numbers? If so, send the copies to this office and receive the prize money. All claims to be preferred before 3-11-33.

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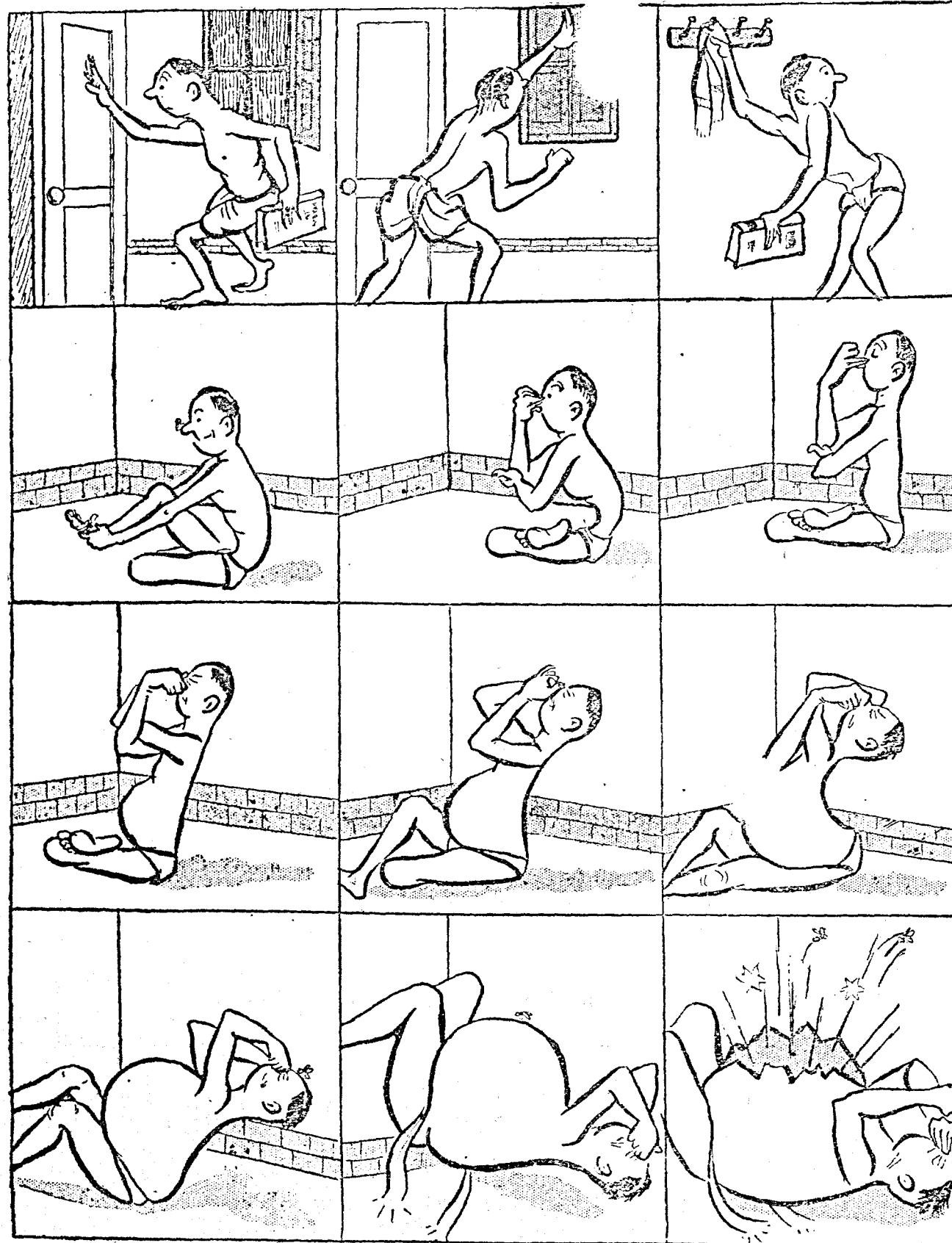
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'PRANAYAM' (Breath Control) in 12 easy steps. (The tragedy of a man who wanted to attain yogic powers through post in 12 short easy steps)



.....sprawling on my bed, smoking.....

BED-SIDE MANNERS

(P. P. SAMUEL)

To suffer agony from the appendix and on top of that to have a so-called friend coming in and sprawling on your bed, smoking cigarettes and imbibing ice-water and to have that friend cheerfully retailing anecdotes of men who had to have their tonsils torn out by the very roots—Poor Samuel!—*Editor.*

W

E have to learn a thing or two from the English and perhaps one of them is not to allow visitors, all and sundry, into the sick-room. Of course, in our country, visitors do not, as a rule, wait for permission; they just nip in and perch themselves sympathetically on the patient's bed. That was what Kuppu did, the other day, when I was down with some internal complaint. Finding me in bed in the shape of a capital N he sat there for a time in an attitude of profound melancholy. But the moment he heard from my servant that I was suffering from stomach-ache he thawed into a broad grin.

"Rummy, isn't it?" he laughed.

Well, that is the worst of your stomach-ache. It tortures you like the Inquisition, but it titillates your visitors like a W. W. Jacobs story. Isn't stomach ache just a juvenile complaint? One can very well understand a boy bargaining for it on a Saturday, when there is no school and he is tempted to pay frequent unofficial visits to the cupboard; but in a sensible grown-up it is a frightfully humorous ailment. How terribly funny it is to see a man suffering from stomach-ache trying to pull himself up in six stages!

"Do it again, that's a dear!" suggested Kuppu, when I had assumed perpendicularity with a super-human effort.

"Damn!" said I, collapsing on to my bed all of a heap.

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I was on pins and needles. Kuppu saw the beads of perspiration on my brow and tried to look penitent.

"I fear it is the appendix," he mourned, looking as melancholy as one should in the presence of a swollen appendix.

"Where is the pain, by the way?"

"Here," said I, indicating my liver.

"That's him," cried Kuppu. "The appendix is right there. My brother had severe pain in the very spot for about a year before it was diagnosed as appendicitis."

"Was it a bad case? I asked, imprudently.

"Gosh!" he replied, "his appendix was slightly bigger than a Rugby football. A normal healthy appendix, you know, is just the size of a caterpillar, and in an average case of appendicitis it is only as big as a full-size sausage. But my brother's....."

"A rather bad case," I remarked, icily. "How did he come to possess such a prize-winner?"

"That's a long story," said he, beginning at the very beginning.

For a good half hour he traced the growth of his brother's appendix, beginning with the caterpillar stage and passing from stage to stage in a scientific manner, right up to the post-Rugby-football period. I remained passive, registering annoyance and incredulity.

"You don't seem to believe me," he burst out suddenly. "I can prove the veracity of every word of my statement if you challenge me." He was jealously proud of the champion appendix!

An honourable bed-side bore would allow you to come out with your tonsils when he has got away with his or his brother's appendix. But Kuppu wouldn't. I was preparing to impress him with the terrible size and redness of my tonsils when he interrupted me.

"But my uncle's case....."

"My tonsils....."

"But my uncle's....."

"My tonsils were a perfect pair of beauties....."

"But my uncle's case....."

It was an unequal duel. I had to fight against Kuppu and the excruciating pain in my interior as well, and so I naturally didn't have his stamina. He won. He got away with his uncle's appendix, and for the space of two cigarettes (he is a slow smoker) and a glass of water I had to listen to his talk-talk-talky about the infernal internal organ of his uncle. The only redeeming feature about it was that it wasn't as big as a Rugby football.

"The moral," said he, winding up his monologue, "is that you never can tell where you are when you have appendicitis. My uncle (sobs) expired under the surgeon's knife."

I looked visibly perturbed.

"Did you consult.....?"

"Krishnan," I yelled, "fetch an easy chair for this gentleman." Kuppu looked good for the whole afternoon.

"No, no, don't worry. I am frightfully sorry. I really have to be going. But I will pop in tomorrow

and stay longer. By the by, did you consult your doctor?"

He was my guest after all, and courtesy demanded that I should answer his questions.

"Yes," I grunted, "I did consult him. He thought it wasn't stomach-ache but perityphlitis."

"What's that?"

"Exactly what I asked him. But he said something about the peritoneum and began to discuss the White Paper."

"Peritoneum?"

"As a matter of fact I didn't know what it was. He said it was something covering the viscera and asked me what I thought of Sir Samuel Hoare."

Kuppu noted down the terms in his diary.

"Rest easy," said he. "I will look them up in my Medical Dictionary and explain them to you tomorrow."

"That's awfully good of you," I freezed, "but I would rather be ignorant."

"Not at all," he laughed. "I shall drop in at 2 p. m. tomorrow. Cheerio!"

I knew he meant to do it. He was a wealthy fellow with little work and was ever ready to oblige a friend. And the trouble with him was that he never fell ill and gave a fellow the chance to sit on his bed and pay him back in kind. But I knew what to do.

"Krishnan," said I, calling my servant. "I suppose you are anxious to get a handsome Deepavali present."

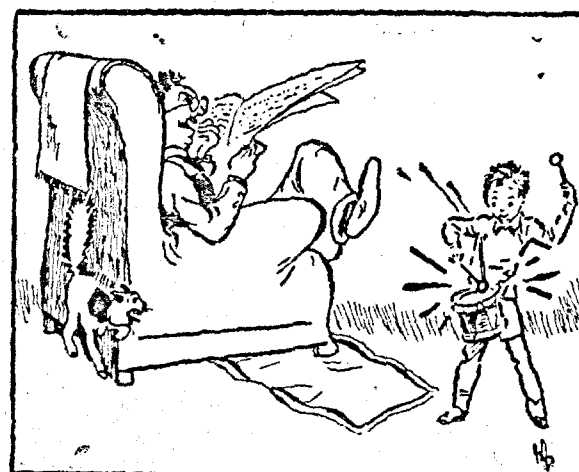
"Yes, sir," said he, in a marked manner.

"Then I'll tell you how to earn it."

"Yes, sir."

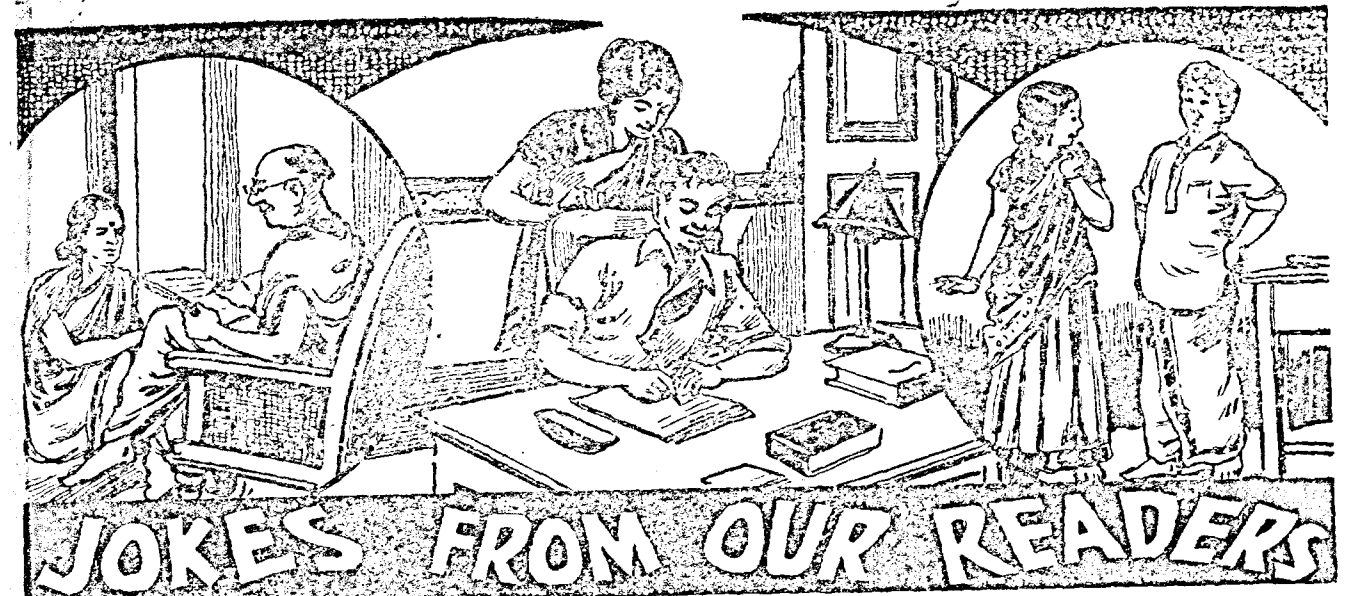
"When Kuppu turns up tomorrow tell him I am asleep and the doctor has ordered I shouldn't be disturbed."

To Be Exact.



Father:—Boy, how many times have I to tell you not to beat that drum?

Son:—About fifteen times would be enough.



Teacher:—"Of all the rulers of this country, who inspires the most respect in you?"

Pupil:—"The one on your table, sir."
—S. R. S. Krishnan, Mylapore.

"I saw the doctor you advised me to see," said a bachelor to his friend.

"That's good," said the other. "And I suppose you told him that I had sent you."

"Yes, unfortunately," replied the bachelor.

"What do you mean?" said his companion aggrievedly.

"When I mentioned that I knew you, he asked me to pay in advance."

—Narain T. Vazirani, Karachi.

A young girl from a country town went to a city boarding school much against the wishes of her father, who thought she would be spoiled by city ways.

Soon she wrote in one of her letters "I am in love with ping-pong." The mother read the letter aloud to her father, who turned angrily upon her saying "Well, you see I was right. I knew no good would come of her going to the city. Now you see she has got entangled with one of those awful Chinamen."

—S. D. Aseervatham, Tirupapulur.

Fortune teller:—"You are going on a journey and you will meet with good fortune."

Insured motorist (eagerly):—"You mean that I will have an accident?"
—V. Sukavanam, Salem.

Gopal:—"Hullo! Rama! what is it that I see on your left thumb. It looks like a new ring."

Rama:—"Yes, Gopal. It is a thread ring. My wife asked me to bring something from the bazaar street this evening on my return from the office. I have tied this thread round my thumb so that I may not forget my wife's commission."

Gopal:—"Alright. What is it that I see on your wrist."

Rama:—"I have just tied my handkerchief round my wrist so that I may be reminded of the ring round my thumb. I was afraid that as the ring round my thumb was a minute thread it might be easily lost sight of."

Gopal:—"Rama! You have taken really elaborate precautions to remember your wife's probably very important commission. May I know what your wife wanted."

Rama:—"Oh! Gopal! I am sorry I have forgotten that. I remember that my wife wanted something but I do not remember what that something is."

Gopal:—"Ha! Ha!! Ha!!! The easiest way to recall to your mind what your wife wanted seems to me to go to all the shops in the bazaar street and call upon the shop-keepers to show you, one after another, all the articles they have for sale."

Rama:—"What is the use of that?"

Gopal:—"You can at least tell your wife that what she wanted was not sold in the shops."
—Ashamat, Shyali.

Teacher:—"Gopal, which is the most useful book you have ever come across?"

Gopal:—"My father's cheque-book, sir."
—G. G. Mirchandani, Karachi.

"What's your brother in college?"

"A half-back."

"I mean in studies"

"Oh, studies, he is a long way back."
—A. Chakrapani, Bangalore.

Magistrate:—"Why did you throw the chair at him?"

Criminal:—"Because I was not able to lift the table."

—T. S. Ramamoorthy, Tirupattur.

Judge:—"And what did the prisoner say when you told him that you would have him arrested?"

Complainant:—"He answered mechanically, your Honour."

Judge:—"Explain."

Complainant:—"He hit me on the head with a hammer."

—V. Venkatraman, Palghat.

Doctor:—"Sir, if you keep a watch on him to-night, tomorrow he will be alright."

A man:—"We will do whatever you advise us. But I never knew that the ticking of a watch could prevent one from dying."

—K. V. Lakshmanamurthy, Berwala.

Two dandy looking chaps were looking at the portrait of a well-known musician with the usual flow of long hair. "I say," said one "long hair makes a chap look intelligent". "Not always," said the other. "My wife found some long hair on my coat the other night and it made me look an absolute fool!"
—Miss Colleen Bradley, Ernakulam.

In spite of clear instructions we find that contributors to this page copy jokes from foreign periodicals and pass them on as original Jokes. The prize of Rs. 3/- is awarded to what we think is an original joke and even here it is possible that we err. Once again may we request contributors to this page to send only original jokes?—Editor.

This fortnight the Prize is awarded to Mr. V. VENKATRAMAN, Palghat.

THIS FORTNIGHT'S FAIRY STORY

(KALYAN)

A tonsorial expert, who is not garrulous, a bus-driver who won't keep his passengers waiting, an income-tax officer who cheerfully and promptly gives you a refund—surely, all this is a dream—*Editor.*



I WOKE up one Monday morning with a happy smile on my face. The previous two days had been holidays; and I had spent them in aimless chatting, card-playing and cinema-going. I was glad that Monday had come at last so that I could go and do a spot of honest work in the office.

My wife brought me a delicious cup of coffee, humming a favourite tune of hers. By that time the barber was at the pail by appointment. He was a smart and quick man with well kept tools. I was pleased with his work and said something to that effect as he was about to finish, but he stopped me with a polite, "Thank you, sir, but please, I can't do my work well if I talk. No barber could." I quite agreed.

I don't know how my wife manages it, but she is always ready with a heavenly meal well before office time. After resting a little, I went leisurely to the bus stand and got into a bus which was about half full. I resigned myself to the inevitable waiting till such time as she got packed like a stuffed pillow, but to my surprise, the driver straightaway stepped on the what-do-you-call-it, with a, "How long can we keep the gentlemen waiting?" Going at a steady regulation speed, I reached the office.

"Well before the time as usual," remarked the officer with a pleasant smile, and seeing some office papers in my hands, asked, "Why do you take these home? Home-time is for amusements, hobbies and minding the kids or playing with them! If the work is too much, ask for another clerk!.....I say, have you seen this book? One of the latest and best of detective novels. Take it home and read it."

That day I had an appointment with the income-tax officer. I knew how much time an appointment with an income-tax officer involves; and so I took the after-noon off and went to his office. I also bought a copy of a humorous weekly on the way to lighten the waiting time. But I was asked in as soon as I sent my

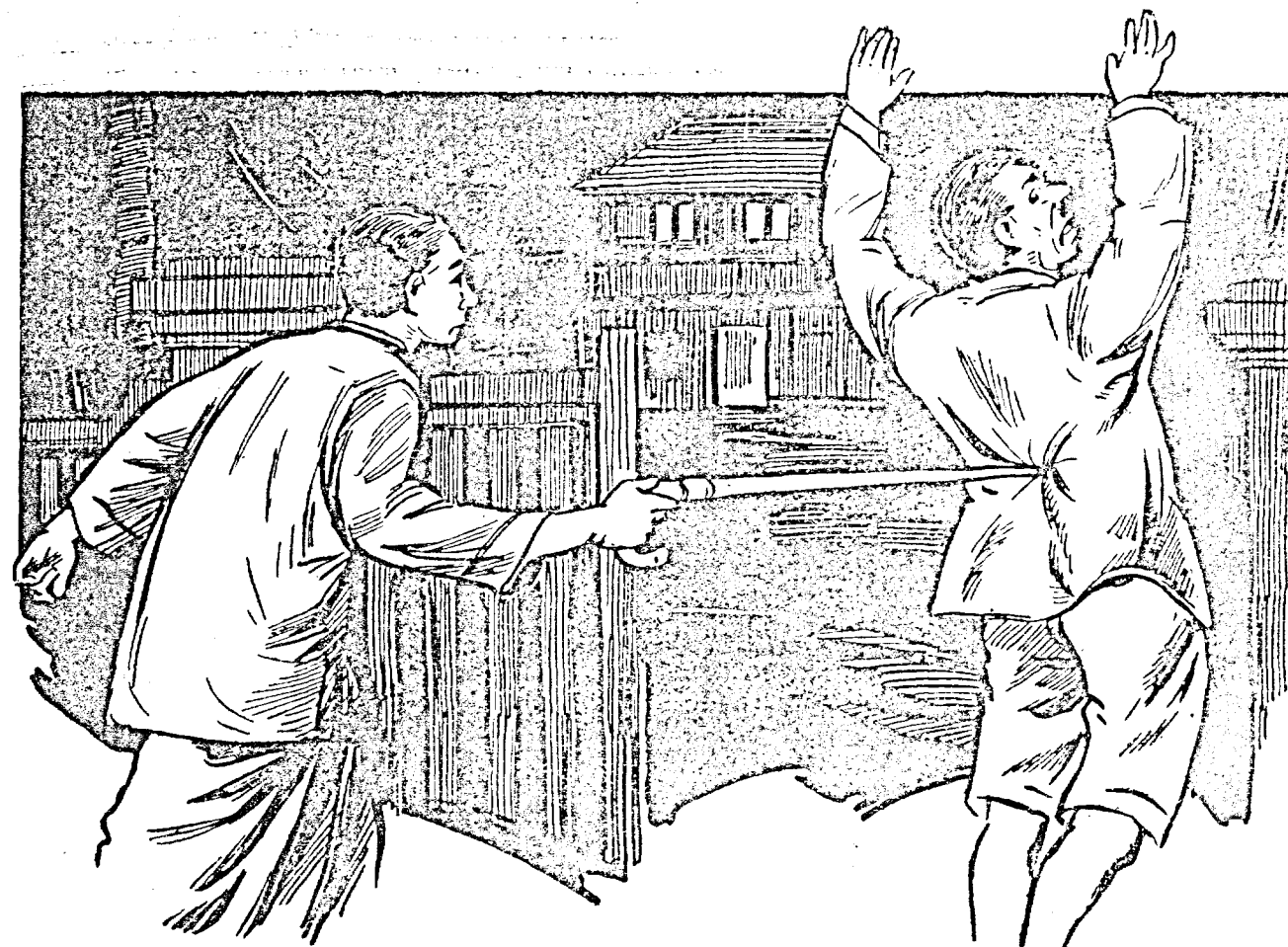
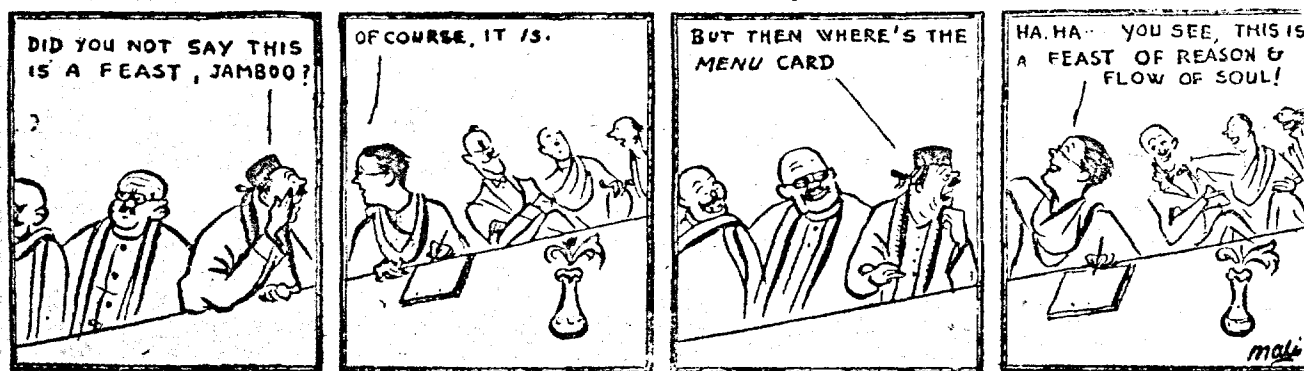
card. The officer smilingly asked me to be seated, apologised for the trouble he was giving me, put me three or four business like questions and said, "Right-o, thank you; I will pass orders for the refund."

Having all the after-noon to myself, I dropped into a dentist's to have a tooth pulled out as it had been aching off and on for some time. I sent my name in and was fingering the latest and brightest magazines on the waiting room table when I was called in. The dentist smilingly remarked that no pulling was needed and that a proper paste and gargle would do the trick. He further added that a lot of rot was being talked of the bad tooth being the root of all ills and that the said root of all ills was being pulled out a bit indiscriminately. I thanked him—there was no fee to pay—and came out ruminating on his unostentatious but forceful humour.

I thought I would finish with the optician too the same day. He examined me closely and said, "Don't go in for glasses and make things worse. They are silly, ugly, second rate things at best. Stop reading and writing at night for some time, take cold baths early morning and evening, don't walk in the sun if you can help it and put a drop of pure castor oil in the eyes before going to bed if they smart. I thought what a splendid fellow he was. I had to force a tenner on him—he protested it was not due to him.

Arriving home, I asked the missus, "What about going to the cinema?" She gladly agreed and in a couple of minutes was ready to come out with me. It was a Puranic talkie. I was pleased to note that the actors exhibited feeling and understanding, that there were no untimely songs, no bows and ribbons on the unsymmetrically parted hair of the heroine, no shaking in the breeze of the walls of the room. The diction was chaste and the enunciation clear. The audience too were silent and attentive. It was a great success and the audience clapped their hands loud and long. I woke up with a start and fond that the Missus was tapping on the table to awaken me from my slumber.

The Barmecide's Feast?

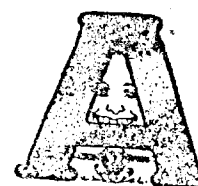


Ordered him to march to the Police Station.

CATCHING THE CAT-BURGLAR

(N. S. PILLIEUX)

Hold-up men use gats, courageous householders overawe burglars with revolvers but have you ever heard of a delinquent being marched to the nearest police station at the point of a walking stick?—*Editor.*



T exactly a quarter past the midnight hour, the show came to a close; the lights burst out in an instant from under multicoloured shades; the orchestra broke forth into the usual, what do you call it?—anthem; I rose up with the crowd and elbowed my way out into the open air.

The night was pitch dark, and one, with a poetic turn of mind, would have almost described it as Cimmerian darkness, whatever that might mean. With nothing more helpful than a perfectly innocuous-looking walking stick to guide my foot steps, I launched forth into the impenetrable darkness and trudged my way home. I might have gone at least a furlong or two along the narrow Rangiah Mudali Street, as silent as

the grave, when I saw far ahead of me, a powerful beam of light, presumably from an electric torch. Going up a few yards farther on, I noticed, that 'the man behind the torch' was standing near the gate of a house, apparently trying to open the lock, with which it had been secured. He had been at it, so far as I knew, for the best part of five minutes without producing any tangible result. Evidently, he did not possess the proper key for the same; and I concluded that the feller might probably be a burglar, for aught I knew.

I did exactly what Sherlock Holmes, Sexton Blake, Malcolm Sage or Mon. Lecoq would have done under the circumstances. I hid behind a tree and watched him intently. From this coign of vantage, I observed, without being seen, no doubt with the aid of his torch, that he had come equipped with a bunch of keys to aid him in

his nefarious scheme. The more I watched him, the more was the conclusion forced in upon me, that he was, without doubt, a house-breaker. The midnight hour, the dark night, the powerful torch, the absence of a proper key and finally, the bunch of keys, probably 'Skeleton,' which he carried—all strengthened my conviction. Suddenly I had a brainwave. The man might, after all, be none other than the redoubtable "cat burglar," as the papers dubbed him, whose atrocities had been the talk of the town! He was still at large, I knew.

All his efforts to force open the lock having proved abortive, I heard him swear roundly. For a moment or two, he seemed to be at a loss to know what to do; his next move, however, set at rest all doubts with regard to his identity. He was trying to scale over the wall; and, what is more natural for a cat burglar than to climb over the wall?

I did not allow the grass to grow under my feet. The course of action I should pursue, was only a matter of few seconds' thinking. I rushed at him in a jiffy, and, brandishing my stick threateningly in the air, barked out the conventional "Hands up." The fellow was certainly surprised; but, his hands shot up at once in obedience. Taking the torch from his hand, I ordered him to march to the Police Station, which he did, with his hands held aloft in the air, as a priest in the act of blessing his disciples. The cat burglar, however clever he might have been to evade arrest, seemed perfectly docile and obedient, when once overpowered.

At the Police Station, the Station House Officer was sitting bolt upright at his desk, with his eyes closed, while his unsupported head was making all sorts of fantastic movements in space. At the sound of our approach, he woke up with a start, rubbed his swollen eyes, dabbed his perspiring forehead with a kerchief, stood up and favoured us with a salute in correct military style. He might be still hovering about in the realm of sweet unconsciousness and hence not entirely responsible for his actions; so I thought.

But that was no concern of mine. I stood erect, folded my arms, threw my head back, and, in a dull monotonous tone, began to recount my 'story.' As the tale unfolded itself little by little, the last remnants of sleep vanished from his face, giving place to a grin, which broadened itself inch by inch, and, when I finished off with the conclusion that the man in front of me was none other than the notorious 'cat burglar,' I had a suspicion that the corners of his mouth met on the other side of his head. Suddenly both the S. H. O. and the C. B. burst out into a fit of uproarious laughter. Short bouts gave place to long ones, until at last one continuous cackle was all that I heard.

This unexpected turn of events exasperated me not a little. I had my own suspicions that the limb of the law was in league with the C. B. and was trying this tactics, just to dissuade me from proceeding further and eventually to let the C. B. go scot free. When the laughter expended itself leaving its victims breathless and holding their sides, I decided to make him understand that I was not a man to be trifled with. "Officer,"

I barked out, "I shall see the Inspector, direct; do tell me where he lives." The S. H. O. controlling with difficulty, fresh ebullitions from within, pointed towards the man in front of me and managed to say, "There he is." The latter, perhaps to convince me, fumbled in his pocket, and produced a visiting card bearing the name,

"A. Rajaratna Mudaliar,
Madras Police service."

It appeared, that he had been out, in mufti, to do a bit of investigation work. On returning home, he found, that he had misplaced his key somewhere; and, since there was no one inside the house, he tried to open the lock with the aid of his bunch of keys. Finding it impossible, he was just on the point of jumping over the wall, when I apprehended him.

"You are a resourceful chap, indeed!" the Inspector added, "you tried to corner the notorious cat burglar with your walking stick, eh?"

"But, Inspector, why did you take the trouble of coming all this way? You could have revealed your identity then and there," I at last found my tongue.

"No, the humour of the situation so appealed to me, that I wanted you to have it all in your own way—Ha! Ha!! Ha!!!" But one look at my woebegone countenance cut short his hilarious outburst.

"Worse mistakes have been committed, man," he patted my shoulder reassuringly, "Why! our Secretary of State was, you know, once accused of murder!!"

Claiming their Undivided Attention.



FUN FROM FOULSHAM'S

Books You Must Read.

- The Corn*, by Honor Footo. * * *
- Expelled from School*, by Millicent Holme. * * *
- The Sovereign*, by Iona Dudden. * * *
- The Antiques*, by Fay Kingham. * * *
- Knighted*, by Watts E. Dunn. * * *
- Wine and Women*, by Rex Holmes. * * *
- Stand and Deliver*, by Ann Dover. * * *
- The Housing Problem*, by Rufus Quick. * * *
- The Song of the Shirt*, by Dryden Aird. * * *

A doctor was attending a pretty American film-star, who had been ill some time. "You've got acute appendicitis," he announced.

The girl sat up indignantly. "I say, doc, cut out the freshness," she said, "I want to be examined, not admired!"

Paddy was asked whether his twins did not make an awful noise at nights.

"Well," he said, "not so bad—not so bad; you see one makes such a din that you can't hear the other."

SHE: "Would you lend me £5? I'm making an heroic effort to get out of debt."

Molly was a sprightly patriotid flapper, whose one ambition was to do real war-work. She lived with a prim maiden aunt, who only very reluctantly allowed her to join the V. A. D.

After some month's Molly's ambition was realised to the full, and she was sent to France; and while she was there her auntie wrote her many letters, containing much wholesome, but quite unnecessary, advice as to behaviour and conduct.

Eventually Molly began to write of a hoped-for period of leave. Slowly, but surely, the leave approached. Everything was arranged by letter. Molly was to come straight home by the first train from Dover, and auntie had secretly prepared a gay reception for her.

Crossing the Channel on the same boat with the nurses were some Belgian refugees. One of these, a little ragged boy evidently very ill, inspired kind-hearted Molly with pity, and she insisted that he should be put to bed in her berth. The crossing proved to be very rough, and Molly walking the deck all night, was very ill.

These circumstances were the real cause of the telegram which prostrated Molly's maiden aunt for several days. Owing to a telegraph operator's mistake, it read: "Remaining Dover to-night. Very sick coming over. Gave birth to little Belgian boy.—Molly."

The squire and his wife, as they say in the society novels, "drifted apart." Rarely were they seen at the old Hall, and never together. But the kindly old rector took the matter in hand, and by winning ways of his own effected a reconciliation.

The village was pleased at the new state of affairs and presently was all agog at the news that a little stranger was expected at the Hall.

When informed of the interesting event, one sweet old lady was highly delighted.

"I am so glad," she said—"so very glad! And to think that it was all the dear rector's doing!"

HENLEY SKATING RINK: "All articles of clothing must be left in the block room."

"A firm of solicitors would like to know the present whereabouts of John Milligan who was reported dead a year ago."

"If this should meet the eye of Mr. Robert Smithson, he is requested to communicate with the undersigned when he will be acquainted with something to his advantage. His wife died recently."

"Miss Brown (wardrobe dealer) having cast-off clothing of all description, invites inspection."

ANSWERS

- Q. Where is the true gentleman to be found?
A. There is a picture of him in front of every master-tailor's.
- Q. What is a Retrenchment Committee?
A. It is a committee set up at a cost of Rs. 10000 to recommend a saving of Rs. 2000 in the pay and allowance of menials.
- Q. What is a fine lecture?
A. It is one in which you have the maximum number of words conveying the minimum number of ideas.
- Q. What are the openings left for the un-employed?
A. Starting Cross-Word Puzzle Competitions; Learning a bit of astrology and offering to give wonderful predictions at remarkably cheap rates; Running Auction Chit Funds.
- Q. What is the psychology of presenting bromide enlargements of living persons?
A. The people making the present want that their hero should imitate the ways of the dead and retire from active life.

GEORGE BERNARD SHAW



Some men do say George Bernard Shaw
Is such a Superman,
A wight without a vital flaw,
Though but an Irishman.

While some maintain that he is but
An empty rattling can,
A bouncer who just bawls "tut-tut"—
Pugnacious Irishman!

His hair is crisp and red and short,
His face is like the tan,
His beard is red, his gait is smart.
He earns whatever he can.

He looks the whole world in the face,
He can lick any man;
Be he Belloc or Inge or Wells,
L. G. or Chesterton.

His plays are short, prefaces long,
Long as his lanky frame;
Not mine to croon a critic's song,
He's won undying fame.

A greater than e'en Shakespeare?
"BY JOVE!" says G. B. S.
Now if you happen to be near
And prize your skin say "YES."

"LIZ"



THE CREAM OF THE JEST

A Jew called at a country post office early one morning and asked if a telegram had arrived for him. When answered in the negative, he seemed much disturbed. An hour afterwards he called again with the same question. Again he was disappointed, and seemed more upset than before. At length, after many fruitless visits, the postmaster handed him a wire that had just arrived. Hurriedly and tremblingly, the man opened it, and exclaimed, "Suffering Caesar! My house is on fire!"

Garage Attendant (as car drives up):—"Juice?"

Motorist:—"Vell, vot if we are—don't ve get no petrol?"

Mr. Meek crawled under the bed when he heard the burglar. After a long pause he felt someone crawl in beside him.

"Is that you, Mary?" he whispered.

"No," came the muttered response. "I've just seen your wife. I'm the burglar. Move up."

Lance:—"Queer fellows, these poets! There's one, for instance, who speaks of 'an aching void.' Now, how can a void ache?"

Hilda:—"Have you never had a headache?"

Discontented Artist:—"I wish I had a fortune. I would never paint again."

Generous "Brother Brush":—"By Jove, old man, I wish I had one. I'd give it to you!"

"James, see that I get my breakfast at nine tomorrow."

"Yes, sir. Scotch or Irish?"

He:—"Now, darling, do tell me how you first came to know of your love for me?"

She:—"Oh, suddenly I noticed that I became angry when everybody called you an idiot."

A man stood in front of a dental display window. "I think I'll get a pair like that," he mused. "Hush," said his companion. "Don't you know it's impolite to pick your teeth in public?"

TWO LADIES OF FASHION IN AN ARTIST'S STUDIO:—

"I get so uncomfortable coming to these artists' places."

"Why?"

"Oh, they—they—know what we're like."

Stage Manager (discussing chorus girl who has been given a small singing part):—"Well, what do you think of her?"

Producer:—"A peach—but no Melba."

Stage Hand (to manager):—"Shall I lower the curtain, guv'nor? One of the living statues has the hiccups!"

"It's half an hour since I ordered that turtle soup," shouted the angry diner.

"Sorry, sir, but you know how slow turtles are replied the waiter.

"Do you want a ticket one way, or one that will take you there and back?" asked a booking clerk of an Irishman.

"What the devil do I want a ticket there and back for, whin I'm here already?" was the reply.

New Tenant:—"The roof is so bad that the rain comes through on to my head. How long is this going to continue?"

Land-lord:—"What do you think I am; A weather prophet?"



"Show me your tongue" he said.

THE DOUGHTY DOC

(V. GANAPATHI)

The author is ill of a fever. At least he thinks he is and he believes that the Doctor's medicine has cured him. But his friend knows better.—*Editor.*

I WAS seriously ill—at least I thought I was. It was just a month since I came to Madras, the centre of Politics, of learning, of fashion and of Malaria. Before I caught anything else, I caught the last-mentioned. My friend, who was just my alter ego, as in everything else, was here a sharer with me—he was ill too.

In one thing, most unusually, we disagreed. I insisted on medical treatment and he insisted on keeping himself away from the stethoscope and the prosaic mixtures and pills. I believed in the Doctor's treatment; and belief, they say, is relief. So, I engaged a rickshaw and was transported at the cost of a few annas to a Doctor's "Day and Night" Dispensary. From a look at the place, I could not guess what they

dispensed there, but I was able to see that the Doctor dispensed with his patients with wonderful alacrity.

I secured for myself a neglected seat on a backless bench, awaiting my chance for examination. Patients there were by the score. The whole scene was a wonderful panorama—literally as well as in the poetic conception of the term. Illustrations of the human anatomy, piecemeal, of the circulatory and the digestive systems illustrated beautifully in red and blue, of first aid, amputations and fractures etc.—and an actual sight of all human woes.

My turn came—rather I seized my chance and rushed forward to the Jesus of the moment whose touch, patients imagined, cured them.

"What is wrong?" kindly enquired the medical man.

"Fever, Doctor, and head-ache."

"Had you shivering?"

"Yes"

"How many days since you had this fever?"

"Three days."

"I thought so. You people never come in time" seriously observed the Doctor.

Another patient could remain patient no more, having been waiting for more than one full hour. He dashed forward and commenced his wail.

"Stomach ache, Doctor" he began, and the majestic medical head was turned, describing quite an obtuse angle. One by one he examined with his piercing eyes and applied that inseparable stethoscope.

Once more, the revolving head neared me, taking me as it were by a shock as I was just then rather deep in my speculative reflections whether the Doctor, judging by his minute questions to the patients, was getting direct to the aetiology of all the maladies.

"Show me your tongue" he said, and I obeyed. Another wail near by, and the Doctor turned round again. I was putting out my tongue helplessly and was turning round with the Doctor. He looked everywhere, around me, behind me, about me, but never at me much less at my tongue.

At last, he did have a look at it and solemnly proclaimed "H'm, you have got fever," as if I did not know that much.

As with the others, he applied the pair of rubber tubes to his ears and the metal cup to my chest. His numerous clients every minute drew his attention, and the Doctor could not adhere to the principle "one thing at a time etc." So he turned; and with him, poor I. He moved, and with him I did. Students interested in Astronomy could have had a demonstrative illustration of how the Moon and the Earth behave.

For five minutes, this wonderful spectacle of revolution and rotation went on. I was then released, and in a way relieved.

"Name?" the Doctor asked. He then scribbled something, Hieroglyphics I think they call it, and handed it to me.

"You see, Doctor, I have a sort of..." I began.

"Yes, yes, it will be like that" was his calm reply.

"What will be?" I fancied and began anew my representation.

A nod—a graceful one of his head was all that he condescended. Between me and the Doctor, the distance gradually grew till it was nearly ten yards and I went to the dispensary. There again, I had to wait for my turn. I then slipped in the precious recipe and got a bottle, a card-board box of cylindrical design, and a slip of paper, each with its respective contents. I

paid for the last of these items and re-boarded the waiting rickshaw.

My friend laughed at my actions, as if I had done something irrational and strange. I drank the first dose of mixture, which tasted sweet, bitter and sour, all at once. I took the mixture as directed, once every two hours, "shaking the bottle well before use."

For all the six doses that I took, I felt none the better, perhaps, I felt worse. Next morning, my friend got up at 6 A.M., took a clean cold bath and greeted me in my bed. I was shocked to see him thus. "Are you mad?" I asked, "taking a bath like this while you were ill only yesterday?"

"Oh, I feel sound as a bell" he replied, much to my astonishment.

"Please, Somu, get me the mixture to day from the Doctor. I feel very weak and worse than yesterday."

He agreed and took the bottle, not forgetting to take a rupee from my purse. He returned half an hour later with the "mixture" again. I repeated this course of medical treatment for three consecutive days and every day, one rupee from my purse changed residence. On the fourth day, I was on my legs again.

My friend congratulated me on my speedy recovery and assured me that I was wise to have taken timely medical aid, otherwise, anything might have happened. I felt flattered and expected Somu to submit to my superior practical sense then at least. But he did not express a single word of regret at having had a dispute over a matter in which he was decidedly wrong.

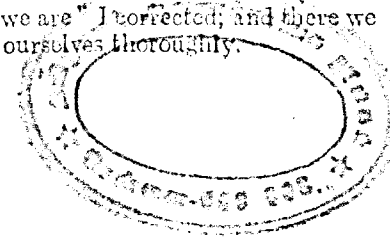
On the other hand, with a mischievous smile, he extended a tiny packet and requested me to accept it as a token of friendly love. I opened it, all perplexity, and found a beautiful little pen.

I blinked with a vacant stare and a mark of interrogation on my face. Somu enlightened me at once. "Your money," he said "I did not want to keep your money or benefit by it. I never went to the Doctor. I gave you my own mixture. Pure aqua plus a few drops of lime juice and a bit of quinine, as good a mixture as your Doctor's; perhaps better. And you are now all right, sooner for all my white deceit."

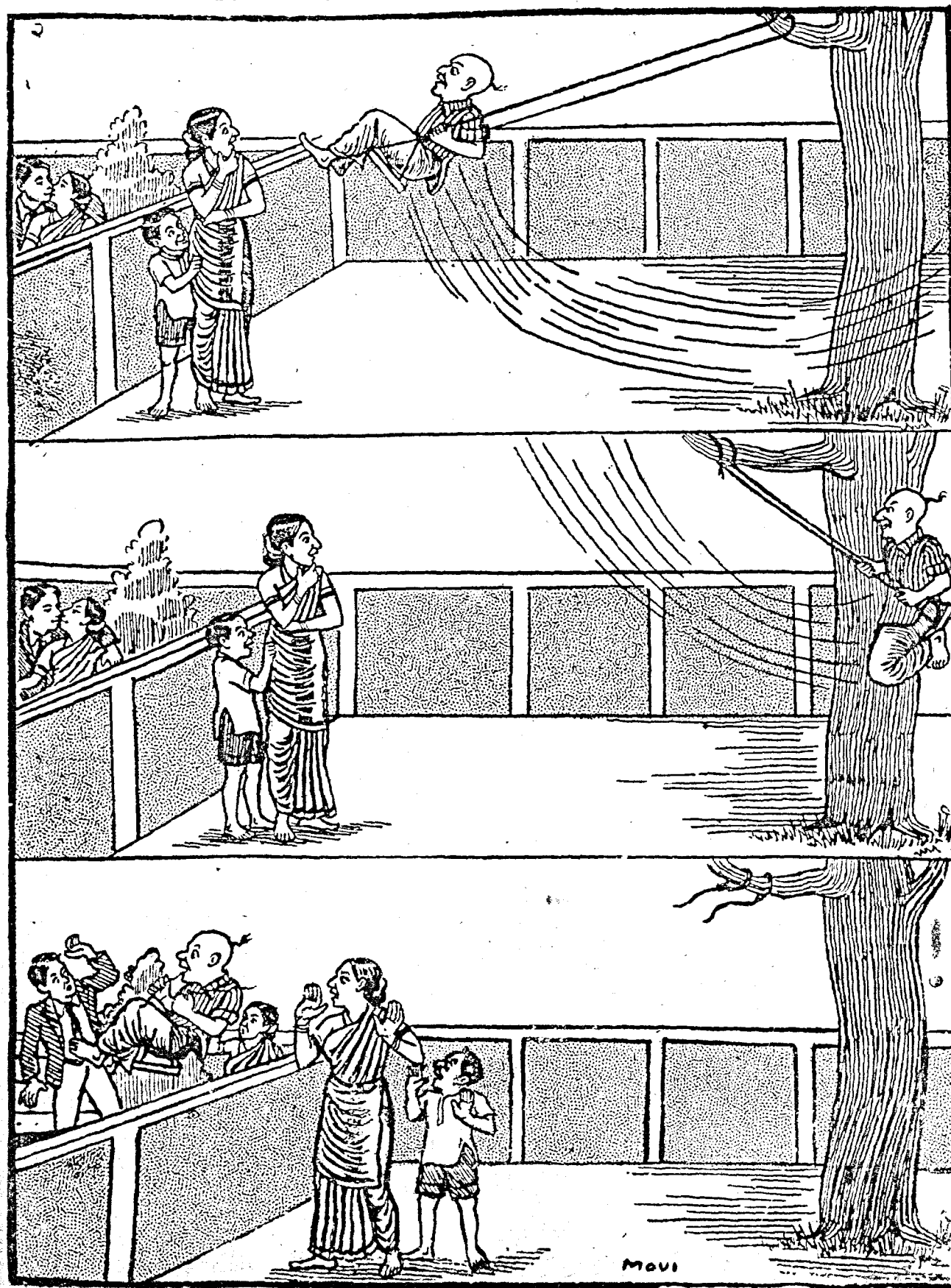
I was dumb for a few minutes. "You have won, my dear Somu, both in theory and by practical application. Let us be wise. Let the world roll on as it does. What about a little amusement and cheer? With all my recovery, I do not quite feel fit for out-door amusements. Put away your Talkies and Cinemas, even the Beach" I said.

My gifted friend had the very thing ready and handed me that store of delight, cheer, mirth and fun, with no little proportion of intellectual component, the "MERRY MAG." and smilingly added "Here you are."

"No, here we are" I corrected; and there we indeed were, enjoying ourselves thoroughly.



NEIGHBOURLINESS



The next door neighbour takes his turn and drops in.

NONE BUT THE BRAVE

(V. S. K.)

Ramu's *bravery* wins him his bride but Ramu's courage was of the Bob Acres variety; it oozed out at his fingers' ends. But whether Ramu deserved his luck or not, he got his heart's desire.—*Editor*.

N

AMES as a rule are often deceptive.

It is very common that names falsify the actual persons who bear them. The other day when my regular morning visitor, an emaciated beggar, came to my house, I asked him, quite casually, his name. I was very amused, when he said it was Sampathrajan. It was certainly an irony of fate that Sampathrajan or the king of wealth should take to the beggar's bowl. Such misnomers are abundant in everyday life. But especially when you deal with girls you must be very careful. When you hear of a name like Rupavathi or Soundaryavathi, do not jump to the conclusion that you are going to meet the embodiment of beauty. Ten to one, take it from me, dear reader, your Rupavathi in real life will be the very negation of beauty. She will just be ugliness incarnate. Our disappointment is more acute when we judge the character of a person from the name. I remember the pathetic experience of a friend of mine. He married his wife because her name was Sita. He expected from her all the wifely virtues of the legendary Sita. But he soon discovered his mistake. The suitable name for her was Surpanaka. That was the impression he got from more contact with his beloved Sita.

When Ramasami, more familiarly, Ramu, was with us in the college we thought his name was a misnomer. We thought it a shame that he should bear the name, when he was neither strong nor brave like the illustrious hero of the Ramayana. He was a weakling and more than that, a coward. But nature had endowed him with vast intellectual abilities. He was first in every examination and his store of knowledge was wonderful.

We were sure that when Ramu settled down in life he would soon come into the limelight by the qualities of his head. But it came as a big surprise to us when we heard that Ramu had settled down in life as a Police Inspector and was widely known as Ramu the Brave. We, who had known him intimately, wondered how he could have ever merited "The Brave." We came to the conclusion that Ramu should have been metamorphosed and we were still in the age of miracles.

But the manner in which Ramu earned his epithet of distinction is rather a funnystory. Sometime after

Ramu left the college, he went to stay with his friend Subramaniam for some days. Subramaniam or Subbu as we called him, was one of Ramu's intimate friends. Subbu had a great regard for Ramu's studiousness and cleverness and he used to look to Ramu for coaching him for every examination. Ramu loved Subbu very much as he was one of the pick of the sportsmen of the college. A warm friendship had sprung up between them and they used to be called the "Inseparables" in the college.

Subbu was the son of Mr. S. N. Aiyar, a District Superintendent of Police. Mr. Aiyar was one of those who had risen to the top from the lowest rung of the ladder. In point of appearance he was the usual type of the Indian Police officer. A figure inclined towards abnormal rotundity, he resembled a beer cask with a human head at the top. He was one of those who cared for money and fame. His methods in the department were often of a type not very straightforward or justifiable. His interests in life were few. The one thing which gave him some satisfaction was to have about him sturdy and strong fellows. So when Ramu came to his house he was greatly disappointed in his son's friend. He had not the cultural outlook to appreciate the finer qualities of Ramu. "Ramu is a weakling. Walking corpses are no good in life." That was the remark he made to his son about Ramu. So definitely from the start Ramu was given the cold shoulder by Mr. Aiyar.

In the ordinary course of things, it would have been immaterial to Ramu what Mr. Aiyar thought of him. But strange developments soon began to take place. Padma, Mr. Aiyar's daughter soon fascinated Ramu. She had also come for the holidays and her mind ran in the same groove as Ramu's. She was passionately fond of books and every day Ramu was pleasantly engaged in discussing the beauties of literature with her. She was a slender girl of medium height with a charming expression and within a week of his stay with Subbu, Ramu was head over ears in love with Padma. Padma in turn warmly reciprocated his love. His mine of knowledge astonished and attracted her like a magnet.

Subbu was cognisant of what was happening. He observed the growing attachment of his friend for his sister and the glowing of love in his sister's blushes.

Nothing could have delighted him more than that his best friend should marry his dear sister.

But what avail could Subbu's approbation be? Nothing could happen unless Mr. Aiyar gave his consent to the match. And it was certainly going to be a pretty difficult matter to get Mr. Aiyar's assent.

Ramu knew that Mr. Aiyar distinctly disliked him. Padma, with her womanly intuition, was against taking risks with her father. Subbu was prepared to fight a boxing match or run a cross country race for the sake of his friend. But in matters which required delicate tactics, he was not the proper person. After a lengthy conference it was decided that Ramu should take the bold step of approaching Mr. Aiyar himself and disclose the facts.

So when Mr. Aiyar was signing some office papers, Ramu was pushed in by Subbu while Padma with a beating heart stood by the stair landing and awaited results.

Mr. Aiyar was chin deep, immersed in official files and he was just feeling gravely worried about an explanation required from him for an official delinquency. Suddenly he lifted up his head and hearing a sound looked in the direction of the door. He saw Ramu standing there. Mr. Aiyar from the noiseless manner in which Ramu entered the room, immediately brought forth his police experience to jump to the conclusion that there was something suspicious about Ramu. His usual habit whenever he tackled a suspected person was to stare at him. So he stared at Ramu. Ramu wanted to talk; but the words sank within himself and he also tried to stare at Mr. Aiyar. But soon he found that he was helpless before the Police officer's fixed and inscrutable gaze. Mr. Aiyar's twin eyes were penetrating into Ramu's face like shafts. Finally Mr. Aiyar broke the silence and said, "Out with your story, I know everything."

Ramu's little courage immediately oozed out. He found himself confronted with a man who knew everything. All his hopes were crushed and he thought that Mr. Aiyar was going to take him to task for loving Padma.

"What, speak out, man, don't stare like an owl," said Mr. Aiyar. "No, I thought there was nothing wrong in that" answered a feeble voice.

Now Mr. Aiyar was glad he had detected something. He asked now in a tone of exultation, "well, Mr. Ramu, I do not want to do anything in your case, as you are my son's friend. But you must tell me everything from the beginning. Remember, truth only can

save you, truth, man, and nothing but the truth, do you understand?"

Ramu was utterly chagrined. He did not know how to begin. Just then Subbu entered the room and expressed surprise at finding Ramu there. "What is the matter, Ramu; was my father cross with you for taking his private copy of Sherlock Holmes? Don't you mind about that. He is always touchy when his books are touched. Isn't father. Come out, Ramu, we will go out for a walk." So saying, to Ramu's great relief Subbu dragged him out.

As soon as Ramu came out, he saw Padma standing with anger and vexation spread over every lineament of her countenance. "Look here, Mr. Ramu" she cried, "I can never marry you. You are not man enough to go and tell my father straight out that you love me. You were just hoodwinked by him and here you are looking like a hunted hare." So saying she ran away in anger.

Ramu's hopes were squashed. He felt that he did not deserve Padma. Yes, he had not the courage to fight for her. He was a washout in life. He went to his room and buried himself under the pillows. Night came. Ramu did not feel hungry. He refused to come for dinner. He was feeling miserable. Conflicting emotions tore him. He could not sleep. He kept on tossing in his bed. Yes, he loved Padma. But now it was too late. He had shown himself a coward and had behaved like a fool. Ramu determined to leave Subbu's house and go to his place by the earliest train. He wanted to sneak out of the place and fade out of Padma's life for ever. He remembered that there was a train at 3 A. M. He wanted to see the time. He searched for his watch. It was nowhere in the room. Suddenly he remembered that he had kept it in the shelf in the kitchen.

Ramu therefore slowly tip-toed downstairs and went in the direction of the kitchen. He was pleasantly surprised to find the kitchen door open and the lights on. He thought that the cook had carelessly omitted to close the kitchen door. It happened that the shelf was fixed by the side of the door and Ramu put his hand on the shelf to take his watch. But the next moment he withdrew his hand trembling with sudden fear, for a man, scantily clad, came from under the shelf and fell prostrate before him.

"Swami, aiyah, please spare me. Don't beat me, I cannot bear any blows. I was very hungry. I just wanted to see if I could get any food here. Please, Swami, spare me", wailed the man.

Ramu in a minute understood the situation. He had caught a burglar. He looked very brave and cried in a tone of command:

"What is it you wanted to steal, rascal." Then he did not know what to say further, for at that moment, Mr. Aiyar, Subbu and Padma had come there. But Ramu remembered the evening's scene.

He continued with added dignity and courage, "You sneaking blackguard, tell the truth and remember, nothing but the truth."

So saying he turned towards Mr. Aiyar who was himself transfixed with fear at the sight of the thief. "Mr. Aiyar," continued Ramu at the sight of Mr. Aiyar's pale face, "look here, don't be afraid. But take this advice from me; you had better be jolly well careful. I hear from reliable quarters you are doing things highhandedly."

Mr. Aiyar's face turned deadly white. "Ramu, be quiet, I will be more careful hereafter. You have saved me from this ruffian. What was he telling you?"

"Why, sir, he said he belonged to a gang who have an eye on you. Better you take leave and get yourself transferred."

"Yes, Ramu, thank you, Ramu. But I want to have about me a person of undaunted courage in order to feel safe. Would you like to be with me?"

"Mr. Aiyar, we will see to that. Subbu, you lead this man away. By the bye, Mr. Aiyar, I forgot to tell you last evening. As myself and Padma have determined to marry, you had better fix up an early date for the marriage."

"Is it so, Ramu. My blessings are with you. Take her hand and be happy with her, my boy," said Mr. Aiyar, overjoyed at this piece of good luck.

Ramu was feeling impatient. He melted out of the room; but soon he was under the staircase. He was not alone; he had Padma in his arms and was imprinting the first and the sweetest kiss on her lips. "Now, Padma; go to bed. You are not accustomed to seeing burglars. You are after all, dear, a woman. Such tasks are for a man and a brave man too."

Now you can understand, dear readers, whether Ramu is not really Ramu, the Brave; or is it just another misnomer?

WHERE TO FIND THEM?



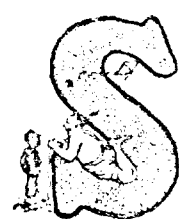
The Speaker:—If the coming Reforms are to be worked honestly, gentlemen, we must have men with convictions and where can we find them to-day?

Voice from the audience:—In the prisons, Mr. President, in the prisons!

= KAMALA'S BAD LUCK =

(R. V.)

[The Prize-Winning effort in our "Build a Story round the Picture" Competition.—Editor.]



HE sat on the threshold of her quiet, little villa, her chin resting on her hand, deep in thought. The sunlight penetrating through the leaves of the palm trees in front of the house threw a checkered pattern on her, so that she presented a charming study in light and shade. A bouquet of oleanders decked her head, and a streak of light falling on her face revealed a tear slowly moving down her cheek of rosy velvet.

What misfortune! Poor creature!

If only she hadn't worn it that day; if she hadn't gone to the *soiree* at Pankajam's villa—what foolish thoughts! who could have foreseen it?—that on one of her happiest occasions in life she would come to lose it. But such is life, such is fate.

She gently lifted her hand, and dubiously looked at the finger, the bare finger. How lovely it had looked yesterday, with the ring on!

It was, indeed, a very charming ring that had been irrevocably lost to her. How was she going to return it to her friend Padma? Could she buy another one like it? My God! what would it cost, one like it, made all of scintillating diamonds! She wept.

"Kamala! Kamala!" Her father was calling from within.

A shudder ran through her that manifested itself in an almost imperceptible ruffle over her silk saree. How was she going to break the sad news to her father? She must, anyway.

She wiped her eyes quickly, and ran in, leaving behind two petals of oleander to drift slowly down to the floor.

"Where's my fountain? Ah! what's the matter, child? You seem to have been weeping. Come nearer. Let me see." So saying he approached her, and

gently patted her back and cajoled her. With a sad countenance Kamala narrated her tale of woe.

Her father embraced Kamala softly, and consoled her in comforting words: "Why do you grieve? What must happen must needs happen. It was sheer bad luck for you to lose the jewel. Let's buy another at Gopanal's and have it returned to your friend."

That evening they went to the celebrated firm of "Gopanal Brothers: Jewellers and Dealers in Diamond wares." Kamala was amazed by the wealth of

charming, diamond jewels daintily arranged in glass cases. She discovered an exact replica of the ring she had lost. As she held it between her fingers the exquisite diamonds winked under the sheen of the Mazda electric lamps.

"What's the price of this?" asked her father.

"Four Hundred and Fifty. Blue Jaeger stones. Superior quality," said the salesman.

"What?"

"Sir! No haggling here. You know Gopanal's, and I presume you know our motto." Kamala's father counted out 450 Rs. and returned with the ring.

The next day Kamala returned the ring to Padma.

450 Rs. gone in the twinkling of an eye—and for nothing! "What must happen must needs happen" the words had stuck in her mind.

She had not walked ten steps when Padma called her back: "This ring is different and much finer than the other. I didn't notice it at first. But the maker's name is engraved on the velvet lining here in small gold letters. Mine had nothing of the kind."

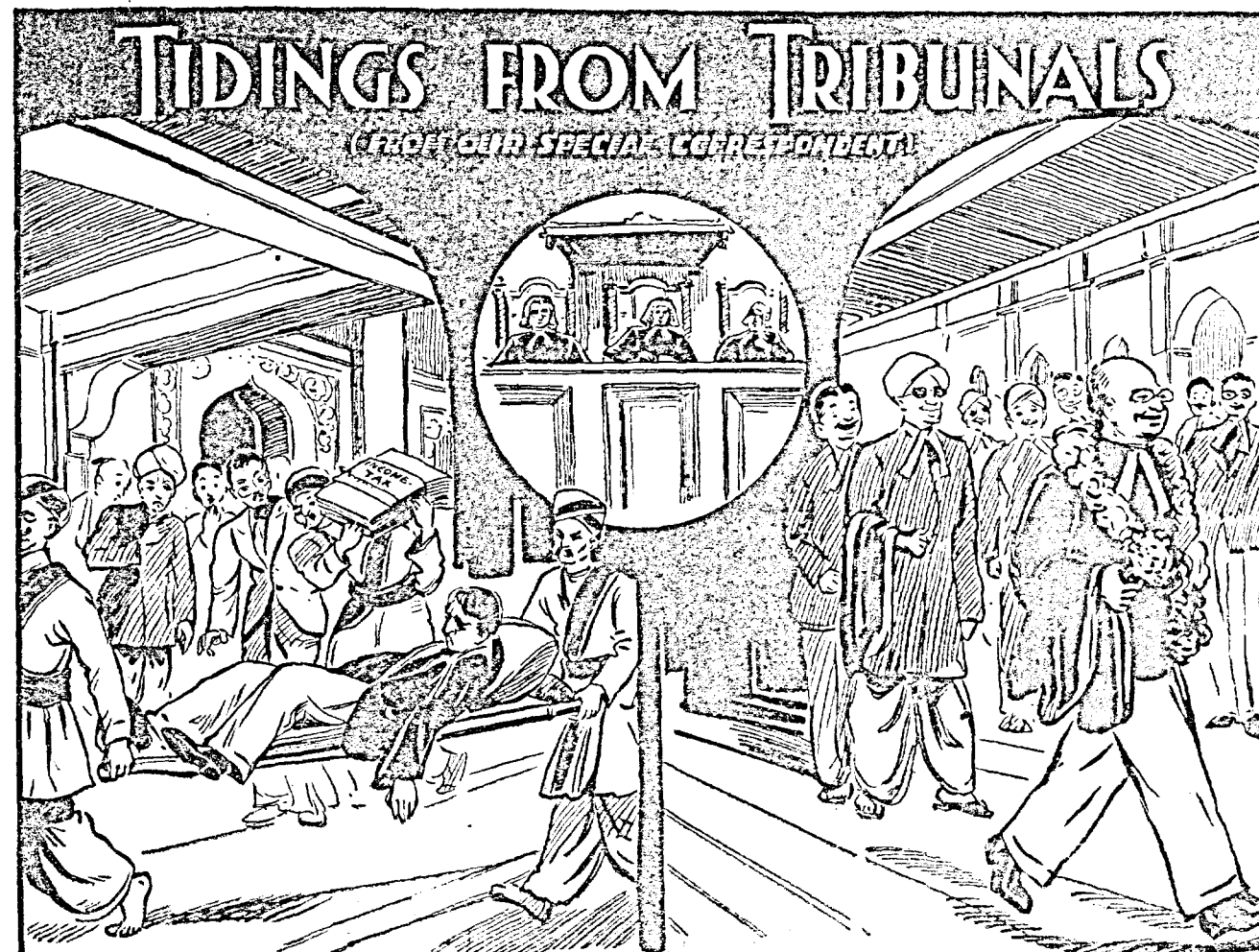
Then Kamala told her the whole story and of the stroke of bad luck she had had.

Padma burst into laughter. "What a story. The ring you had from me was a trifle, made of artificial stones and worth only fifteen rupees!"

"BUILD A STORY" COMPETITION



Her father embraced Kamala gently and consoled her with comforting words.



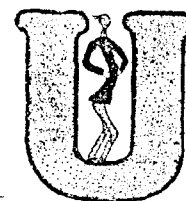
The Commissioner of Income-tax fainted and had to be carried out on a stretcher.

Eminent counsel for the successful appellant was profusely garlanded.

Before their Lordships Sir Fly Swatter, Kt Soundtop and Mandookapathi Iyer, JJJ.

Sir Allasani Vs. The Commissioner Of Income-Tax (Maddington)

Maddington, 10th October, 1933



UNPRECEDENTED scenes were witnessed in the Court of Appeal today when a Full Bench of the Court consisting of Sir Fly Swatter, Mr. Justice Soundtop and Mr. Justice Mandookapathi Iyer, delivered judgment in a sensational Income-tax appeal.

The Commissioner of Income-tax fainted and had to be carried out on a stretcher by his counsel while Sir Norman Grunt the eminent counsel for the successful appellant was profusely garlanded and carried in triumphant procession through the corridors of the Court by the members of the Bar and public assembled therein. Admission to the court was restricted to taxpayers and permission had to be obtained from the officiating Chief Justice by a petition on a Rs. 2 stamp paper and an affidavit in support thereof.

It may be recalled that when Sir Norman Grunt commenced his learned arguments on Monday the second inst. he said 'My lads; I am terribly oppressed with a feeling of heavy responsibility in this appeal,' to which His Lordship Sir Fly replied 'Do not mind us, Sir Norman. Have a stiff pull at the flask if you have one handy!' Sir Norman during the course of the arguments which were concluded only on the 5th inst. had several long 'pulls' every time expressing his deep obligation to the bench for this overwhelmingly kind indulgence. This is considered to be a move in the right direction by the members of the Maddington Bar and a deputation waited on Sir Fly this evening to thank His Lordship for the indulgence and to express their desire that this precedent should be followed by the other eminent judges of the Court. The arguments which lasted for 7 full days were concluded today and the court after taking time for consideration delivered their considered judgment, the judgment of the

196/72

bench being delivered by Sir Fly Swatter Kt. the other judges agreeing. The following is the text of the judgment.

Sir Fly Swatter:—This is yet another reference under The Income-Tax Act XXI of 1922 arising out of certain proceedings necessitated by a preposterous claim of the Commissioner of Income-Tax (Maddington Circle) that he should, in the matter of distribution of the income of the appellant (assessee) herein receive preference over the appellant himself, his wife, and 16 children. This is not a question affecting only the particular appellant before us or depending upon the state of evidence in this case but a question of public importance affecting at least all subjects of his Majesty with an assessable income within British India and depending upon well recognised general principles of law.

The facts out of which this reference arises may be briefly stated. The appellant assessee in this case is Sir Apat Sahayam an eminent member of the Maddington Bar who appears to be fashionable among the litigant public at present. Sir Apat (who will be referred to as the assessee) for the purpose of assessment to Income-tax for the financial year 1929-30 had to, very reluctantly though, make a return of his total income during that year. He returned it at Rs. 1001-2-5 as the taxable income after deducting the sum of Rs. 139500-0-0 (from his larger gross income of Rs. 140501-2-5), as being exempt from taxation under the Act. The Commissioner not content with this unimpeachable return and the tax thereon, assessed the total income of the assessee at the figure of Rs. 140501-2-5. In arriving at this figure the Commissioner disallowed certain deductions which had been made by the assessee. The assessee then made several commendable efforts to bring to the knowledge of the authorities concerned the extravagant nature of their claim and for that purpose presented several pathetic appeals and even invited the Commissioner to a full 18 course champagne dinner during which he discussed the matter with the Commissioner and said several nice things to the Commissioner. He also appears to have garlanded the Commissioner profusely and presented him with two lemons on the occasion. These efforts proving futile he refers through the Commissioner his case to us for determination. The question therefore is whether the assessee is not under the law of the land entitled to deduct the sum of Rs. 139500—0—0 from his gross income as being exempt from taxation.

This modest claim of the assessee conveniently falls to be considered under 2 heads viz exemption claimed in respect of a sum of Rs. 1035000/- under Section 4 (3) vii. of the Act and exemption claimed in respect of a sum of Rs. 36000/- under section 11 of the Act.

The contention of the assessee in regard to the 1st of these heads is that the sum of Rs. 103500—0—0 represents the 7 payments made by the Rajah of Thathapuram on the distinct understanding that the assessee should not practice his profession in respect of

certain cases either for or against the Rajah. It was in the nature of a 'detainer' fee in respect of which the assessee, far from rendering any professional service promised not to engage himself in any profession or vocation including the one of his choice either to the advantage or disadvantage of the Rajah of Thathapuram. In these circumstances could this sum be deemed to be the income, gains or profits derived from the practice of a profession by the assessee? We, in spite of our flash-light imagination have never been able to see how it could possibly be said to be an income derived from the practice of a profession or vocation by the assessee, when the whole reason it was paid to the assessee by the Rajah, was said to be that the assessee should not practice or follow his profession. It is therefore futile to contend, as the commissioner is obstinate enough to do, that this income was anything but a casual income under section 4 (3) vii. entirely divorced from the practice of any business, trade, profession or vocation by the assessee, an income that is subject to, or depending on, or produced by chance or accidental or fortuitous occurrence, coming at uncertain times, not calculated upon, and brought about without design or premeditation. It is hardly necessary to cite any authority in support of our view. But we shall cite only one conclusive authority so that it may serve as a guidance to the commissioner on future occasions when he contemplates such extravagant demands. It is a case reported in 110 D. U. D. S. J. 452 (The Governor of Dugbay Vs The Commissioner of Income-tax, Dugbay). There a similar point arose for determination in respect of the taxable income of the assessee therein. Sir Grass Hopper J. in delivering the judgment of the Full Bench held that as there was the fundamental idea of the continuous exercise of an activity, underlying the word Income which the act purports to tax at varying exorbitant rates, the assessee in that case who was notorious for his inactivity, except on rare occasions when he signed on the dotted line at the dictation of certain persons called his councillors, should be exempt from income-tax. The facts in that case also disclosed that the assessee was such an inert mass of living adipose tissue, that the doctors frequently put him on a treadmill to relax his stiffened limbs. It was strenuously argued in that case that salaries were distinct from other sources of income and were liable to be taxed irrespective of the fact that they were not the fruits of any activity. This contention was repelled by the court at once on the wider ground of public interests viz. that the prospect of exemption from tax would be sufficient inducement for Government servants to maintain a correct record of their inactivity instead of exaggerated accounts of dreadful and frenzied activity.

We now turn to the second and more consequential head of income i.e. the sum of Rs. 36000 in respect of which assessee claims exemption from tax under section 11 and the general law of the land. That this item represents his lawful earnings in the practice of his profession is admitted by the assessee. To be able to appreciate the assessee's claim under this head, we shall have to bear in mind certain elementary principles of law well recognised and long established in all civilised states. It is not the case of the Commissioner that

this country or the assessee is not civilised enough to claim the benefit of these well known principles.

Now it is a fundamental though elementary principle of the law of the land and in fact the very foundation on which the state, of which the Commissioner is but one extreme limb, rests and maintains its authority, that the life and the body (apart from which life cannot exist) of every subject are not his own but that of the state. Every subject in the eye of the state is either an actual or potential source of wealth and power. It is not a matter of surprise therefore that those exhilarating scraps, joy fights, jousts, and tournaments so fashionable in a primitive state of society, in which the fellow with the quicker battle axe or lance or a stouter meat-safe merrily put an end to the merry career of another, are now definitely forbidden by law. In their stead we have a comprehensive Penal Code in which as many as 76 sections are provided for the express purpose of safeguarding the life and limb of the subject from the embryo to the grave or pyre. The state is so zealous about the safety of its subjects that a person cannot without fear of punishment snap his fingers nor even so much as sneeze or shoot peas at the face or person of another in any attitude intended to, or though least intended to, but in fact conveying or likely to convey a threat. The state is so insistent in its demands on the unremitting labours of its subjects for its safety that the subject is not at liberty even to attempt to put an end to his life in his own interests, as the assessee threatened to do at a certain stage of these proceedings, as any such attempt is punishable under 5309 of the Penal Code though unfortunately the completed offence is not. The subject escapes punishment. Apart from the Penal Code suicide is forbidden by all religions of the world, perhaps for the same reason, and set down under the Hindu Scriptures as Ghorapataka. But a solitary exception to this strict rule has of late been recognised in the case of the hunger striker who, however, is allowed to perish as well as he can, peacefully on salt and water. The reason for this exception is said to be based on a policy of convenience and expediency, as these individuals exhibit tendencies distinctly uncanny that make the administrators of law uneasy in their seats.

Quite apart from the obligations of the subject as above indicated he is by various enactments and by the personal law by which he is governed bound to protect and maintain his wife and children, irrespective of their number, in a manner consistent with his position and status in society and in that state of comfort to which they have been accustomed to, and neglect, failure, or refusal to do so may expose him to criminal and civil proceedings, not to speak of the music to be faced from the wife and children aforementioned.

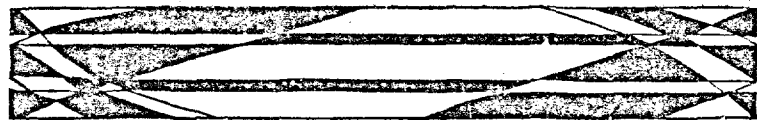
On these well known principles it is argued with convincing force that in this advanced or highly evolved state of law the assessee is not at liberty either to neglect the care of his person or sacrifice the interests of his wife and 16 children in response to a claim pre-

sented under a statute which is well recognised as a freak of the legislature since regretted at every lucid interval by the members of that body. We uphold this contention of the assessee with all its implications. Though our opinion of that body is by no means complimentary, we do not think so ill of the legislature as to suppose that in enacting this statute, it intended to enact principles so remote from the needs of a civilised society and the ordinary claims that they make upon its members as between each other or as between man and wife or parent and child as to deny to the assessee or his dependents their respective rights and obligations inter se.

It is further maintained by the eminent counsel for the assessee that the sum was expended on the maintenance of his (assessee's) person in a fit state or condition to enable him to practice his profession and that the sum so expended is exempt from tax as being items of expenses incurred solely for the purposes of the profession. The accounts of the assessee indicate that these sums were expended on food, clothing, and foreign travel more for reasons of health than for a more intimate knowledge of the subtle differences between blondes and brunettes in the West or the broader distinction between Napoleon brandy and grocer's port. We hasten to express our considered opinion that these are necessary items of expenditure for the practice of the assessee's profession (or any profession or calling) for we shudder at the prospect of having to hear the assessee from his place at the Bar in a famished and denuded state. Nor are we inclined to differ from the assessee's statement made on oath that he would never have been spared by his wife and 16 clamorous children to practice his profession in peace had he preferred the Commissioner in respect of the amount of tax claimed on Rs. 139500.

It is argued for the Commissioner that these expenses represent personal expenses expressly excepted from exemption under the act and that a contrary view would work grave hardship on the state which is now stepping blithely on only two steps ahead of bankruptcy. We concede it is indeed a very hard case for the state. But "Hard cases make bad law" says Lord Lackbean in Grumphy vs. The Commissioner for Inland Revenue. The state cannot endearingly claim the life and person of its subject in one breath and disown him with indecent haste in the next breath. That is not cricket, much less is it, in our opinion, sound law. We therefore hold that the assessee is entitled to be exempted from income-tax on the sum of Rs. 139500 and the reference shall accordingly be answered in emphatic affirmative; 'Yes' in capital letters. The assessee shall have his costs of this reference fixed at Rs. 2500 and also the cost of the Champagne dinner, Rose garlands and Lemons fixed at Rs. 123—6—9.

Sir Norman Grunt instructed by Messrs. Pluhs and Argue, Solicitors, Maddington, appeared for the assessee while the commissioner was represented by Messrs. Prunthalal Sastry, assisted by Sontee Ganapathy Sastry and Mopillai Gangadara Sastry.



CULLED JEMS

A Waiting Game.

An elderly examiner was questioning a young medical student.

"Suppose," he began, "there was a gunpowder explosion, and a man was blown into the air. You, as the nearest doctor, having been called in, what would you do first?" "Wait for him to come down," was the prompt reply.

—Spinx's Jokes.

Impressions.

"I guess your wife made a deep impression on you."

"Oh Yes, twice."

"Twice?"

"Yes, once when we first met, and another time she hit me on the head with a rolling pin."

—Wehman's Vaudeville Jokes.

Well Informed

Lecturer:—"Of course, you all know what the inside of a corpuscle is like—"

Chairman (interrupting):—"Most of us do, but, for the benefit of those who have never been inside of one you might explain it."

—Legion Weekly.

Tighten the belt.

Race horses do not eat the day before the race, according to a magazine article. And often we do not eat for days after the race.

—Atlanta Constitution.

The Reason.

"Mummy can I have a little sister some day?"

"Why, my dear?"

"Because I'm getting so tired of teasing the cat."

—Answers.

Both sides.

A Father asked his son what made him lie in bed so long. "I am kept busy," said he, "in hearing counsel every morning. Industry advises me to get up; sloth to lie still. And they give twenty reasons for and against. It is my part to hear what is said on both sides, and by the time the case is over, dinner is ready."

—Labor

Not guilty.

With a grinding of brakes the officer pulled up his motor-car, and shouted to a little boy playing in the field "I say, have you seen an aeroplane come down anywhere near here?"

"No, Sir!" replied the boy trying to hide his tiny catapult. "I've only been shooting at a bottle."

—Galt Reporter.

Indisputable.

A woman inquired of a Negro porter the time of the train to Chicago. She then went to a white man and asked him.

The porter went to the white man afterwards and said, with a smile "Perhaps she will believe it, now that she has got it in black and white."

—Northern Mail.

Lucky.

The big game hunter was telling his stay at home wife all about his encounter with the Bengal tiger and how he finally shot it.

"Yes," he wound up, "it was a case of the tiger or me."

"I'm so glad it was the tiger, dear," she said sweetly; "otherwise we wouldn't have this lovely rug."

—Guelph Mercury.

Making it Easier.

Night fell and the two tramps began to look round for a place to lay their heads.

"What yer going to use as a pillow?" Asked Willie.

"This bit of drain-pipe," said Tim.

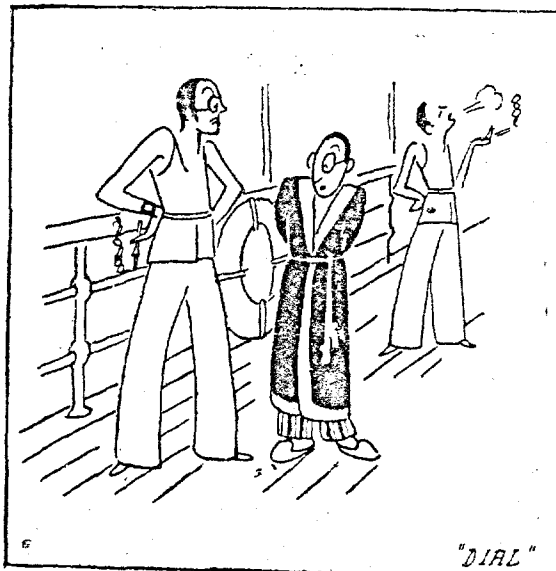
"Drain-pipe?" echoed his companion.

"Won't that be a bit 'ard?"

"Course not," I'm going to stuff it with some straw."

—Answers.

A COMEDY OF TERRORS.



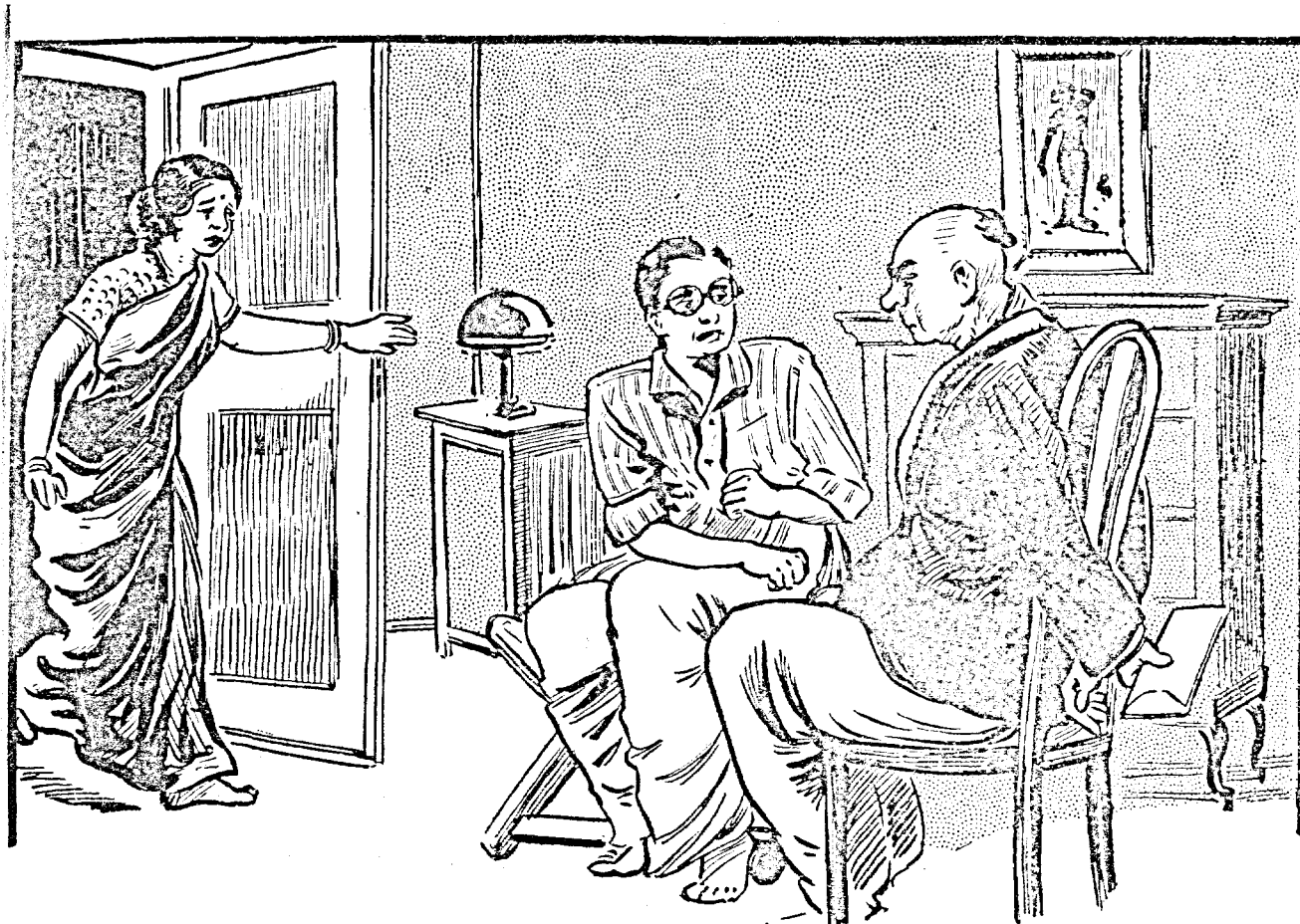
"DIAL"

"Look at that girl! She's dressed up just like a man! I've never seen anything like that before!"

"Sir, that's my daughter"

"I beg your pardon I didn't know you were her father—"

"I'm not. I'm her mother."

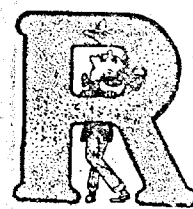


.....she marched into the room.

ROMANCE

(ENNARC)

To be romantic is no doubt interesting but Ennarc will tell you that romance has more than a spice of danger attached to it.—Editor.



OMANCE! Romance! Does it ever die?—that stimulant of youth; that Magic of Life.

Without introduction and all that sort of stuff, let me go straight into the subject. Now this is a different sort of story, and it is also true. From my earliest days I was an impetuous youngster, always getting into some scrape or other, but none the worse for it. You will understand better if I say that I am incurably romantic. Till I married, I had been, in spite of everything, getting a bit of fun out of life. But things took a decided turn when she stepped in and took charge, relieving me of all duties but to say 'yes' to her. But a thousand wives can't kill the romantic spirit in me. There it was and there it is still in me, only dormant.

For my part I am in love with life and the fun I can get out of it; but am I satisfied to live as I do? Certainly not. The romantic spirit in me badly needed an outlet. I determined to wake up, and do something to satisfy my desire for adventure.

I thought mighty hard, planning one thing after another, a dozen schemes, but all fell flat, nothing coming up to the mark. One evening I was sitting huddled up in a chair limp and weary. Just then the news boy brought in the daily paper and I skimmed over the contents and as usual looked into the advertisement columns. As luck would have it, my eyes rested on a particular advertisement. You have heard of Agencies, agencies catering for the multifarious wants of the public—Employment Agencies, 'Let me be your father, or mother' agency, 'Why worry? Leave everything to me' agency, 'Come and be convinced' agency, and a

host of others. But this one was different, a new sort so to say. This was purely a humanitarian agency pledged to make both sexes happy.

No More Sleepless Nights! No Further Anxiety!!
Banish All your Cares!!!

Parents, Bachelors, Maids, Widows,
Don't Despair.

Leave all your matrimonial affairs to us.

Apply to:

The Matrimonial Agency,
Noman Street,
Newmanpet, Madras.

I saw my chance and grabbed it with both hands. After all! I shall have a go at this. I danced with joy at the prospect of the fun I would have out of it. I resolved to attend to this matter the very next day. Why? I was so jubilant that I was whispering soft nothings to my wife the rest of the day which made her wonder whether I was suffering from softening of the brain!

Next day, when the wife was having her customary afternoon nap, like a thief, in the privacy of my room, I wrote out my application to the Agency with all the necessary information re: my age, qualification, status in life etc, etc; and enclosing my photograph just to make the Agency know that, though not of the classical type but still, that I was a bit of an Adonis—and added a postscript that the agency should try to choose and yoke me to a 'fair, educated, well accomplished, etc' sort of girl from amongst their clients. I sent it along with the necessary fee.

In about two days, the agency acknowledged my application and wrote to say that my name had been registered and put on the 'waiting list,' and that they would do their utmost to satisfy my requirements. Now I had my own misgivings. But what of that? Think of the fun you get out of it. I patiently awaited developments.

A week passed in waiting. The agency seemed to be slow, very slow, in affairs matrimonial. But there was the consolation that patience is always fully rewarded in the end.

One fine morning, my father-in-law happened to blow in on me. *O tempora! O mores!* Of all times, why should this Jack-in-a-box of a father-in-law pop out just now, fairly giving me a touch of the heeby-jeebies. If, if the matrimonial agency correspondence should fall into his hands in my absence.....The very thought made me feel as tho' every drop of blood in my body had turned to ice. Though seething with rage and inwardly cursing him the while, I put on my blandest air and grinned a welcome to him; but he cut me dead!

Shortly after, the father and daughter were closeted with each other for a long time in earnest conversation—punctuated by oaths, grinding and gnashing of teeth on the one side, and broken by sobs and

moans on the other, and my name was mentioned a dozen times at least. Holy Blazes! What was up? My heart was going pit-a-pat. Tensely I held my breath while I could feel my heart hammer against my ribs.

I was not left in suspense for long. After the farce of a meal was over, I retired to my room sorely perplexed. Soon after, the vast bulk of my father-in-law lumbered across the room and deposited itself in a chair. He groaned.

"Are you ill?" I asked.

There was no reply. He had been sitting with his face turned towards the kitchen, perhaps waiting for his daughter to join him. In a few minutes, she marched into my room like a lioness; and he looked up. There was a red glare in his eyes which sent a thrill of horror through me. He reminded me of Frankenstein's monster.

"So, you want to marry again, eh?" he shot out suddenly.

I stared at him, then at my wife, thoroughly bewildered. Putting on a bewildered air, as if the very thought of marriage was revolting to me, I blurted out:

"Marry? What do you mean? Me, marry again when I have Leela, my beloved, my....."

"Shut up," he roared.

"Are you sure this is your handwriting?" he asked, actually thrusting a bulky envelope on my face.

"Almost," I said.

"Almost!" screeched my Leela, as she snatched the packet from her father's hands, tore open the envelope and threw the contents at my face. "My stars! My application to the matrimonial agency, my photograph and the rest scattered down to the floor. The world seemed to swim before my eyes. My heart missed one complete beat. She looked at me, and then let off the most awful screech I have ever heard and fell on the floor and carried on like a lunatic. As I gazed at the papers on the floor, I was conscious of a chill that ran right down my back.

My father-in-law stormed and raged; he thrust another typed paper into my hands.

"Read it," he said, choking and holding out the letter; "read it."

I took hold of it and looked at it. I felt the world had come to an end. It was from the same agency to my father-in-law. I read it over and over. It ran something like this:

Mr. S.....Aiyar Avl.,
Senior Deputy Collector,
Manjur.....

Dear Sir,

We are glad to inform you that we have, after much consideration, hit upon a suitable match for your second daughter, Padma. The candidate, we hope, will more than satisfy your expectation. Mr. Ennarc, whose

photo is enclosed herewith, has respectable family connections, a good status in life.....We are sure you will approve of our choice and talk things over in person.....

That was the finish. Everything was clear to me now. So, my father-in-law had sought the help of the same blasted agency to choose and select for him a suitable candidate for my wife's sister, Padma. To hell with the agency! The irony of it! The agency in turn had pitched upon me as a suitable match for my sister-in-law! Immediately on hearing from them, he had hurried on to the agency office without a moment's delay. What little doubt he might have had had been washed away by the particulars he had received there.

I didn't know where I was. Then I saw how I had been done. The evidence of my guilt was incontrovertible. As I perused the details it was as tho' a cold hand was closing round my heart. I looked wistfully at the door, but escape was impossible.

"What have you got to say for yourself?" asked my wife, beginning to rave again.

"Don't you know, Leela," I managed, having gulped once or twice, "I, I am a man as will have his little joke."

"I don't want none of your lies."

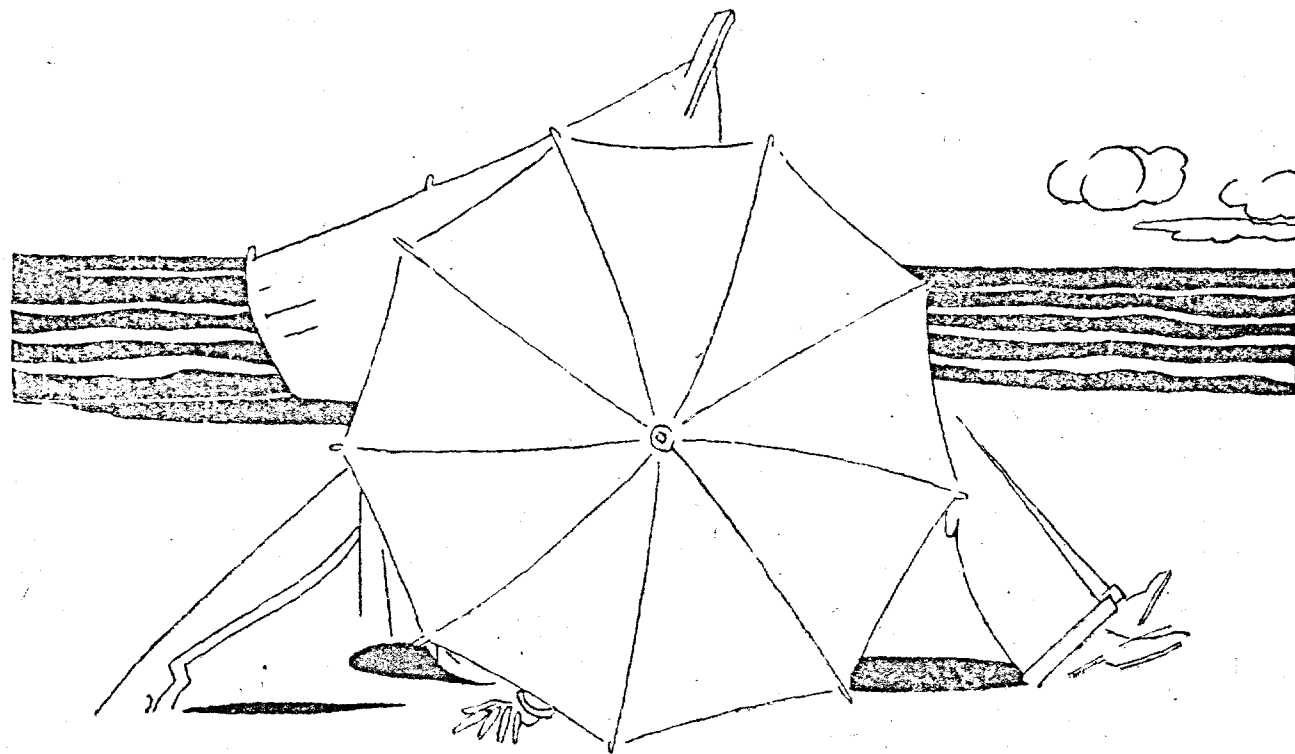
"Leela," I broke in, after she had tried to glare me down again, "Don't you see, have you not guessed....."

SWAN-NECKED



[Lady who has never before seen a swan, to her lover after seeing the swan] "What did you mean by comparing my neck to that thing, you....."

90 DEGREES IN THE SHADE



OCTOBER LUCKY NUMBER SCHEME

THE EDITOR OFFERS

Rs. 215

for the return of readers' copies. Rs. 100 will be paid for the first

Winning number, Rs. 50 for the Second Winning number

Rs. 20 in two Third Winning numbers

and

Rs. 5 each for the other 9 Winning Numbers.

13 numbers have been chosen at random and kept in a sealed envelope which will be opened after 25-10-'33. These numbers will be published on 10-11-'33.

Yours may be the Lucky Number Worth Rs. 100
SO KEEP YOUR COPY

HABITS, HILARIOUS AND HORRID

(RAJARAM)

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen

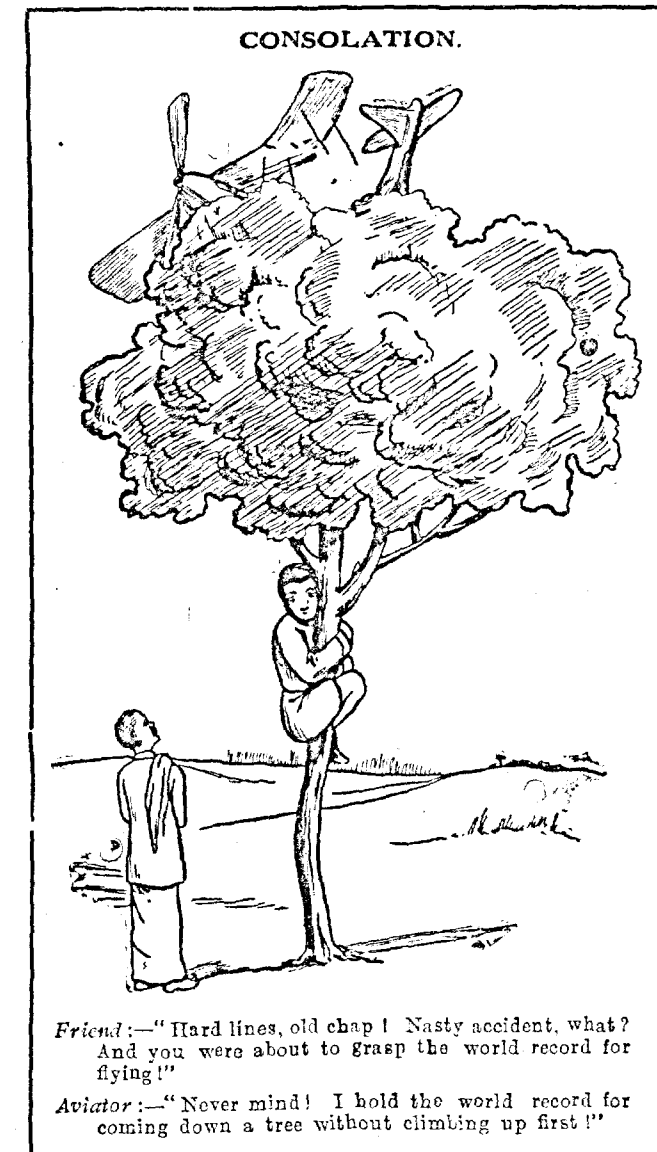
I AM thankful to you all for giving me this opportunity to acquaint you with my researches into the psychology and anatomy of habits, which so largely determine our happiness and character. I am grateful to you, Mr. Chairman, for having introduced me with generosity, and particularly for having described me as the tallest and foremost scientist in the Pacific. It shall be my endeavour to deserve well of your commendations. (Applause)

It does not become a big scientist like my humble self to waste time in platitudinous pomposities and vainglorious vacuities. I shall strike at the root of the subject on hand and try to do what justice I can to its limitless potentialities in discussion. Habit, said some literary somebody, is second nature. So it is, I warrant. Habit, like mercy, can drop like the gentle dew from Heaven to soften and charm humanity; it can also, alas! smash us like Indra's thunderbolt and nastily pulverise us. Literally perhaps as in the instance cited in Professor Mhu-vyus' book "Danger-spots in Habit-culture"; on page 47 we read:—

"In Hong-Kong was a retired soldier, disabled to boot, who eked out a petty livelihood selling milk. Daily did ex-corporal Mi-U-wa-Thing take a massive mud-pot of milk on his head and cry hoarse in the streets, the pot of rotundity supported by his no less rotund hands, and walking agile and alert—the typical milk-vendor we are all familiar with. And what does a little urchin of a school-boy do, one ominous tragic morning, on confronting the ex-corporal, but shout peremptorily: "tention!" in orthodox military style! Automatic like our machinery, the deceived ex-corporal forgets the

present, drops his hands, and draws his form severely perpendicular—and the pot-ful of milk tumbles down, and the pot breaks to a thousand pieces." (Vociferous cheers and applause)

I am surprised, Ladies and Gentlemen, you laugh thus ungenerously over this pitiful tragedy. Oh! rather, if you have tears, prepare to shed them now and flood this hall with tears. (Silence again)



Friend:—"Hard lines, old chap! Nasty accident, what? And you were about to grasp the world record for flying!"

Aviator:—"Never mind! I hold the world record for coming down a tree without climbing up first!"

Let us discuss this matter calmly and carefully. (A voice: O let us!) Thank you. What, I ask, was the matter with poor ex-corporal: Mi-U-wa-thing? It was this. The habits of his military days had hardened into the texture of his conduct, that he had become a slave of it. Is it not serious, Ladies and Gentleman? Is it not unbearably miserable? We want liberty, independence and freedom; but the force of habit has us in its thrall, Habits, my vast researches tell me, are not only psychological but also neurological. It is all well when habit crystallises into instructive action, though even there, there are difficulties enough as we saw in the history of the ex-corporal. But there are worse things. When thinking and logic intrude into the domain of habit and instinct, I may say with Othello, "Chaos is come again."

Ladies and Gentlemen, I find some of you yawning. And my learned colleague Professor Zoozoo says that yawning is the

prefatal indication of sleep. Do you find my lecture dull? Am I a fool? I beg to inform you that I am a B.A., besides being the Honorary visitor of the Pacific Zoo. I protest my subject is serious. (Laughter) I shall now give concrete instances of "Habit-retrogression," as I have named it. It is also called Tittleef-complex, after my sur-name. During my professorship

of Habit-culture at the Pacific University, I have often been consulted by persons suffering from the Tithleef-complex. I shall now quote from a few of my overseas correspondents:—

(1) A cabinet minister writes: "Dear Professor Tithleef, I am helpless. O save me, else fallen, fallen am I. Trouble is this, whenever I take my safety razor, or any razor, I can't decide at which angle I should shave. Formerly I never thought about it, but did the thing to satisfaction; now I question myself as soon as I take up my razor, whether it is to 2" or 20" or 47" or *what* it must be. There are no barbers here; and my hair is growing profusely. Save me, O professor!" (*subdued cheers*)

(2) A great actor of Poland, Mr. Kaliniasky, writes:—"You are my last resort. I am afraid if I go on like this my career is gone and I must be deposited on the cup-board. When I go to the stage I can't automatically make up my mind on which of the heroine's cheeks I ought to impart a kiss. Formerly things had been jolly smooth sailing. Now I look at her and reason within myself "left or right?" till I am absurd and the whole audience hisses me out of the stage. Oh professor with world-wide reputation, save me, lift me from the bottomless pit of oblivion....." (*Deafening applause*) Again, Ladies and Gentlemen, I am afraid (*A voice: no fear please*) you don't comprehend the pathetic part of my stories. (*voices: we do, we do*) Please allow me to proceed:

(3) An eminent Mathematician from Prague writes to me: "Dear Brother in the Profession, take pity on me and advise me. I have not drunk anything naturally for days together. I am being forcibly fed. What a monstrous confusion in my brain! Whenever I lift a cup of water or milk or coffee or wine to drink, I cannot decide on the spur of the moment, or ever afterwards, if I should open my mouth first and then let the water flow, or *vice versa*. 'If' is the most horrid extremity of hideous uncertainty. I rely on you to save me and pull me up."

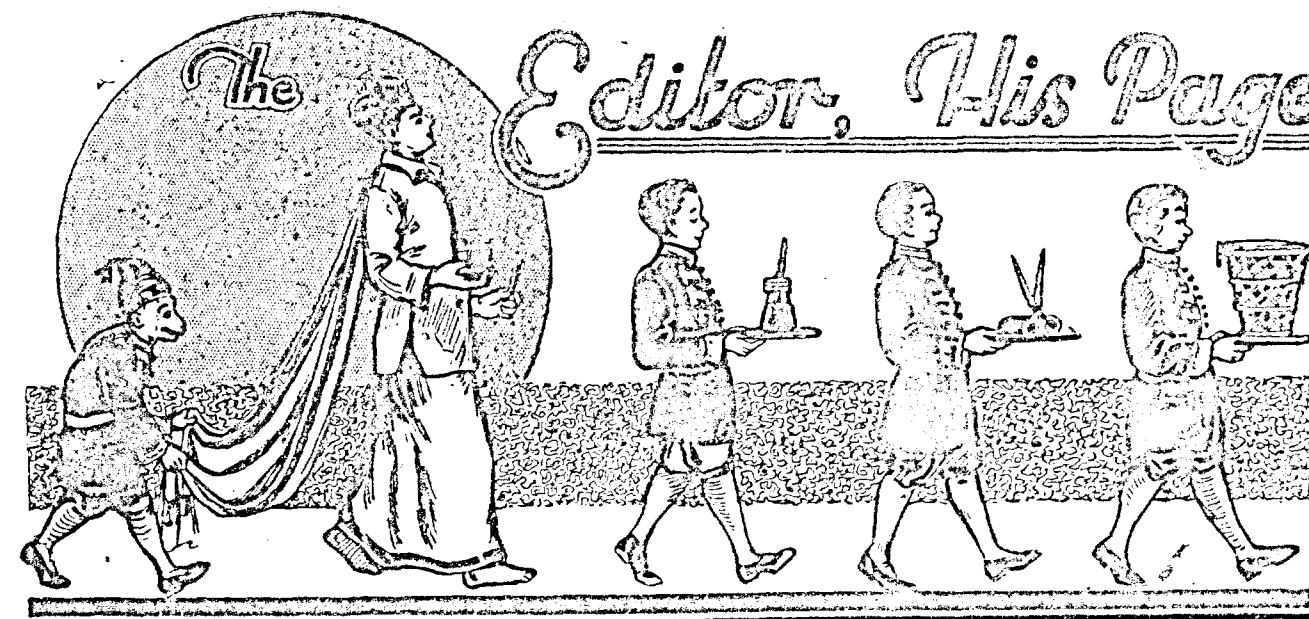
(4) A despairing High Court Judge from the Andamans Empire wires to me: "My wife's taunts are biting and unbearable. I can tie the tie around my hand or around the mosquito pole or around anybody's neck; but, woe is me, *not* around my neck. It always goes wrong. My wife who has to help me always taunts me on that score most unmercifully. She is a terror; wire me your prescription." (*Applause*)

Ladies and Gentlemen, your applause is proof-positive or positive-proof that you do appreciate the humour of the situations revealed in those despairing

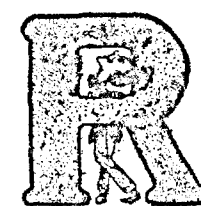
messages. But do you equally comprehend and apprehend the humour side of the same? Do not run away with the idea that these calamitous consequences of habit-retrogression are outside the pale of your own individual existences. That will be lulling yourself into a false sense of security. Any moment you may find yourselves in similar juxtapositions and play the part of laughing-stocks to others. We must not only know what it is but also find out a suitable remedy. (*Hear, hear!*) I am glad you are now serious about it.

Ladies and Gentlemen, let me dig deep into the kernel of the matter. What has been humanity's curse? What has been the chief cause of man's undoing? What has made a pitiful mockery of man? I say, and I say it with all the emphasis of which I am capable, that it is all due to man's so-called reasoning faculty, to man's logic, to man's introspective imaginings, to man's ratiocinative vaticinations, to man's self-stultifying intellectual hair-splittings, to man's.....(*voices: please stop! we can't bear it*) I am glad though you have risen to my expectations. Ladies and Gentlemen, patience please; I shall make my meaning perfectly clear. Think of Hamlet. I say, think of Shakespear's Hamlet. What is the unwritten moral of that stupendous play? Is it not that we should cease to think and reason? Is it not that we should return to instructive action and annihilate all powers of logic and ratiocination? A beast or a primitive man, when he felt hungry or thirsty, simply ate what was handy, or drank whatever was within reach. It was all over in a tree. But now, now, NOW, in 1933, what has happened? We cogitate, and meditate, and hesitate, and contemplate, and do nothing. We think and talk; we have lost the native art of *doing*. It is the Hamlet-complex *inexcelsis* (*The audience murmurs scandalised: ha! hoo! hum!*)

What ha? What hoo? What hum? I snap my fingers at your *has* and *hos* and *hums*. I ask you in the name of sanity, I request you in the name of human solidarity, I command you in the name of human insurance, I thus ask and entreat and command you to break through the prison-house of civilisation and be back at the native woodlands of instinctive, unerring action. Smash habit; pulverise logic; act as the inner soul urges you; pull down your leaders of thought who have brought you to this pass of degeneracy, to this plight of degradation. (*Voices: you are a presumptuous fool! sit down, sit down!*) I shall not; I will not. (*We will make you*) You can't. You can't. You don't dare. (*Order, order.*) A fig for your order! (*Smash the fellow! Neck him out!*) You are pigmies to me. Do your worst. (*Uproar everywhere. The electric lights are out. "Chaos is come again."*)



All-India Merry Magazine Literary Competition Rs. 1000 Prize Money.



READERS will remember that in our last number, I said that it was my avowed policy to foster and encourage Indian writers and Indian talent. I am backing my words with action. I am offering a prize of Rs. 1000 for the best humorous sketch or short story sent in before 1st January 1934. If an offer of this magnitude does not tempt writers, who have presumably been hiding their lights under bushels all these months, I don't know what will. On Page 774 will be found details. Remember there is no Entrance fee and no limit to the number of entries you may submit. More about this in our next issue.

This Issue

As regards the contents of this issue, we have many of our bright ones at their best. Ennare gets into hot water, over an amusing matrimonial bungle. In spite of the *Kempu Addigai*, we fear, things will go hard with him for some time. P. P. Samuel is as racy as ever. N. S. Pillieux hunting for the Cat-Burglar, bags the Police-Inspector! Poor Munuswamy Naidu suffers a loss to the tune of Rs. 500 on account of the one chink in his otherwise perfect armour.

Deisvi takes his story a few steps farther. Devi the heroine grows up and is now a young woman. Things start happening and there are further alarms and excursions. The tempo of the tale is now quicker and very soon, you may expect startling developments. Nera in his usual quiet fashion, has a dig at the regular exercise faddists; Dial's picture of the Garden of Eden with its original inhabitants is extremely well drawn while Liz contributes a short and very humorous poem about G. B. S., that ever-interesting personality.

Lucky Number Scheme

The winning numbers in the September Lucky Number Scheme are announced on page 783. Claims must be received at this office before 3rd November, 1933. Many of the August Lucky number copies have not been produced. To day we have on hand Rs. 115 unclaimed and we are adding this sum to the October Lucky Number scheme. This means that I am offering for the month of October Rs. 215 in Prizes for Lucky Number copies.

Apt Phrases Competition Result

Since entries closed only on the 5th inst, there is no time to publish the results in this issue. Look forward to the next one.

'Build the Story' Competition

I am publishing on page 800 in this issue, the winning entry in the above competition. The Prize of Rs. 10 has been forwarded to Mr. R. Venkataraman, Salem. Mr. Venkataraman has treated the subject in a very original manner. Almost all the other competitors have interpreted the picture as the usual young girl and old man affair with a third man thrown in to complete the eternal triangle.

To Our Contributors

Now, a word to our contributors. I have been frequently asked as to the best way of forwarding Mss. Many contributors send unnecessary covering letters along with their Mss. This is unnecessary. Contributors can send their Mss wrapped up, by book post at a cost of ½ anna. Once again let me remind you that Mss. will not be returned if stamps are not enclosed.

Art Needlework

On another page will be found details (prices etc.) about Illustrated Publications on Art Needlework. They are very good value for the price asked and the women-folk at home will while away many an idle hour if you buy them a few.

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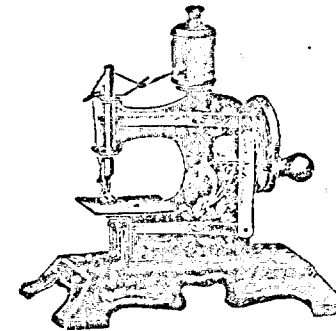
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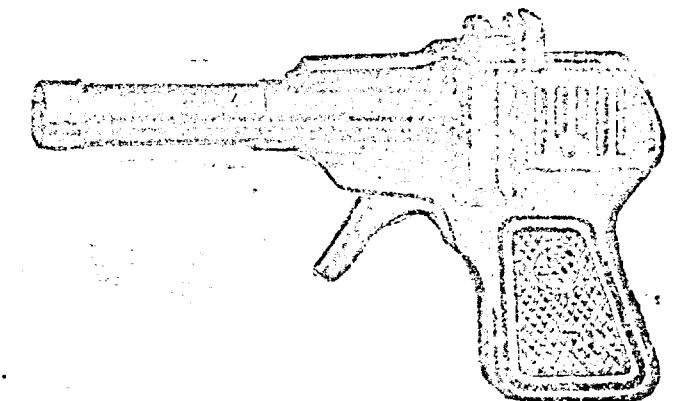
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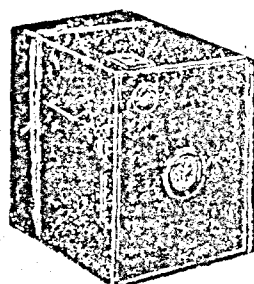


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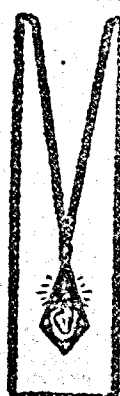


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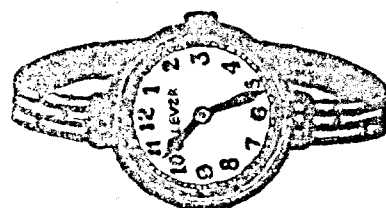
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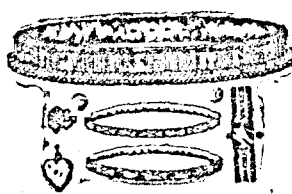
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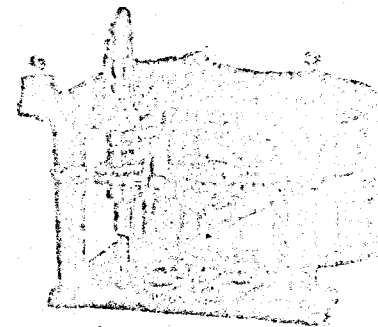
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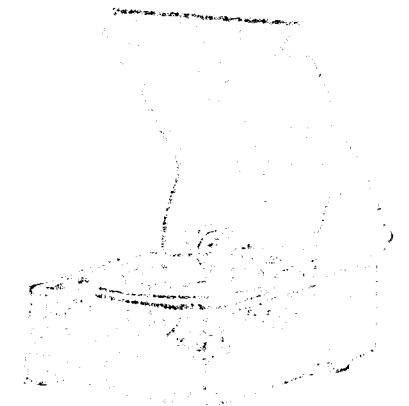
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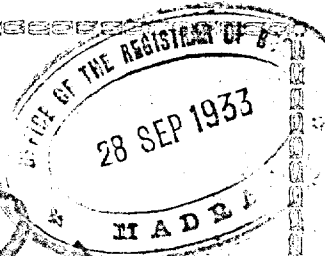
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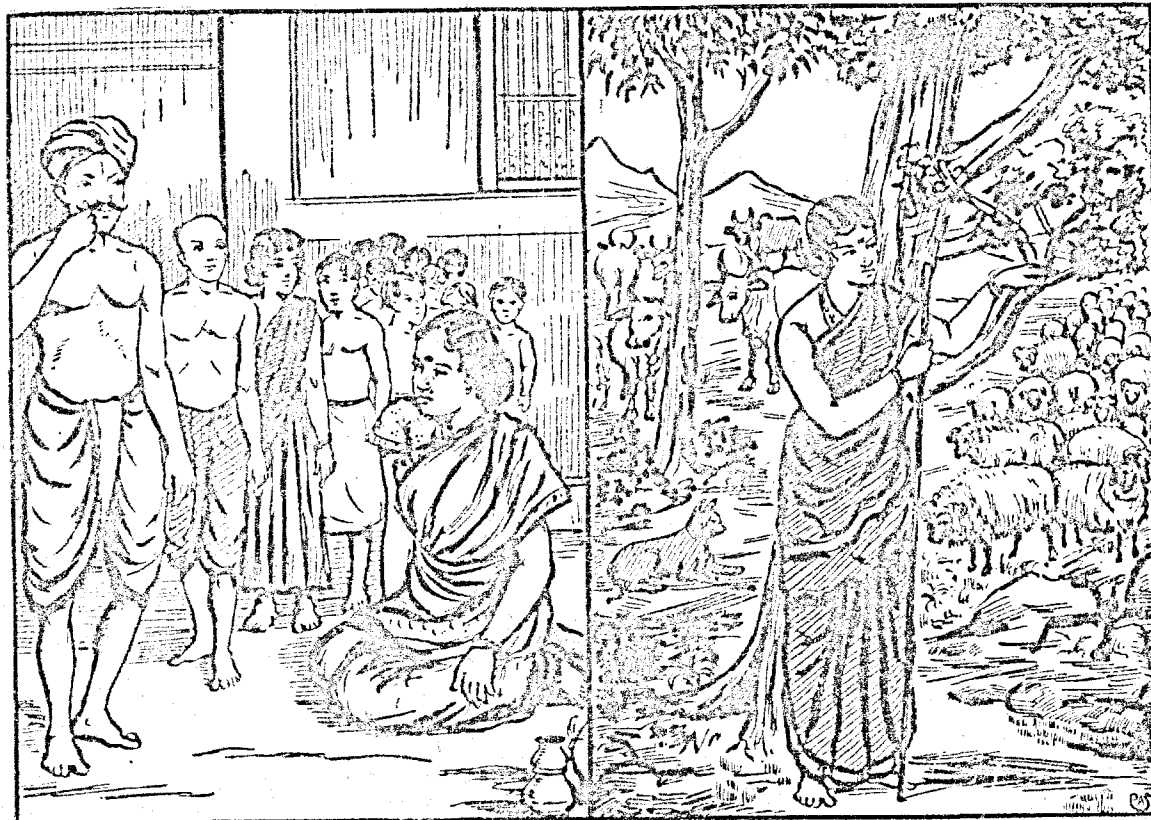
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