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ONE RUPEE PER WORD FOR WRITERS See Page 1001

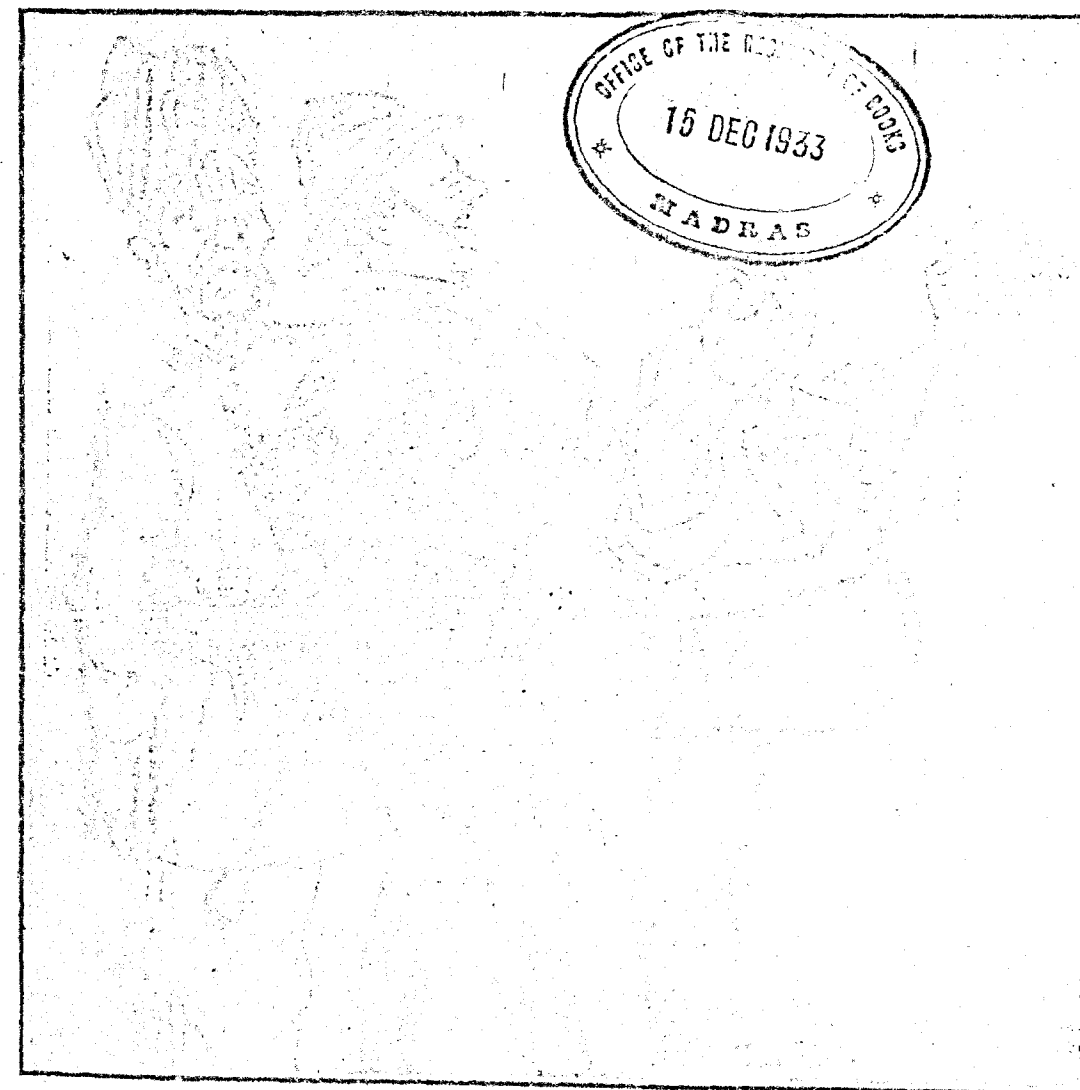
The **MERRY** *MAGAZINE*

2/50

Vol. I.

MADRAS, 10th DECEMBER 1933.

No. 23.



Police Officer :—Can you at least tell me what he looked like?
Householder :—Oh! yes. You see.....like this.

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IN THE DECEMBER ISSUES.

MERRY MAG

Vol. I.

MADRAS, 10th DECEMBER, 1933.

No. 23

SPARKS FROM OUR ANVIL

Referring to the sale of Indian silver to America by which the British Government made a profit of 15 cents an ounce, the Finance Member informed the members of the Assembly that 'it had nothing to do with India.'

As usual, it only did India.

The impending retirement of Sir M. Krishnan Nair from the Law Membership has given rise to speculation as to his probable successor.

So far as we can see, nobody seems to have thought of the chances of Sir M. Krishnan Nair.

The St. Andrews dinner went off very well at Madras.

Scotsmen were given an opportunity of exhibiting their love of country in direct proportion to their distance from it.

One of the speakers, answering the question why he came to India, declared: 'I came to India because, I wanted to come here; and I want to say that when the time comes, I will be the first person to turn my back to this land.'

A voice: 'Well-said.'

We are waiting to say: "Well-done."

He further added: 'I am proud to live in India.' And in due course, like other retired people, on India?

Responding to the toast of 'The Land we live in,' on the same convivial occasion, H. E. the Governor referring to the pre British days, said: "In those days the whole continent was merely a conglomeration of different nations, independent and distrustful of one another. What was the position now?"

Pretty much the same, except that we are no more independent.

"Women throng the polls: Effort to stamp out anarchy,"—says a head-line referring to the elections in Spain.

So one country at least is anxious to try a natural dictatorship.

"We must make a determined attempt to improve the White Paper," says Sir H. S. Gour.
We think it as well to try to improve Sir H. S. Gour.

Presiding at the Gin-rack dinner, the Aga Khan, after referring to the strange fate of fortune which gave him such an honour, added: "Such is life to day that this strange event is taken as a matter of course."

To be more precise, as a matter of the race-course!

"Buy Empire Campaign: The Prince of Wales's Message,"—says a Reuter's news item.
We didn't know it was for sale!

It is said that the Japanese are fond of Western films, food and foot-wear.

This is no expiation for dumping cheap and nasty varieties of the nation on us.

Dr. Ziauddin is alleged to have charged the Indian members of the London Committee on the Reserve Bank Scheme, with having left their consciences at Whitehall.

This is the first indication we've had of their having carried it with them on the voyage!

Mr. Churchill is said to have confessed that his two days' appearance before the Joint Committee was the most exhausting thing he had ever done.
Or undone.

".....Government have embarked on a programme of appointing commissioners as executor officer of municipalities, leaving the elected chairman and his council a mere shadow of their former powers....."
Let us hope the executor will at least preserve the elegies.

The Bombay Government has extended the Emergency Ordinance for another year.

This is apparently Sir F. Sykes's parting gift to the province.

Speaking at a durbar, the Collector of Malabar is reported to have said: "The civil disobedience movement is dead; I am content to say: Let the dead rest."

At any rate, they are beyond arrest.



".....deeply interested in Badam Halwa."

(P. P. SAMUEL)

"DON'T talk to me of Birth-control," said Mr. Mani, helping himself to my last cigarette and blowing a huge cloud of disapproval to the ceiling.

"Look here," said I, "in fact....."

"Dash it!" he yelled, "I am looking at you. And may I tell you that it is not quite sporting to keep on making silly remarks about my eyes."

"I am awfully sorry," said I. "But I don't remember making any remark about anybody's eyes. I know that with a little ill-luck and a fondness for Chinese toys I would have become cock-eyed myself."

"And don't talk of birth-control," he reminded me.

I was, in fact, talking of traffic-control in Madras, when he suddenly decided to drag in birth-control by its tail, so to speak. Well, that is Mr. Mani's way of introducing a new topic. If he wants to talk of the philosophy of Tolstoy, for instance, when I am deeply interested in such an unphilosophic thing as *Badam Halwa*, he coughs twice, stares in the direction of N. N. E., and orders me not to talk of the philosophy of Tolstoy. 146176

So I refused to be drawn.

"The advocates of birth-control," he began, "haven't....."

"How many runs did C. K. Naidu make for the Governor's XI against the M. C. C.?" I asked him, casually.

He went off like a rocket.

His reply was quite unprintable and I was right glad to notice that my parrot was taking a nap. Had the bird been awake it would have committed the reprehensible words to memory and rattled them off at the pastor when he paid his parochial visit on Saturday evening. And I would have lost my churchwardenship and thereby forfeited the proud privilege of receiving nice-looking girls at the Parish Hall and leading them chivalrously to the seats under the fans. Polly had already picked up "Damn too many" from Mr. Mani and I once had to pacify the pastor by explaining that it really meant "jam." "Polly," I said, "is inordinately fond of jam and always keeps on asking for it."

"You shouldn't forget," remarked Mr. Mani, "that geniuses have a tendency to be born at the tail of a numerous team. Napoleon was the twelfth child of his parents and Demosthenes the twenty-sixth....."

"And Benjamin Franklin the umpty-umpty," I freezed.

"Ah, yes. If I remember right he was the....."

"I am not," I said icily, "very much interested in other people's children. I have two of my own and they are....."

"Damn too many," said the parrot.

"Right you are, Polly," I said.

"If," Mr. Mani argued, "the parents of Napoleon....."

"Sh-sh-sh-sh!" I demurred. "You needn't worry about completing the sentence, old chap. I have heard it repeated numberless times—1789 times, to be exact. I fear your argument is as old as the grandfather of Malthus."

"It is still an argument. Isn't it so?"

"Yes," I conceded, "provided you can prove that the poor world wouldn't have been a better place without them."

"Easy," he smiled. "Napoleon was the greatest...."

"That shows," I put in edgewise, "you haven't read the people worth reading—Sir Archibald Alison, H. G. Wells, and Lord Tennyson. The poet calls Napoleon a madman; Wells thinks he was a lunatic; and Alison would give his nose to prove that he was a mere maniac. And they are all true-blue Britons who mean what they say and say what they mean. Q. E. D."

Mr. Mani's answer was so loud and vitriolic that the parrot woke up, cocked its head, and listened.

"For goodness' sake," I cried, "speak low. Polly has the memory of a Senior Wrangler. The head constable who taught it to talk has already given it a colourful vocabulary, and Heaven forbid that you should add to it!"

"D—d—d.....," faltered Mr. Mani, banging the table so lustily that he made it lame.

Polly took it up and completed it for him.

"And what does your Wells say about Demosthenes?" he inquired.

"Well, I don't quite agree with Wells as regards the Athenian. Demosthenes, I think, has given the world a black eye, so to say. But for him there would have been no speech-making and no politicians. And when I think of the miles of gup that the politicians talk from their platforms I wish Demosthenes had remained a stammerer to the end and gone on saying 'L-l-l-l-ladies and g-g-g-g-g-gentlemen.' It would have been better still if his parents had birth-controlled (copyright) him."

"You are a cynic," he shouted, glaring in the direction N. N. E. But I knew that his orbs were focussed on me as he was pointing straight at my nose with his finger.

"Perhaps," I rejoined, "I am a cynic too, with so many politicians about, trying their s-l-i-s-h best to make a cat's planet of this earth. They make the poor earth oscillate between war and peace, boom and slump, thanks to Demosthenes—a twentieth child, wasn't he? I'll tell you what. Abolish the politicians and prohibit public-speaking. That will effectively wipe out slumps, wars and influenza."

"But....."

"And again," I interrupted, "they say that the man next-door who owns a gramophone was the dozenth (copyright, sir) child of his parents. Naturally his mother was rather weak and often dropped him on his head, thereby giving him a gramophone complex. Look here, old man, I am a birth-control fan."

"But I am not, thank God!"

"You needn't mention it. The whole world knows that the sworn enemies of birth-control are either chronic bachelors, irascible old maids, or childless married folk."

Mr. Mani—he is a chronic bachelor—jumped up from his chair and told me a thing or two about myself. Poor Polly almost dropped off its perch, but, regaining its balance, it listened attentively, wondering why the head constable who had trained it to talk had withheld such choice words from it.

It looked as if Mr. Mani wouldn't stop and so I offered him a sizable chunk of chewing gum. He accepted it graciously and popped it into his mouth. I leaned back with a sigh of relief and thanked America for the greatest of her inventions—the invention of Chewing Gum. Meanwhile Polly began to stage a quiet rehearsal.

My friend chewed the gum thoughtfully for some time, and then, stowing it away in his cheek, asked me to explain why the priests of the world were the bitter opponents of birth-control.

"You are," I remarked, "enticing me into deep waters. I am sure fellows are going to sit up, dip their pens in gall, and write letters to the Editor when this article is published. They may even waylay me, but I have got to lift up the bushel and bring my light out. Now, then. Can you mention a single movement of importance in History that was not vociferously opposed by the Grand Lamas of the world? They are the impossible Tories—the Churchills—of the world who want to kick the poor old planet back into the twilight of the Middle Ages. And they grouse a good deal now-a-days because folks do not usually consult them."

The fellow next-door thought that we had argued too long. He opened his gramophone and played "Pussy Cat, Pussy Cat" six times running.

Mr. Mani's jaws went up and down like the jaws of a goat chewing the cud. "Whath a din!" said he, speaking thickly through the chewing gum.

"What a din!" I agreed. "How could one discuss the Physiology, Psychology, Theology, Anthropology and Thingummylogy of birth-control with so much noise about....."

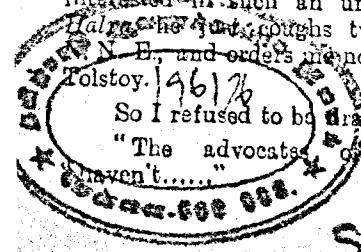
"Impossible," was his verdict.

"... and so much gum in the mouth?"

He nodded like a Mandarin.

"That fellow," said I, jerking my thumb in the direction of the gramophone, "is a twelfth child, 22 years of age. If only they had started Birth-control Clinics and Lantern Lectures on Malthusianism in 1910 A.D.!"

Mr. Mani looked at N. N. E. and floodlit me with a broad smile of appreciation.



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PEOPLE IN THE

Mr. M. R. JAYAKAR

The Castor
OF INDIAN



Took part in the famous ex nauts who went to London, not but in that of the mare's nest are patriots of the moderate outstanding eminence, and both the maximum in any examina gence. Both are uncompromising —on paper. Like the mythi dited with the power of calming was at one time, and perhaps the Hindu Maha Sabha, and of post scriptum to his more has already been a Law Member may become one again. What is only known to us—to wit, knowing. His recreation is Persian Gazals of his own com which he has publicly confessed dums, which are more often even read.

PUBLIC EYE

Sir TEJ BAHADUR SAPRU

and Pollux
POLITICS



pedition of the Indian Argo- in quest of the Golden Fleece, of an Indian Federation. Both persuasion, both are lawyers of are particularly facile at earning tion devised to test pure intelli- advocates of their country's case cal twins they are generally cre- political storms. Mr. Jayakar still is, a moderate supporter of functions for the rest as a sort redoubtable partner. Sir Tej of the Government of India, and he does not know of federation that it is something not worth well-known to be the singing of position; while the only hobby to, is the writing of memoran- admited than acted upon or

(A TRI)

"A penny for your thoughts," said my wife with the ignorant assurance which seems a prerogative of wives.

Though her interruption was as usual uncere-
monious, I managed to look down on her with indulgent
pity. It is diplomatically more effective than getting
angry. She had just returned from a 'party', and was,
I could see, agog to tell me all about it. But unfortu-
nately for me, she found me in a contrarious mood.

"They're worth very much more," I replied, I hope
in a tone of impersonal detachment, "as the Editor of
the *Merry Magazine* will tell you, if you care to make a
reference to him."

"Not if he sees you at work, I'm sure," she said
tartly: "there you've been sitting, pen in hand, all the
evening; but the paper's as blank as your mind, or is it
the mind as blank as the paper?"

"My dear girl," I replied with suspicious suavity,
"what can you know of the arduousness of literary
work? We men of letters must wait on the moment
of inspiration; it bloweth as it listeth."

"Nonsense and stuff!"

I liked the way it was said to the accompaniment
of a toss of the head and a pouting of lips, which I
admire for strictly private reasons—not the toss I mean,
but the federation of features called the face. But there
are limits to connubial complacency.

"You should say, 'stuff and nonsense'; not that
it's respectful to me either way. Take care of your
phrases, my dear, even if you are over-confident of your
graces."

"All the same, you understand what I mean; that's
the main thing."

"Look here," I replied more sternly, "this won't
do. I believe the dhoby came in with his account when
you were away; go and check it, and please, for heaven's
sake, mind your spelling."

I knew it was a sore point. My wife's spelling, by
the way, is more phonetic than pedantic, her education
having been entirely *viva voce*. It gave me one of the
few opportunities of getting the whip-hand of her in
domestic dialectics. Luckily for me, she is ignorant of
the activities of the *Simplifide Speling Sosaisti*—an
association which I am inclined to think must have
been started by victims of English orthography,
exasperated by a sense of the inferiority complex.

Otherwise, she would have, like them, made a virtue of
her infirmity, and deprived me of a vantage point in my
skirmishes with her. To do her justice, I'm bound to
say that she is more consistent in her mis-spelling than
the average graduate of to-day.

"Oh, bother the dhoby; why couldn't you attend
to it?"

"Not my portfolio, my dear. Here I come after
a strenuous evening, and you nag me straightaway."

"That's fine! I—nag—you. You're adding
inaccuracy to your unprovoked assault on my privacy."

"I wish I had stayed longer and finished the rubber.
I had more consideration for your being alone than you
deserve."

"Is it too late—to—er—go back?"

"I thought," she continued with more sorrow than
anger, "you would like to know how it went off, who
else came, what they said—"

"My dear girl, you mean, what sarrees were on
exhibition, where they were bought, what the price was,
etc., etc. Sorry, I'm not a newspaper correspondent or a
writer of fashion notes. But if you *must* tell me, I
suggest that you reduce it all to writing; I shall lick
it into shape, and send it on to the *Merry Mag*. I'm
sure most of its readers are patient husbands like me
and will read it at least for the sake of their wives."

"Thank you for nothing; you needn't assume such
a resigned air. I'm not at all anxious to oblige your
funny magazine, much less you."

"That's unfortunate; for my fortnightly quota is
still nebulous. Won't you reconsider your decision?"

"On condition that you don't write about it."

"That's not fair; you're anxious to tell me some-
thing, and I'm anxious to make up something for a
page. Hadn't we better agree for once, to our mutual
gratification and advantage?"

At this juncture, when she was on the point of
yielding to my persuasive request, an unexpected
diversion was caused by a noise from the cradle; and
my wife went down with a headlong precipitation
suggestive of escape from a house on fire.....I waited
for five patient minutes in the hope of her return.
Soon came a duet of voices cooing, gurgling and
quivering in a crescendo of thrilling ululations.
Dejectedly I turned to my desk, and stared at the blank
paper.

(TUT-TUT-TUT)



Annotate:—

- (a) Wandering between two worlds,—one
dead,
And the other powerless to be born.
- (b) The quarrel is a very pretty quarrel as it
stands; we should only spoil it by
trying to explain it.
- (c) Who shall decide when doctors disagree?
- (d) The world's great age begins anew,
The golden years return.....



Write short notes on:—

- (a) The Exchange Ratio.
- (b) The Zionist Movement.
- (c) Japanese Cotton Talks.



What do you know of:—

- (a) Nila Nagini.
- (b) Bhai Parmanand.
- (c) Mr. Littlehailles.
- (d) Lord Carson.



1. (a) This is the unhonoured, un-sung and un-wept for
fate of the ancient and Venerable Ramsay of the
clan Macdonald. Things are not going as smoothly
with the National Government, as the Nation,
that is, Mr Macdonald would wish. Recent bye-
elections are unfolding a tale of prospective
disaster to the unnatural combination of the
triumvirate now in power. The 'National' candi-
dates are either soundly thrashed, or manage
to sneak in by a minority vote. The Conserva-
tive party though strong as a giant, has shown a
commendable restraint in using its strength. But
it is becoming increasingly clear that they are
anxious to throw him out where he properly
belongs—in outer political darkness. He is still
obsessed by the delusion that the country cannot
get on without his help; so he is anxious to start
a new party which would guarantee him a con-
tinuance of power under the camouflage of a
'national' label. Unluckily for him, the other

two know full well that he has nothing to lose
and everything to gain by such an arrangement.
Mr. Baldwin did full justice to the dinner
recently organised by Mr Macdonald, but was
too astute to allow his good sense to be overcome
by hospitality. As for Sir John Simon, he seems
more anxious to join the Conservatives, bag and
baggage, than is the party to welcome him.
England has always proved un congenial soil to
coalitions, which have either had an inglorious
birth or an ignominious death. The present one
has been longer in being than it deserved,
considered as a coalition; which only shows that
it is the Conservative party which is in power,
whom it suits, for the time being, to suffer Mr.
Macdonald. He has to thank himself for failing
to make his exit from the public stage, in grace-
ful accord with his love of spectacular identities,
with the collapse of the world Economic Con-
ference.

- (b) Our country is just now witnessing the sorry
spectacle of innumerable internecine skirmishes
and pitched battles, among erstwhile victims of a
common tribulation. It is a sight fit for the
gods to weep over. One and all of them are
kicking against the pricks, with a zeal that is
marred by its thorough-going futility. We have
too much respect for the protagonists to sit in
judgment over them. Meanwhile reaction is
either running riot, or more quietly entrenching
itself. How long, O Lord, ere this babel of
tongues will cease, and the work on hand done
with a will?

(c) Of course, the patient himself. There has been a
lot of heat without light generated by a rather
miscellaneous newspaper debate on the pros
and cons of birth-control. The self-appointed
leader of the opposition is, curiously enough, a
Jesuit 'father' of Madras. In the present posture
of affairs in the 'Fatherland,' it seems a
great pity that this reverend gentleman's evange-
lical fury and radical vehemence are not avail-
able under the enlightened regime of Herr
Hitler. We have a wild hope that it is not yet
too late for the gentleman to act upon the hint.
For the rest, the problem is bound to be tackled
according to the extent of the temperamental
and other exigencies of the individual. The
whole secret of the opposition is the inconve-
niently modern craving for knowledge. It
started in the Garden of Eden itself; and
notwithstanding all the doctors, clerical and lay,
sacred and profane, is bound to grow from more
to more.

- (d) America is celebrating the death of prohibition.
The golden age has come back again. The
American president proposes to make a virtue of
necessity by using the thirst of his countrymen

to give a fresh fillip to trade. Quotas of liquor imports from Europe are to be fixed on condition that existing tariff-walls are lowered in favour of the States. This reminds us of a Tamil proverb which may roughly be translated thus:

*If you must indeed break a row,
See that it profits you somehow!*

2. (a). The dismal science of economics has many heinous crimes to answer for; this exchange business is one of the deadliest of them. Exchange has been defined as the 'metaphysical part' of public finance. Again, another philosopher has said that 'force is the *ultima ratio* of sovereigns.' But the modern sovereign is so precious as to have become all but exiguous. Therefore, lest we should forget all about the sovereign, a benign government has linked our rupee to its nearest substitute, viz. the sterling. Now watch the result. The higher the price fixed for the rupee in terms of sterling, the greater the gain of those who know India only through the sterling. That is, British Trade which has shown such remarkable recovery amidst the doldrums of the world-trade depression, has been largely bolstered up by the Indian exchange at 18d the rupee. It is a very irrelevant and minor detail that England's gain is our loss. The Reserve Bank Bill now being considered by the Assembly will give this exchange ratio further stability. It will take some time for our politicians to realise that they are being called upon to lock the stable-door long after the horse is stolen.

(b). At first, Jehovah promised Palestine to His chosen people—the Jews. After a long time, he led them to it, and exhorted them to behave like His chosen people. When they misbehaved towards Jesus of Nazareth, He became so angry that they were driven out again. Meanwhile, the Arabs came and took possession, while Jehovah was still peeved with the chosen people. Long, long afterwards, an English statesman named Balfour renewed the promise to the Jews. But this time, they didn't very much care, as they were quite happy and very well-off where they were. Then came a great leader called Hitler, and he said he didn't want the Jews. So they remembered the second promise, and started to go 'home.' This didn't suit the Arabs. The British were in a quandary. The Arabs were Muslims, and Muslims were a loyal people, and had saved India for the Empire by helping to break the back of the Indian 'revolt'. So when the Arabs started a rumpus, it reacted upon Imperial policy, as Indian Muslims grumbled, gently, no doubt, but unmistakably. The present position is one of stalemate. The only thing that can be hazarded is that stalemates are of uncertain duration.

(c). These seem interminable, and likely to go on for ever. Judging from one type of press reports, each side is apparently vying with the other in

surrendering its demands one by one. The following lines convey our view of the negotiations:

A belted knight yeleft Sir Bhore,
Was condemned to tackle a problem sore;
He stood for a quota fix'd,
While the Japs the colours mix'd,
And pressed for more and more galore!

3. (a). Alias Nellie Cram Cook; a hectic creature from Hollywood, who strayed into the Sabarmati Ashram, urged by an obscure longing for sensation. Found the discipline of the Mahatmaic atmosphere too drab and realistic for her taste, and has now gone back to find her level. She has the courage of her weaknesses. Let us think of her gently, if not reverently.

(b) A desperately funny character, adorning the Assembly chamber. Somebody with a turn for practical jokes inducted him into the presidential chair at the last session of the Hindu Mahasabha. Is the author of a new philosophy of isolation which he recommends for the acceptance of the Hindu community. Nationally or economically, isolation in modern times spells asphyxiation; and we therefore hope that the Hindu community will refuse to commit suicide.

(c) A former Director of Public Instruction in the Madras Presidency. He has announced his intention of standing for election as Vice-Chancellor of the Madras University. If, as is likely, he is elected at the top of the panel, it will be the second instalment of the price which the present ministry pays to the bureaucracy for its continuance in office—not power. We have nothing against Mr. Littlehales; only it seems a curious commentary on the policy of Indianisation which is supposed to be common ground to all parties in the country that the chances of deserving Indians should thus be choked off by giving gratuitous weightage to an overwhelmingly powerful minority. From the point of view of the party this seems less objectionable than throwing their own man overboard at the eleventh hour, as they did in the case of Mr. Chakkarai Chettiar in the Mayoral election.

(d) One of the heroic 'Unionists' who after a long period of silence has again emerged on the public platform. His palmy days were spent in association with 'galloper' Smith, the late Lord Birkenhead of hallowed memory. They formed a pair of intransigents who carried defiance of the government as constituted by Law to the extremest lengths, without having a hair of their heads being touched. Lord Carson has found in Lord Lloyd the strong silent man 'who is needed in a 'blatant land,' namely Ireland. The threatened declaration of an Irish Republic has brought him out of his retirement. He is like the Bourbons: he has learnt nothing and forgotten nothing.

E. V. BOBB

(A TRI)

Tennis fans of Madras had a recent opportunity of seeing this All-India champion in action. Though rain, the proverbial spoil-sport, damped the enthusiasm of players and spectators alike, the exhibition for all its one-sidedness was of sufficiently high quality. Our special representative who was deputed to furnish a plain, unvarnished account of the matches failed to send in his report in time for our last issue. The reason for this delay is now seen to be a wholly unauthorised attempt on his part to convey his impressions in a sort of stilted, hobbling dithyramb, which we offer to our readers with much misgiving.

*An eager mob
Greeted E. V. Bobb,—
A stranger orb,
From the Punjab!*

*A distant star,
Famed afar
From Peshawar
To Calcutta—!*

*A smiling face,
And easy grace
Marked the pace
Of this tennis ace.*

*Tall and well-knit
As a fiddle fit,
He showed his grit
The way he hit.*

*Service and stroke
O' this unruffled bloke
Were a feast to the folk
Who had paid to look.*

*With right and left
He was equally heft—
Y and bereft
Even the deft.*

*Est local cock
Dazed by the shock
Of having to knock
Against a rock.*



The two Swamies
Were ill-at-ease,
And seemed to freeze
About the crease!*

*But O what a fall,—
Bala Gopal!
Three games in ail,—
A poor total!*

*Our champion swore
That Bobb felt sore
Of being run o'er
At Bangalore.*

*By a bare-footed chap
Who caught him in a trap,
And made him in a snap
Yield a feather from his cap.*

*But the Bobb we saw
Was without a flaw;
He laid down the law
With a determined jaw.*

*So here's to Bobb
Who made a clean job
O' th' uncertain lob
Of the wretched wob.*

*Bler at the net,
When the ground was wet;—
And ran to set
Without a let.*

* Rama and Krishna of that ilk. † Rachappa—We do not know if his one-time aversion for shoes still persists. We hope so, for the sake of OUR metre and rhyme!

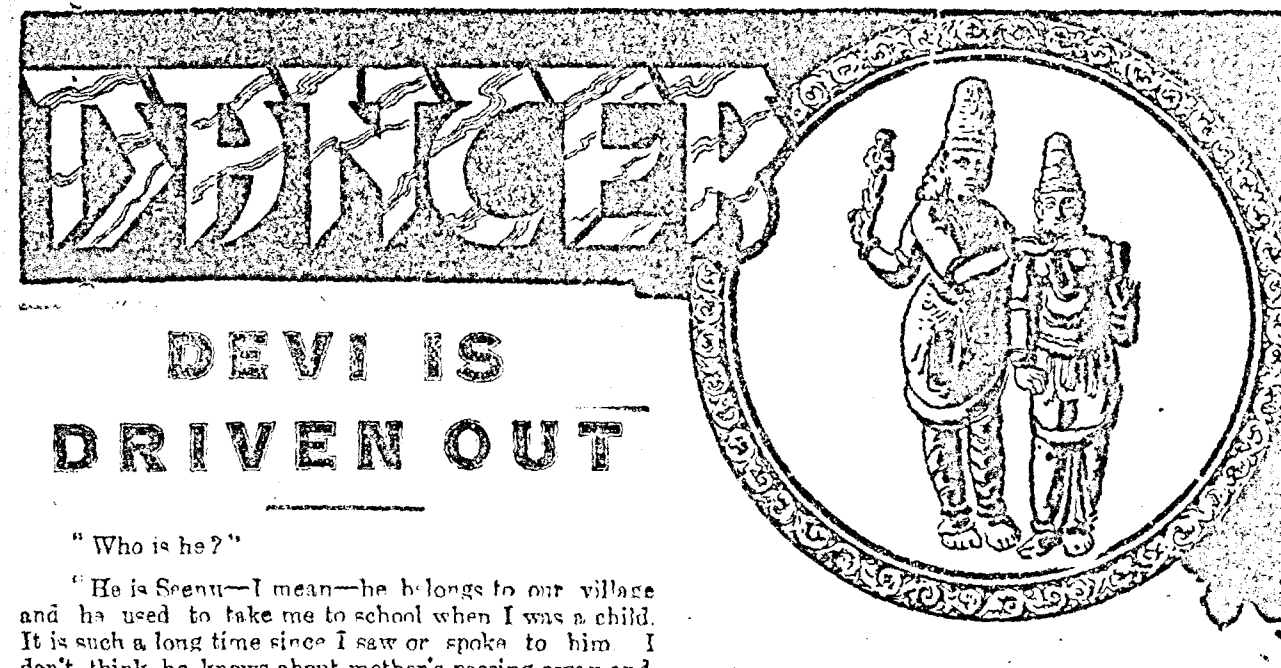


VIII

In the previous seven instalments.

Devi, only daughter of Rajam, a Devadasi of Devipatnam falls in love with her boy-friend, Seenu. Her mother objects to the boy's sense of fair-play and he leaves Devipatnam without seeing Devi. She is dedicated and entrusted to the protection of a rich young Chettiar who takes her to Madras. Devi's mother dies. The girl finds the life at Madras insufferably dull. To coax her back into her normal mood, the Chettiar takes her to a show at the Museum Theatre.

"Devi settled down in her seat, adjusted her sari, and after a minute, turned round to scan the audience. From the next seat Seenu was looking at her, full in the face. Her heart missed a beat, the old emotions came surging up within her and she felt like fainting. Controlling her feelings she startled the Chettiar by asking, "Would it be very improper if I talk to that gentleman in the next seat?"



DEVI IS DRIVEN OUT

"Who is he?"

"He is Seenu—I mean—he belongs to our village and he used to take me to school when I was a child. It is such a long time since I saw or spoke to him. I don't think he knows about mother's passing away and he will be grieved to hear about it."

"Hm!—What's his full name?"

"Sreenivasan."

"I'll speak to him during the interval and ask him to call on you at the cottage. You are very much excited and people are staring at us."

Deva had perforce to be content with the assurance and though she tried her best to concentrate her attention on the stage, yet her mind and eyes again and again turned to Seenu. She began to wonder who the lady seated next to him was and if she was his wife. During the interval, the Chettiar accosted Seenu with the remark: "May I have a word with you outside, Sir?" and Seenu readily accompanied the Chettiar. When they returned, five minutes later, they were smiling and in good humour and Seenu beamed at Deva but went straight to his seat. The lady next to him engaged him in conversation and Deva could guess that they were discussing her and the Chettiar.

"What did he say?" asked Deva of her lord and master.

"Said he would come. Seems to be a nice chap."

"When is he coming?"

"Oh, tomorrow. Don't know if I can manage to be there to receive him. You do the honours. Tell Maena about it."

"Wouldn't it be better if you told her, yourself?"

"Alright. I'll do so."

"What time did he say he would call?"

"Quarter past four. Oh, look at that!" The Chettiar pointed to the dancing on the stage.

"It's nothing," said Deva. "I can do these poses much better."

"Oh, can you?"

"Oh yes! You never have seen me dancing."

Story By Devani
Pictures by Sekar.

"That's true! Look here! I have an idea. Supposing you

give us an entertainment at the cottage one of these days—some dancing and light music?"

"Whom do you mean by us?"

"Me and some friends, not more than a dozen. You could invite your friend over there, Mr. Seenu. Say yes!"

"You and Seenu would be alright; but your friends! I don't know them."

"Does it matter? Haven't you been trained to dance before all and sundry?"

"What about the accompaniment?"



"I'll ask Sambandam to fix all that."

"I must rehearse and then—oh—my old dancing master! I won't be able to do anything without him."

"Don't you worry! Sambandam will fix everything."

All next day Deva was agog with excitement. The hours dragged with leaden feet. Meena had to remark half-a-dozen times in the course of the day, "What's the matter with you? You are as excited as a girl on her nuptial night!"

By 4-15 in the afternoon, Deva was dressed and ready for the usual evening drive. She postured Meena to do her hair over and over again, changed her saree and petticoat more than once and stood before the mirror gazing intently at her reflection and studying it critically. The entire household knew that Deva was expecting a visitor—a privilege which she was very rarely allowed to enjoy. But the servants, including Meena, imagined that the visitor was perhaps a relation. They therefore looked upon Deva's efforts to look her very best as a very natural and pardonable desire. But when Sambandam ushered in a young and handsome Brahmin into the hall, Meena wondered who he was.

"Please be seated on this sofa, Sir," Sambandam was saying to Seenu. "I'll tell the lady you are here."

But there was no need. Deva, arrayed like a bride, was already standing in the doorway. There was a moment's tense silence. Sambandam was fidgeting with the switch of the electric fan while Deva stood still, like a statue, framed by the doorway, her eyes downcast. Seenu could only say, "Well, Deva!"

Deva moved a few steps forward listlessly, and stood before Seenu with a pathetic droop of her head.

"What is the matter? I thought you were happy and contented here!" exclaimed Seenu.

The tears gathered in Deva's eyes. Her bosom heaved. Rolling up the end of her saree into a ball, she pressed it close to her mouth to stifle an overpowering feeling to cry her heart out. Sambandam guessed the reason.

"She lost her mother, you know," he said to Seenu.

"Poor darling!" said Seenu, and rising from his seat, he very gently took her hand and made her sit.

"When did it happen? I never knew!"

"I have no one else in this wide, wide world!" sobbed Deva.

"Nonsense! You have the Chettiar and I am here!" He patted her hand.

"Fine people both of you!" said Deva withdrawing her hand. "You left me without even a word."

"I shall explain all that, later. But, honestly Deva, I never heard about your mother's death: else, I would have come and seen you earlier. It must have been a terrible shock to you and she loved you very much. But, apart from all that—aren't you happy here?"

"Of course, she is!" answered Sambandam, seeing that Deva was silent. "She has everything she wants here: Nice Bungalow, car, servants, jewels and clothes. What more does a girl want?"

"There is such a thing as kindness and love, uncle," said Deva, turning to Sambandam.

"Oh, yes! You have plenty of that too here," said Sambandam, laying his hand on his heart.

"To be frank, Deva," said Seenu. "I never expected to see you like this. Why, you look like a flower withering away! Won't you tell me what is on your mind?"

"I hardly know myself."

"Isn't it getting late, Deva?" gently hinted Sambandam, looking at the clock on the wall.

"Why, are you going out?" asked Seenu.

"Yes, she and the Chettiar usually drive on the Marina in the evenings. The car is ready, waiting outside."

"I suppose I must go out," said Deva. "I wanted to talk to you a great deal, Seenu. I wonder whether the Chettiar would permit me to see you again?"

"I'll fix that," assured Sambandam with alacrity.

"I'll also speak to him about it," promised Seenu and added: "I am so sorry Deva to see you like this. Believe me, if there is anything I can do to make you happy, I'll move heaven and earth to do it."

"I know you will, Seenu. Do not desert me. Try to see me as often as you can. You are the only link with the happy past."

"Alright, Deva! Be brave! I shall see you later!"

As Deva was about to leave the hall, she turned and flung at Seenu a question: "Who was she?"

"Who was who?"

"The lady who was sitting next to you."

"Oh! she? That was my niece. Why did you ask?"

"I was wondering if you were married."

"No thanks. That is another story and a big one. I shall tell you one day, when we have the leisure."

"You won't forget me, Seenu?"

"No, never."

"And Seenu, if the Chettiar invites you to a party, please don't refuse."

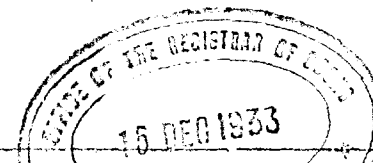
"I won't, my dear."

"When do I see you next?"

"Soon enough. Couldn't I come with you to the beach?"

"No I don't think you will be permitted. There's the horn!"

* * *



It was Sambandam who wheedled out of the Chettiar permission to Deva for seeing Seenu as often as she liked, at the cottage. "She is a good girl, Sir, and that man has been like a brother to her in her childhood. I am always at the cottage and there is Meena too and nothing amiss is likely to happen. I have to keep Deva in good humour. With this party which I am arranging and her friend seeing her daily, I am sure in about a fortnight she will be her old self."

"I don't like it! I come there for a little relaxation and she goes about as if there is a corpse in the house. On top of it, you want this young Brahmin hanging around. Do whatever you like. I am getting sick of it all!"

"All I am asking is a chance to put things straight."

"Very well. Go ahead! If you make a mess of things, you know what you will get."

Thus Deva and Seenu had once more plenty of opportunities for seeing one another. Though Sambandam or Meena was there or thereabouts when they met and talked, yet there were moments when they were alone and these were the most trying to Seenu. He could see that Deva loved, adored and yearned for him and yet in her own interest, he had to keep control over his emotions however intense they were. But a touch, a look, an unspoken word, was often perilously near shattering his firm resolve.

"I can't go on like this, Deva!" said Seenu, one morning as they walked around the garden.

"Go on like what?"

"I am a man after all and being near you, looking at you and hearing you speak, is a great strain."

"Am I so revolting and unsociable?"

"Please don't make fun of me! You know what I mean!"

"Honestly, I don't!"

"I love you, Deva!"

"I think I heard that before, one glorious evening, on a moon-lit terrace."

"It was your mother. She pleaded with me to go away."

"Did she know?"

"Oh, yes—I thought I could forget you. You have been haunting my dreams, all these days—Now that I am seeing you, almost daily, I am getting mad—stark, staring mad. I want you, Deva."

"What would my mother think? Speaking for myself, Seenu, I would go into the wilderness with you—I love you so much. But my mother, whose presence I still feel hovering around me has taught me from childhood certain precepts which if I transgress, would cause her intense pain. I was free as a lark when

you kissed me that evening on the terrace. Now I am another man's chattel. Is it proper for you to covet it or steal it away from him? Answer me!"

"But, you love me, Deva, don't you?"

"I do. Do you remember I once asked you what love is? Then I didn't know. Now, I know."

"And knowing what love is, you would still keep me at arm's length?"

"Oh, Seenu! Don't make it hard for me! Don't you see that I am a slave: that in exchange for food, clothing and all this, I have been sold to a man and that I have no liberty to act as my heart dictates. I can't be disloyal to him."

"Then, the only thing for me to do is to keep away from you."

"Must you take away even that little happiness from me?"

"Flesh and blood can't stand it."

"I really do not understand."

"If you loved me as much as I love you, you would understand."

"Let us not quarrel over that. Here is somebody coming—"

It was the gardener. "You are wanted on the telephone, amma," said he.

"Who is it?"

"It is Mr. Pillay. He wants to know at what hour he may ask the musicians to come over here."

"I'll answer him myself. You aren't going just yet, Seenu. Do please come in. I want to talk to you about the party."

* * *

The party was a great success. Deva was at her best. The Chettiar brought some friends and Seenu was among them. Deva sang and danced and Seenu knew that the song, "Why did you come into my life?" was specially meant for him. The guests congratulated the Chettiar and Deva and left one by one. Seenu was the last to leave.

"It was great, Deva!" he told her and as the Chettiar grasped his hand to bid him a good-night, Seenu couldn't help saying, "You are lucky Mr. Chettiar!"

"But, you, my dear friend, have been a tonic to her. Sambandam tells me that but for you this party would have been a wash-out."

"I am sure he is exaggerating."

"Good-night!"

"Good-night! You can take my car."

"Thanks. I borrowed one from a friend and it's outside."

"Good-night—and please don't stop the tonic just yet."

The Merry Magazine

From the beginning Meena never approved of the frequent visits of Seenu to the cottage. There was a maid-of-all-work working under Meena, called Maragatham, to whom Meena would often express her undisguised opinions in strong language "I don't like these goings-on here, Maragathi. It's getting worse day by day and if the poor Chettiar comes to know the truth, we will, all of us, get the sack."

"Why! Did you notice anything special of late?"

"Special? Everything is special about them. The way that man looks at the girl, one would think he would eat her. And I saw them kissing! What do you say to that?"

"You don't say so?"

"I do, my dear woman. Day before yesterday, that Brahmin came at 8-30 in the night and waited for her. As soon as she returned from the beach, they both went into the garden. Till 9-30 they were there in the dark and when I went there to call her for the night-meal, I saw them locked in an embrace and kissing. Shameless, I call it!"

"What shall we do?"

"What can we do? The Chettiar must be told. He may not believe me."

"Why don't you speak to her yourself? She may send the Brahmin away."

"She knows I don't approve of her receiving the man in the house. If only I could prove to the Chettiar that his pretty girl is a rotter!"

"What would happen? You would still be out of a job!"

"Who? Me! Ha! Ha! You don't know Meena. I serve my masters well. If this girl goes, another

comes. My job is safe so long as I am loyal to my employer. See?"

Meena was not lying to Maragatham. It was true that youth was slowly triumphing over reason and



"Don't you believe me?" asked Deva

sanity. The kiss in the garden was only the forerunner of similar incidents. Discretion was thrown to the winds. Meena was defied and Seenu took to visiting the cottage daily, after eight in the night and

Devi, The Dancer

would stay for an hour or so, but he would invariably leave the cottage before the Chettiar arrived there. The lovers would either walk around the garden or stay inside and chat endlessly. Meanwhile Meena was waiting for an opportunity.

the haunted Mantapam and so on and so forth. The clock struck nine. Seenu rose with a start. "Good God! It is late! I hate to leave you, but I suppose I must. But, Deva I haven't had my reward, you know!"

"Reward for what?"

"For my valour. I saved you from that Demon Maddu."

"Isn't it too late to ask for a reward now?"

"Late for receiving rewards?—Never!"

Deva looked around and mutely pointed to the bedroom. "Someone may come here!" she whispered. "Get into that room! One kiss and no more!"

They moved into the bedroom and Deva switched off the light. Seenu gathered her in his arms and then someone with a bang closed the door and bolted it from outside.

In a flash Deva realised that she had walked into a trap and that Meena had played her cards well. She collapsed into the bed saying: "This-is-the-very-end!"

"Why, what is the matter?" asked Seenu, puzzled.

"It is Meena. She never liked me: never liked your coming here: suspected me of being unfaithful to the Chettiar, all the time. And now—she has created evidence enough to convince him. He will be here any moment."

"Nonsense! I'll speak to him and convince him

"I tell you we have been tricked into this!" exclaimed Seenu

Sitting in the hall, one night, Deva and Seenu were in a reminiscent mood. They went over their school-days, of the fight with Maddu, of the pseudo-ghost at that there is nothing wrong— ".....In your being in his bedroom with me! Would anyone believe it?"

"He has got to believe it!"

"I am afraid! I am feeling miserable. I am entirely to blame," Deva moaned.

"Please, please, Deva, don't for heaven's sake go on like this. I swear that whatever happens I will take good care of you."

The door opened as suddenly as it was closed. Rao Sahab Balasundaram Chettiar, stood outside and glared at the dark interior of the bed-room.

"Take good care of your skin, you scoundrel! Come out!"

Deva and Seenu came out of the room. Meena was nowhere to be seen.

"Meena has told me all," said the Chettiar in low measured tones.

"She is lying! Don't you believe me?" asked Deva.

"I tell you we have been tricked into this!" exclaimed Seenu.

"Shut up! The way in which you have repaid my hospitality does credit to yourself. Now then, get out before I take a whip to you!"

"Oh, listen..."

"I don't want to listen! I don't want to see your face! Will you get out or shall I have you thrown out?"

With a start, Deva ran to Seenu and clung to him.

"And you too—you Dasi girl!" shouted the Chettiar. "Get out and stay out!"

"There has been nothing, I tell you..." began Seenu once again but the Chettiar shouted for Meena. And when she came, looking like a docile lamb, the Chettiar told her: "Strip that harlot of all her ornaments and clothes. Give her one cotton saree and put her on the streets with her Romeo. Now then, look sharp! Not even a nose-screw, mind you!"

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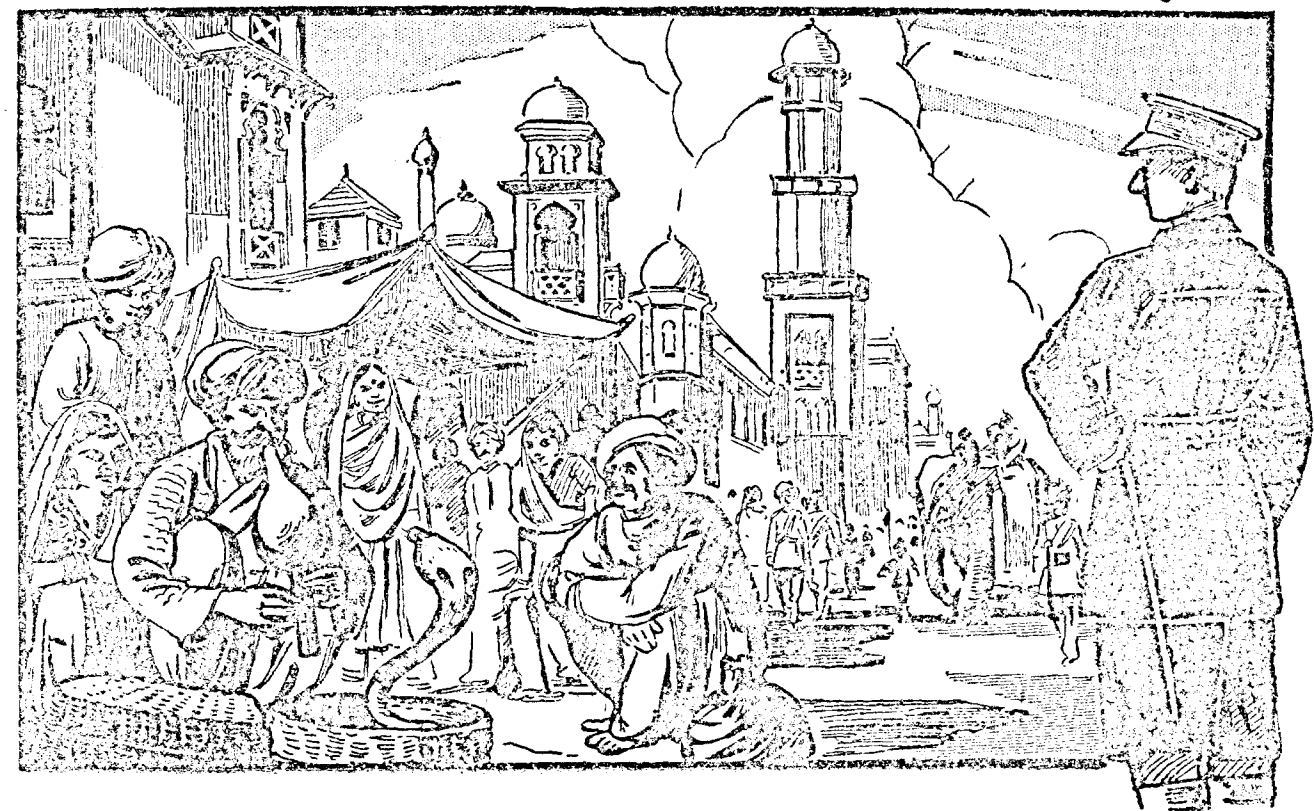
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THE LETTERS OF PRIVATE JOYFULL, IV.



Madras, 10th December, '33

DEAR MOTHER,

THANK you for the newspapers you sent me. I am glad to see that West End United have beaten Puddlecombe Rovers, and that Mary Jones has run away from her husband. The Indian papers never mention important news like that. I try to understand the big things that are going on in India, but the news is all about Provincial Autonomy, Inter-Communal Tension, Federal Legislation, Transitional Safeguards, Taluka Board Defalcations, Chowkidars, Panchayats, Zemindars, Hundies, Sowcars, Mahasabhas, Pattadars, and all sorts of things no one has ever heard of. The big people who argue about these affairs have names like Ranganaswamy Venktrachellum, which you can only say by setting them to music. When a printed debate is concerned with six or eight of these gentlemen, I have to keep track of who's who by working it out on a board with some chessmen. On top of that, what they are arguing about is probably a Hereditary Mutt at Peddiandiputtur. Of course, you would imagine that "Hereditary Mutt" is plain English for a congenital idiot: but far from it. Someone told me that it stands for a person who manages an extremely shrewd financial arrangement.

I began to make an index of these names and expressions, with coloured tabs and cross-references, and a simple explanation of each. Even then, I could only read the news like you read a crossword puzzle. Besides, no two Indians gave me the same account of the person

or institution concerned. They were all very positive but disagreed most spitefully, and so I was more puzzled than ever.

My chum Boggins asked me what I was up to, and I told him I was behaving like a good citizen, trying to understand the institutions of the country. At that Boggins laughed, and said that Englishmen, when they had been in the country a long time, gave up trying to understand it. He said there wasn't any mystery of the East; only a lot of cussedness. Even the great English statesmen didn't know anything about India, so why should I bother? I asked how then it was that English statesmen were able to guide the destinies of the country, and he said they did it by imagining it was like their own backyards.

I am beginning to think that one of the defects of the Indian character is a lack of public interest. For instance, in London the public is interested in everything, and consequently there are free entertainments going on in the street all the time. When a man starts digging a hole in the road, the whole population says, "Hello, what's this fellow doing to our road?" They want to know how and why, and whether the man is digging the hole in the most scientific way, and whether he gets proper pay for the job. The people stand for hours happily watching the hole, and seeing it filled up again.

Out here, no one takes any notice of the men who dig holes in the road. People aren't friendly with

coolies, which is the Indian name for navvies. You never see a judge of the High Court leaning over the barrier talking to a coolie, and exchanging opinions about the cultivation of roses, and asking him round to his house to tea. The result of this indifference is that the coolies dig the holes very slowly, and then go or sleep in them. If the general public showed a proper interest, and stood around and gave advice and were concerned about how the coolies lived, the holes would be dug much quicker, and would be filled in again afterwards. As things are, the coolies get bored, and go back to their native villages and leave the hole open. No one worries for a month or two, and then some Burra Sab chances to pass that way, and angrily orders the hole to be filled in at once. After the hole has been filled in, someone remembers that the purpose for which it was dug has never been carried out; and so the hole has to be dug all over again.

Another instance is when a London policeman has to lock a man up for being drunk. The population considers this an excellent entertainment, and follows the drama to the very door of the police-station. The difference is that the public is a critical as well as an appreciative audience. If the policeman is in difficulties, they will lend him a hand; but if he is too severe, they take a note of his number, and make a fuss about it. A Londoner likes to be sure that his policemen carry out their duties in a manner of which he approves, and use only the authority and privileges which he has delegated to them. In India it is quite different. No one seems to realise that policemen are representatives of the general public, and permitted to keep order only in a manner of which the public, their masters, would approve.

Now take the harbour. The people of Madras have a lovely harbour, and yet hardly any of them ever go to inspect it. It is like an enormous pond in the sea, surrounded by immense breakwaters. The public is allowed to walk along these breakwaters; at least, the Burra Sabs walk along them every evening, and when Boggins and I took a stroll there the other day, no one actually turned us off, though several people behaved as if there was a bad smell somewhere. Well, why don't more of the population use this magnificent



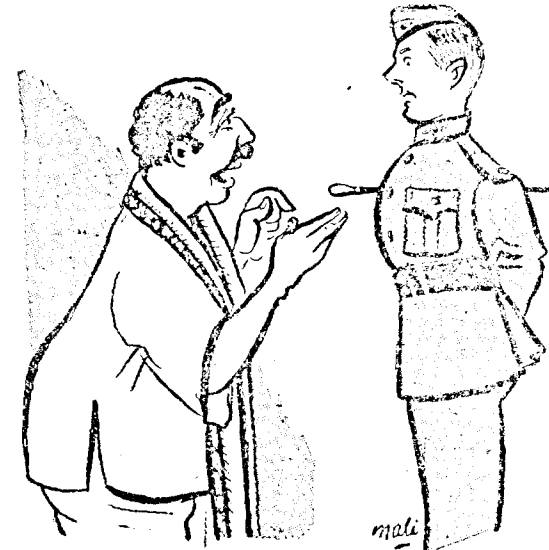
.....But if he is too severe, they take a note of his number.....

promenade? The surf comes booming against the stout masonry, and a lovely fresh breeze sweeps towards the land. When you get to the end of the pier, and look back, the view is truly magnificent. The people of Madras have erected grand buildings facing the sea, although for some reason they don't live in them themselves, but all crowd together in hovels, away from the sea breezes. The grand buildings look very quaint, for they are ornamented with decorations, stuck on all over the facade, like highly-coloured warts, in the shape of sugar-casters, pepper-pots, urns, and vases. In a book I have, this is called the Indo-Saracenic style, and I think the loyal inhabitants did it to please Queen Victoria. All the same, the panorama is very noble, with the great tall flagstaff of the Fort in the centre, and the view tailing off into a mist of sand and spray amid the palms of Mylapore.

Some of the older buildings of the town can be seen in different places, and they are a remarkable example of how the English are always obstinately insular, and try to make every part of the world a copy of their own backyards. It appears that once upon a time Corinthian architecture was all the rage in England, and all the gentlemen's houses were built to resemble the Parthenon in Greece, with great tall massive pillars and high porticoes, a flat isosceles triangle at the top. Well, about this time, lots of adventurers and rascals came to India, and, on account of the English love of gardening, they all became cultivators. What they cultivated was a certain plant called the Pagoda Tree, which I hear is practically extinct in India

nowadays. A lot of these rascals became deceased quite quickly, but the survivors usually pursued their agricultural operations with great energy, and soon became quite wealthy. As soon as they were wealthy, they used to go and write their name in a book at Government House, to prove that they were Burra Sabs. After they had done this, they used to write to the College of Heralds in England to be made into gentlemen, and on receipt of a suitable inducement the College would send them out a coat of arms and a family tree by V.P.P. You can tell these armorial bearings to this day, because one of the supporters of the badge of nobility is always a pagoda-tree or a palm-oil tree.

Well, as soon as these persons had become Burra Sabs and gentlemen, they had to have a gentleman's house, just like the gentlemen's houses in England. So



No two Indians gave me the same account.....

all over Madras you find old houses built like the Parthenon in Athens, except that the Parthenon does not keep on crumbling away. It was a very uncomfortable style of building, because the Parthenon was constructed to let in the sun, whereas in Madras you need houses to keep out the sun. What the Burra Sabs did was to build their big pillars and high open verandahs to prove that they were gentlemen, and then afterwards fill in the space between the pillars with lattices, to keep out the sun.

Regarding the harbour: not only is the public allowed to use the breakwater, they are allowed to sail little boats in the harbour. I saw lots of little boats sailing round and round, but by a strange coincidence all the occupants were Burra Sabs. I think the rest of the public should take more advantage of these privileges. It would be lovely, for instance, if the Rickshaw Pullers' Union arranged regular picnics to the harbour for all their members and friends. Several thousands of them could comfortably promenade on the breakwater at once, and have refreshments, or do a little fishing, while the more adventurous spirits could come in a couple of hundred catamarans and have sailing-races round the harbour.

The harbour is an excellent place for the public to go sailing, because there is a custom that the little sailing boats take precedence over the steamers who want to use the harbour for cargo and passengers. The other day I was watching a race, when a big steamer arrived at the entrance. It wanted to come in, but the captain courteously anchored for an hour or so, until the race was over. He even encouraged the competitors by frequently giving short sharp blasts on his siren.

A pleasant little custom like that is quite typical of India, and shows how urbane life can be out here. At the same time, I think it is a good thing that we don't allow any Burra Sabs in England. It would be rather awkward if they had a golf-course in the middle of Piccadilly, and whenever there was a match, the traffic had to wait until the competitors had holed out their putts.

Goodbye for the present. I received the cod-liver oil, except that the bottle was broken in the post.



.....Though several people behaved as if there was a bad smell somewhere.

However, the people out here don't often use cod-liver oil even in the cold weather, so perhaps I shall get safely through the winter without it.

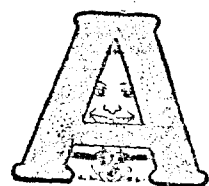
Your Loving Son,
ORRAH JOYFULL.

Keep this copy of The Merry Magazine.

It may bring you Rs. 100.

SUPERLATIVES

(Dr. CYNICUS)



ADVERTISEMENT, at any rate in modern days, is the thing that makes goods sell. It imparts a subtle persuasion to the buyer making him believe what a nice and profitable bargain he was making.

Praising articles abnormally is not now considered immoral. That is why there are no goods nowadays that are anything less than the 'best,' meaning thereby, I suppose, that it is the best in the whole universe. If a merchant advertises his goods as less than the 'best,' all that will be said of him is that he must be a milkop who does not know the A.B.C. of business.

But, for the buyer, what a perplexing bewilderment! There are so many "bests" of the kind that you want to buy, that there is nothing for it but to give up the job in despair! God save us from these 'bests'!

You go to the Picture House and you are greeted by the audacious announcement that it is the 'best' picture of the year or the century, every hair-cutting saloon professes to be the most fashionable and every coffee hotel boasts that it is the 'Best.' There is as much truth in these statements as in the claim that you and I are the wisest surviving descendants of Adam!

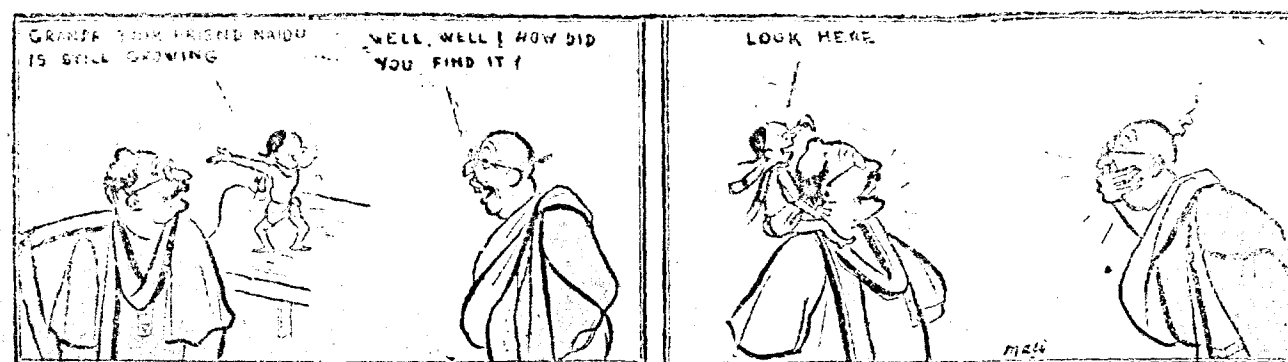
My friend, the other day, coming from the moffusil, asked me to recommend a good tailor and I confessed there were no good tailors in Madras, for, every blessed jackanape who could thread a needle and stitch a button on a petticoat claims that he is the best tailor and outfitter in the British Empire! My poor friend purchased the "best" razor and had his cheeks ploughed up like a paddy field: he went in for one of those "best toilette soaps" and is now all blisters and boils!

Sometime ago a lady friend of mine purchased one of the best hair-dyes and she is now compelled to wear a permanent wig to hide the assorted colours on her head!

Well my dear reader, I ask you, is it fair? Is there no such thing as morality in business? By all means persuade every body to buy your wares, but for Heavens' sake don't go about shouting from the housetops that your 'goods' are 'the best' under the sky. It is high time that something is done to secure the interests of the buyer and save the conscience of the seller. Some standard must be set up to judge things by. Our politicians and economists would be doing a useful service to the country if they turn their activities in this direction. Instead of wrangling for hours over whether there shall be fruits in the Fruit Market or fish and fowl, instead of flying at each other's throats in a desperate endeavour to fit the proportion of silk to satin in the Mayoral robes, our Corporation Councillors will be serving the citizens better by making arrangements for the proper grading and hall-marking of the goods sold in the City.

Coffee-hotels, for instance, could easily be licensed in different grades A1, A2, A3 etc. or each one might be directed to specialise in a particular dish, just as our college students specialise in History, Mathematics, Chemistry, Literature and so on. Of course it would mean a little extra trouble on our part, beginning, say, with the 'best basandhi' in Triplicane, 'the best halwa' in Mylapore, the 'best bondas' in George Town, the 'best poori-chutney' in Sowcarpet and finishing off with the 'best coffee' in Adyar or the 'best tea' in Mirsahibpet! But, surely you and I would not grudge the inconvenience in moving about from place to place, provided we are sure of getting the very 'best' in exchange for our hard earned money!

THE INCORRIGIBLE



THE MYSTERIOUS DOCTOR

(YU-TI-YUM)

Quite an eerie story, but "Yu-ti-Yum" is good-natured enough to see that you laugh away your uneasiness in the end!—Editor.

"LOOK here! don't go in, you may never return!" said Jopithraj with a very serious face.

"Why? what is the matter?" asked the stranger.

"I know you won't believe me when I tell you. So no good telling. Better keep out if you value your health and safety."

"But do tell me. I want to know why."

"No. I better not. You will laugh at me and say that I was dreaming."

"No. I promise to hear it right through. You assure me it is true?"

"Quite true. I saw it with my own eyes."

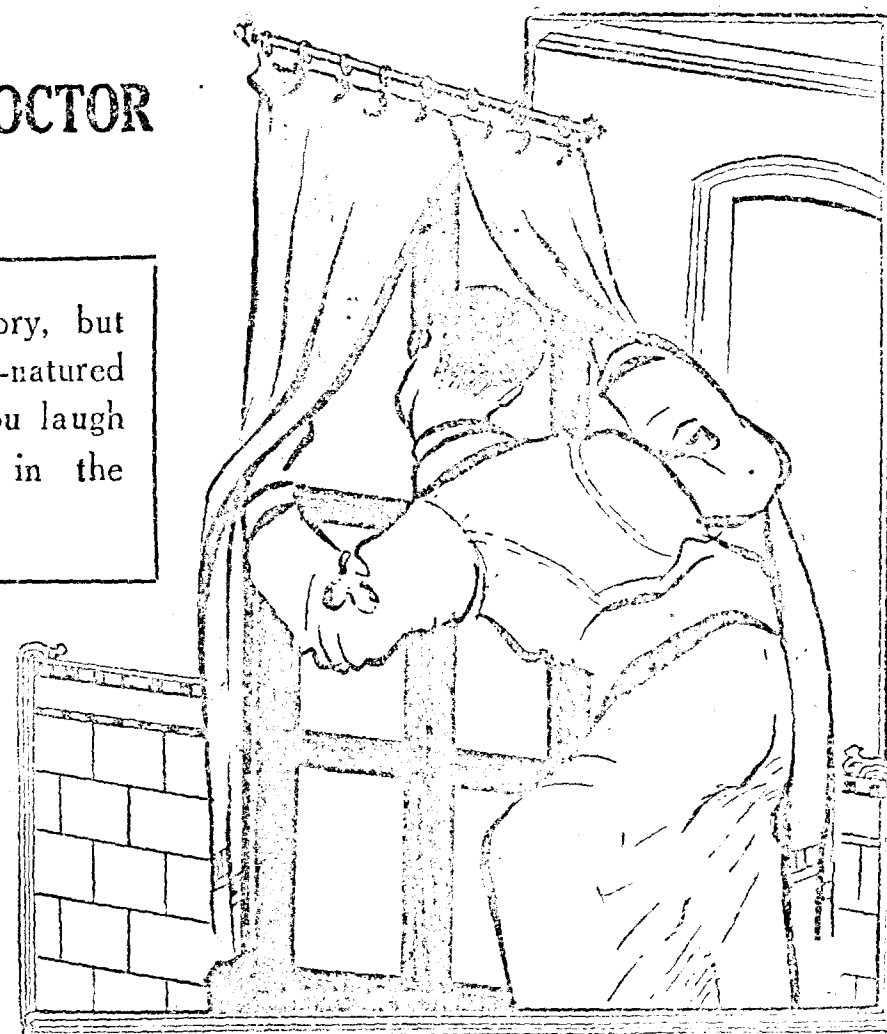
"Then come along, begin. I am anxious to hear."

Jopithraj cleared his throat and looked round to see whether there was anybody and then began.

"It was just three days ago. It happened in the adjoining room. There is a doctor in there, *appah*! He is a wizard—nothing short of it."

"A doctor here! What doctor?"

"Just hear me patiently. The doctor seems to possess some supernatural powers. I was watching him through a hole in the window. He hadn't noticed me; otherwise I would have been done for and would not



"I was watching him through the window....."

have been alive today to tell you the tale. I was alone. In fact no one knew that I was then on the premises. I looked, and what was my surprise to see him take out a man from a box! The man was stiff and appeared to be lifeless."

"Chloroformed?"

"May be, I don't know. I am only telling you what I saw. I am sure he is not a dead man. Something in the body told me that. The man was pale and lifeless like a statue."

"Was there no one there to assist the doctor?"

"There was no one else. That is why I think there is something in it. The doctor was certainly up to something unearthly and mysterious. That made me all the more keen to watch the whole process. The doctor then looked round to see that there was no one watching his operations. He then quietly—very quietly, began tapping the stiff body all over.

"Why did he do that?"

"Ask me another! I don't know."

"No, what I wanted to know is whether the body then came to life."

"No. It was as stiff as before. Nay, at that time it appeared to be more stiff than before. The doctor then took some instrument and began to tap the skull all round. He had apparently cut it all round, for he was next slowly and carefully lifting the top of the skull clean off!"

"Good God! Do you want me to believe that?"

"There! there! Didn't I say so at the very beginning? So I will now stop and go. Good morning!"

"No. Stop. Don't go."

"No. I won't waste your time nor mine. Good bye."

"Stop! Come here for goodness sake. I will be patient and hear you to the end. Was there blood?"

"I do not remember to have noticed that particularly, but who would look for all that at such a moment? I was so flabbergasted. But stranger things are yet to come but I will not tell you."

"Please do. I will not interrupt again. But is all this really true or are you only——"

"Didn't I say that I saw all this with my own eyes?"

"Then pray proceed."

"I will, but I want to know one thing."

"What is it?"

"Have you got a weak heart?"

"No. Why?"

"Because what I am going to tell you next is such that a weak hearted man may collapse. Well, I said that the doctor removed the top portion of the skull. He gently placed it aside. He examined minutely the brain that lay exposed. I too took a good look. I had never seen a brain before. Then what do you think he did next? You won't believe it when I say."

"Tell me, I will believe you."

"Well! The doctor looked about him again to see that no one was looking on. He then took some instru-

ment and inserted it between the brain and the skull and passed it all round. Then laying aside the instrument he gently—very gently began lifting the whole brain out of the skull!"

"My lord!" the stranger said and wiped the perspiration which had flowed down through his excitement and fear. "Do you really say this happened?"

"Yes! You see, I too perspired like you then, perhaps more than you did, for, you only hear what I narrate but I saw the actual thing."

"Sure?"

"Do you doubt?"

"No, no. But this is so strange."

"Yes, truth is always stranger than fiction."

"What happened next?"

"He deposited the brain gently on a glass plate, and then what do you think he did next? You would not dream!"

"Cut it, I suppose," he said resignedly, perspiring all the more and wiping it often with a handkerchief in each hand.

"No.—You wouldn't believe me when I say that he took a fine brush from a box and actually began to brush off the proverbial cobwebs from off the brain."

"Pshaw! what rubbish! You want me to swallow all this. Brushing the cobwebs! Pshaw!"

"Believe it or not. I don't care. But that cobweb business was my addition. I actually saw him carefully brushing the top of the brain. That is what I actually saw. I warned you at the beginning that what I was going to tell you was all strange. Since you begin to doubt I will stop. I must go and take my meal. It is already late. If you like you can go in and risk all that."

"No. I really want to hear the end of this. You see all this is so strange."

"Then hear and be quick about it. I am hungry. You see I too would not have believed about a doctor brushing the brain if anyone had told me about it. But I must believe what I saw. I can never forget the sight till the end of my life."

"But can you swear by all that is sacred that what you told me is true?"

"I swear! Are you satisfied? Well, the doctor then washed the brain with some fluid which he took from a bottle."

"What was the fluid?"

"I don't know. I should have liked to ask the doctor that, but how could I?"

"And then?"

"Then the doctor took up the brain again and was going to replace it. But then some sound behind frightened me. I thought someone had come behind me. I turned and ran away with fear as my nerves were in a strained condition then. When I found that there was no one behind me I went up to the window and peeped again."

"What did you see?"

"The stiff man was as before, I mean that the brain and the skull top had been replaced and the doctor was looking at the stiff man with a smile on his face, probably at the satisfaction of having done this operation successfully. Don't you see that it was a wonderful feat?"

"Yes," he said with a sigh of relief, "then what happened? Did the man open his eyes and breathe again?"

"Wait, it is not all over yet. Worse and worse. The doctor then looked down and examined the stiff man's body."

"And what did he do?"

"He——" he began but was cut short.

"He cut open the whole front of the body and began taking out the internal organs one by one," came a laughing voice suddenly through a door which was now half open."

Both Jopithraj and the stranger looked round aghast. A second later Jopithraj was nowhere to be found.

"Well, where is your story teller?" asked the man who looked like a professor of the college.

"He is not to be seen," he said, rather upset.

"It was rather an interesting story and so I did not interrupt. I was overhearing the whole story with interest as I was personally concerned in the matter," the professor said.

"How, sir?"

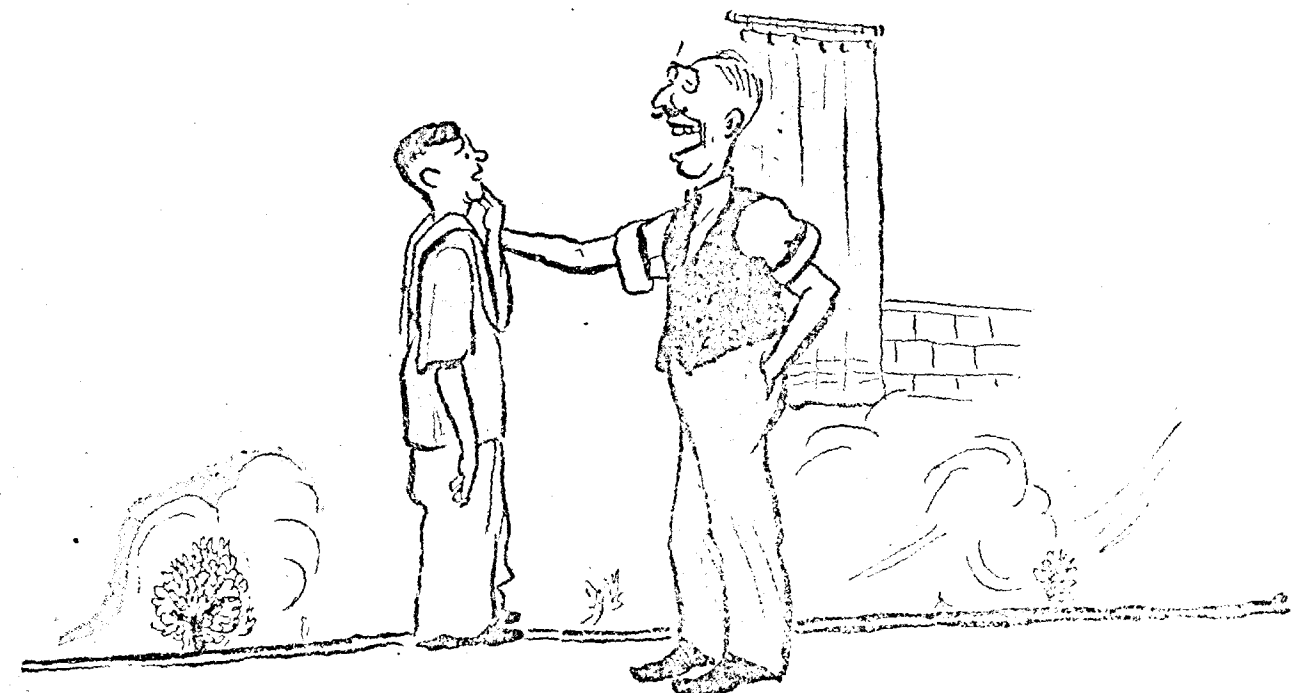
"What he said was all true. You can give him credit for that. But what I was dealing with was a plaster of paris model of a man from which the different parts and organs could be detached. I was then cleaning them."

"And the doctor?"

"Myself."

"But you are the professor, I think."

"Yes, the professor of Zoology and a Doctor of Science. Your story teller Jopithraj is a most mischievous but bright pupil of mine. You are probably a stranger and his latest dupe. Good morning."



"Well, where is your story teller?"

OTHER PEOPLE'S HUMOUR

Oh, Hell!

While a surgeon was performing an operation, a fire started in a building directly opposite the hospital, and soon the operating-theatre was lit up by the reflection of the flames. Turning to one of the nurses, he said:—

"I say, nurse, I think we had better have the blinds drawn. I shouldn't like the patient to think, when he comes to, that the operation hasn't been a success."

He Left.

An extra porter had been taken on at the seaside station to cope with the rush of holiday makers. The stationmaster was outlining his duties.

"First of all," he said, "you'll start on number one platform. Sweep out the waiting-room and the porters' room. Then go over the bridge to platform number two and sweep out the booking-office, my room, and the general waiting-room. Make sure that all the fire-buckets are filled, and the platform has had a good sweeping. After that come over the bridge—"

"Sweep the snow off number one platform?" put in the porter.

"But there isn't any snow on number one platform."

"There will be by the time I've finished the other jobs."

Angel Unawares.

A clergyman noticed a woman pushing a pram up a steep hill and volunteered his assistance, which was gratefully accepted.

When he had pushed the pram to the top of the hill, he said: "No thanks at all. I'm delighted to help you—but, as a little reward, may I kiss the baby?"

"Bless you, sir," said the woman, "it isn't a baby—it's a dozen of stout!"

Not Tete-a-tete.

"Hist!" exclaimed the villain in the new play. "Are we alone?"

"Not quite," said the solitary occupant of the pit. "I'm here."

French as she is spoke.

"Was your French chauffeur seriously hurt in the accident?"

"Yes, he was knocked practically speechless."

"Speechless? How?"

"Shoulder dislocated. Can't shrug."

They Laughed—At the End.

The portly and pompous chairman rose to tell a funny story. He told it dully, long-windedly, and without a vestige of humour. Yet when he sat down at the end of ten minutes' chronic narration, the roars of laughter nearly split the ceiling.

Somebody had put a tack on his chair.

No Waste.

A Northern farm-hand went to work for a Texas rancher. There had been an unusually long drought in the region and everyone on the ranch was hoping for rain. One day it did start to sprinkle, and the farm-hand, to show his delight, proceeded to dance in the rain.

"Come in out of that rain!" the rancher shouted. "Oh, I don't mind these few drops," replied the man.

"Who cares about that?" bellowed the farmer. "We want every bit of that rain to fall on Texas!"

Dad Reads All the Ads.

Gladys—"Mother, dear, I advertised under a different name that I would like to make the acquaintance of a refined gentleman with an eye to romance."

Mother—"Gladys, how awful! Did you get any answers?"

Gladys—"Only one—from father."

Pointed.

Mary Roberts Rinehart, writing in "My Story" about her resourceful grandmother, says: "Completely untrained and with no openings outside of school teaching for women in those days, she fell back on her needle." "Reminding one," comments A. W., "of the man who sat down on the spur of the moment."

Of Course.

"I'm managing a private laundry."

"Are you! Many hands working?"

"Two, of course. How many hands do you think my wife's got?"

Jealous?

"I was very upset, Mary, to see the postman kissing you just now."

"Lor', mum, I didn't know you were one of the jealous sort."

Substitute.

Diner (examining the menu): "There's nothing fit to eat here—absolutely nothing! Bring me the manager."

Waiter (under notice): "Very good, Sir. How would you like him—fried or grilled?"

Simple.

Jones was always complaining of his wife's memory. "She can never remember anything," he said. "It's awful."

"My wife was just as bad," said Brown, "till I found a capital recipe."

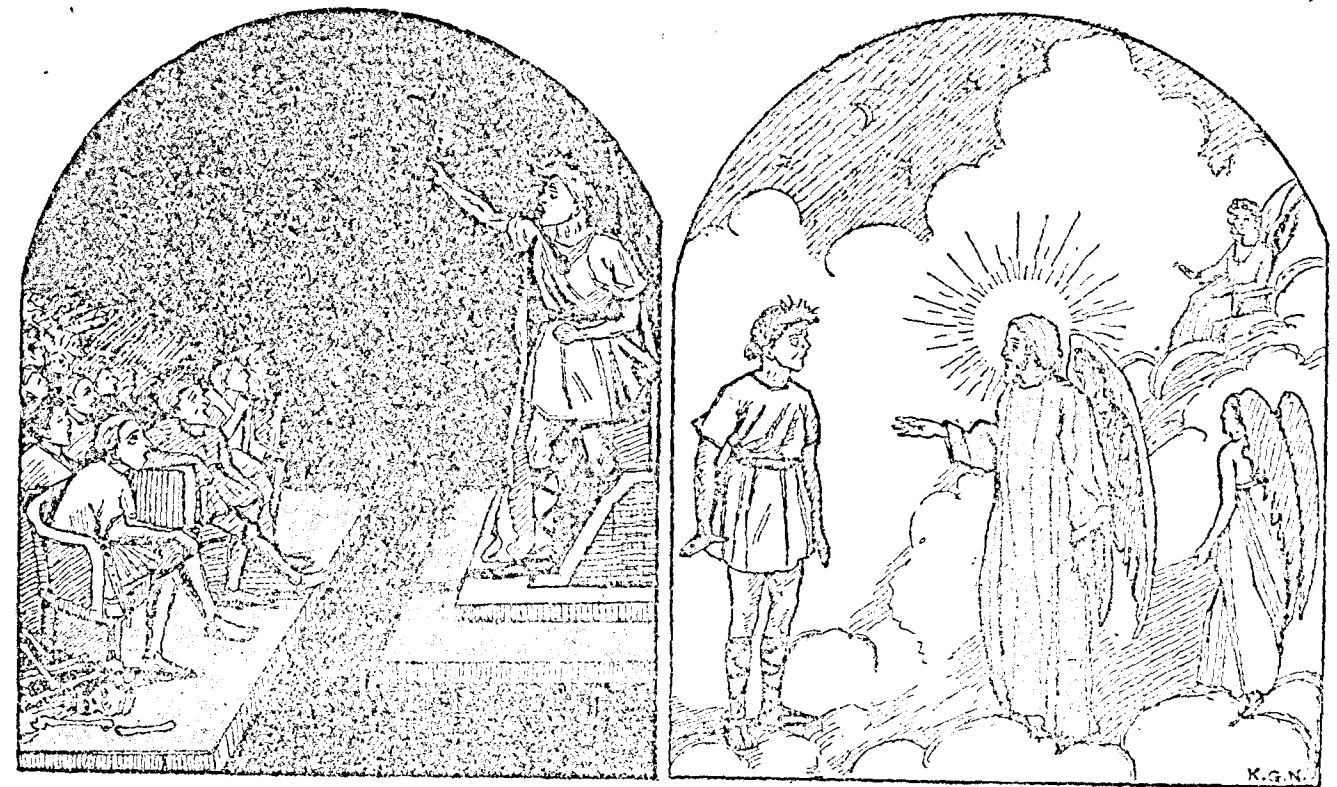
"What was it?" asked Jones eagerly.

"Why," said Brown, "whenever there's anything particular I want the missus to remember, I write it on a slip of paper and gum it to the looking-glass."

Jones is now a contented man.

A PROVINCIAL NORTON

FRANK



"Better to reign in hell than serve in heaven."

A sketch of a provincial 'Norton'—is the genus getting extinct?—by a writer who knows when to be gay and when grave.—Editor.

I WENT the other day to the town of R— on a visit of business. I sighed to think of the numberless occasions when I had gone there previously, when every visit was so full of emotional significance to me. Now, alas, the dominant personality of the place has been removed by death and it wears visibly the look of being without its lord, of 'masterlessness.' He was a great criminal lawyer, the renowned 'Norton' of the place. The sense of the missing personality assailed me long before I reached R—. At A—, the junction station, the Brahmin boy of the hotel carrying coffee about on the platform, courtesied to me first. I said I did not want any tiffin, I had lost my appetite for some time. The boy pitied my stomach.

"The good days have vanished, sir, with the great Vakil master. He would want plenty of tiffin to eat, and he would oblige his friends as well to eat. Your renowned father, I mean your father-in-law, sir, used to say that he always won his cases after having a sumptuous lunch."

Then there was the clerk at Higginbotham's book-stall. I picked up a newspaper to buy, just for an anna. He looked at me with a sigh of regret.

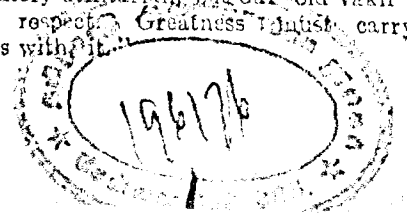
"Few of these present-day gentlemen can appreciate books as your father-in-law did," says he. "He would know every kind of book, law, literature, poetry, or cookery for the matter of that. I sold him once a cookery book which cost ten rupees. Every time he came to this junction I would place a heap of illustrated journals beside his seat in the compartment. The cost was of no account at all to him —"

"Because the clients paid for him nearly always," I interrupted.

"But he could have taken all that money for himself. He was a large-hearted man, sir, and rejoiced to see all about him happy," answered the book-stall clerk.

"I don't think he read the books which he bought," I remarked again.

"That was just his greatness, sir. You moderns are so absolutely utilitarian, but our old vakil inspired unbounded respect. Greatness must carry many irregularities with it."



The third person I met at A— was the Sub-Inspector of Police. He gave me a mechanical salaam, reminding me of the fuller deference he would have shown me if I stood by the provincial Norton. The Sub-Inspector had quailed numberless times before the cross-examination by the Norton, and yet outside the court the lawyer was full of courtesy to him. It was once a case of rioting, and the lawyer elicited a statement from the police officer that he had been 'disarmed.' He had meant to say that he was unarmed, but his English was typically Police and poor.

Once a Muhammadan woman complained about the theft of her clothes. There was the need to prove that a bodice in question belonged to her. The Norton was engaged for the defence. Would she wear the bodice and demonstrate to the court that it belonged to her? And fitness would have to be determined by Muhammadan standards according to which bodices half concealed and half revealed the breasts. The charge of theft did not succeed and the accused was set free.

When Major Thompson was summoned to appear before the magistrate of W— for non-payment of the toll-gate tax for his car, our Norton handled him like any other person who might appear in court.

"You must know, I am a Major," breaks out the angry British officer.

"Yes, I know you are not a minor," remarks the lawyer coolly.

How the provincial Norton managed the magistrates who had just changed their places from clerkships, by threatening them with the wrath of their superiors, the first class magistrates, how these latter would succumb to his flattery like Julius Caesar when told they were above flattery, how clerks and peons attached to courts would all pay their homage to the lawyer, and receive in turn his tender consideration, all should form part of a great biography.

The provincial Norton loved to play the *pater familias* to the entire locality. You should have beheld him in his glory when he sat in the large pavilion-like hall in front of his house, surrounded by his clients. He had the true Roman sense of dignity, counting each of his "clients" a dependant of his. They were his myrmidons running on his errands all about the place. Glorious *Sob Jan*, of wrestling fame, who had been saved from a serious charge of assault was commissioned to accompany me on a road journey at midnight, and how secure I felt then, though the usual experience had been one of trepidation! The lawyer became a kind of feudal lord having a claim over everybody's services in the place. The washerwoman did the washing free, the vendor of sweets sent him a constant supply of them, and provisions came lavishly, like clothes, from shopmen who remained in lasting obligation to him.

One feared to lose one's self-respect by dwelling too near the orbit of this centre of a planetary system, for

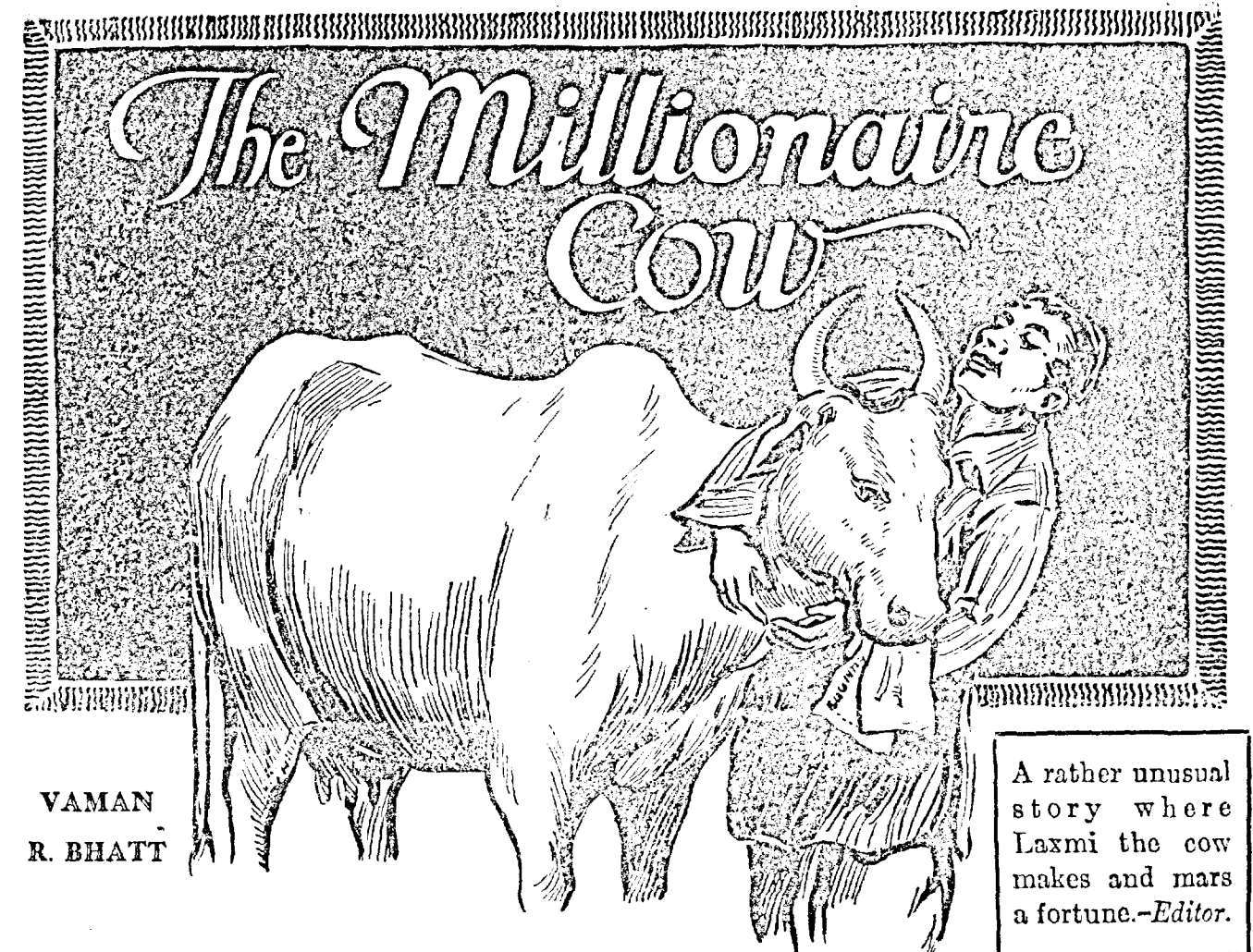
where he was, none else counted for anything. But for the children and grandchildren in the home of the Norton, what an enviable home it seemed to the others in the town!

My Norton began life as a schoolmaster in the metropolis and he was known for his pluck in controlling the most notoriously rebellious of the boys. He wrote successful books in his days for the booksellers and added to his schoolmaster's pay. Do you know that wonderful dictionary in which parallel proverbs of two languages, English and Tamil, are so aptly put together? That was his work. While consuming mounds of flavoured potatoes he wrote 'Made-Easies,' 'Compendia' and 'Manuals.' Schoolmastering soon proved to be too tame an occupation and he set up practice at R—. In the early years writing letters to the Madras dailies in which he artfully insinuated against munsiffs and magistrates was all his occupation. But the good days came quickly and they came with crowding glory. The clients regarded him a demi-god, and to fee him was equivalent to regaining your liberty, whatever criminal charge lay against you.

Provincial Norton, I had judged thee often with great harshness. Your ways were barbarian in my eyes. In the bed of prolonged sickness and suffering you seemed to be vain, selfish and haughty, though the world worshipped you as a hero. The others were right and I was wrong. Yours was a magnetic personality. Your faults were burnt up in the fire of your forceful personality. You wore a halo of romance, and you must remain a myth and legend for the future. I thought you were touched with Satanic pride and believed it.

'Better to reign in hell than serve in heaven.' You never liked to pass out of the world where you held undisputed supremacy. You had the mettle of a warrior, for, like the warrior, you loved to be in action always, though of a different kind. You took pleasure only in the company of 'men of action,' policemen and doctors, and officials of "executive functions." You adored them, and made them your fast friends. For schoolmastering you had little regard, and that stung me!

What a home of hospitality the provincial Norton's was! Every travelling commercial agent found a resting place in his home; clients fed there, and relations of all degrees, so that his own children felt like living in a hotel. Lawyer, your part on the world's stage has been acted out. What now objects are engaging your generous heart and what ceaseless activities keep you alive in the world which you have reached? Are you still the patriarch there? Are a crowd of dependents about you there, paying you constant homage? Are you dispensing there your accustomed hospitality? Norton, how I miss thee on earth!



"If it were not for a cursed cow," said Ramdas as he blew out clouds of smoke, "I would have been a millionaire now."

We were in a third class compartment of the South Indian Railway, sitting face to face on opposite benches of the dirty, dusty compartment which the great men of the S. I. R. (Incorporated in England) have inflicted on the teeming humanity of India.

"I cannot understand," continued Ramdas, "why on earth this silly animal is held in India to be the most sacred creature that ever destroyed grass or ever spoiled one's lawn. It's beyond my comprehension how my coreligionists can find so much holiness, benignity and divinity in this noisome animal."

"But how could a cow have deprived you of millions?" I asked. My acquaintance with him had only started some two hundred miles away down the line and I had a vague suspicion that he was trying to pull my leg.

"Have patience, my dear friend," said Ramdas, patting the air before him with the palm of his hand. "I shall tell you how."

He got up from his seat and bending down drew out a small travelling bag from under the seat. Opening it he fished out a piece of paper from it and held it to me for inspection. "Read," he requested me.

I took it in my hand. It was a ticket for the Derby, of the Irish Free State Hospital Ltd. and bore the mark of the year 1932. His name was written at the back: Ramdas Naidu.

"Well?" I asked him as I handed it back to him. "What has this to do with the cow?"

"I shall now explain to you how the cow comes in," he said and putting back the bag under the seat resumed the story.

"Last year, the astrologer predicted to me after reading my horoscope that I would win a lottery, or that in some way or other I would become rich."

"So having great faith in his reading of my stars, I saved up some rupees out of my monthly salary of Rs. 20 (you see I am a clerk in a high school), and on an auspicious day and hour of the month, I went to an agent of the Irish Hospital Lottery and bought the ticket I showed to you just now."

"The *nom de plume* for the ticket had puzzled me before I bought the ticket, but this had been solved by Kamala my wife. We have a cow which came as a part of the dowry of my wife; it had been named Laxmi. Well, before I started for the ticket agent my wife begged me to enter Laxmi as the *nom de plume* of the ticket, because she said Laxmi was the Goddess of Riches and Prosperity, and Laxmi in connection with a cow would be an irresistible combination to wrest the greatest prize out of the most unlucky or the most obdurate stars. And so I had taken the ticket under the name "Laxmi."

Months passed, the draw of the Sweep drew near. The Irish nurses, I read in the papers, had begun to mix the foils. I prayed hard to the Goddess Laxmi to shower her attentions on my foil in the huge drum in Dublin.

"It was six o'clock on the day of the first draw. I was sitting in the front of my house, looking down the direction of the road to see if the telegraph peon was coming with the glad tidings. My wife was sitting near me tense with expectation. Luxmi the cow was dozing peacefully in the garden.

"Suddenly my wife clutched me by the arm and pointed to a cyclist in khaki who was coming in the direction of our house at a furious speed. I rose in excitement and rushed towards the gate.

"He gave me a telegram, I tore it open. Sure! I had drawn the favourite horse. I gasped with joy, embraced my wife (or was it the telegraph peon by mistake? I do not recollect.) Anyhow I know that I surprised him by presenting him a five rupee note. 'For me?' he asked and when I nodded assent rushed at a greater speed than before, afraid that I might recall him and the note.

"I went into the house and took the counterfoil from my trunk where I had locked it away and coming out into the garden looked at it long and carefully. Then it was that my wife suggested that I should thank the cow Laxmi! She too, you see, was almost out of her senses with joy.

"With the counterfoil, the ticket and the telegram in my hand I walked to the cow. I patted her neck, and she woke up from her doze and her dreams and looked up. I bent down and taking her long hairy snout between my hands (in one hand I had the ticket etc.) I made as it were to kiss her.

"And then," Ramdas struck his forehead with gusto, "the cursed cow snapped up the counterfoil and

the telegram from my hand and before I could say A B C had munched and swallowed them! Can you imagine my feelings then? I tried everything to retrieve the counterfoil, for I knew that without the counterfoil the ticket would be useless. I gave the cow an opening dose, at one time I thought of ripping open her bowels, but all was in vain. A doctor made me understand that the counterfoil would have been reduced to pulp in Laxmi's interior.

"And so," said Ramdas, "when the horse I had drawn ran first, instead of being the most lucky man, I was the most wretched. Of course I sent the ticket to the Directors of the Sweep, but they refused to give me the prize till I had produced the counterfoil.

"Laxmi the cow is the unique cow in the world, being the millionaire cow, and I its owner who would have been now rolling on the soft cushions in the first class, am the most wretched being on earth. Cursed be cows, and doubly cursed be the cows who are given to chewing paper."

The train whistled, slowed down and came to a stop. "My station," announced Ramdas and got down, and as the train started I saw him walking towards the exit with his travelling bag. "Was he pulling my leg?" I wondered.

Fatness Stands in the Way



Owner of Pig:—You can't run over my pig and get away with it.

Owner of Car :—Don't you worry! I'll replace it.

Owner of Pig:—How! You aren't fat enough.

THIS FORTNIGHT'S FAIRY TALE

(K A L Y A N)

boarded the train at Trichy and got into a second class coupe compartment. (I was advised to travel second as I was convalescing after a serious illness). I was a bit embarrassed to find a European seated on the berth with his things rather spread out on it; for I was in my usual *vaidik* clothes. But the European smilingly made room for me and put me somewhat at ease. I thanked him and took my seat in the farthest corner. "Make yourself comfortable," he smiled and went back to his cigar. In a moment, however, he turned towards me with a jerk and saying "Sorry!" threw the cigar away. I took a few seconds to understand the position and then reassured him, "Not at all, sir; I don't mind your smoking."

I was bound for Raduma, (pronounced Rajuma), down South; and so was he. He was completely free from reserve, and put me a thousand searching questions about our social life, agricultural difficulties, political views and so on. I answered him with great pleasure. All the time I tried to guess who he was. His face was familiar in a distant sort of way; but in these days when record kissers jostle Arctic explorers in the illustrated press, how can a body be sure? We reached our destination without my knowing who he was.

At the Raduma platform, however, there was sudden bustle and excitement among the station staff. The S. M. came hurriedly and, saluting my fellow-passenger, started something about, "I deeply regret, Your Excellency,....." The other quickly put the lid on him, saying, "Will you please stop being interested in passengers till asked to?... And, may I depend on you not to set up a cackle in the town about my presence here?" The S. M. meekly answers, "Very good, your—I mean, Sir." His Excellency then drove to the dak-bungalow in a taxi.

His presence could not however be kept a secret long. The Municipality, among other bodies, requested a visit from him. He agreed, but stipulated that there should be no show and needless expenditure. The visit was fixed for ten the next morning. He was disappointed to find welcome arches and decorations all along the route, and surging crowds, waiting for a sight of him. All he could do was to urge the car to be driven on as fast as possible. On arriving at the office

he told the chairman, "Well, Sir, come along. We will have a look round."

"Very good, Your Excellency, but....."

"Oh, for goodness sake, cut out the Excellency business. 'Sir' is a good old honest English word. It is good enough for me.—You were about to say something?"

"Yes, Sir. I was about to suggest that we go in for a few minutes....."

"What for? I didn't come here on office inspection!"

"Not that, Sir. There is a little address, Sir....."

"Oh! out it out!...I wonder when you will out-grow these formalities!...All along the roads were crowds anxious to see me either out of curiosity—which embarrasses one; or out of a slave mentality—which saddens me. If I tell them to spin for a few minutes a day, they will grumble that they have no spare time; but here they are wasting hours to have a look at me!.....What is an address for, anyway? I know I am welcome here; but even otherwise I will come here on my own to discharge my duties!"

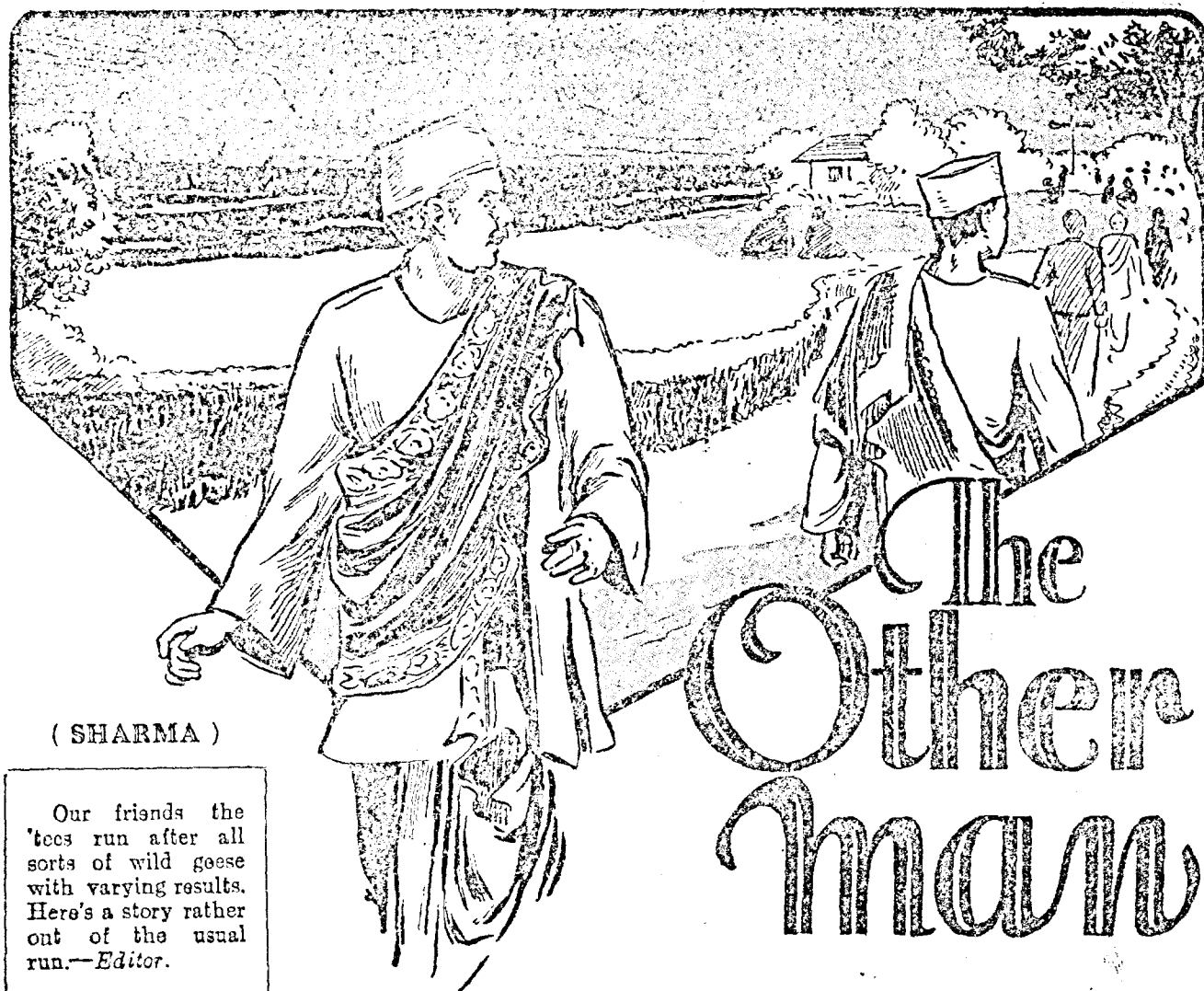
"As you please, Sir..."

"That's better.....Look here, I prefer to have an unofficial guide to take me through the worst lanes and markets. Will you please send for one Mr. Kalyan Sastri who lives in Warm Street? [*As is the way with dreams, I seemed to be everywhere !*]—By the by, does the Municipality own all these pigs?.....And another thing—why do you call it 'Rajuma' instead of 'Raduma'?....."

A Municipal *chaprassé* arrived in a splendid car, and, knocking at my door, shouted, "Saar, Saar!"

I woke up. An obliging fellow-passenger was tapping me on my shoulder and shouting, "Saar, Saar!"

"Oh, has Raduma come?" I asked, sitting up confusedly.



(SHARMA)

Our friends the 'tees run after all sorts of wild geese with varying results. Here's a story rather out of the usual run.—Editor.



It was with an acute attack of self-importance that Kothandan left the Headquarters of the Criminal Investigation Department. He was conscious of the weight of a thousand peaceful lives pressing on his shoulder. It would be nothing more than bare justice to that worthy gentleman when we observe that he felt like the little Don riding out to fight the wrongs of this world.

Mr. Kothandan was one of those numerous sleuths who had been let loose from the kennels of the C. I. D. consequent upon the dastardly outrage at L-Street. A dark, peakish May pole of a man with a pair of brazen eyes, a leaden complexion and rusty head of hair, there was not much of the detective about him. But he was not deficient in bragging. "Neck or nothing," had been his valedictory words to his chief, "I shall trace the author of this outrage. Trust me for it."

We believe we won't be straying into the sacred precincts of Sec. 144 when we remark here that the methods eventually adopted by Mr. Kothandan were

more or less crude and half a century behind our own day. Every once-in-a-blue-moon reader of 'shilling shockers' knows to-day that false wigs and painted moustaches have long become dead letters in the world of criminal detection. But Kothandan never read 'shilling shockers' (that, by the way, was one of his strong points); and criminology, if anything, was not his *metier*. And it was only one of those idiotic freaks of Providence that had made Kothandan such a prosaic thing as a detective, when he could have made a capital hit as a brainy butler or a brainier jutka-wallah.

Well, Mr. Kothandan's tactics were as old as Julius Caesar's, but not as ingenious. Mr. Kothandan adopted a disguise—or rather we should say, had his features thoroughly over-hauled. He suffered his rusty hair to be close-cropped and inserted under a Khadi cap which sat on his chump like a saucepan on a dung-hill. He purchased a black false moustache which, when adjusted, served to eclipse the only silver lining in his cloud of a face—we mean his teeth. He exchanged his usual raiments for a Khaddar *vasty* (which he wore in the manner of a Non-Madrassi), a Khaddar *jubba* of the Adyar pattern and a shawl of the same material. And

The Other Man

when, in conclusion, we add that he wore a pair of blue spectacles, another of Burmah sandals and a set of false teeth, we have painted the picture of as tell-tale and as dummy a khadi-wallah—or a detective, if you like—as was ever sighted in the streets of Madras.

In this metamorphosed edition, Mr. Kothandan set about his business. He visited pubs and pot-houses, wriggled into private drawing-rooms at the hazard of the broom and the bull-dog, inspected Railway platforms and fish markets—in short, took up a series of manoeuvres which, we can assuredly say, would not have won the approbation of Sherlock Holmes. It is no wonder that all this was of no avail. Fate seemed terribly at logger-heads with Mr. Kothandan. His original ardour and enthusiasm flagged; he got confounded wild; he gnashed his teeth and shook his fist and cursed and swore and bullied and dragged and ranted and raved at the elusive culprit.

"I'm sure these criminal chappies are gone quite rotten. Why, there was a time when every blessed crook and felon submitted to the hand-cuffs like a sensible creature. Now—well, I'm dashed if they haven't turned a bally lot of idiots."

With which sagacious remark he bottled up his virtuous indignation at the degeneracy of the criminal standard and turned towards the Marina in expectation of a bit of inspiration. "It is strange," he murmured to himself, "I forgot all about the Marina. God bless me, there's at least one place left where things can happen. We shall do for these dynamiter chappies yet."

Mr. Kothandan had reached the southern end of the Marina without as yet encountering any dynamiter. The evening had far advanced and the sun was just contemplating his exit. To the south the spire of San Thome rose abruptly, proud, sombre and solitary. The city lights flashed into sudden brilliance. The 'autos' had drawn up and stood as if on show. Madras looked at its best in the fading evening light. But Mr. Kothandan had no eye for all this "silly stuff." To him the sun was just a big blazing thing going its round from 6 A. M. to 6 P. M. like a cop on duty. The absorbing question of the unknown Anarchist engrossed his attention and he strolled down the side walk more desperate than ever.

Suddenly he stopped. A little to his right he beheld a precise counter-part of himself footing it down the lovers' path with a mighty swaggering gait. The stranger might have been Mr. Kothandan himself but for a more hopeful complexion and less baboonish features. He wore the same inquisitive expression and the same sort of Khaddar clothes. Mr. Kothandan stopped dead. His first impulse was amazement, his next a sort of bewilderment, his third and last an uncontrollable desire to burst into a broad grin. It is no exaggeration to say that he felt somewhat like the good old philosopher of Greece who ran out of his bath in ecstatic joy and has been since then the *bete noire* of many a mug and swot.

"I knew it. Ahem!" Mr. Kothandan murmured to himself. He stared at the stranger; the stranger stared at him. He turned away and fixed his gaze upon the world; the other man followed his example. He shook himself and walked forward at a tremendous pace; the other man did the same, but down the lovers' path.

Now he was in front of Queen Mary's; the other man too was opposite the same. Now he had reached the Radio zone; and still the stranger trotted down between the casuarina hedges like the Old Man of the Sea. So on, they walked at the same distance and in the same direction. Mr. Kothandan remembered something vague about parallel straight lines and their queer way of never meeting together. He dismissed this geometric axiom as too silly for a detective's brain. The chase continued as far as the Iron Bridge; then it stopped simply because further progress was a physical impossibility and neither of them was in the mood for suicide.

Mr. Kothandan gathered up all that was left of his scanty wits and made a mighty effort at playing the 'tec. He greeted his strange friend with a grin.

"Awfully glad you take such an interest in my movements," he began in a pretty awkward manner.

"Well, it is a sort of sympathy, I reckon," the other man returned; "I knew it by the look of you. No sooner did I catch a glimpse of your face than I says to myself, 'Well, here's a brother and a vertebrate one at that. He will make a nice addition to the Fold.'"

"Well—er, I don't quite catch you."

"Really? I gave you credit for something more than that," the other man replied a whit disappointed.

"I'm talking of the Fold of the Fearless—what they call the Anarchist gang in your idiotic newspapers. Well, I belong to that great fraternity."

The stranger held up his head like a Sultan and seemed to grow an inch taller all of a sudden. Mr. Kothandan snatched his hand and worked it like a pump handle.

"It's a pleasure, it's more than a pleasure. It's a privilege to make the acquaintance of such a celebrated personage," Mr. Kothandan spluttered out in too theatrical a way. "Let me add, my dear sir, that my sympathies are wholly with you."

Having delivered himself of this pretty piece of eloquence Mr. Kothandan proceeded to introduce himself with immense gusto.

"I am—er—Jagat Singh of the Anarchist League, Karachi—or—I mean Bombay. Your name, sir?"

The stranger coughed.

"Sur Dev. President, 'Fold of the Fearless'."

There was a renewal of the pump-handle shakings after which the 'friends' betook themselves to one of the benches and helped themselves to a spill of Arcadie. They talked of the Anarchist world and of the latest developments therein. Mr. Kothandan learnt that the

stranger had already 'bagged' seven. Of course he found it a bit too hard on his nerves to cope with his friend, for he knew as much of Anarchy as of telepathy. But Mr. Kothandan had this in common with Bully Bottom—his immense adaptability.

When it was time to take each other's leave, Mr. Sur Dev whispered in his friend's ear:

"We may not meet for a few days to come. But in the meanwhile I would like to get into closer touch with you.....*Vive l'anarchie!*"

With which emotional ejaculation he turned on his heels and strode into the darkness.

And the worthy detective gave vent to a self-complacent chuckle. "I knew the rat would walk into the trap," he said.

The next morning Mr. Kothandan presented himself at headquarters in extra-fine spirits and more incurably self-important than ever.

"I have something to report about these anarchist chaps, chief," he said.

The sage smiled benignantly as only sages can.

"It's odd, though," he replied. "Looks as if we are in for an easy win this time. Who's the guy like?"

Mr. Kothandan consulted his pocket book and then his memory and gave as faithful an account of his anarchist friend as his descriptive talents could allow him to.

The chief started in his chair.

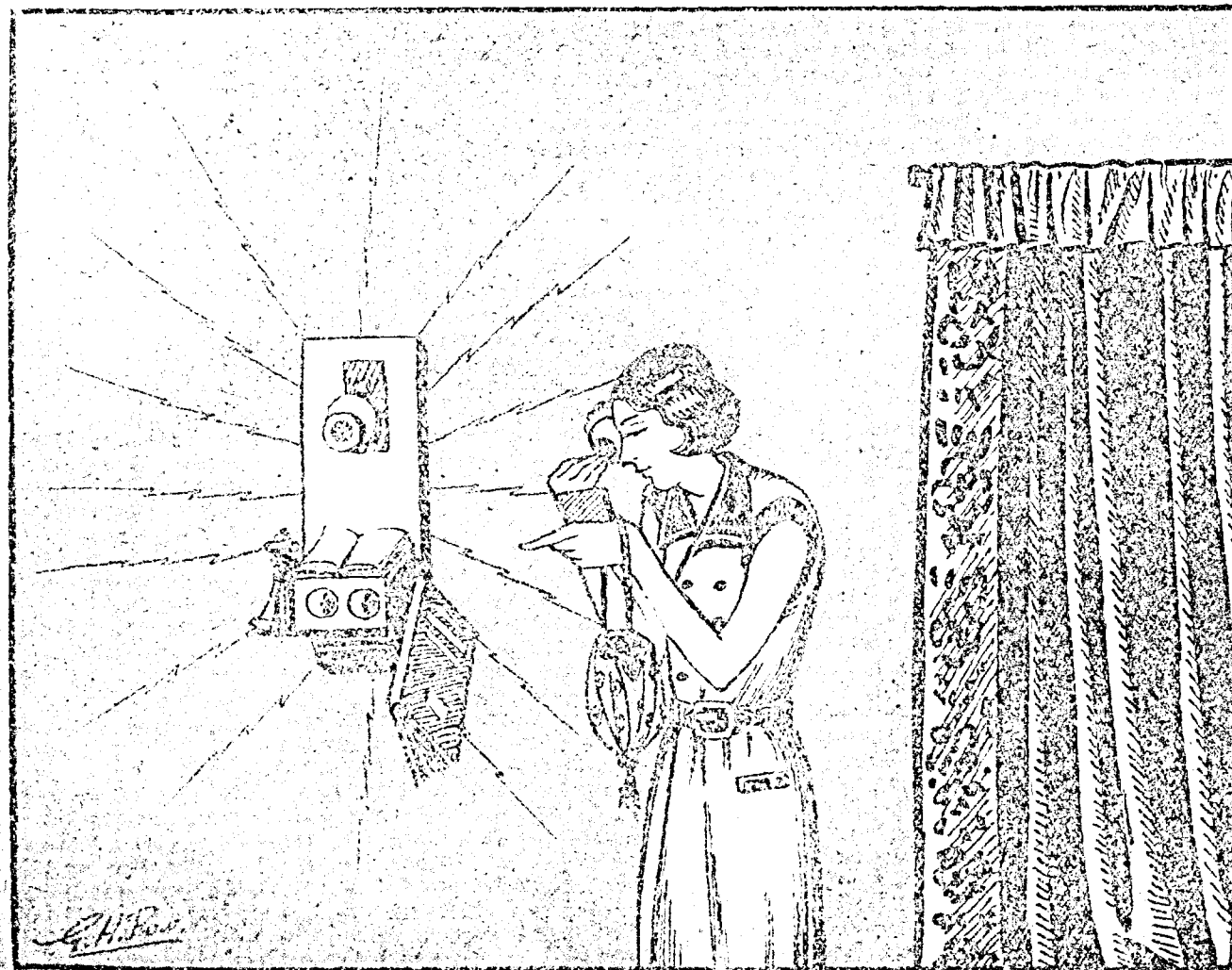
"It's droll!" he exclaimed. "I haven't had forty winks since Detective Kannan brought word about a similar chap. He says he met him on the beach and in the same spot as you mention. But he gave us a different name. Jagat something, I forget. Here, Kannan."

The detective thus addressed made his appearance.

Mr. Kothandan turned about all the colours of the rainbow as he saw the person.

It was the other man!

JUST INSTINCT



From Our Special
Correspondent

Before his Lordship Sir Fly Swatter, J.

The Breakallbone Club Vs. The Smashead (North) Club.

Maddington, 10th December, '33.

STARTLING revelations were made to-day regarding the origin of 'body line' bowling and 'headline' batting in the Sensational Cricket Club case, the hearing of which was concluded today. Much comment was caused in sporting circles by the decision of His Lordship Sir Fly Swatter who after a careful consideration of the expert testimony of several witnesses delivered the following judgment. As a result of this decision it is anticipated in sporting circles that the potentialities of the wicket as a weapon of aggression in the game will be fully exploited in the ensuing Tests.

This action, the decision in which may have an enduring effect not merely on the parties directly concerned, pertains to a sphere of human activities which has seldom, if at all, been the subject of judicial pro-

nouncement. I therefore approach the difficult task of a decision thereon with the trepidity of one treading on virgin soil and if I have rushed in where angels fear to tread, that is due to my long and intimate association with the law.

The plaintiff club herein prays for an injunction restraining the defendant club team of 11 named players from adopting what is said to be the 'Head Line' form of batting in cricket in the ensuing Test Matches while the defendant club seek to restrain by an injunction the plaintiff club team of 11 named players from adopting what is known as 'Body Line' bowling in the same matches.

To be able to appreciate the facts of this case in their correct perspective it is necessary to detail at some length the relationship between the parties herein which, from one of the most friendly cordiality in its beginning, has culminated in one of the most deadly enmity

as is obvious from these painful proceedings. The Breakallbone Club (hereinafter called the plaintiff club) sues by its power of attorney agent, the president and captain of its cricket team Willie Wizhood, while the Smashead (North) Club hereinafter referred to as the defendant club is represented by its power of attorney agent, the president and captain of its cricket team Larry Lashbat. Both these clubs have been formed with the sole aim and object of furthering the cause of and creating an abiding interest in the well known game of cricket in anticipation of a few more battles of Waterloo, Ypres, and Marne, and by the articles of their respective constitutions they are not only empowered but enjoined to do all such act or acts that are conducive to the advancement of the said sole aim and object in their respective cities of Breakallbone and Smashead (North). Though these clubs claim their origin to be somewhere in the remote past, their mutual relationship or contact to which these extremely contentious proceedings are attributable dates back only to the year 1923 and we are here concerned with the events from this date that have led to this action.

During the Cricket season of the year 1921 the then president of the plaintiff club while in a pot-valourous mood challenged, on a wager of £5/-. one Mr. Chophead of the same club to bowl him (president) out in one over while the unfortunate president set out to defend the stumps heroically. Mr. Chophead, a butcher by profession—another strong indication of the democratic nature of the institution and the game—accepted the challenge and aimed the first ball at the head of the lamented president who fell down never to rise again. With the next ball he bowled the undefended stumps, all the three of them, a feat never since accomplished, and proudly claimed the wager. But he was convicted and sentenced for manslaughter. That sentence was confirmed on appeal.

This incident, trivial in itself, had nonetheless serious consequences as subsequent events have proved. To perpetuate the memory of the president the members of the plaintiff club by unanimous resolution dated 11—7—1923 decided to bottle in formaline six of the said president's bones and declare them as the most coveted trophy any cricket team could aspire to win. It was duly so proclaimed and by another resolution dated 15—9—1923 the plaintiff club decided to award that trophy to the best team that came out successful in the course of a series of 'Test Matches' organised therefor.

The defendant club now definitely entered on the scene, and by its letter dated 4—1—1924 it offered to compete for the trophy and the same was duly accepted by the plaintiff club. It has since been competing every year for the trophy. Though several teams competed for this trophy it was well known, and it has not been disputed that it was so, that the real contest was between the teams of the plaintiff and the defendant clubs, the other teams being eliminated in the course of the various preliminary matches. It is therefore not surprising that these matches were always regarded as a fight between

the parties herein for the bones. These test matches were held periodically on appointed days and the trophy was won at times by the plaintiff club team and at others by the defendant club team and till recently the relations between these two teams and clubs have been one of the most friendly rivalry. For example after the matches in the year 1931 the captain of the defendant club team in his letter dated 4—6—1931, (Ex. B 1) to the captain of the plaintiff club team wrote, 'My dear Old Egg, Your game was topping. Particularly that hat trick of yours. But I hope to give you a stiff fight next time. Thanks for that binge old boy. That 1867 Burgundy was undeniable. The way the corks went plop! Oh! etc., etc.' to which the latter replied, 'My dear Jolly Old Bean, You are a brick. To take that licking so sportingly! My dear Larry, few are capable of it. I look forward to brighter cricket next season. The Burgundy will then be older by one more year, etc., etc.'. The events immediately succeeding these epistolary 'eggings' and 'beanings' in almost Wodehousean geniality are shrouded in mystery. But from the deposition of Larry Lashbat D. W. 1 the origin of the trouble is intelligible. That was the 'eternal apple of discord', (per Lord Lumpkin in *Peko vs. Peko*) a woman by name Luciana Largheart, a lady of—if the photographs Ex. C series are any indication and it has been strongly urged that they are not—surpassing beauty. Both D.W. 1 and P.W. 1 (Willie Wizhood) paid their address to Miss Luciana Largheart. Her evidence which would have been invaluable for the purposes of this action, is however not available as she has since left the jurisdiction of this Hon'ble Court and in her letter to the Registrar in answer to the summonses she calls the parties hereto 'a fat lot of smuts' and declines to assist either of them or the court by her testimony. Miss Largheart appears to have encouraged both the captains, keeping the one in the dark as to her intimacy with the other, and even vouchsafed holy matrimony to both with an absolute disregard to the legal implications of such simultaneous promises and the performance thereof, as well as the deplorable consequences that such promises are generally fraught with. On 8—8—1931 at or about 10 p.m. P.W. 1 called on her and to his dismay he found her engaged in an agreeable tete-a-tete with the captain D.W. 1. This to my mind is the crucial point at which the relationship between the parties took a definite turn ultimately leading to the present crisis. The lurid details of what, necessarily in the circumstances, was a singularly unfortunate and unpleasant meeting lack reliable corroboration. But as to the first few exchanges (words) that took place between the rival captains they are sworn to by them and their versions agree in material particulars. P.W. 1 broke the painful silence with a "How's that?" to which came the reply "Lbw. Larry before Willie." "Boob!" said P.W. 1. "Goof!" came the retort. "Smug" said P.W. 1. "Pooph" came the reply. These latter words having no known significance in the English language as interpreted by the Concise English Dictionary in 8 Vols. I am not called upon to decide on their defamatory significance. P.W. 1 then (according to D.W. 1) pronounced the ominous words, 'Revenge is sweet. I shall reserve it for the next test', and left the place a disappointed, distracted, and

broken hearted, but nevertheless a different man determined to do his worst to D.W. 1 and his team whom unfortunately he has since identified with D.W. 1.

It is in evidence before me that from this day onwards P.W. 1 and his team were constantly observed practising a particular type of bowling the ball with the ostensible object of hitting the wicket or the bails thereon but in fact hitting with pulverising force a stuffed dummy batsman stationed near the wicket in an attitude commonly adopted by all batsmen when facing the ball. I have no doubt that this type of bowling or if I may use a contemporary catchword this 'body line' bowling or bowling confined to the limits circumscribed by an imaginary line drawn round the body of the batsman was nothing more than a reproduction, with less disastrous results, of the method of bowling adopted by the said Mr. Chophead the butcher when he was challenged by the late president. I therefore find accordingly.

Then followed an eventless period in the history of these clubs during which each was accustomed to foam in the mouth when the other was mentioned. It is needless to state that the Test Match for the year 1932 ended disastrously for the defendant club. They compiled 26 runs for the 2 innings (Ex. D series Score Cards) and lost the trophy by an innings, 9 wickets and 156 runs. More than that, every one of the deft club's players had to be carried off in various states of unconsciousness, and the life of D.W. 1 was for a few anxious weeks despaired of. The celebration of that victory by the plaintiff club resulted in the prosecution by Sergt. Palm Greeze of no less than 132 members of the club for drunken and disorderly behaviour, a privilege considered by the defendant club to be exclusively their own. That was in the words of D.W. 1 'rubbing it in too much.'

But the event that precipitated the present crisis is the Test Match for the current year 1933 and the tactics indulged therein by the defendant club team. The year 1932-33 appears to have been devoted by the deft club to perfect by practice a type of batting since known as the 'head line' batting or batting in which the batsman with the object of arresting the progress of the ball immediately after it emerged out of the hand of the bowler, hurled the bat ostensibly at the ball but in fact at the bowler with an almost William-Tell-precision and skill that the bat either arrested the progress of the ball towards the wicket or disabled the bowler from further participation in the game or accomplished both simultaneously. Needless to say that as a result of it the tables were turned in favour of the deft club in the Tests in 1933. Apprehending similar tactics from the deft club in the ensuing Tests (1934) the plaintiff club seek to prevent the same by this action while the deft club resists this move and prays that the repetition of 'body line' or 'Chophead' bowling may be prevented.

With the controversy that this admittedly farcical exhibition of a game designed to fit men and even women to win Waterloos and Trafalgars evoked, we are not here concerned. The parties have endeavoured to justify their attitude and in support thereof have adduced evidence to show that the game of the other is opposed to the very spirit and conventions of the game. But I reject this evidence as being interested and untrustworthy. I am therefore obliged to fall back upon the expert testimony of 3 court witnesses Dead Sleep Blangee, Haque Jobber, and Sardine Sawfish on the subject. The witness Dead Sleep was of the opinion that there were objectionable features in the tactics of both the plaintiff and the defendant clubs, and in view of the fact that they tended to enhance the risk encountered by the players, he considered that they added considerably to the adventurous element in the game which was everything in this game as in any other game. But the witness Haque Jobber stated that he was a middle aged man with a wife and desired to live for some more time and would, given an option, never venture out to face either the ball or the bat as used by the parties herein. The witness Sardine Sawfish opined that the bowling was all right, the batting all wrong, and when pressed for the reason for this view he was unable to cite any express rule that condemned the batting complained of so long as the batsman kept the crease. These conflicting views have not advanced me much towards arriving at the correct conclusion. Though the origin of the objectionable features in the games has been adequately explained no sufficient cause has been shown for their preservation. But I cannot on that ground grant the reliefs prayed for as the law on the point is quite clear. "In pari delicto potior est conditio defendentis." This salutary principle of law governs this action as appropriately as it does an ordinary action based on a contract.

The parties should approach the court with clean hands. They protest that their hands are absolutely clean, washed with Pears Soap, and manicured after the latest French fashion. But I have no doubt that the hands of the one are smeared with the blood and soiled with the sweat of the other. I have therefore no hesitation whatsoever in dismissing this action. But in the circumstances of this case each party shall bear the costs of the other as each is responsible for the action brought by the other.

Messrs. Killady Kichoo and Kathadi Kuppoo appeared for the Plaintiff club while the Defendant club was represented by K. V. Spitfire and J. V. Chinnie.



Jail Superintendent:—You are disturbing your neighbours. You don't mind your work. I am not satisfied with your work. Take care.

Prisoner:—If you are not satisfied with my work, please let me go away.

—K. Moideen Sha, Tanjore.

“He left her five hundred pounds to buy a stone to his memory.”

“Of course she did so?”

“Yes, she bought a diamond.”

—K. R. Hathiramaui, Hyderabad.

The King of Shujapur lent his army to the King of Gujapur. The battle was disastrous and Gujapur took refuge with Shujapur, complaining plaintively, “Your army seems to have run a race, Majesty!”

“And you seem to have won the race!” said his royal brother.

—C. Sambanda Murthi, Perambur.

“Arithmetic is a Science of truth. It can never be wrong.”

“How?”

“If one man can do a piece of work in six days, six can do it in one day.”

“So 144 can do it in one hour, 8640 in one minute and 518400 in one second. Why, they can't lay even a single brick in one second!”

—Nageswara Rao, Cocanada.

Municipal Chairman:—“The death-rate is very low this month.”

D. B. Registrar:—“The local Hospital is not working well.”

—A. K. Muni, Cuddapah.

An aged Professor who loved a joke was strolling along the road. Two wags who happened to come from the opposite direction, thinking of fooling him, asked, “Are you a fool or a knave?” The Professor without a moment's hesitation stood between them and said, “I am between the two!”

—M. K. Paralkar, Bombay.

Teacher:—Parse the sentence “Tom married Jane.”

Student:—“Tom is a noun, because he is the name of something; married is a conjunction because it joins Tom and Jane; Jane's a verb because she governs the noun Tom.”

—Miss P. Indira Bai, Narasaraopet.

Teacher:—Boys, listen, I will take O as centre and S as radius and will cut off DR at U. Then—

A Boy:—Please let me go out, sir.

Teacher:—Why?

The Boy:—I will go and inform the police before the tragedy takes place and thus prevent the murder of the doctor!

—H. S. Ranganatha Rao, Shimoga.

A police constable slept while on guard duty in the sub-jail and one of the prisoners escaped. The constable was brought before the magistrate who, finding him guilty, ordered that the constable should be in prison till he brought the escaped prisoner.

The Magistrate wondered why the whole court burst into laughter.

—C. Narayana Sastri, Kumbakonam.

Mother:—(To a sick child) Child, I am very tired and can't keep awake any more during the night. So I am going to engage a sick-nurse to look after you in the night.

Sick child:—What? Sick nurse?

Mother:—Yes, a sick-nurse.

Sick child:—“But, mother, if the nurse is sick then how can she look after me? I fear you will have to look after her as well.”

—Elijah Moses, Bombay.

Ramu:—We are a very healthy family—my father died at one hundred and twenty.

Gopal:—What!

Ramu:—Yes: 120, High Road.

—P. D. Kannivelu, Tiruttani.

Teacher:—Now, Ramu, tell me which has got more legs, a pig, or no pig?

Ramu:—No pig.

Teacher:—How is it?

Ramu:—No pig has ten legs.

—K. Nauti, Sivaganga.

Manager:—(to applicant). Do you know Double Entry System in book-keeping?

Applicant:—I know Triple Entry too, Sir.

Manager:—What! Triple Entry!

Applicant:—Yes Sir. In the firm I recently left I used to prepare three Balance Sheets; one with a minimum gain to the Sleeping Partner, the other with a complete loss to the Income-tax Officer, and the third with the actual gain to the Proprietor of the business.

—S. Sivaraman, Karachi.

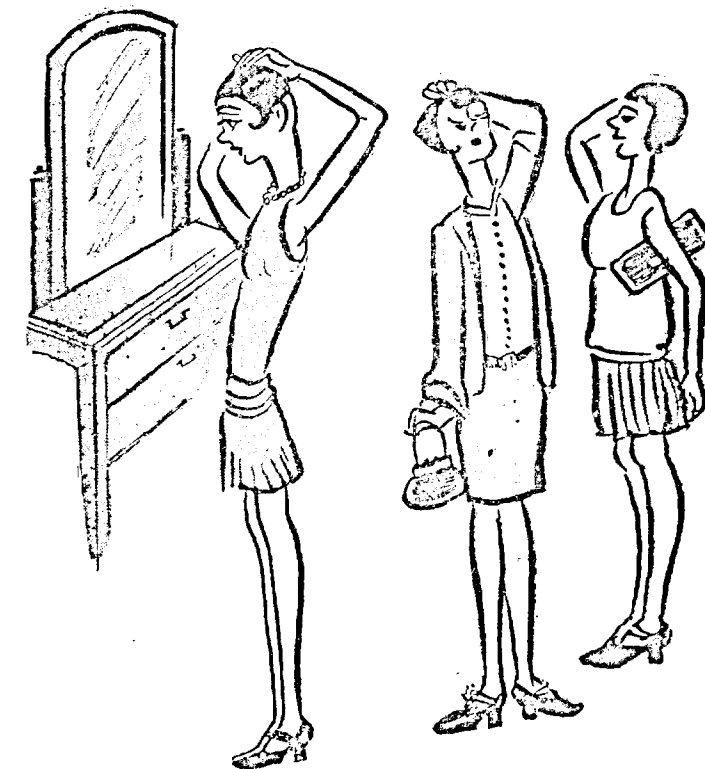
IF WORDS WERE TO BE TAXED

(NEIL A'CANTEN)

THIS is an age of Economic Depression and salary cuts. Turn wheresoever you may, you hear nothing but the cry ‘The times are bad.’ In train or in tram, in theatre or in restaurant, the same cry assails your ears. From across the Atlantic comes the voice of President Roosevelt urging an Economy Drive. The World Economic Conference promised to solve the problem, but the nations of the world have realised too late that if they can economise in anything, it is in the appointment of committees and conferences. Economy has been at work with a vengeance on women's hair and skirts too. The bob and the shingle are the fashion now. And to see a girl dressed in one of those short frocks, you would think that the frock has been purchased on the instalment system and that she is wearing only the first instalment of it. Neither have names been unaffected. If you give your son a long name, you are ostracising him from society; for his friends would not like to waste a whole post card by writing his address on one side of it.

This Depression has resulted in deficit budgets all over the world. And the best intellects of every nation are stirring their grey matter to find ways and means to tide over the evil. When the inhabitants of a locality petitioned to the President of the District Board that a bridge in the district had to be repaired because it had become unsafe, that worthy pulled down the bridge, opened a ferry there, and auctioned off the right of ferry to the highest bidder! Needless to say that he added a pretty penny to the District Exchequer. Now, that is what I call genius—the ability to reap thistles out of thorns. I would be surprised if I did not find his name in the next New Year Honours List.

Everything under the sun is being taxed. From the cradle to the grave, it is a sorry procession through taxes, beginning with baptismal charges and ending in funeral duties, not to mention the tin you shell out to the man behind the prayer book to get yourself buckled. Peter the Great of Russia imposed a tax only on beards in his time. If he were alive today he would have balanced any deficit budget by taxing even moustachios. Mussolini taxes bachelors and short skirts. And even the South Indian Railway sometimes fleeces you to the extent of an anna by way of a pilgrim-tax, when you haven't the ghost of an idea to play the fool in any of



“Economy has been at work.....”

these places of pilgrimage. The other day, I was walking beside a petrol bunk when I was surprised by seeing an advertisement ‘Free Air and Water.’ What! have we sunk so low as to blazon forth our generosity in thick headlines when it only means the giving away of air and water?

This morning, while I was lolling on my bed, I had a brain-wave. Usually, the post-bed-coffee-cigarette stage is my brain-wave stage in the day. It is then that the old grey matter harbours visitants every one of which is worth a dozen Nobel Prizes. Why can't some brainy bloke introduce a bill in the legislature to the effect that every unnecessary word that is spoken is to be taxed? And the fame of the new Messiah who introduces this bill would eclipse that of the abolisher of the Suttee or of Sarda. And some distinguished scientist can take up the patent for a meter which will record every such word!

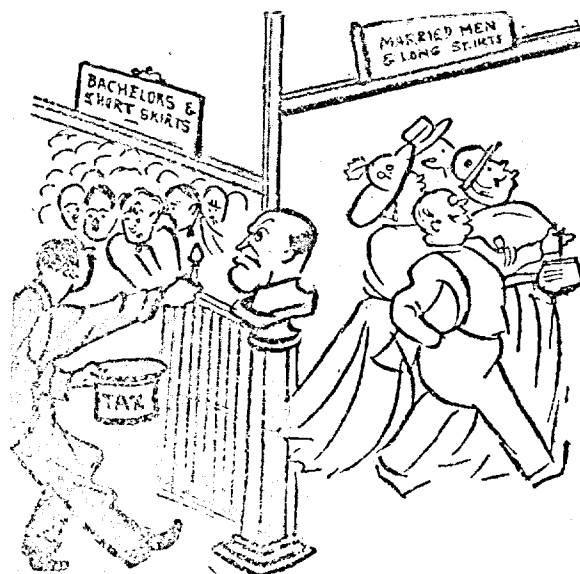
If every spoken or written word which is unnecessary or repeated or in negation to truth were to be taxed in proportion to the superfluity or untruth thereof! It sounds too good to be true, I admit; but more staunchly opposed measures have been passed. We would then be thinking, talking and writing in telegraphic language. The longest address delivered would be the telegraphic address of the speaker, and ‘Waiter, bill’ would be considered a fairly long after dinner speech. The man who could keep his tongue glued to his mouth would be

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. NAGESWARA RAO, Cocanada.

reputed the best conversationalist of the party. You cannot hear any commonplaces about the weather outside the four walls of a Meteorological Office. When the club bore sinks down into the vacant seat beside you and begins his oft-repeated story 'When I was in England' the club boy would promptly appear and remind him, 'The meter has gone up to ten rupees, sir. That story you just now finished about your lion-hunt in Central Africa brought it up to eight ten. If you are narrating this story of the bar-maid you met in England there will be repetition charges to pay besides the usual tax.' The club boy can afford to be garrulous as the club meets his taxes, and the bore skulks out through the open door.

Third class compartments in our trains would be a regular paradise of silence where a student might prepare for his exam. The Railway Company, of course, would grant the privilege of one word per mile to every passenger. It would be voted sheer generosity on its part to allow a passenger to speak a few words in anticipation of his journey. The most garrulous occupant of a third class compartment would conserve his words to ask for a cup of coffee at the nearest junction. There would be no more higgling with porters. You can



"Mussolini taxes bachelors and short skirts."

hear a pin drop in your home even if you happen to be mated with a very vociferous better half. No need to stuff her oral cavity with cotton-wool or to put in a quiet word to the Surgeon who is operating on her tonsils that you would not be very sorry even if his knife slipped and cut her tongue instead. Only, make her understand that every word she speaks is liable to be taxed and that the tax will be paid out of the money that is being spent on her jewels and *sartres*.

The proceeds of the three Round Table Conferences put together would support the British army in India for thirty years; and the League of Nations would be rich enough to raise a mercenary army which would be larger than the troops of all the world. Our Legislative Councils and Assembly would be self-supporting; nay, they would even put by a little surplus after paying their ministers. College professors would find it very hard to exist, for besides the usual tax on unnecessary words, they would have to pay out fabulous repetition charges as well. It would no longer be an uncommon thing for the Principal of a college to write to a professor at the end of the month, 'The tax on your words for the month comes up to Rs. 255/10. Remit balance forthwith, deducting salary.' The Principal cannot afford to 'have the honour to inform you' or to 'beg to remain your most obedient servant.'

When the tax is imposed on the written word as well, the biggest library would shrink to the dimensions of a brief-bag. The most voluminous newspaper would look like a menu card. Editors of journals would write to their contributors, 'Your story, though good, seems to have been written by Guy de Maupassant long ago. I admit it might be purely accidental that he chose the identical plot and the very words that you have made use of. Pray wire repetition charges.' The examination fees of students would go up by leaps and bounds, for haven't they got to pay the price of the verbosity they indulge in in their answer papers as a mask to their ignorance and as a device to tempt the examiner to be lenient?

The greatest penalty would be reserved for those who use words which are the total negation of truth. Terminological inexactitudes would then affect the purse. Our diplomats and politicians would find their bank deposits dwindling away. Clergymen would grow as poor as the proverbial church mouse. Litigation would become exorbitantly costly as the parties would have to meet the huge taxes on their lawyers—that Belial-like fraternity who can 'make the worse appear the better reason.'

If words were to be taxed, we would soon have seen the last of the deficit budgets. The language too would be rid of the superlative degree and all its commonplace excrescences which, while they are being uttered, are giving time to the speaker to think out the next idea. Every word would be deliberately chosen and chiselled into perfection. Instead of the babbling chatter-boxes we meet with today, we shall have a set of grim, silent men who would *do* things and not *talk* about them.

And by the way, dear Mr. Editor, how much does my bill come up to?

[You will receive your debit note by return.—Editor.]

WE PRESENT AN ADDRESS N. S. PILLIEUX



The good people of a country town evince their patriotism by honouring—the wrong man!—Editor.



IS it your considered opinion that we have outlived the age of Hero-worship? If so, I beg to differ. I don't say that you are wrong; but, to use a more dignified expression, that your statement suffers from a terminological inexactitude. I aver that we are at present experiencing an acute exacerbation of this accursed infection, more acute, perhaps, than ever before; only, we hate to own as much. For, do we not see men, women and

children flocking together to pay homage, I mean worship, to their chosen heroes or supposed heroes by offering garlands and addresses, by arranging tea and garden parties, by presenting suitable purses, caskets and so on? Are not subscriptions collected, donations made, even in these days of economic depression and financial stringency, to make the function a unique success? Don't you honestly think that it is all so much waste of hard-earned money, when we don't have enough wherewith to procure even the bare necessities of life? If

this does not amount to hero-worship, I do not know what does.

Look at my modest town, Kanjiyur, for instance. Did I say 'town'? Well, it is not a town, really; but something midway between a town and a village and the inhabitants thereof are mostly half-starved, half-clothed ryots. Even they decided to forego some of their wants still further in order to find the wherewithal to present an address and a 'purse' to Desa-uliyan Gurra Seshayyah. It appeared that the Desa-uliyan had consented to go over to Galpant to open the Swadeshi Exhibition there and we decided to waylay him at Kanjiyur Railway station and present the address and the purse. An *ad hoc* committee (with myself as the President) was selected to work out the details therefor.

The committee by a majority voted that the address should be in Hindi, as, otherwise, it was argued, we might be dubbed old-fashioned. As an essential corollary thereto, it followed we should requisition the services of a Hindi-knowing gentleman from outside for drafting and reading the address, since there was nobody in Kanjiyur who had any pretensions to knowing even the A. B. C. of Hindi, let alone proficiency therein. The committee unanimously agreed that the members thereof should wear only Khadder for the occasion and sanctioned the amount for the purchase of six sets of dhotis, shirts, angavastrams and 'caps' for all the members. The address was to be printed in Khadder and mounted in a beautifully engraved sandal-wood frame.

Great excitement prevailed all over Kanjiyur even a week before the Desa-uliyan's arrival and it reached its zenith on the day prior to it. The station platform was 'spring-cleaned' and decorated with innumerable flags and festoons. Various kinds of garlands and bouquets were got down. In fact, all arrangements were completed to make the function a unique success.

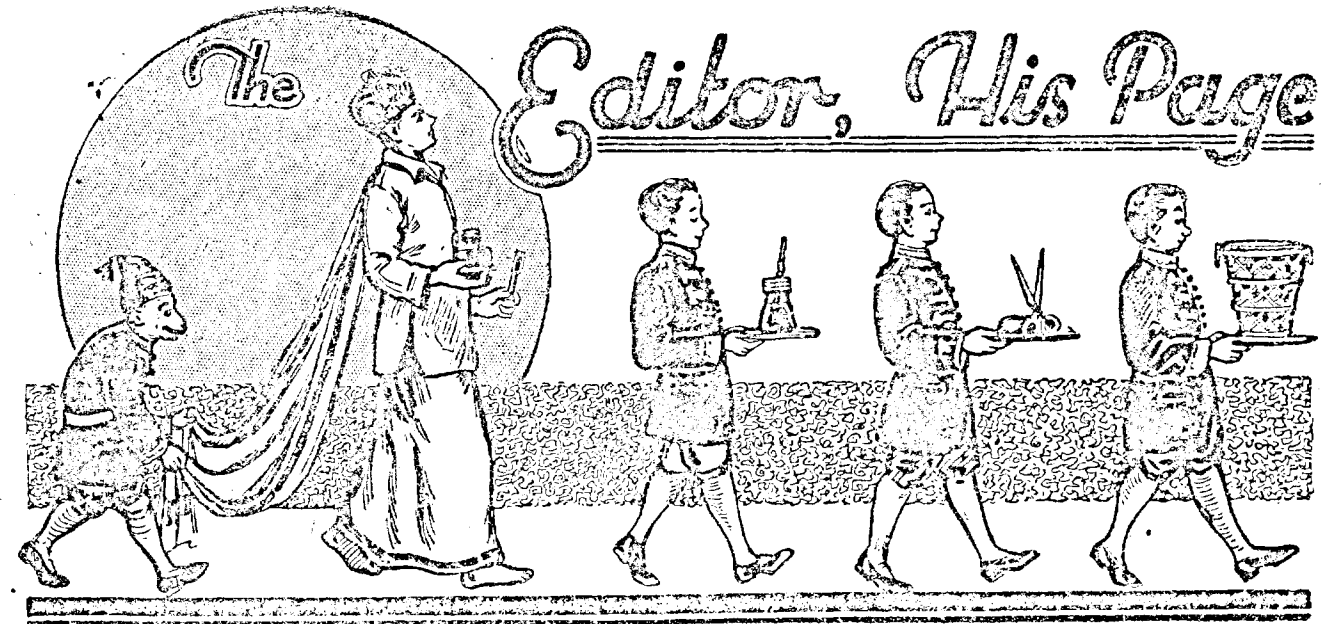
The memorable day came at last. Though the train in which Desa-uliyan Gurra Seshayya was programmed to pass through Kanjiyur arrived only as late as 9-42 hours, a large crowd had begun to collect in and around the station to pay homage to the great Desa-uliyan even at break of dawn. There was a large influx

of people from the neighbouring villages also who had come to Kanjiyur to have a *darshan* of the great leader. We, the members of the committee and the Hindi-wallah all dressed in Khadi, paraded the platform with Nathaswaram, band and all even as early as 8 A.M.

Punctually at 9-42 hours the train steamed into the station. We had barely 10 minutes, (Kanjiyur is a watering station), for presenting the address and the purse. We rushed along the platform with Nathaswaram, band and all in search of the Desa-uliyan. It was only just then that we remembered that none of us knew him by sight. We searched the upper class compartments in vain and finally turned to the third class ones. "You know, he never travels upper class," a friend at my elbow put in. In frantic haste we ran hither and thither. At last, some one in the crowd cried out, "Here he is!" We hurried forthwith to the compartment in question. There was a middle-aged man dressed in Khadder sitting all alone in a small compartment. We thanked our stars that we were at last able to spot him out. We had only six minutes more at our disposal. There was a flourish of Nathaswaram and band. We got into the compartment and garlanded him profusely and presented the purse. He seemed to be a bit surprised and murmured something in Telugu or may be Hindi for aught we knew. Meanwhile the address was being read and before we heard the guard's whistle, we had presented the address also and got out. And, as the train steamed forth majestically out of the station, cries of "Desauliyan-ki-jai!" rent the air. We returned home with the satisfaction of having done a noble deed.

On opening the newspaper the next day, my attention was riveted upon a small paragraph about Desa-uliyan Gurra Seshayya. My heart jumped into my mouth. "Desauliyan Gurra Seshayya is having a slight temperature. There is absolutely no cause for anxiety; but his doctors have advised him complete rest for a week. He has therefore cancelled his visit to Galpant."

I wisely kept the information to myself, and my co-villagers even now remember with pride how they presented the address and purse to Desa-uliyan Gurra Seshayya. But, whoever it was that actually got the garlands, the address and what is of more importance, the purse, is certainly a lucky dog.



ONE RUPEE FOR A WORD

I STILL receive letters asking for information about our Rs. 1000 Literary Competition. Some correspondents want to know if they can send two or more entries, some others ask me if there is a limit to the length of their contributions and still others would like to know if the prizes will be awarded irrespective of the quality of the entries. All the rules governing our Competition have been printed more than four or five times and in this issue also, you will find the conditions set out at length on page 1003. Let me repeat that there is no limit to the number of entries that may be submitted by any one competitor but that there is a limit to the length of the Mss. entered. Mss. must be about 3000 words in length. This does not mean that entries which are 3500 or 4000 words long will be disqualified nor 2000 or 2500 word long efforts. You may submit a short story or sketch one thousand words in length and your entry may be of such exceptional merit that the Judges may award you the prize. In this latter case, your remuneration for your literary effort works out at the rate of *One Rupee* a word, a scale of payment which might well satisfy the cleverest of writers who are specially commissioned by the most generous of newspapers or journals. With regard to the award of the prizes, the prize amount of Rs. 1000 must be *utn*. The entire prize amount offered will be paid to the best entry. The judges have *not* reserved to themselves the right to withhold any part of the Prize Amount on the score of the poor quality of the Mss. submitted. Neither is any such contingency apprehended. And now that all doubts and vaguenesses have been satisfactorily cleared up, it only remains for you to roll up and pocket a nice little cheque, with our compliments.

'For Favour of Review.'

Editors sometimes have strange duties to perform in the course of their daily grind. Books written by

ambitious authors and published by enterprising publishers are sent to them for favour of review. But it is not books alone that are sent to them. Articles of domestic or other utility are also sometimes received and the favour of review is requested. Listen to Mr. J. C. Squire, the Editor of the 'London Mercury':

"It is only a few months since we were sent a sample of a new and improved Mouse-Trap which the makers were sure would interest our large circle of Women-Readers. We had no idea as to what reduction to a shilling* would lead us to: which includes ending a sentence with a preposition. We have now received a letter which begins:

DEAR SIR,

No doubt many of the staff engaged in your office are keen on Knitting and Crochet.

We have opened at this address a Department for the sale of Knitting and Crochet wools in addition to our Patterns and Publications.

We think that this service would be appreciated by your staff, and if you have an office notice board perhaps you would be kind enough to display the enclosed notice thereon or in some way let the staff know of this additional service now offered in our shop....."

Lucky Mr. Squire! He may have his own crosses to bear but so long as people go on furnishing him with Mouse-Traps and Knitting and Crochet wools, he can soon set up house, free, gratis and for nothing.

Cars and Wireless Sets.

I have not been so lucky. Books have been sent to me for favour of review, invitations to be present at drawings of raffles and at openings of conferences have occasionally come my way and more occasionally at previews of three and four-star films at some of our local picture palaces. Vainly however do I scan my mail every morning for a nutty little new automobile complete with all the newest gadgets or a powerful

* The price of the 'Mercury' was reduced from 3sh. to 1sh.

The Merry Magazine

short-wave radio set on which I can 'get' Moscow or Daventry at will, for 'favour of review.' Imagine what an ornament the latter would be to my drawing room. (Of course, I have no drawing room at home but I call my room in the office the drawing room, because that is the room I am always in on the first of the month so that the boss might not have any difficulty in tracking me when he starts looking for me with a fistful of currency notes. He must however be wondering, poor soul, what I have done during the previous month that he should have to assign so many of the Governments' promises to pay in my favour. But then, by now, it has almost become a habit with him and some habits, once contracted, are very difficult to shake off. And this is one of the difficult ones.)

Monopolies.

Or take the case of some of the Government Presses. It is my considered opinion that the Johnnies who are running these commercial Government concerns are a most unbusinesslike lot of conservative old fogeys. They print hundreds of thousands of those nice, new crinkly bits of paper, everyone of which contains an acknowledgment of liability on the part of the Government. Just in order that people should not get tired of the same old patterns and the same old colour-scheme, the experts often ring the chromatic changes and sometimes make sensational alterations in the size and pattern of their product. But do they advertise these things in our Magazine or for that matter, in any other? Do they know that It Pays To Advertise? Do they arrange to have write-ups inserted in the papers? Is their

Publicity man earning his keep? In fact, have they got a Publicity man? Nary a bit. When they won't even advertise, are they likely to send out nice, new packets of notes, containing, say, two of each denomination to Editors for Favour of Review. Not by a long chalk. And, Sir, do you know why they don't? I'm telling you now. It is because they have a monopoly of the dashed business. Queen Elizabeth or was it Queen Anne or Queen Victoria is supposed to have abolished monopolies. Don't you believe a word of it. It is just one of those historical fictions which can give any of our leading legal fictions cards and spades and a beating. All that I am now saying is this. If these people continue to run their business in this mediaeval un-go-ahead fashion, I shall start or cause to be started an up-to-date new printing Press, completely equipped with the latest and newest lines in Lino types, Archetypes, Rotaries, Rodeos, Double Demies, Triple Octavos, Merry-Go-Rounds, Brass Bands, Electric Belts and last, but by no means least, a few million type-faces to print the figure 1 followed by as many noughts as I jolly well please. And when the whole plant is in complete working order, I will advertise and every reader will receive a sample packet. I know there will be determined opposition and the Government will try all it can to stifle this dangerous competition. But you know the old proverb: It takes two to make a quarrel. If these monopolists want a fight, they won't have it. It takes two to make a quarrel and I am too proud to fight. I am not President Wilson. But anyway, President Wilson hasn't got a monopoly of that phrase.

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Dy. Director of Public Instruction, Madras.

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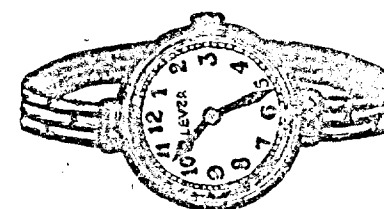
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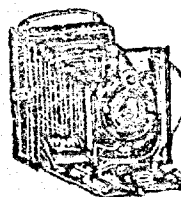
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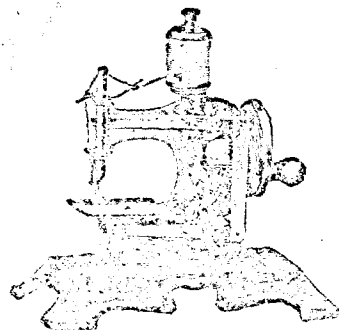
SRI DHANAM & Co, P. B. 119, Madras.

Latest Invention!

Latest Novelty!

Hand Sewing Machines

(Made in Germany)



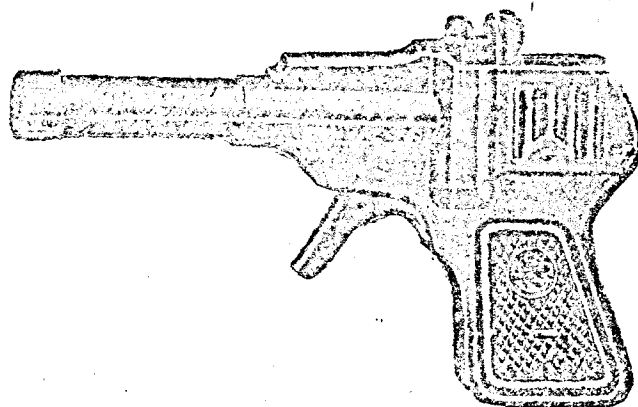
These are just imported, measurement 1 length 5 inches, breadth 4 inches, made of sheet metal throughout, black Japanned with litho, decoration; steel and nickel plated parts and attachments, and so scientifically constructed as to make it do the actual sewing, like big machines. Can Stitch Bed cover, Cushions, window-curtains, Cloths, Flag, shirts, Underwear, Jackets, Etc. Can be fastened anywhere. Every machine tested and ready for use. Simple enough for a child to operate. Every home should possess one. Each in a box complete with 1 Reel Thread and 1 Screw-driver.

Price Rs. 2-14-0. Packing & Postage etc.

THE KRISHNA AGENCY, - - P. B. 119, Madras.

Safeguard Your Property?

ENSURE absolute protection to yourself, family, loved ones and valuables with this Automatic Alarm pistol that needs no license 6 1/2" x 3" in size and looks like a real one. The mere sight frightens Burglars, Thieves, etc. First 6 shots in 6 seconds, sufficient to scare away a whole gang. Every home needs one. Instructions with every pistol.



Price Rs. 5-8-0 with 50 shots.

V. P. P. As. 8 extra. Extra shots Rs. 1 for 50.

The Genuine Watch Co., P. B. 119, Madras.

Do you feel Tired of Razors and an ever increasing Growth of Hair?

Here is a marvel of Modern Chemistry to satisfy you
RESULT IN THREE MINUTES

THE IDEAL HAIR REMOVING CREAM.
REFRESHING AND SOOTHING (HIGHLY PERFUMED)

This is a fatty ointment that does not dry up and excels, owing to pleasant coolness during the depilatory treatment whereas with other ordinary watery depilatories available in the market, there will be some burning feeling on the skin. Ohio Cream excels owing to beautiful lilac scent and hence can be used at any time.

If correctly applied, hair once removed within 3 minutes do not grow for several days leaving the skin clean and fresh all the while. Every application of OHIO makes the hair grow finer. Frequent use of it reduces and slackens the growth of hair so that they are finally turned into soft down. Unlike Razors, Ohio does not darken the skin nor causes irritation. Directions for use enclosed in each tube.

Tube Costs Rs. 1-8. Three at a Time Rs. 3-12. - When ordering please mention "Merry Magazine."

SRI DHANAM & Co., Post Box 119, Madras.

WHAT SHALL I PRESENT FOR

X'MAS AND NEW YEAR

to my Lady Friends and Relatives?

Is the thought that is engaging the mind of one and all.

Everybody wants to give something which will be cherished and appreciated, a gift that will recall the giver—

Here is something new which will bring lasting Joy to the heart of your friends.

— NEW STYLES IN SILK SAREES —
KAISER-I-HIND'S MEDAL-BRAND SAREES

Simple and Smart, Elegant and Inexpensive. A great improvement over the Old-Fashioned, heavy Lace-Laden Sarees. Small attractive borders and equally well designed anchals. - Fast and Fascinating shades.

GUARANTEED

To wash well, Wear well, and Look Well.

Stocked & Sold throughout India by all houses of repute.

The Kaiser - I - Hind Woollen Cotton & Silk Mills Ltd., Bangalore.

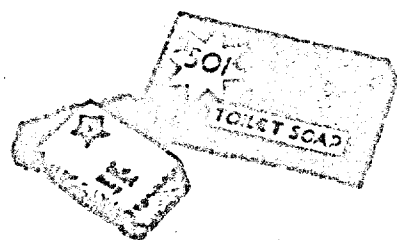
Sole Selling Agents for Madras Presidency:—

Messrs. T. R. R. SAWHNEY,

2/74, Godown Street,

Madras.

For those who want the BEST— these toilet soaps were made...

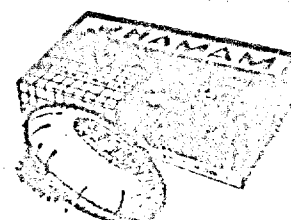


501 Toilet Soap

The same quality and value in a toilet soap that you have known in the famous 501 Washing Soap. It is absolutely pure and is delicately scented with Jasmine.

As. 6 for box of three tablets

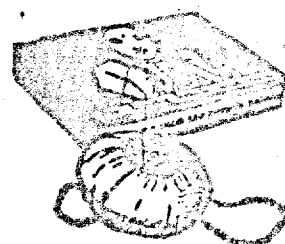
THOSE discerning people who insist upon the best will appreciate these six new Swadeshi toilet soaps. In every way they have been made to compare with the expensive quality soaps that come from abroad, yet because they are Swadeshi they can be offered at far lower prices.



Hamam

The ideal soap for your bath, giving a rich, creamy lather. Scented with Heliotrope.

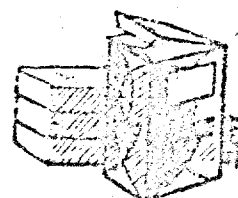
As. 9 for box of three new extra large tablets



Moti

A delicate soap to guard the charm of beauty. No finer soap has ever been offered at so moderate a price.

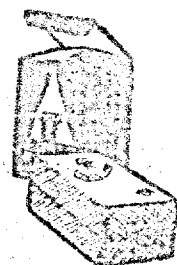
Rs. 1/8 for box of six tablets



Special Perfumed Tablets

Perfumed with Khus Khus, Lavender, Fougere Henna, Jasmine or carnation.

As. 8 for a packet of three tablets

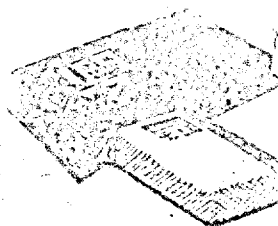


Eau de Cologne

The cool, refreshing qualities of Eau-de-Cologne are contained in this luxurious Soap.

As. 12 for packet of two large tablets

Re. 1/8 for box of three tablets.



Jai

An exquisite soap specially made for those discerning people who demand only the finest.



Temco Sales Dept.
Post Box 31
MADRAS.

THE TATA OIL MILLS COMPANY, LIMITED
TATAPURAM.