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1000 FREE TO READERS

THE

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MERRY

MAGAZINE

Vol. III

MADRAS, 12th JANUARY, 1935

No. 2

TELLS A STORY!

HE: You look a picture!
SHE: And doesn't every picture tell a story?
HE: What is yours?
SHE: Saying "Don't" to impossible young man who proposes....



SOAP AND WATER

I was scamping through my evening paper (my neighbour's, to be honest), yesterday, when, right in the middle of a page, I bumped against the Maharajah of Goldgarh. I stood up. When one reads an article written by a Maharajah, I suppose one has got to remain standing. Especially so, when the author has a salute of 9 guns and has often, presumably, shaken hands with the Viceroy.

"The English," writes the gallant prince, "are indubitably the greatest nation on earth. They consume



21 lbs. of soap per head per annum, whereas Germany uses only 15, Czechoslovakia 11, and India, a mere 1/4. And yet (here, I believe, the Maharajah's golden jacket shimmered with emotion) there are Indian politicians who talk glibly of severing the British tie!"

Consuming 21 pounds of soap per annum is a performance worthy of credit, and I take my hat off to the Englishman. I hope he won't mind if it isn't really a hat, but a turban. Anyway, I take it absolutely off to him.

Now to return to the Maharajah of Goldgarh. The remarks of the gallant prince (if I may use the term



...sails out of the room with her nose in the air.



.....you wrinkle your nose and purse your lips.

again) might strike the average reader as a shade idiosyncratic—incorrect, but, personally, I am inclined to think that there is a *soupcou* of sense in them. A glance at the advertisement pages of the *Daily Mail* or the *Morning Post* is enough to convince one that dear Miss Britannia rules the waves mainly because of the excellence of her toilet soaps. "Complexion," as Julius Caesar remarked so pithily to Cleopatra, "is mightier than the sword."

In the Middle Ages, washing with soap was regarded an unnecessary absurdity. The British nobles didn't call it 'soap' then, but *Sapo fatis* or something, as the English language was thoroughly unfashionable in high society, and Latin was all the rage. However, the point I want to drive home is that they didn't find much use for it. For instance, history says that the children of Edward I had baths only four times a year—one at the beginning of each season—and were soaped only once in twelve months—usually on Christmas Eve. And Edward the Confessor.....But why multiply examples? Enough has been said to show why Britannia couldn't rule the waves in the Middle Ages. Poor girl!

When an Englishman of the Middle Ages took a bath and rubbed himself with soap, he probably expected to receive a knighthood the next morning. One can very well imagine a prospective knight saying to his wife:—

"Darling, I want a bath. I am to be knighted tomorrow, you know."

"A bath? Whatever is it, dear?"

"Well, a bath is-er-well, don't you remember we had one on our wedding day—only ten years ago? No? Scratch your head, lass, and try to recollect."

"I did never!"

"Well, then, it is like this. You rub yourself with er-er-soap until you are white, and then wash yourself with hot water, until you are quite pink."

"Water and s-soap?"

"Yes, water and soap."

"Sez you?"

"Sez I."

"You are drunk, Arthur! I shan't stand any more nonsense from you. So there!"

And she sails out of the room with her nose in the air.

But things have changed now, and Britain as well as the rest of the world has become more or less soap-conscious. The markets are flooded with soap and the newspapers are full of it. Soaps aren't mere cleansing agents at the present day. If you could believe the soap-makers, their advertising agents, and the kindly doctors who give 'unsolicited testimonials', there are soaps to cure you of pimples, adiposity, lassitude, inferiority-complex, superannuation, Khan Bahadur's kidney, *et cetera*. And, they say, there is on the market a special brand of soap for politicians and tuft-hunters, who need heaps and heaps of soft soap, of the right degree of softness, to help them to lubricate their way to preferment.

Naturally, one of the greatest problems of the present day is to decide what soap to buy. It is not like buying biscuits, for example. If you want to purchase a pound of biscuits, you first enter a shop and ask for a few samples. Having tasted the lot like a connoisseur, you wrinkle your nose and purse your lips and say, "not half nutty enough" or "no class and crispness to it," and walk off to the next shop, looking a trifle outraged. And when you are too full to sample any more, you could always give it up for the day, and go the whole hog the next—in a different quarter, perhaps.

But soap is a more complex affair. If you try to go by the advertisements, you might take a couple of days to decide which to buy, for each, according to the advertiser, the chemical analyst and "the leaders of the medical profession," is the last word in saponification.

A better procedure, perhaps, is to leave it to the shop assistant as I do.

"A cake of soap, please."

"One cake?"

"No, I mean a box."

"Pears, sir? Greta Garbo and the Prince of Wales....."

"No, if you mean *Pears*. I don't want *Pears*: it reminds me of my schooldays."

"Brown's, sir? Brown's Best British Bath Balls for Bright Bathing."

"No, please. That sounds too B-B-British by half."

"*Sapo Carbonis*? Wright's you know. Sir Malcolm Campbell....."

"Do you mean.....?"

"And Mr. Lloyd George, the royal physician....."

"Ha ha! No marks. Try again."

"Ah," says he, 'brightening up, "I should have recommended Barclay's at the very outset.

'Buy British-made Barclay And Biff the fat away.'

"Look here, young man, am I fat?"

"It is not for me to say, sir, but if I were you I should plump for Barclay's right away."

"Thanks very much. But I don't want Barclay's. Let me have a cake of Swadeshi stuff."

"One cake, sir?"

"No, I mean a box."

"Gandhi soap?"

"No, I don't want Gandhi. Neither Nehru, if you happen to have any such. Engenders inferiority complex, you know.....Paradise? Not at all.....Dash it, let me have-er-er-a packet of Gillette blades—and the bills!"

Of course, you could always do it all over again the next day.

In The Next Issue

THIS MONKEY BUSINESS P. P. Samuel
A scintillating skit on practical jokes.

KULTUR in 1940 'Hun'
A vision of Germany ten years hence under a super dictator who out-Hitler's Hitler.

WHAT A YOUNG WIFE OUGHT TO KNOW "Teddy Bear"
All about bringing up babies during the first twelve months.

GUIDE TO MADRAS V. B. Prasad
Strange sidelights on Madras and their ways of living.

MY FACE IS MY FORTUNE, SIR! M. S. Kalyana-sundaram
The adventures of a man with the face of a greenhorn.

SEENU'S TORTOISE 'Rose'
On Seenu's queer tastes in the choice of pets.
Joyfull, Auntie and other sparkling features.

The Merry Magazine All-

READER'S OPINION ON THE WINNING ENTRIES

IN THE ABOVE COMPETITION

Winner of Gold Medal: "GINGER"

WHERE is the sting in the tail of Mr. Doraiswamy's tale? In his advance announcement of the first published prize story, the Editor asked us to look out for it, but I have been searching in vain. But then, the Editor of the *Merry* is a resourceful man, who, when he falls down on his face, consoles himself with the reflection that his whiskers aren't soiled.

The sting in *Not with a Bang* is not in poor Kotiswara Iyer's dismissal or Pinto's perfidy; the sting seems to be specially directed against the Editor and the moral of the story is apparently this. Mr. Editor, if you want post-war fiction judged, do not entrust the job to lawyers and school-masters of the Victorian era, who do not know anything that was written after Shakespeare's death.

When I look at the story from this view-point, I cannot help admiring Mr. Doraiswamy for his courage in bearding the lions in their own dens. His Editor and his Judges are all so true to life and he has roasted them ever so nicely. The wonder of it all is that the Judges have been able to appreciate such a pungent joke against themselves.

I have all along felt that Indian writers of fiction devote more attention to descriptions of incidents, as against persons in the story. *Not with a Bang* is one of the very few stories I have read so far that is faultless in this respect. The characterisation is perfect and detailed to a fault and gives you a *pucca* mental picture of the persons concerned.

The way each character in the story is made to expose the particular bee in his bonnet in his talk, is admirable. Mr. Sarma's old-world puritanism, Mr. Raghavachari's cry against modern youth and art, Mr. Mudaliar's comic attempt to dissect a modern story from the standards set up by Henry James and Coventry Patmore and in the end the whole lot of them falling for the fishy smell in Pinto's lifted tale and each trying to justify his choice from his own particular philosophy—oh, the thing is so screamingly funny.

The sub-characters, if I may use the term, in Rao Bahadur Jeswantrao Pingle, the widow-dreaming Sastri, the half-starved clerk, whose life-time of misery is compensated by the pleasure of witnessing his bully Editor's discomfiture—these are all so cleverly portrayed and woven into the story that you do not at all get the im-

pression of crowding, which the presence of so many persons in a story might otherwise create.

Mr. Doraiswamy's style and language, if a bit laboured and pedantic, are, nevertheless, very effective and forceful. The consistency he has managed to maintain in his characters over the whole story is specially noticeable. This story deserves our very wholesome praise.

The Earthquake-Relief Charity Show

'What is the use of a book,' complained Alice of Wonderland, 'without any pictures or conversations?' And Alice was a very good judge of fiction. Dialogue is the great thing in a short story and Mr. Seshadri has handled this aspect of his story very effectively. The conversation is so snappy and gives an insight into the characters that a more laboured attempt might not so effectively portray.

As for the pictures, the theme of the story has offered such a wonderful scope to the artist that the Editor has been able to save up on the price of a front-cover joke and palm off a bevy of beauties from the story on his readers instead.

Personally I do not hold with a wife, even if she is a 'graduate-wife,' saying to her husband 'Don't be an ass', but whatever her faults, Lalitha is right in one thing. Her husband does write crisply. Mr. Seshadri's style is very effective in its economy of words and you notice what a lot he makes you understand with a minimum of effort.

At first reading, the story interest in the mss. seems to be rather obscure, but yet I cannot imagine a more perfect *denouement* than the nice way in which the writer leads up to the sale of Janaki's blazer and her consequent discomfiture. And then you remember what the girl in green-blue said about Janaki not wanting to part with a rag herself, while trying to touch others for their mite. All along you are thinking that the joke is on the writer and then you end up by saying 'Serve Janaki right'—which is just the effect the writer was after. Very clever, I am sure.

Like all good things, this story leaves you with a feeling that you could do with more of it. Personally I wouldn't mind listening to the 'music at home' when Lalitha started on her worse half about Janaki's blazer.

India Literary Competition

Dodu, the Money-Maker

Child-life is always difficult to portray—not so much perhaps in its relationship to grown-ups, but in its relationship to itself in its own child-world, where standards are all so pleasingly different, yet realities are so terribly grim. It is this duality in the child's experience that requires the touch of a genius like Barrie or Lewis Carroll to handle effectively.

Mr. Narayan Swami seems to have caught the happy knack of putting himself in the child's place. His handling of the process of thought in Dodu's little mind at once warms the reader's heart to his little hero. Dodu's perplexities and little problems in life and the infant philosophy which takes him through the stamp-buyers' perversity and his father's harsh want of sympathy, are all so vividly portrayed. The scene between the child and Dr. Iyengar is so realistic in its simplicity of motives and shows a master-touch in this particular type of writing.

The ending of the story is perhaps its greatest point. Dodu's money-making stunt and his entry into big business are so appealing, but his forgetting the whole world in three pies worth of fried ground-nuts, endears you all the more to this little man who, unfortunately will one day be big and imbue so much sophistry. You feel that you could wish for Dodu eternal childhood like Peter Pan.

A fine subject, finely handled and refreshing to read in the midst of so much un-reality that is unfortunately real. Mr. Narayan Swami has indeed done his job very well.

He Laughs Best

When I read HE LAUGHS BEST first, I couldn't help thinking that it stood in a class by itself. As a short story, its technique is so perfect and the *denouement* is so sudden and masterful that it takes your breath away. Very few writers of short stories are able to achieve this effect of climax in such a short space and with so few words.

Perhaps the effect is so good on account of the theme of the story. Confidence-men seem to be a result of all social upheavals and both in American and English literature the popularity of confidence tricksters in fiction has been confined to a post-war period. It was perhaps only natural therefore, that the revolution which the civil disobedience movement brought about in the life of Bombay, should also result in a few clever men trying to live on their wit. The theme affords a back-ground fit for the plot and if the building of the story offers some scope for comment in that it is copied from a greater master of short-story writing,

Mr. Sampathkumaran's adaptation of the idea deserves warm praise.

It would perhaps be an idea for more of our writers to attempt this very effective way of handling a *denouement* and if he has not done much, the writer had at least shown us a way that is worth following.

My Aunt.

It has been often remarked that Hindu domestic life offers very little scope for the writer on account of its drab simplicity and want of colourfulness. We have no eternal triangles to dissect and romance of the novelist's variety is practically taboo. The higher aspects of existence, which seem to form such a fundamental part of our lives, do not show well in print.

Despite all this, I do not think our worst critics can accuse us of want of emotion. There are complications enough in our domestic life to make life attractive. Mr. Jagannathan has chosen a difficult theme for his skit and has managed to make it read so well. The aunt *motif* is a predominant factor in our lives and this portrayal of domestic politics gives such a vivid insight into Hindu life that even strangers to it cannot but be impressed by the essential human aspect of the situation.

Mr. Jagannathan says he covets literary distinction. I am sure his skit will earn it for him. Not everybody can make such a thorough job of such a dry subject. The writer's style and diction are well suited to the subject. Even in his youth the writer seems to have been able to earn a tip of eight annas from Awful Aunt; no wonder he has been able to make more money by writing about her in later life. I do not envy him his success.

'G. V.' Writes:

On the whole, the All India Literary Competition has been a complete success, and the *Merry Magazine* has every right to be proud of it. In fact, the prized entries far exceed the expectations that one could form at a normal reckoning. The offer made by the editor at first appeared to be unnecessarily high, but now one could say that the editor has struck rather a cheap bargain.

I believe the editor has decided to dig up the wells of literary talent that either has not been discovered or has been kept under cover. If only he makes repeat offers, well, India will prove next to none in the literary field. May we hope that the editor of the *Merry Magazine* will be directly instrumental in bringing about this glorious evolution.

"G. V."



"London struck me as a city of dogs," says Mr. Eugene O'Neill. We always said that London was going to the dogs.

"Complaining about corns or sore-feet won't cure them," says an advertisement. It will at least prevent people from stepping on them.

"The standard domestic antidote," says a contemporary, "for (flu) is hot whisky and lemon." Now just cut the lemon out, and it's an ideal prescription.

A Hindu has been placed before a Presidency Magistrate, for an attempt to cut off his wife's nose. The defence, we believe, was that the nose was too long, and used to poke in all his affairs.

"There is in London a restaurant which is partly staffed by ex-convicts." This is just to make the patrons feel more at home.

"Don't you just love dainty underwear?" asks the *Daily Sketch*. Not immediately, but may be after seeing who is in it.

"Britain's heart may be soft, but her head is hard," says a London paper. Solid, my dear Watson, solid.

"Mrs. Catherine Brickland, of Ireland, who died at the age of 123, attributed her long life to work." If this is the case, there is very little chance of our reaching even half that age.

"You must take care of your teeth and gums," says a dentist. Especially if it is a gold set.

"The revelation," says a story, "came to her very slowly." But isn't Revelation the last book in the Bible?

"From the long table," says an author, "came the familiar noises of the Ranchmen, at their meals." We never thought that Ranchmen also took soup.

"The story contains," says a review, "poignant dramas, astounding experiences, and stirring revelations, told in a few words." For example: "The Editor presents his compliments and regrets that etc., etc."

An appeal to Britain not to abandon India was made at a dinner by Lord Carson. There are doubting Thomases even to-day.

Mr. Jones says that the European in India is a Conservative Animal. This is another distinct victory for Darwin's theory.

G. W. Wilder says that reading of absorbing detective stories is one of the best nerve tonics. Next time we visit our doctor he should be prepared to tell us a thrilling detective yarn.

The Total revenue from Tobacco in England for the year ending 31st March was £67,227,401. So, you can't say it all ends in smoke.

B's Bill, says a medical report, was given to ten patients in doses of 150 grains daily. We should like to know what the coroner's verdict was.



By 'KEBI'

THE nudist cult is rapidly gaining ground and enlisting followers in the Western countries. Everybody is mad after wearing the new clothes of the Emperor in the old story. New clothes. The Doukhobors of Canada must look to their laurels—I was about to say morals—since they are not the sole monarchs of all they survey. Cut-throat competition, as my friends the financiers would say, is growing even in the nudist field.

Oh, fie, that India has not fallen in line with her Western sisters! It is just like her to lag behind in everything. But, I suppose the cult will not catch on in this continent. What is to happen to the pick-pockets and therefore, the Honorary Magistrates, if everyone turned nudist? Have a heart, folks.

That reminds me. Did you hear the story of the 'nudely-weds,' who were arrested, on the day of days? Well, here goes then. The honeymoon of a Chicago couple, who wore nothing but a smile—oh, I am so sorry, the bride also wore a gold hoop on her finger—in the midst of a strictly nudist gathering was rudely interrupted by the police. They were arrested and charged with participating in an indecent and obscene exhibition. The minister was the only person present at the wedding who broke the nudist rules, being robed in a goat-skin. These policemen are so unsympathetic everywhere.

But Captain X of England, a film producer, went one better. When a 'cutie' came to him for a part in a film, he said she must have a test in the nude first. Well, what do you think she did? No, she did not slap him, but.....agreed! You never know our modern maidens, they will do anything for dough, if you will pardon my *Americanese*. But, like the Government of India, she imposed one condition. The film was to be returned to her, after it had been *privately* viewed. Mark the word 'privately.' We don't have a dog's chance.

Well, to cut a long story short, the film was made and viewed. What the film producer's opinion on it was, no one ever knew, for he did not express it, no, not even to the girl. But one thing he certainly did. He neither delivered the film to her nor gave her any part in any film. Only the 'incorruptible Robespierre' would have done it, the first part, I mean. The girl dashed off to court and the Captain had to shell out £500 as damages. Bravo, girl, buck up. You would never have made that

much, if you had got a part in a film. But, did you make sure that the Captain did not keep a copy of the film, for his *private* use?

What is next to nudism in the news? I'll give you three round guesses. Right, first time. Nazi Germany. There is no end or reason or rhyme to Hitler's laws. But he seems set on the propagation of the race. Every unmarried man, who has not seen twenty-five summers, is to be dismissed from service. He must marry. But 'My Leader'—that's his latest title—is a real father of the people. He does not intend to leave his unmarried children in the lurch, but shows men the way to wedding-bells. He has set down the following 'Ten Commandments for choosing a Mate':—

1. Remember that thou art a German.
2. Thou shalt not, if hereditarily sound, remain unmarried.
3. Keep thy body clean.
4. Keep soul and spirit clean.
5. As a German, only choose a mate of like or of Nordic blood.
6. In choosing thy mate, ask after his (her) ancestors.
7. Health is a first condition of outward beauty.
8. Marry only for love.
9. Seek not a playmate, but a comrade for marriage.
10. Wish for as many children as possible.

Holy Moses! Can you beat it? But one or two 'commandments' are quite unnecessary. For instance the sixth. Why ask after his (her) ancestors? Isn't Darwin's word good enough, even for Nazis? And again, the tenth 'commandment.' If to wish were to achieve, I think some people would not be where they are now.

And talking about husbands and wives, I have an interesting incident to relate.

"Is there a man in the audience with another man's wife?" asked a *revue* comedian at an English theatre Mrs. Emily Ibell, a member of the audience, turned round, as she did so catching the eye of Mrs. Ivy Cooper.

Mrs. Cooper waited.....outside the theatre and smacked Mrs. Ibell's face. A fight followed. The result: both the women were bound over by the police magistrate "for using gestures calculated to lead to a breach of the peace."

THE EDITOR'S COLUMN

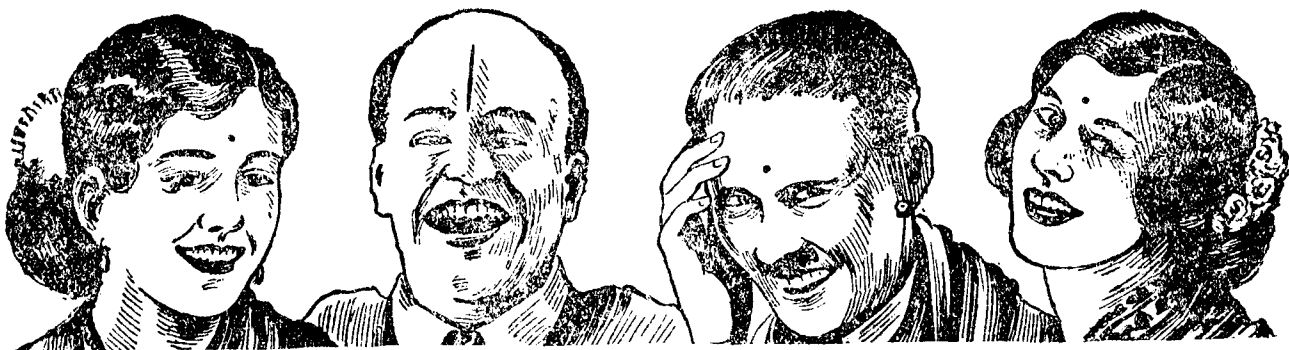
AS I am publishing in this issue a short story by Miss 'Devika Rani,' I feel I should correct a possible misconception. She is not the star of 'Karma,' as some of you are likely to take her to be; she is an Irish lady writing under an Indian *nom-de-plume*. She has chosen this name because, for one thing, it is a pretty name—to quote herself; for another, she is a great admirer of the famous actress. She is a friend of the film-star's family and has much in common with the star herself—such as a flair for acting. But what the Devika Rani of the films probably has not, and what our 'Devika Rani' certainly has, is a talent for writing. But then, I needn't tell you more about it. I leave it to you to read the story and judge for yourself.

One word more. In our last issue, I prepared you to listen to an account of Private Joyfull's hair-cut. But, on second thoughts I decided that the hair-cut affair should go in, in the last issue itself. It seemed so good and after an interval of 20 days you were looking forward to the quintessence of humour in the *Merry*, weren't you? Not that this week's fare is by any means inferior or even that 'Military Matrimony' is less interesting than 'Hair Cut.' I don't think so. Do you?

Before I quite finish, I should like to draw your attention to the fare provided for you in our next week's issue. I have all the while been telling you that the *Merry* marches on steadily, proudly, never hesitating, never pausing or stumbling, never looking back or taking a retrograde step. If you are not convinced, you could just glance at our pages week by week. This week we are giving you a feast, next week a regular riot. Besides our regular scrumptious features like 'Topsy Turvy, Star Dust, Private Joyfull, Story of My Life, Auntie and other items, we have also delicious dishes like "Kultur In 1940," by a "Hun," "A Doctor's Dilemma"—not Shaw's but 'Elmer Delville's which is pleasanter; "Monkey Business" by Mr. P. P. Samuel (who ought to know all about it); advice to young wives under the caption of 'What A Young Wife Ought To Know' by (the obviously bachelor-writer) 'Teddy Bear' and many others. I warn you to have a stock of aesthetic digestives with you when you read the *Merry* next week. Our fare is too rich, you know... Things may happen.

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A FEAST OF FUN

Force of Habit

Dentist: "Which is the sore tooth?"

Patient: (who is a cinema attendant): "Balcony, third on left."

The Reason

Teacher: (To class): "Everything I say to you goes in through one ear and comes out through the other."

Pupil: "Is that why we have two ears, sir?"

Quick Results

"Is it dangerous to drink out of another person's glass?"

"It certainly is—I got a black eye that way once."

The Secret

Manager: "To what do you attribute your success as a house-to-house salesman, Ramu?"

Smith: "Very largely to six words, sir. Is your mother at home, miss?"

Experience

Mrs. B: Does your husband try to make you obey him?

Mr. W: No, dear. He has experience. You see I married a widower.

His Precaution

Hubby: "I hear a burglar downstairs."

Wifey: "You're right, I do believe. But why are you getting out of bed?"

Hubby: "To lock the bedroom door!"

A Poser

Mother: "Look, dear. There's the church where your father and I were married."

Child: "Who minded me that day, mummie?"

Bright & Wrong

Counsel:—"The new man says he can prove he's related to you."

Accused:—"The man's a fool."

Counsel:—"Oh, but I wouldn't call that proof. It may be just coincidence."

A Wonder

H: What do you think of the man who continually deceives his wife?

D: My dear chap, I don't think he's been born yet.

That Was Why

Rushing into a police-station a man cried out that he wished to give himself up as he had assaulted his wife with a rolling-pin.

"Did you kill her?" inquired the police-man at the door.

"No," was the reply; "that's why I want to be locked-up."

Conclusive

Footle: But suppose one's parachute doesn't open after one leaves the machine?

Flying Instructor: Well, you might call that jump to a conclusion, my lad.

Good Taste!

A THRILLING FANTASY

By "RAJARAM"

PART THE TWO

THE RETURN HOME

The Fantasy so far :

Professor Thurkov of Modalkar while taking his evening constitutional meets his student Nargun. Pedantic to the tips of his toes, he lectures to Nargun on the correct behaviour of students. To divert the conversation, Nargun suggests a visit to the Temple of Bhima. The professor readily consents and the pair climb up a zig-zag road on the side of a hill to reach the temple. It is drizzling when they set out.

In the presence of a colossal statue of Bhima at the entrance of the temple, the professor grows sentimental and regrets his lost youth. If only he can be young again!

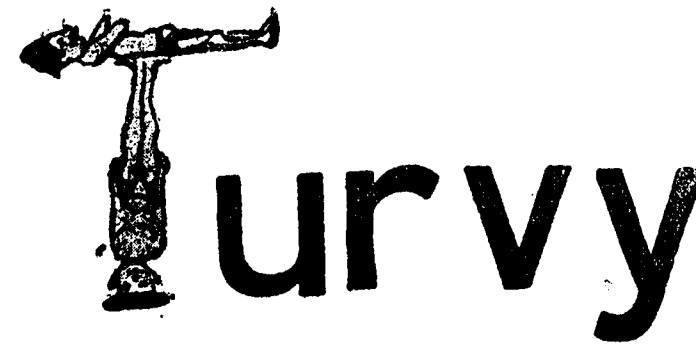
Nargun tries to soothe him and says in reply that it is pleasant to be old and respected. If only he can be a professor, commanding reverence from the student world!

Thunder and lightning.

The sky clears and in the light of the setting sun, Guru and Chela see a puny, ugly thing ascending the platform and reaching Bhima's outstretched arm. The witch of Modalkar! She grants their wishes and Thurkov and Nargun find that while they retain their physical bodies, their personalities had interchanged.



.....he forgets himself and takes up a comb to dress his hair.



THE way seemed endless, the wind was cold and the drizzle was nasty. Night was quickly enveloping the earth. The will-o'-the-wisp-like electric lamps in the distance were the lone lighthouses of direction and hope. Thurkov and Nargun jog-jog-jogged along, tired and dispirited.

"What a mess! Is it possible? Do we wake or sleep? What's to be done!" were the exclamations, in varying permutations and intonations, that beguiled half the weary way. The mind of the professor, like that of the pupil, was pellucid, clear and worked in the same old way; but the body impeded and obstructed clumsily. Nargun would think of jumping across a little brook as he was wont to do, but the 175 pound of sudden weightage would jerk him cruelly behind, daunting and defeating him. The body acted as a drag, as an unescapable resistance and the youthful mind already felt the unnaturalness of the situation. So it was with the professor. Gone was the former assurance and sneer of cold and pompous command, for no sooner did he adopt that attitude, than he saw that it ill suited his nimble boyish form, and somehow something restrained him and he stopped talking.

In silence they walked, unobserved by the passers-by in the welcome darkness, and had time to take stock of the novel situation. It was all a confounded nuisance! Why should that thingummy of a boy goad him to visit the Temple of Bhima? Thurkov thought he had been ungenerously tricked, made a preposterous ass! Of course it was he, who had proposed a walk to Nargun. That didn't matter though. What did it all mean? How was all that going to end? What was to be his immediate objective? Was he to return home? What a picture of idiocy he must cut before his wife and children? Would his students discover the professor in the puny garb of Nargun? Ah, here was the rub! What's he to do with Nargun? What must he do, if the students hail him as their Professor of Chemistry or even if his own wife rushed towards him or the children prattled in innocent glee? What a mess, what a frightful, unimaginable mess! That ill-fated, blasted, blooming Temple of Bhima and the Witch of Modalkar! Oh, had he never heard of them!

Along parallel lines Nargun's thoughts, too, rushed and rebounded and jolted. He had never bargained for such a change, by all heavens, no! Had he never proposed that unlucky visit to the temple. How heavy his body had become; how he had to pant for fresh air, take deep breaths! What a protuberant belly, fat thighs, and that bald head paining under the pressure of the wet



What a sight it will be for Thurkov's children!

cap! How could he play cricket, how play carrom with those rigid fingers, how sing the tunes with that monstrous voice! Would his mother and father and brother and sister and friends in College and Miss Adriane of the Women's College recognise him! What if he had to engage the chemistry classes! How could he expound the physical and chemical properties of Phosphorous Pentoxide and Bismuth Chloride! And above all how could he face his master's people? Supposing he forgot himself and took up a comb to dress his hair. What a sight it would be for Thurkov's children! His head was in a whirl; his thoughts spun like a well-wound top; he was too tired even to keep abreast of his nimbly-altered professor.

It must have been on the wrong side of seven-thirty when the professor plucked up sufficient courage to ask his companion: "Now pray, you portly pumpkin, what are we to do? You have brought us both to this tragic pass and it is up to you to suggest a remedy." But Nargun was not the same old Nargun, but one suffering under an additional mass of 90 pounds and an immense amount of irritation; he simply said in suppressed derision: "I s'pose we've changed places and so must play the game. I go to your house and you go to my house and for the resulting comedies and tragedies we will have only ourselves to be thankful."

Thurkov restrained his rage, for he knew that, however impudent, the advice pointed to the only practicable course. To think of the endless confusion the changed identities would entail! And poor Thurkov didn't even know where Nargun's house was located, nor the constitution or configuration of his family—and how was he to conduct himself in the alien atmosphere of Nargun's household? The immediate future was bristling with alarming uncertainties.

The dwindled professor tried to be practical. "Nargun," he began ingratiatingly, "let us discuss our affairs calmly and from a realist stand-point. Have you any reason to hope that our changed states will be only temporary, in other words that the Witch of Modalkar can be duly propitiated to withdraw her curse?"

Nargun instantly replied: "None whatsoever—that Witch I have heard told, is the nastiest and vengefullest being in the cosmos. The horrid thing will never withdraw her curse!"

Thurkov found the last shred of hope breaking into atoms and Hell gaping from below and sulphurous vapours suffocating the future. Had but the Witch changed the memory as well as the form; then would the very change in bodily state have passed unnoticed. But no, the mischief had to be complete and deadly. Here under the clear 60 candle-power electric-municipal light could Thurkov see himself and see Nargun lucider—and oh, what appalling difference! Here is—what an uncomfortable coincidence!—Professor Modavalla of the biology department, smilingly nodding to Nargun, and condescendingly bowing to Thurkov. What a MESS! And the troubles were just beginning.

Nargun suddenly asked: "Haven't you tomorrow a class for us—Inorganic Chemistry, I think? How in Bhima's name am I to engage that class? And of the Nitrogen group I understand nothing!"

"How you exaggerate your difficulties," expostulated Thurkov. "Take heart, rather, thinking of my own immenser puzzlements. When I enter your house, how can I answer the queries of your people, how can I sit under the lamp and read Milford's *Analytical Conics*, Watson's *Physics* and Caven's *Qualitative Analysis*? Think you, it will not pain me? How, again, am I to sit in the class and listen to the exasperating stupid talk of the students and the tall talk of the professors! And above all, how am I to sit snug in your house and leave you in full possession of my house,—of Lila and Indu and Mohan, and my most egregious, nevertheless charming wife? What sins did I commit in my previous births, my God, that I have to suffer even thus in my life! Oh! this earthly life is sure a pitiful vale of tears and scattered hopes and twisted ambitions and perverse afflictions!"

Nargun's heart was moved—as whose would not at the palpable wretchedness on Thurkov's face? They were nearing the precincts of the city and it was imperative that they should agree to a common course of conduct. Nargun therefore insinuatingly remarked, stopping understandingly between sentences, and inspiring confidence and trust in his own motives: "Unhappy sir, I beg you to listen to me a while. No doubt, we didn't expect all this, but what will be will be. I pray you, trust me with a whole heart. It is impossible that you should go home as you are; your wife will not recognise you, and before you can explain it all, she will raise a shout and the people of twenty flats will be upon you, and off will you go, and perhaps be

clapped in prison. And it is doubtful whether any explanation will satisfy people as to the reality of the change. People won't simply believe us, and we will be fools and rogues at once. It is better therefore that I go to your house—but in the name of all that I hold sacred, I promise to conduct myself still as if I were but a dutiful pupil. I shall keep aloof, talk little, touch only your children, even sham an illness, if need be—and meanwhile we shall make discreet enquiries as to the revocability of the curse that has fallen upon us. There must be something in the legends about the Temple and the Witch that must give us a clue. But for the present there is nothing to do except acquiesce in what has happened."

"Well may you lecture to me thus!" put in Thurkov, "but you aren't to blame. Well, then, I trust you; and I warn you that my children are very mischievous and that my wife has an imperious temper. And for tomorrow's lesson on the Nitrogen group, you will see in my right-hand drawer my lecture-notes, which with some application you can master. Fortunately, you have come to my house often, and I presume you know where different things are kept. If possible, I shall come that way tomorrow at 10.30 and clear up any difficulty that might crop up. Don't funk in the class and spoil my name—you know my methods, pursue them, and overawe the boys. You needn't perform any experiments in the class—quite probably you'll bungle. Just lecture, that'll do. Now give me some brief and pointed directions as to how I should conduct myself in your parental home."

Thurkov and Nargun had by now become thoroughly sober, discussing seriously, almost sombrely, ways and means of circumventing the possible inconveniences of the inverted identities. Thurkov learnt of the exact location of Nargun's house, the rooms and windows therein, of Nargun's study and bed, of Nargun's sister Prema and brother Madhu, of the father who had to be called 'appu' and the mother to be addressed 'ayae' with emphasis on the second syllable! He learnt too where Nargun kept his pyjamas and dhoties and the one hundred minor things one must have. They had, discussing their

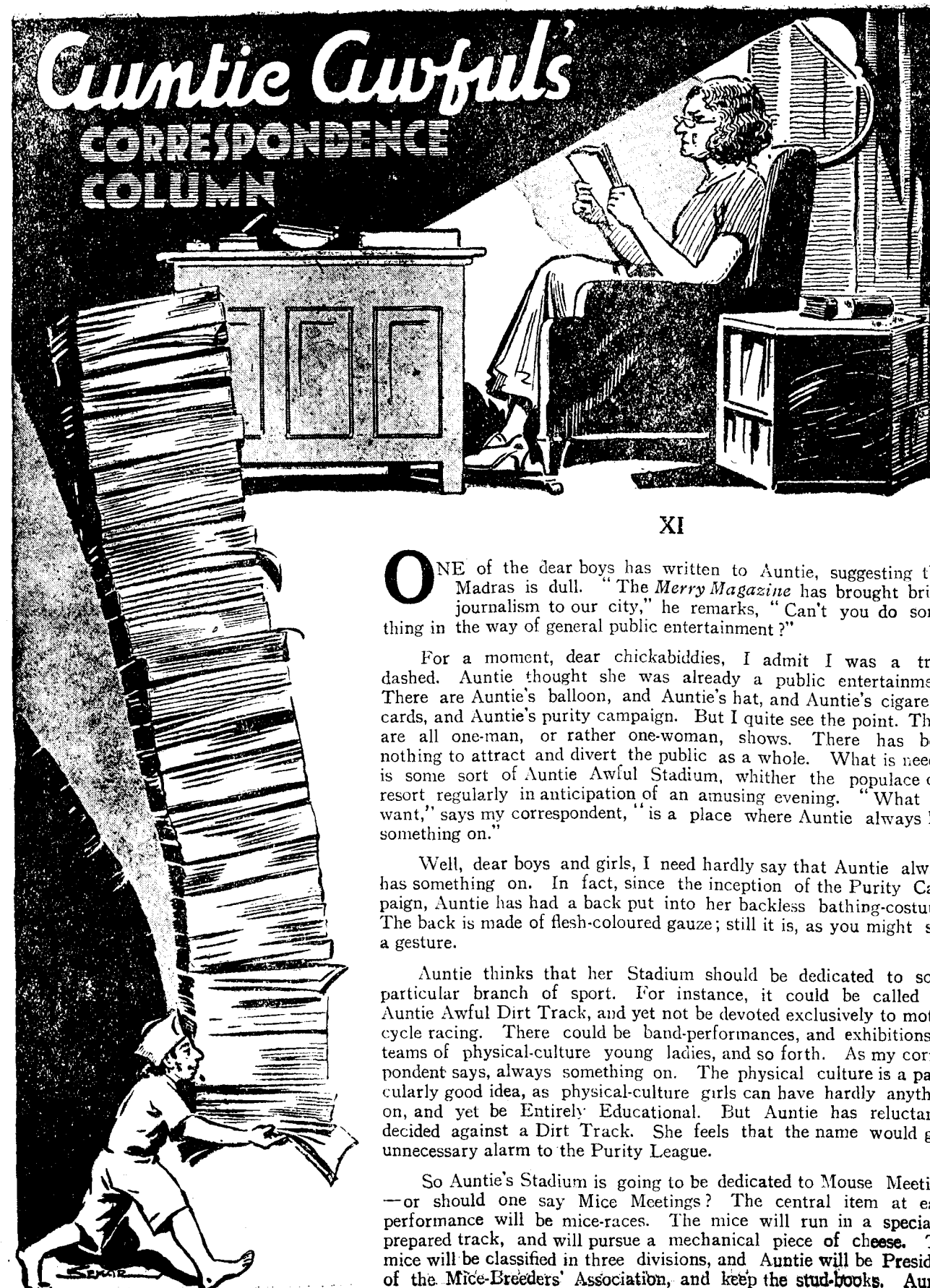
(Continued on page 15)

DO YOU KNOW?



Please see answers on Page 14.

1. Which city is said to be the oldest in existence?
2. What is the 'nebular hypothesis'?
3. Who was Arabi Pasha?
4. Where is the Aswan Dam?
5. By whom and when were logarithms invented?
6. What is Zionism?



XI

ONE of the dear boys has written to Auntie, suggesting that Madras is dull. "The *Merry Magazine* has brought bright journalism to our city," he remarks, "Can't you do something in the way of general public entertainment?"

For a moment, dear chickabiddies, I admit I was a trifle dashed. Auntie thought she was already a public entertainment. There are Auntie's balloon, and Auntie's hat, and Auntie's cigarette-cards, and Auntie's purity campaign. But I quite see the point. These are all one-man, or rather one-woman, shows. There has been nothing to attract and divert the public as a whole. What is needed is some sort of Auntie Awful Stadium, whither the populace can resort regularly in anticipation of an amusing evening. "What we want," says my correspondent, "is a place where Auntie always has something on."

Well, dear boys and girls, I need hardly say that Auntie always has something on. In fact, since the inception of the Purity Campaign, Auntie has had a back put into her backless bathing-costume. The back is made of flesh-coloured gauze; still it is, as you might say, a gesture.

Auntie thinks that her Stadium should be dedicated to some particular branch of sport. For instance, it could be called the Auntie Awful Dirt Track, and yet not be devoted exclusively to motor-cycle racing. There could be band-performances, and exhibitions by teams of physical-culture young ladies, and so forth. As my correspondent says, always something on. The physical culture is a particularly good idea, as physical-culture girls can have hardly anything on, and yet be Entirely Educational. But Auntie has reluctantly decided against a Dirt Track. She feels that the name would give unnecessary alarm to the Purity League.

So Auntie's Stadium is going to be dedicated to Mouse Meetings—or should one say Mice Meetings? The central item at each performance will be mice-races. The mice will run in a specially-prepared track, and will pursue a mechanical piece of cheese. The mice will be classified in three divisions, and Auntie will be President of the Mice-Breeders' Association, and keep the stud-books. Auntie

will also run the tote, but book-makers will be licensed for the course. The climax of the season will be a high-weight handicap for a Golden Gorgonzola. For this event all mice-race-goers will have to wear evening dress, and all the Big Cheeses will attend in State.

Lover of Beauty. (Pycroft Road) "Why is it that the Venus de Milo has no arms?" Perhaps, dear boy, this famous sculpture is intended to be an awful warning, to show what happens to a girl who bites her finger-nails.

Neela. (Salem) Auntie is so glad to hear that you are employing your spare time in handicrafts. To make a Venetian blind, my dear, throw pepper in his face.

Lottery Manager. (Oslo) Auntie is sure that your lottery is far superior to all others. There is a first drawing, for which participants must send ten rupees. Then, if they want to retain their privileges in the lottery, they must send ten rupees for the second drawing, and so on, and so on. And, as the printer says in your circular, "The decision of the Manager is venial." What could be fairer than that?

Lottery Manager. (Oslo) Why didn't you like Auntie's previous reply? You say, "This lottery is perfectly conducted, on the word of a gentleman." Well, Auntie is always open to conviction. Produce the gentleman.

Newly-wed. (Coimbatore) "What should a wife do, when her husband constantly insists on having his relatives for dinner?" Leave the brute at once, my dear. No self-respecting girl should be expected to live with a cannibal.

Romeo. (San Thome) You say that your fiancée is a stenographer, and you have noticed that whenever you take her on your knee, she reaches for a notebook and pencil. Be firm with her, my dear Romeo. Evidently she is used to being dictated to.

Dante. (Broadway) "I am a poet, and I have written some verses that are bound to be immortal. I would like you to arrange an interview for me. How will I find the Editor?" You will find him very ferocious on the subject of spring poets, my dear Dante.

Bright Idea. (The Laboratory, Belfreyport) So you have invented a Universal Solvent. It is a liquid that will dissolve all metals, greases, earths—in fact everything. This sounds splendid, my dear chap, and I am sure it will meet a long-felt want. No doubt it will even dissolve Parliamentary Committees. I can only see one snag. As the liquid is a Universal Solvent, what will you keep it in?

Miss Pritti-Deah. (Labuan) "I have only one trouble. What can I do for bad hands?" Auntie can only suggest that you give up playing cards, Pritti-Deah.

Billu. (Little Naicker Street) "Why do Europeans put little boxes outside their houses? And why do the little boxes say 'Not At Home,' when you can see the whole family sitting on the verandah?" A Not-at-Home box, dear boy, is equivalent to a notice, "Don't Come Up or See Me Any Time."

Thirsty. (Bombay) A good way to get a drink, when funds are low, is as follows: Take your bath-sponge, dry it thoroughly, and insert it into a large black bottle. Then go round to the off-license, slap the bottle carelessly on the counter, and say, "Fill it up!" When the bottle has been filled, search through your pockets, and remark that you have forgotten to bring any money. Grasp the bottle, and prepare to depart, saying you will return shortly with the cash. At this, the barman will detain you. "Very well!" you cry indignantly. "If you don't trust me, take back your liquor!" So the barman empties the bottle. All you have to do now is to go round the corner, break the bottle, and suck a refreshing draught from the sponge.

Irate. (Madras) "If I addressed a letter to the biggest fool in Madras, would the post-office deliver it to you?" No, dear boy. Consult the Post-Office Directory, and you will see that such letters are returned to the sender.

Unbereaved. (Bangalore) Auntie is sorry to hear that your wife disappeared, and was presumed to have gone to a better world. It was very nice of you to put up a marble memorial, bearing the inscription, "Gone, but not Forgotten." Evidently she was a talkative spouse, and not easily forgotten. Imagine your surprise when you discovered that she had not gone to a better world, but only to her mother. No doubt she will soon be back. In that case, you need not waste the memorial. Get the mason to alter the last word. Then, suitably hung with trappings of woe, the inscription will read, "Gone, but Not For Good."

Adventurous. (Lalarpet) "May I come up in your balloon one morning, dear Auntie?" You are most welcome, my boy. Auntie always has to throw out

ballast when she reaches five hundred feet, and the contractor charges a rupee a load for bringing sand from the beach. It will be much more convenient to throw you out, my dear.

Happy Mother. (Raniganj) You can weigh your baby regularly if you take it to the colliery weigh-bridge. Just put the little dear on a coal-truck, shunt the truck on to the weigh-bridge, take the reading, and deduct the weight of the vehicle. To bathe the infant, fill a vessel with hot water, and insert the child. If it shouts, the water is too warm. When you have finished, be careful not to throw out the baby with the bath-water.

Billy Bumpkin. (Jangalaram) What a pity that the experiment conducted by the holy man was unsuccessful. You buried the pot of rupees as directed, but when you dug them up again, they had not doubled. Instead, they had disappeared entirely. So had the holy man. Still, you cannot complain. He warned you that if you thought of the rupees even once during the

week that they were buried, the charm would not work, and the rupees would turn into dust. Well, you did think of the rupees, didn't you? And you found the pot full of dust, didn't you? What more do you want for money?

Sportsman. (Karachi) Yes, fishing is an excellent pastime. You first buy a fifty-rupee rod, and other tackle in proportion. You next procure a large jar of liquid refreshment, and hire a boy to carry your *impedimenta* to the scene of operations. Then you sit on the jetty all day, and meditate about Life. When the shades of night are approaching, you find a real fisherman, and give him a couple of rupees, and he gives you a few nice fish, and you take them home to the wife. She could have bought the fish for twelve annas; but they taste nicer when obtained in the above manner.

Seela. (Ambala) Remember that your carpets are your children's play-ground. Have them regularly beaten and shampooed by an expert.

TOPSY TURVY—(Continued from page 12)

problem thus-wise, reached the central New Bazaar Road, when simultaneously Nargun and Thurkov screamed, as if stung by a scorpion, "Oh-hh, what about the language!"

Thurkov was a stranger to Modalkar, and his mother-tongue was Tamil. He had gone to Modalkar five years ago from Coimbatore and all these years he had not picked up any knowledge of the local Mahratti. His wife, Mondodhari, and himself, talked Tamil at home, and the children talked a polyglot that was 50% Tamil, and the rest made up of Mahratti, Telugu, English and what not. Nargun's family talked pure Mahratti at home—though the father and the children, Prema and Madhu, talked bad English and misunderstood correct English.

At that forlorn moment, when they realised the true significance of these facts, so utterly done up did they feel that they would have thought it a divine blessing if a sinister destiny had broken the hard earth underneath and swallowed them there and then.

At length, the diminutive professor remarked: "Nargun, there's no use crying over spilt water. We have a Sanskrit saying—Silence ensures success of every kind. We will embody that very maxim in our unblemished conduct at home. Talk less, but think more;—particularly at home. There are bound to be confusions, when we confabulate at home. We'll keep a grip over the chatter-boxish instinct—and in the meantime pray with folded hands to the Almighty for deliverance from this extraordinary thrall. Cheerio, my dear boy; don't give way to despair!"

Thurkov's stimulated jubilation had some effect on the jaded nerves and expanded figure of Nargun. They

formally shook hands, and wishing each other a peaceful night separated—each bound for the other's house.

(In part the third, Nargun, as Professor Thurkov in face and from, roaches the Professor's house and has to face many tragi-comical perplexities.)

JANUARY LUCKY NUMBER SCHEME

THE EDITOR OFFERS

Rs. 100

For the return of readers' copies. Rs. 50 will be paid for the first Lucky Number. Rs. 10 each for two Lucky Numbers and Rs. 5 each for six other Lucky Numbers.

9 Numbers have been chosen at random and kept in a sealed envelope which will be opened after 1-2-'35

These Numbers will be published in February.

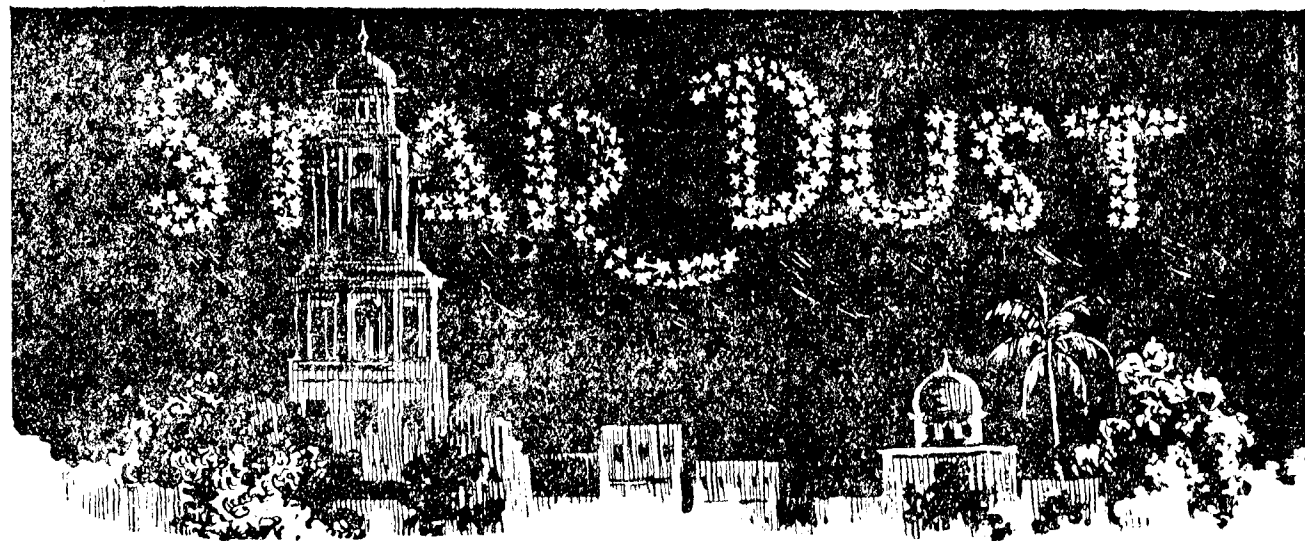
SO KEEP YOUR COPY

YES! I KNOW!



1. Damascus.
2. A theory to explain the formation of the stars and planets
3. An Egyptian revolutionary leader. (1841—1911.)
4. In the upper Egypt on the Nile.
5. By John Napier, the English Mathematician in 1614.
6. A movement to repatriate the Jews in Palestine.

Answers to questions on Page 12.



How Hollywood takes Nudism.

The Greeks started Nudism. Russians are observing it, while going bathing. Germans have stuck to it just, for health. It is making headway into Hollywood. But how far Hollywood is taking to it can be gauged by the answers given by some of the Stars who were asked whether they would join a Nudist Colony.

These stars who reach fame through illusion and mystery, will they risk it! It is true all stars go nude in the privacy of their estates. But, doing it collectively is something else. Garbo is one of the most faithful devotees of Nudism.

"Certainly not!" says Mae West, "clothes are the women's best friends and they are the things that keep up our allure!"

"I am all for it," says Sidney Fox, the brunette.

Claudette Colbert on the other hand thinks that, even though she takes sun-baths in privacy, she wouldn't like to go nude in public—this from the Empress of 'The sign of the Cross.'

Maureen O'Sullivan of 'Tarzan and His Mate,' on the other hand, approves of it in the right place with the right people, but wouldn't join a nudist colony.

Fay Wray wouldn't think of it.

Carole Lombard is afraid of it.

Sylvia Sydney believes it is good for the kids, but her adult vanity is too strong for it.

Jean Arthur hope that she could enjoy going without clothing. It will be healthy and comfortable.

And Jack Oakie is too timid.

Remember Jackie Coogan, *The Kid*? And Toby Wing, the Hollywood blonde-sensation? They are engaged!

Mary Pickford filed her divorce papers. Douglas Fairbanks confirmed it. But, here they are again, rebuilding a home for themselves. Douglas Fairbanks is going back to Hollywood to make his own pictures, terminating his contracts with the producers in England.

George O'Brians are heart-broken over the death of their tiny son. He was nine days old.

"Svengali" Springs a Surprise

Wellington Talkies management received the surprise of their lives when, in the middle of the second week of "Roman Scandals" they found the theatre springing suddenly into autograph-hunting. It was the famous star of "Svengali," besieged by his fans for autographs. John Barrymore and his secretary had bought two tickets and gone into the Wellington Talkies to see "Roman Scandals," as the star later admitted, for the first time. Nobody knew it was John but some tommies were suspicious that it must be John Barrymore but were not sure. So, when John ventured out during the interval, "Mr. Barrymore, your autograph, please" said one of those around him. Smilingly, like a truant boy discovered in his act, John signed one autograph after another. The news spread quick. Caught unawares, the management were apologetic for not having sent him their invitation. But, would he honour them by taking his money back? "No, don't worry," said he, good-humoredly. "You see, this is the first time I see 'Roman Scandals' and I enjoyed the gorgeous settings and the show immensely. Now let's to your operator's room."

He was taken round to inspect their apparatus. John was greatly pleased with its working.

Warners think they can make a new star of Margaret Lindsay and will start by co-starring her with Jimmy Cagney.

Baby Le Roy, got a new contract for his second birth-day present. He's making good, too, getting twice as much as a year ago.

Barbara Stanwyck has built a three-quarter mile bicycle course at her home for herself and Frank Fay to work out on.

'Tarzan and his Mate' made Maureen's fan mail go up by several thousands. But what a surprise when Maureen discovered that the fans were feeling hurt by her appearing without the benefit of clothes or clergy. She has nothing to do with her role, it is true. Albeit this role will hurt her career.

"Roman Scandals"



"YES, I am being tortured, Your Majesty. Ha, ha, ha! Ha ha ha!"

The scene is a torture-chamber in ancient Rome. The speaker is a half-wit, who has incurred the displeasure of the Emperor. Two evil-looking men, with white-hot branding irons in their hands, are standing before him—holding their sides with laughter. His Imperial Majesty is looking on with lines of vexation on his face. He advances a few steps—and then he too breaks into violent laughter..... A few minutes later the prisoner and the Emperor walk away arm in arm.

No black magic need be postulated to account for this. The fumes of nitrous oxide, escaping from a leaking jar, convert the chamber of horrors into a room of laughing maniacs.

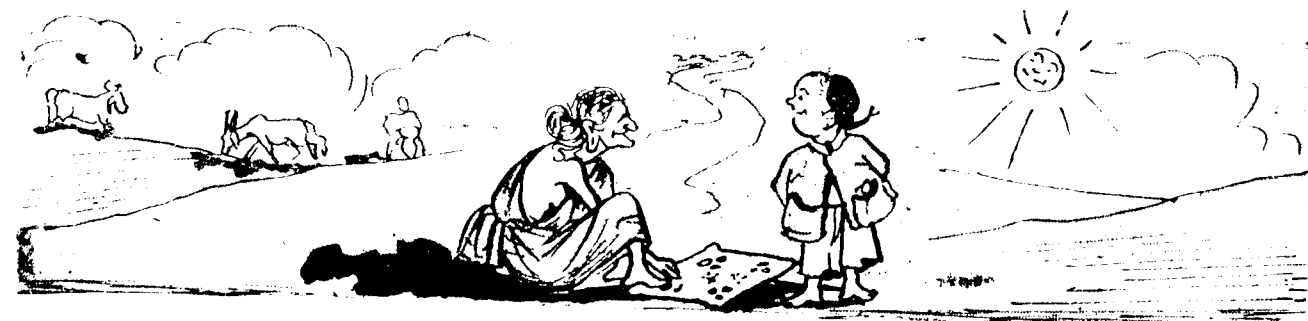
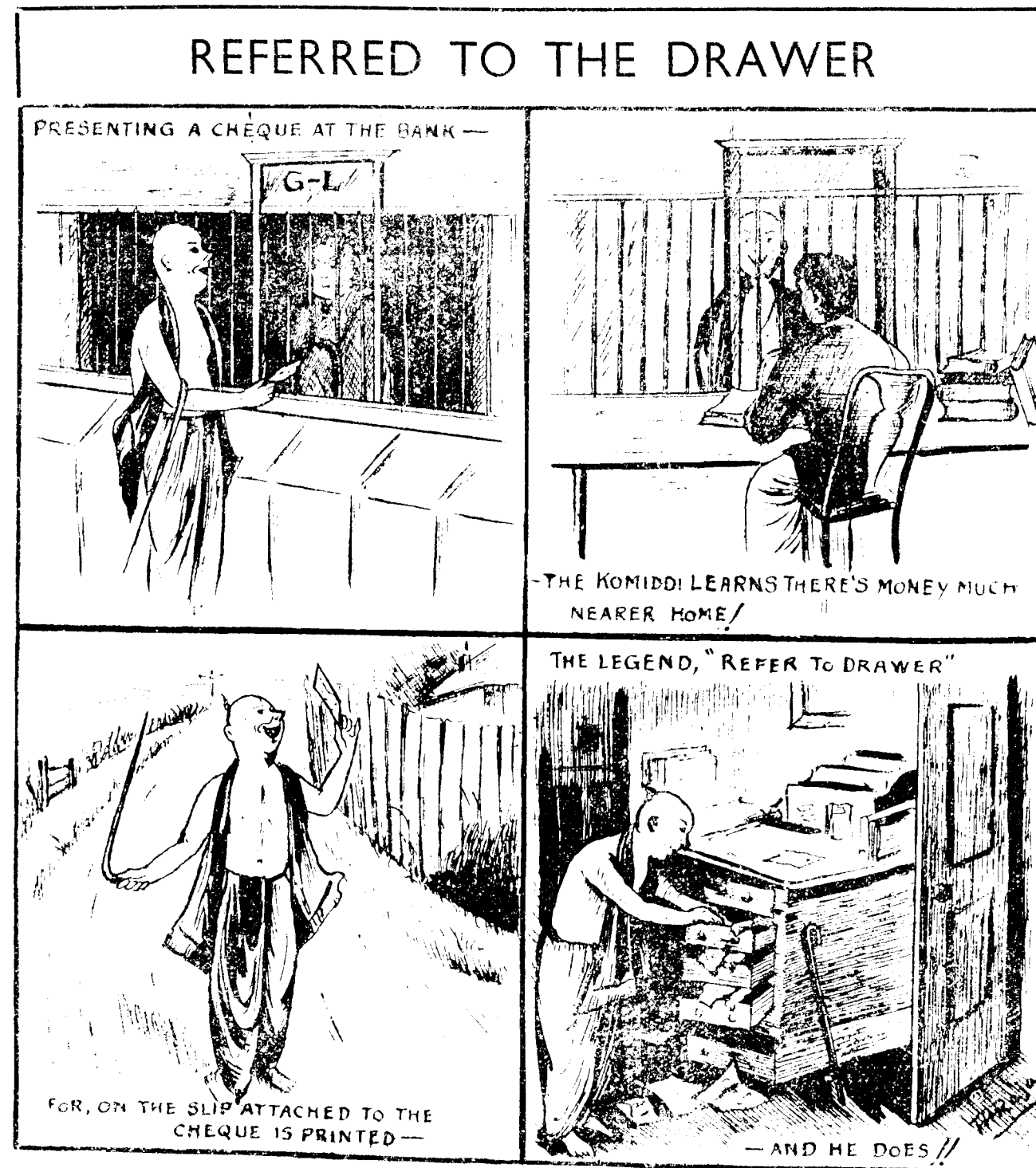
The whole scene is typical of the way in which Eddie Cantor manages to wring laughter out of the very heart of tears. *Roman Scandals* is boisterous fun on the face of it. Scratch but the surface, and you have tragedy too deep for tears. The plot is simple and unimportant. A half-wit, expelled from the modern township of West Rome, falls asleep and dreams. Wandering about the Museum of Roman Arts in the city, he has acquired some knowledge of colourful incidents in the history of Imperial Rome. And his dream takes him on to the Eternal City in the days of its splendour. Gorgeous scenes pass before his eyes. There is the slave market, where unfortunate women were stripped and sold. And there is the palace with its intrigues and scandals, its conspiracies and stratagems. The Emperor himself, the sole monarch of the Western world, moves about in daily fear of the poisoner and the assassin. There are the beauty parlours of the ladies of the court and the *demimonde*, who dance away their youth in giddy gaieties. And crowning nightmare of all, there is a flight in a racing chariot, closely pursued by the Emperor's forces—a race, which ends in a crash. Connecting all these, there is of course a story, in which the half-wit passes from the slave-market into the torture-chamber and thence to the palace, where he holds the risky post of food-taster to His Majesty.

Set in relief against this imposing back-ground, we see the antics of a half-wit. A bull in a china shop cannot be half so destructive as Eddie Cantor gambolling amongst the conventions and etiquettes of Roman court and society. It was a great, but vicious civilisation. It was built on the tortures of the slaves and the tears of the poor. It was adorned by the gay charms of women, who were by training or necessity blind to the higher values of life. The rich and the mighty had the best of it, and they sinned with impunity and wantonness.....At times, it seems a caricature, vivid and penetrating, of modern civilisation itself. At odd moments and in unexpected corners, Eddie Cantor tears away the decorated veil and exposes to our gaze the running sore, which ended the grandeur that was Rome. The tears gather in our eyes, but before they are full, there is a queer twist and we laugh away in relief. Take for instance the scene at the slave-market, where Cantor is being sold. No offers come at first. The auctioneer coolly informs Cantor, that if he is not bought, he will be thrown to the lions. With this terrifying prospect before him, Cantor pleads with the crowd of customers and enumerates his qualifications. He can sing a little, cook a little: he can mind babies: and he can dance. Then begin some odd uncouth movements that tickle our risible faculties. But is it fit matter for laughter or for tears?

The epilogue and the prologue have their own moral to tell. For there is scandal in the municipal politics of the modern township of West Rome, as there was scandal in the imperial court of the Eternal City. And in the city of his dreams as of his waking life, Eddie Cantor lets loose an earthquake.

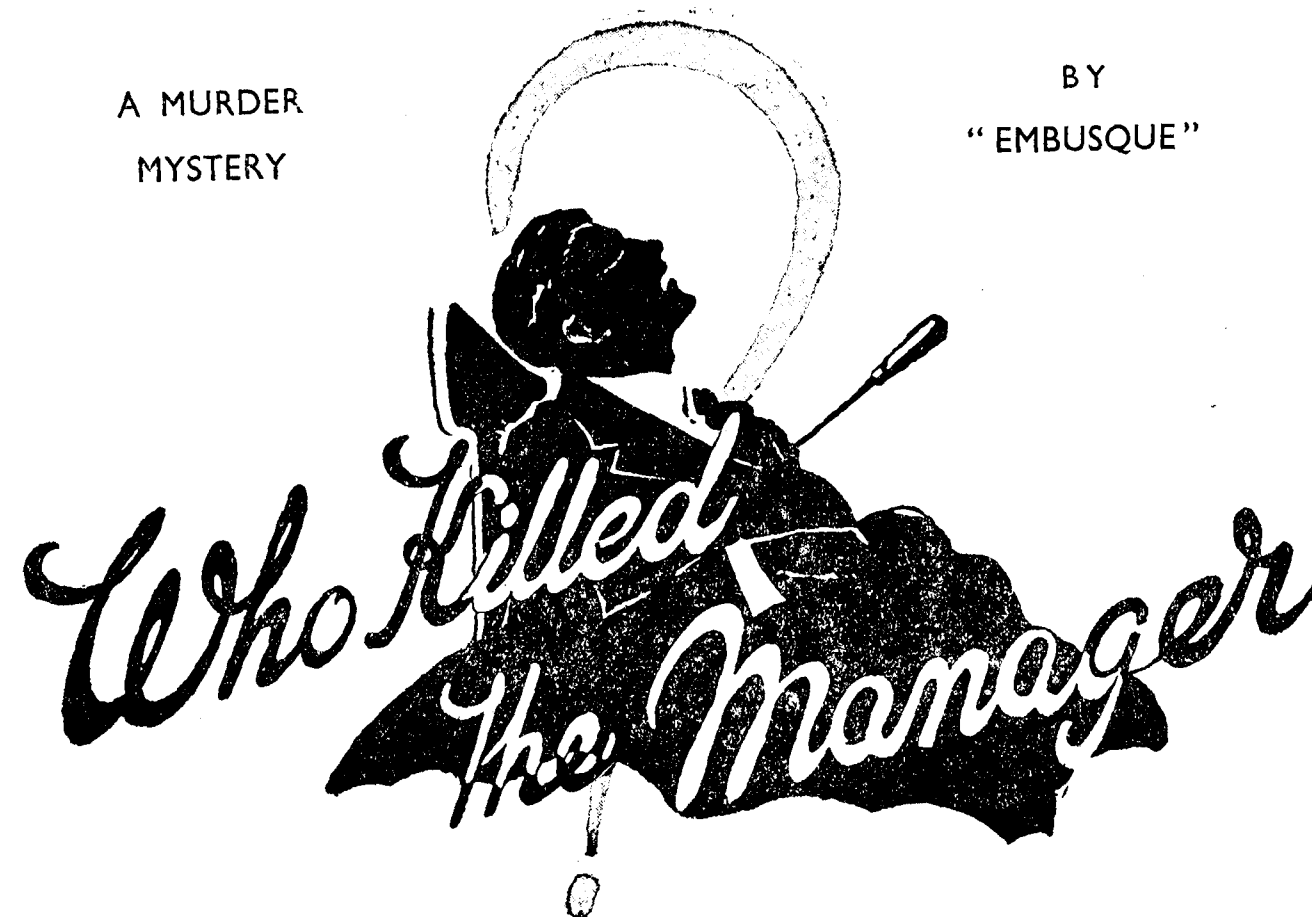
Two hours of splendid entertainment. But ever and anon, one remembers Byron's lines:

If I laugh at any mortal thing,
It is that I may not weep.



A MURDER
MYSTERY

BY
"EMBUSQUE"



From the note-book of Inspector Catfoot.

AT 10.20 a.m. on the 11th October, I received a telephone message, and proceeded to the Follies Theatre. I found the manager dead in his chair in the private office. There was a dagger in his heart. The position of the dagger precluded suicide. I tested the dagger, the bell-push, and the door-knob for finger-prints, but obtained only smears. On other articles in the room I found the finger-prints of the manager himself, and of his secretary, Mr. File. There were no other prints nor clues of any kind.

I examined the premises. The offices of the theatre are above the stage, 80 feet from the ground. The outside walls are unclimbable, and the roof is inaccessible. All the windows are barred. The only access to this floor is by a stairway from the stage-door.

There were some unopened letters on the manager's desk. The desk was newly dusted and free of finger-prints.

From the appearance of the secretary's room, Mr. File did not seem to have done any work up to the time of the murder, but I found nothing suspicious.

In the typist's room there was an automatic perforating machine, and a pile of about 200 newly perforated cards.

The alcove at the head of the stairs contained hats and coats and a stool. There was some tobacco-ash on the floor.

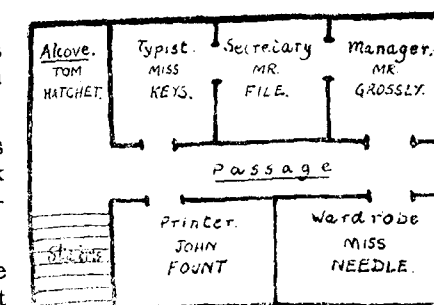
In the printing-room, the programme for the night's performance was half set-up.

In the wardrobe-room was an electric sewing-machine, with a partly-made ballet-skirt on it.

I interrogated all persons on the premises, and obtained the following statements and admissions:

Mr. File

I am the manager's private secretary. Everyone in the office starts work promptly at 10 a.m. Mr. Grossly arrived at that hour this morning. He is very punctual. I immediately took the correspondence in to him. He always opens the letters at once. Mr. Grossly found fault with my work, and abused me. I offered an explanation, but he was in a bad temper, and told me to get out.



THE PLAN

I returned to my office, and sat doing nothing for about ten minutes. I heard the murmur of voices in the manager's room. I do not know who was speaking to the manager. I could not hear plainly, because of the noise of Miss Key's perforating-machine.

At 10.18, the bell rang in Mr. Grossly's office. I went straight in, and found him stone-dead in his chair. I ran back to Miss Keys, and told her to phone for the police.

The dagger was Mr. Grossly's paper-knife. It was always on his desk. I did not like Mr. Grossly. He constantly insulted and threatened me.

Miss Keys

I am the typist and general office-assistant. I arrived at the usual time this morning, and set up the automatic perforator. Once it is ready, I only have to feed the cards into the machine, about 50 a minute.

I heard Mr. Grossly arrive and go down the passage. A few minutes later I heard Mr. Grossly and Mr. File talking angrily in the private office. Then I heard Mr. File come back into his own room. Mr. Grossly shouted something to Mr. File as the door closed. Yes, that would be about 10.8 a.m.

I did not notice anything more until Mr. File came running to me, and told me to phone for the police.

I am engaged to be married to John Fount, the printer. For the last three weeks, Mr. Grossly has been pestering me. Yesterday, Mr. Grossly sent John on an errand out of town and during the lunch-hour got me into his private office and overpowered me. Afterwards he said that if I did not submit to him whenever he wished, he would tell John that I had become his mistress. I was very upset, and did not sleep all night.

Tom Hatchet

I have been fireman at the Follies Theatre for thirty years. I opened the stage-door at about 9.45 this morning, and the office staff arrived a few minutes later. I stayed at the door until Mr. Grossly arrived, and I followed him up the stairs. I took his hat and hung it in the alcove. Then I sat on the stool in the alcove and smoked my pipe. Smoking is forbidden.

I was facing the stairs all the time, and no one came up. I could hear Miss Key's perforator at work, and the noise of Miss Needle's sewing-machine. I noticed nothing unusual. I was not doing anything between 10.8 and 10.18.

A few days ago, Mr. Grossly gave me notice, for no proper reason. I hated him. He was a bully. I am a married man with four children.

John Fount

I am the staff-printer. I came to the office this morning with Miss Keys. I went into my own room. Mr. Grossly arrived, and gave me the evening's

programme. I started to set it up in type. About fifteen minutes later I heard the bell ring in the manager's room, and then I was told that the manager was dead. That is all I know. I was alone from 10.8 to 10.18, setting up the type.

I disliked Mr. Grossly, because I suspected him of interfering with Miss Keys, my *fiancée*. I was watching them. I am very jealous. On our way to the theatre this morning, I saw that Miss Keys looked ill, and had something on her mind. I asked her if anything had happened while I was away yesterday. She refused to answer, and we quarrelled.

Miss Needle

I am the wardrobe-mistress. I got to my room just before ten this morning. At 10 a.m. Mr. Grossly brought me the material for a ballet-skirt which was urgently required. I began to make up the material at once. I do not know anything else. I did not hear anything, owing to the noise of my sewing-machine.

Until recently, I was Mr. Grossly's mistress. He was unkind to me. For the last few days he has been making advances to Miss Keys. I went to his house last night and confronted him. He said he was finished with me, and I had better find another job. I was very unhappy. I am sorry he is dead.

* * *

DEAR READER,

Can you solve the mystery for Inspector Catfoot? The Inspector is a very thorough and experienced investigator. He cross-examined the witnesses exhaustively, and tested each story. He is satisfied that the statements of all the witnesses are correct. He has noted down all the relevant facts. Nothing important is omitted or falsified.

But the Inspector, though admirable in investigation, is weak in deduction. His notes contain the solution to the murder. It is his custom to hand them to a colleague, better able than himself to unravel skeins of tangled testimony. I want you to complete the Inspector's work.

It is agreed that Mr. File left the manager alive at 10.8 a.m., and announced that he was dead at 10.18 a.m.

The murder must have been committed by one or more of the five persons in the building. They are telling the truth, but they have left out one thing. During that ten minutes, someone went to the manager's office, and stabbed him.

Who committed the murder? How was it done? Who rang the bell?

For answer, please turn to page 23.

Yours faithfully,

THE EDITOR

It was a bleak winter's evening, and dark clouds were scudding across the sky. Storm was in the air. Through the misty haze, which had gathered over the great undulating plains of Kathgodam, could be discerned a speck in the dim distance. Gradually it took the shape of a man on horseback. He seemed a graceful and picturesque figure. But the bowed head suggested utter weariness and dejection. His slim, well-knit body, gave one the impression of hidden strength, and on seeing his face, this impression was confirmed. Though the face was that of a very young man, the thin compressed lips and the piercing grey eyes, under well-marked eye-brows, denoted character. But what was noticeable most was the unmistakeable stamp of refinement and good breeding. It was a handsome face, though, perhaps a trifle too stern for one so young. For Jim Le Fay was only twenty-three years of age. It was the melancholy attitude though, which particularly arrested the attention, and invoked the sympathy of another horseman advancing towards him.

"Hallo, Jim!" he shouted.—"You don't seem quite yourself today. I hope there is nothing wrong."

Jim had been so engrossed in his thoughts that he had not heard the sound of the advancing horse. He turned around half-startled on hearing his friend's sympathetic query. He quickly recovered himself though, and with a smile answered: "I'm all right, thank you, Tom, old man. How are you?"

But Tom Smith was not deceived by his friend's assumed cheerfulness. The haggard face told quite a different story. "Look here, Jim, old boy," he said, "you and I are old pals. I don't want to pry into your affairs, but think I have a right to know what's troubling you. I can't bear to see you in this state, and if I can help you—"

Jim understood, and the anxious gaze of his lifelong friend broke down his natural reserve. "There is no need to tell you, Tom, old man," he said. "You've doubtless known of the sorrow, which has been eating away my very life for some time past, but out of regard for me and respect for my feelings, you've probably kept silent. Well, Tom, it all happened, when I was at the front. There, I received an anonymous letter warning me about Carmen, but I treated it with contempt, though perhaps it was well meant. I loved and trusted Carmen too well to pay any heed to things of that kind; though, I did think her letters weren't quite what they used to be. That was after I wrote and told her that my uncle had cut me off and that the titles and the estates would go to my cousin."

"Yes, Jim, that's an old tale," said his friend sympathetically.

"Of course," continued Jim, "I thought it quite natural that Carmen should be disappointed, and though slightly perturbed at the time, I thought no more of the matter. But when my poor old father died and my

brother was killed in action, and Carmen failed to drop me even a few lines of sympathy, I was not only surprised, but felt very hurt indeed. I didn't say anything, but felt Carmen's indifference very much."

Tom smiled and nodded his head in an understanding way.

"As you know, my father was reputed to be a rich man," said Jim, "but it was found that he had lost practically all his money shortly before he died, and the only thing that came to me was the old estate. I was expecting to return home any day then, so I didn't write to Carmen at the time; but immediately I returned from the war, I told her exactly how matters stood. Carmen expressed considerable surprise, and said that she always thought that my father was a wealthy man. However, I told her, I was moderately well off, and that I would try and work up the old estate."

"Quite like an honest lover, Jim," said Tom.

"Listen, old man," went on Jim. "just then dinner was announced and nothing more was said about the matter."

Carmen seemed pleasant enough during dinner, but I didn't fail to notice that her mother and father were distinctly cold in their manner towards me. Well, some time later, I had occasion to visit one of the bosses of the Haldwani Gold Fields on business, and after the interview I accidentally overheard a remark. Something within me went snap."

Tom Smith looked deeply interested.

"As I was drinking," continued Jim, "I heard a merry group of miners chatting.—Going to the concert

tonight?" asked somebody. "There will be a nice dance by Carmen Houston and that new feller—Chinitoff, I think they call him—who's opened up that new mine out Lalkna way." "He's jolly handsome," said another. "And quite a good actor, too." "Strikes me," broke in a third, "he's acting several parts here. A friend of mine told me that, on one occasion, he met this fellow and Carmen Houston in the Lalkna jungles. They pretended that they were doing a bit of snipe-shooting, but Jack Dyson isn't a fool, and he drew his own conclusions."

My heart seemed like bursting. I determined to stay the night on the Gold Fields and attend the concert. The show began at 9 o'clock. Some two hours later amidst hushed silence and tense expectation the curtain rose for the last time, and revealed the stage, set as the private apartments of an oriental prince. On a luxurious divan, Chinitoff lay, dressed as a prince. The music commenced, and suddenly, there appeared the figure of a beautiful dancing girl. She was scantily clad in an eastern costume, and her full sensuous lips and dark dreamy eyes hinted at a nature, at once voluptuous and passionate. And as she swung her lithe body to and fro, she sang in a deep *contralto* voice. It was a slave song

SACRIFICE

BY

MISS DEVIKA RANI

which she sang. And, as she sang, she advanced with eyes, glowing with passion, towards the prostrate prince, who arose and joined her in the song and dance.—And, as the last words of the song, 'I am thine for ever more,' died away on the mystical stillness of the night, he stooped, and she kissed him, with one last, long, passionate embrace.—And, as the curtain fell for the last event of the evening, a dagger seemed to pierce my heart, my senses seemed obscured, and my vision dimmed. I couldn't believe that what I had just seen was only play acting. It was the look in the eyes of the dancers that made my heart stand still. Then I thought that, perhaps, Carmen had been carried away by the music and the excitement.

Anyway, Tom, old man, I decided to see Carmen before the stars grew pale, and so I waited for her at the entrance. Soon I saw Carmen and Chinitoff emerge out of the back-door of the concert hall, and enter a waiting car. I followed them in mine and through the dark Indian night, the chase began.

I put out the lights of my car and followed at some distance. After travelling for a few miles on the main road, the car in front suddenly swerved. Carmen and her companion alighted. They proceeded on foot through a dark jungle tract, the stillness of which was only broken by the croaking of frogs and the occasional howl of a hungry jackal.

I followed at a safe distance, and after walking for about two miles, I saw the two figures in front stop before a huge rock; and, to my surprise a stone-door opened and Carmen and her companion entered. The door closed behind them. I soon recovered from my surprise and proceeded cautiously to investigate the surroundings. Looking about, I caught a faint glimmer of light through a crevice in the rock. It no sooner appeared than it had gone.

I lay down near the crack and waited for some time. My eyes slowly grew accustomed to the darkness. Dimly, I could see some figures through the small aperture in the rock, when somebody, evidently a servant, entered with a lamp and lighted the scene for me. From the darkness outside I could, unobserved, see distinctly what was going on inside. Supper was being served, and at the table sat Carmen and Chinitoff. After a little while I heard the latter, in excellent English, tell the servant that he could retire for the night. The servant then thanked his master, bowed and left.

Then I saw Carmen and Chinitoff talking earnestly in subdued tones for some time. Then Chinitoff filled Carmen's glass with wine, and they both quaffed a glass each. Not once or twice, but six times in quick succession. Poor Carmen! It was a case of heredity, pure and simple, and agencies were at work over which this poor girl had no control. Have I not heard from Carmen's own lips that her grandfather had died a drunkard?

Then I saw something, which has left me nothing more to live for. When Carmen had finished drinking the wine, she threw herself on a beautiful divan covered with gorgeous eastern rugs and smoked an Egyptian cigarette. Then she threw off her beautiful eastern slippers, which were studded with precious stones, and stretched her shapely limbs. Through the sweet-scented smoke of her cigarette, she smiled at her companion.—

The smile was one of invitation, and her attitude that of utter abandonment. Chinitoff understood and walked slowly to her and, on reaching the divan, he stooped over the prostrate figure of Carmen, and raising her unresisting lips to his, he kissed her passionately.

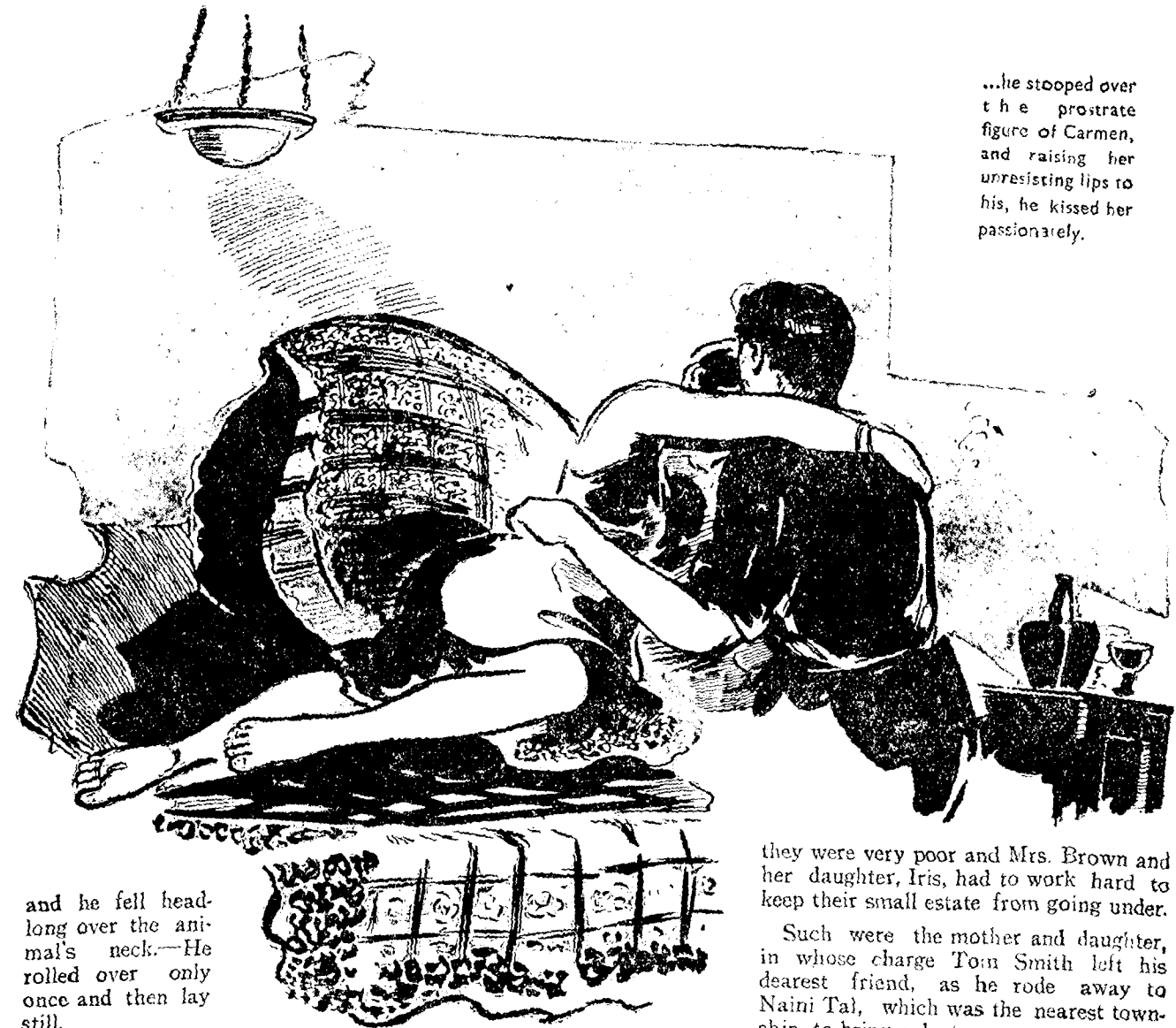
Jim stooped here and reeled forward on his horse's neck. However, with an effort he recovered himself and continued.

"And, now, Tom, the sunshine has gone out of my life for ever, and tonight I mean to —And, goodbye, old pal."

And, turning around quickly, he dug his spurs into his horse's sides, and before his friend could say anything, he rode away in the direction of his plantation. Darkness fell on the land. Suddenly his horse tripped



Then I saw something which has left me nothing more to live for



...he stooped over the prostrate figure of Carmen, and raising her unresisting lips to his, he kissed her passionately.

and he fell headlong over the animal's neck.—He rolled over only once and then lay still.

Tom had followed his friend at a distance, and coming upon him, he laid him tenderly upon his knees.

Fortunately, the accident had occurred near a village, and it wasn't long before Tom, with the aid of the villagers, carried him to the house of one Mrs. Brown. Jim was laid on the couch in the front parlour, and Mrs. Brown poured some brandy down his throat. This revived him somewhat and it wasn't long before he regained consciousness.

The Browns had lived many years in those parts. Old Colonel Brown, a distinguished soldier, had bought land in the district many years before, and at first he had prospered. But unlucky business speculations had reduced him to comparative poverty a few years prior to his death; and, he and his wife and daughter had lived practically on his Government pension during the last few years of his life. And when he died, he left nothing except an old house and a few acres of land to his widow and only daughter. Of course, Mrs. Brown received a small pension from the Government, and with this and the little money which their small estate brought in, she and her daughter managed to live. But

they were very poor and Mrs. Brown and her daughter, Iris, had to work hard to keep their small estate from going under.

Such were the mother and daughter, in whose charge Tom Smith left his dearest friend, as he rode away to Naini Tal, which was the nearest township, to bring a doctor.

When the doctor arrived he examined Jim and stated that he was suffering from concussion of the brain.

Iris Brown undertook to nurse Jim, as no one else was available, and, in addition to nursing him as tenderly as a mother, she poured forth prayers unceasingly to Heaven for his recovery.

Slowly but surely, Jim recovered, and with new health and growing strength, a new hope grew in his heart. He wanted to live and repay the sweet girl, who had watched by his bed. In due course, he left the Browns' place and went back to his own plantation, which was not very far away.

But he felt like a broken reed, and knew that it would take a long time for him to work up the estate which had gone practically to ruin during his illness. And he didn't think it fair to burden this noble girl with himself and his poverty. So he waited, till he was sufficiently strong to commence work again; and then he tried to make up for lost time by working harder than ever. But things went from bad to worse. There came a dreadful drought, which all but ruined Jim's crops, and

left him practically penniless. But nothing could make him forget Iris. The lower he went down in life, the firmer was his resolve to have a home.

Jim and Iris would often meet, but they both kept their secret well. They understood that they loved each other, but they did not speak out.

One day as the evening shadows were falling and Jim was returning from a long walk, he unexpectedly came upon Iris. There, in an open glade in the forest, by the banks of a rivulet, sat little Iris Brown. He went and sat beside her. There was silence, though one might almost hear the beatings of one's heart.

An owl screeched. Gently, Jim held the soft trembling hand of Iris, and the next moment their lips met.

"I love you, Jim," said she, simply, "and poverty is a joy to me."

A few days later, Jim wrote and asked his old pal, Tom, to come and see him, as he had a happy surprise in store for him.

And, Tom, though not surprised at the news which he learnt from Jim's own lips, was pleased beyond words.

"And," said Jim, "though poor, we'll be happy. And, I feel too happy now to say more, Tom, old man."

But Tom Smith understood, and patted his old pal on his back, and replied sympathetically: "I'm more glad than I can say, Jim lad, and I rejoice with you in your newly-found happiness. Your wedding day will be the happiest day of my life, but if you want me to be groomsman, Jim, old bean, you will have to wait till I see this jolly little war through."

"What war?" asked Jim in surprise.

"Well," replied Tom, "I didn't tell you about the matter before, as I thought it would be raking up old wounds and painful memories; but things are different now, and as there won't be any room for the painful past in your newly-found house of happiness, I don't mind telling you. You see, Jim lad, on that winter's evening when you spoke about Carmen and Chinitoff in the Lalkna jungles,—it set me thinking. Well, I decided to do a bit of detective work on my own."

"You, a detective, Tom?" queried Jim.

"Yes, I've been watching the movements of that chap, Chinitoff, for some time past. Of course, it has long since become common knowledge that he and Carmen are leading a sinful life, though they still try to bluff everybody with the fairy tale about having been privately married. However, all their top-show didn't go down with me. Strange things have been happening in the jungles around here, and also in the Kumaon hills for some time past. Any way, old man, some of my planter friends and I kept a sharp look-out; and last night, when we were hiding near the Lalkna caves, we overheard an interesting little conversation, which took place between Carmen and her supposed lawful husband. They are evidently Bolshevik spies!"

"Spies! Did you say, Tom?" exclaimed Jim excitedly.

"Yes, spies!" replied, Tom. "Bolshevik spies! And Jim, old bean, the Superintendent of Police has ordered the mounted police to proceed immediately to the caves which you discovered. And, tonight, they are going to make a surprise attack on the inmates. And, as a special concession, the Superintendent has allowed me to take part in the affray."

On Tom's return to Jim's house, the latter said: "I congratulate you, old man, and I'm glad—more glad than I can say—that you got through the jolly little war all right."

"I thank you from my heart," said Tom, "but allow me to congratulate you!"

"How do you mean?" said Jim in surprise.

In reply Tom handed his pal a cutting from one of the leading English dailies, announcing the death of his uncle Lord Le Fay. It was further stated there that, owing to a letter received from his nephew's friend, Mr. Tom Smith, explaining the sad state to which his nephew, Jim Le Fay, had been reduced, the late Earl had forgiven and forgotten the differences which had arisen between them, and that, once again, he constituted Jim his sole heir.

The two friends clasped hands and looked into one another's eyes. That look meant more than words, and though Tom understood, Jim added with a shaking voice: "Tom lad, my uncle had three separate titles and four estates. In addition to his English Baronetcy and Earldom, he held the title of Seigneur de Val Plaisant. The title is as old as the hills, so to speak, and the old Manor House is a magnificent building. The estate which comprises about 12,000 acres of rich lands, would, roughly speaking, bring in an income of £10,000/- *per annum*, if properly managed."

He could not say more, but bluntly blurted out: "It is yours, Tom, if you are not too proud to accept a little present, as a small mark of gratitude, from an old pal."

Tom turned away his face as he shook Jim's hand, for his eyes had grown suspiciously moist. He only managed to utter a mere, "Thank you," but the warm clasp of his hand meant more to Jim than words.

"We'll drive to Haldwani now," said Jim, "and fix up matters with the missionary there." And so it was arranged that Iris and Jim should be wedded the following day.

All that night Tom Smith sat in his bed-room, his heart wrung with anguish. He had loved Iris Brown deeply, but knowing that she and Jim loved one another, he had remained silent.

He might have tried to win Iris during Jim's poverty, for he was in good circumstances at the time; but he instead wrote to Jim's uncle, pleading the cause of his nephew. And though Tom's face was as grey as the dawn, which was breaking just then, he was happy, for he had served—those he loved.

WHO KILLED THE MANAGER?

THE SOLUTION (to the above question, continued from page 18).

ONE or more of the five persons in the building committed the murder. Each of the five had motives for slaying the despicable Mr. Grossly.

Mr. File, the secretary, had the best opportunity. He had private access to the manager. There is corroboration that he left the manager alive at 10.8 a.m., but no evidence of what he was doing between 10.8 and 10.18, when he told Miss Keys that the manager was dead. He says he sat in his room doing nothing—presumably brooding over his quarrel with the manager.

The manager always opened his letters first thing. He was left alone at 10.8, yet the letters were still unopened at 10.18. He must have been talking with someone. This agrees with Mr. File's statement that there were voices in the manager's room immediately before the murder. Of course, Mr. File himself might have gone back and held that conversation. But, for reasons that will appear shortly, the conversation was a confidential one. These facts exonerate Mr. File. It was not Mr. File who occupied the time from 10.8 to 10.18 in confidential conversation with the manager.

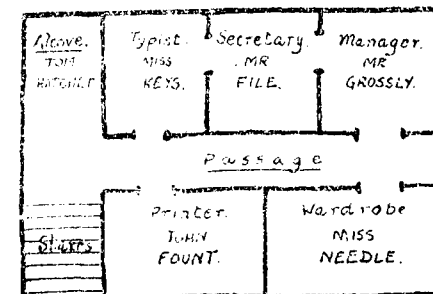
What were the others doing? Tom Hatchet, the fireman, admits to doing nothing between 10.8 and 10.18. He says he sat in the alcove, smoking a forbidden pipe.

It takes ten minutes to smoke a pipe so as to produce an appreciable quantity of ashes. It was not Tom Hatchet who went and had a talk with the manager. Tom would not smoke his pipe in the manager's presence. He could only smoke it in the alcove. From the alcove he had the stairs in full view. This confirms that no one from outside came in and committed the murder. Tom, however, could not see along the passage.

Mr. Grossly made no struggle or outcry when stabbed. He was taken unawares by someone from whom he apprehended no danger. The murderer must have come out of one of the staff rooms, gone along the passage for a private interview with Mr. Grossly, and stabbed him under sudden provocation. The murderer must have been within arm's length, both of the paper-knife and the victim.

Mr. Grossly was 'stone dead,' when the secretary answered the bell. He could not have rung the bell himself. The bell was rung by the murderer.

The murderer was not John Fount. Between 10 a.m. and 10.18, the printer had set up half of the



PLAN

evening's programme. This does not allow for several minutes' confidential talk with the manager.

The conversation might have been with Miss Needle, who had been on intimate terms with the victim. But Miss Needle had partly made a ballet-skirt between 10 a.m. and 10.18—it was already recognisable as such by the Inspector when he arrived. So Miss Needle was not the murderer, though she had good reason to be.

What indicates that the conversation was confidential? The fact that the desk had been newly-wiped free of finger-prints. In an ordinary business interview, the caller sits at a little distance from the desk. To leave finger-prints on the desk, the caller must be sitting right up to it, looking into the face of the manager. The only other possibility is, that the caller sat *on* the desk, with hands resting on its surface.

This caller must have been Miss Keys, for we have eliminated the others. Yet everyone agrees that her perforating machine was running all the while between 10.8 and 10.18.

It was, however, an *automatic* perforating-machine. It kept going of its own accord. Miss Keys only had to feed cards into it, 50 a minute.

Miss Keys started her machine at 10 a.m. Yet by 10.18, only 200 cards had been perforated. She was feeding cards into the machine for only four minutes. From 10.4 to 10.18, *the machine was stamping at nothing*.

What was Miss Keys doing during this time?

She said she heard the quarrel between Mr. File and Mr. Grossly. She heard Mr. File return to his own room. To do this, while her machine was running, she must have been listening at the door between her office and Mr. File's.

Why was she listening? Because she wanted to have a private interview with Mr. Grossly as soon as possible. She left her machine running, because she did not want anyone to know she was interviewing the manager.

The moment Mr. Grossly was left alone, she crept along the passage and into his office. The manager permitted her secretive entrance, because he regarded it as a visit from his new paramour. He made her sit on his desk, intimately.

No doubt she pleaded with him. Probably she alluded to the suspicions of John Fount, and her own unhappiness and fear. In all likelihood she begged the manager not to ruin her prospects further. Possibly, she delivered an ultimatum.

(Continued on next page)

The Story of My Life



By MIE

'The child is father to the man'
(Tenny—well never mind who it is)

I was a very shy and modest baby. I was so diffident that I wouldn't come to this world on my own initiative. A doctor and a midwife were hastily appointed hosts. They cordially but firmly, invited me to come. This joint invitation I could not refuse and so I came. But apparently they were not satisfied by my mere coming. They expected me to make a speech. Like many a hero, I was loth to blow my own trumpet. The doctor, however, was very keen on hearing my speech. When I hesitated, he gave me certain well-meant but painful encouragements. He threw cold water on me, then threw me into hot water (not the last time I fell into hot water) and slapped me on the back. This suasion I couldn't very well reject and so I set up a big howl. The doctor beamed and said, "You will write an autobiography some day, you youngster." The oldest retainer wept for joy. The youngest retainer went about with his best smile on his face and there was great joy.

The astrologer was hastily invited. He came, squatted down on a mat, deliberately chewed betel leaves

and arranged his small sea shells on a crossword-puzzle-cum-chessboard. Then he pondered chanting diverse intonations from the *shastras* and muttering various imprecations on the weather. This lasted for about half an hour. Everyone crowded round to hear the verdict. At last, after an elaborate and mighty prelude, he said that the stars had been very kind and that I was going to be a great man—a ruler of men. He received an unsatisfactory tip and under his breath remarking to himself that I was more likely to become a 'ruler' of wood, he left.

The village-priest was sent for. He came in his dirty silk, bringing some flowers and sandal paste which he bestowed indiscriminately on everybody. Then he stood before my father and gave him a very uneasy half hour by quoting Sanskrit hymns from the sacred texts—quoting badly, wrongly, defiantly. My father tried to silence him by offering the *dakshina* or the money gift, but he wouldn't stop. At last when he had run out of verses and breath, he stopped and blessed my father. Then he sent a telegraphic blessing to my mother and me, who were in another room. Then he blessed himself, and everybody, who unwarily ventured near him. Not satisfied, he invoked the gods to send us a few supplementary blessings and thus with blessings and splutterings, the priest left. He was also thinking hard thoughts of me on his way back, for he got only 4 as, whereas he expected 8.

By now people were trickling in to see the ruler of men in his lair. They took me in their arms, cuddled me, squeezed me, showered me with kisses, pinched me, shook me, slapped me and worst of all, began saying "Did ums," etc. Why didn't people realise that I could understand good English or Tamil? Why weren't they speaking intelligibly instead of jabbering in a *lingo*, which I didn't understand and they didn't either?

Then they dissected me. One said I had my father's nose; another that I had my mother's eyes. Thus they started apportioning me. The cynic of our family remarked that I was a big plagiarist, to have borrowed like that from so many; but what struck him most was that I had my grandfather's hair and teeth! At which they all laughed and fell to kissing me again. Even little girls came and had their share. They kissed me prettily, wonderingly, rather shyly, but enjoyably all the same. They are all of them grown up now and maybe, some of them have children of their own. I wonder whether they will care to repeat the caresses now! But if I suggest such a thing now, they will gather themselves up and say 'How dare you?' But I tell you I am far better-looking now than I was then. But now I am a man and then I was just a chunk of flesh, whom they used to call an angel. Angel indeed! I am no angel. They done me wrong.

WHO KILLED THE MANAGER?

It seems that the manager jeered at her. Anyhow, at 10.16 he said something which filled the girl with sudden desperation. With one movement of her arm, she picked up the paper-knife and plunged it into his heart. He died without a sound. He was 'stone dead' at 10.18.

Why should not the killing have taken place before 10.16? Because of the ringing of the bell. Miss Keys now realised that the stamping of her perforator was her *alibi*. The murder must be discovered as soon as possible, and she must be discovered feeding cards into her machine. She rang the bell as soon as possible after

(Continued from previous page)

the murder. The things she had to do took about two minutes.

She took her handkerchief, and wiped the hilt of the dagger. She wiped the desk, where her fingers might have rested. She wiped the door-handle. With her handkerchief over her fingers, she pressed the bell-button, so that Mr. File would come and discover the corpse at once. The instant the bell had rung, she crept down the passage into her own room. One minute later, when Mr. File told her to phone for the police, she was steadily feeding cards into the automatic perforator.

Letters of Private Joyfull

31. MILITARY MATRIMONY

Madras, 12th January, 1935.

DEAR MOTHER,

I am quite terrified to hear that Mary Robinson has been visiting you, and asking when I will leave the Army. Of course, Mary is a very nice girl, but I think it would be better to tell her that, if ever I leave the Army, I am going to become a monk.

Mind you, I admit that Mary would make a good farmer's wife. She has a light hand with the butter, and can make the cream rise, and is clever with poultry and farm-stock and accounts. But I want you to have the land for your lifetime, dear mother, and meanwhile I am going to stay in the Army and make a career. Of course, when I reached twenty-six years of age, the Army would allow me to have a wife in the Married Quarters, but I do not want to marry yet.

Some young fellows meet girls when they are abroad, and marry them; but as a rule it is not very successful. Even if they get on the Married Quarters Roll, the girls abroad are not cut out to be soldiers' wives. While, if they are not accepted for the Roll, they are simply left behind, when the Regiment leaves the country. The band plays a tune when the troop-ship casts off from the quay, and the tune is called, "The Girl I Left Behind Me."

In places abroad, girls seem to be brought up differently to what they are at home. They do not appear to know that they are ordinary females. A girl seems to think that she is very important and valuable, and not just another blonde. So they are not much good as wives, because they will not soil their hands with menial tasks. They just want to be ladies, and sit about and give orders, as if they were studded with diamonds.

I have met girls at different places abroad, but I have never had much to do with them, because of their airs.



Whenever she saw me in the distance, she blushed and hurried away.

At one place, Boggins and I went to an *At Home*. It was given by a young women's club, and one of the young women took charge of me. She was quite a homely young woman, and her teeth stuck out. She was dressed in very fashionable clothes, but the local tailor had got the style wrong. The young woman spoke as if she were a reigning beauty, but actually she was a stenographer. She said that really her people were gazetted officers, and she was a stenographer only for a pastime. I told her she need not be ashamed of her parents' means of livelihood, as long as she gained her own living honestly.

She next said that it was very interesting to talk to me, because hitherto she had never spoken to any one below the rank of Captain. I replied that I was interested too, because I had never before spoken to a stenographer of a lower class than a hundred and sixty words a minute.

I think she was surprised, because she asked if I knew many stenographers. I told her there were a hundred thousand of them in London; all smart, clever, and pretty. She asked if I were friendly with many, and I said, "No"; a fellow could not be bothered with people like stenographers, when there were so many better girls anxious to have a boy-friend.

The young woman seemed quite put out, and said, "Do you mean that a lady in an office is anxious to be the friend of a soldier?"

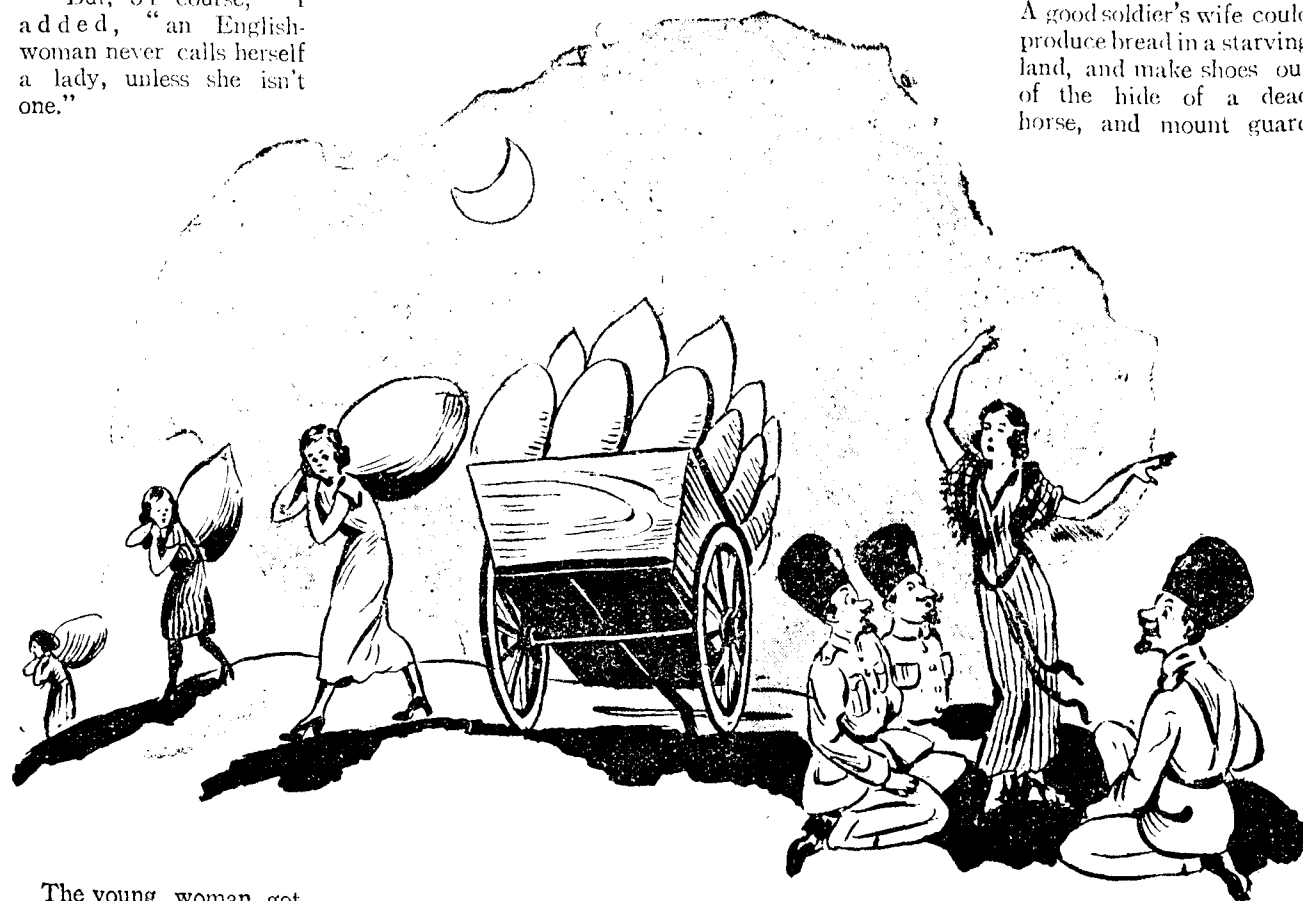


Boggins winked at me.....but I reproved him.....

"You bet!" I replied. In fact, a business-girl is only too glad to scrub floors and wash clothes for a man for the rest of her days, if only she is lucky enough to get one!

"But, of course," I added, "an English woman never calls herself a lady, unless she isn't one."

The soldiers' wives had a corner of the barrack-room curtained off for themselves, and they went everywhere that the Regiment did. They looked after the men, and tended the sick, and brought in the wounded. A good soldier's wife could produce bread in a starving land, and make shoes out of the hide of a dead horse, and mount guard



The young woman got up and flounced about, and said that she must be going now.

"Good-bye," I replied politely. I noticed afterwards, that whenever she saw me in the distance, she blushed and hurried away. Boggins winked at me, and began to whistle to himself. "Edie Was A Lady," but I reproved him, and said, one should always be kind, even to the most-misguided of God's creatures.

Girls at home like to marry a soldier, because, if he rises to a good rank, his wife can have a very comfortable home and a nice position. Most girls are willing to work hard and to be poor at first, because a soldier who is given permission to marry is sure to be a good man, who will get on. If he marries without permission, it is another story.

Things were not as comfortable in the early days of the Army. Many years ago, the rule was that eight men out of every hundred could be married. The wives had to do all the washing and mending for the troops, and in this way they were able to support themselves and their families. Their husbands could not support them, because a soldier's pay was only a penny a day. An agricultural labourer got only a penny a day also; but he was better off, because he could grow all his food, and keep livestock. Our old nursery-rhymes always talk about a husband going out to earn his penny a day.

Mrs. Murphy and her friends scrounged a sack of flour apiece.....and made off with them while the Frenchmen were not looking.

when her husband was ill, and fight back-to-back with him when surrounded by the enemy. Many

times the wives saved a battle by bringing up more ammunition; and many an exhausted soldier, left to die by the roadside, owed his life to the women of the regiment.

The soldiers' wives were very good scroungers. Scrounging is really the same as stealing, with the difference that scrounging is done under pressure of necessity—the necessity that knows no law. Even today, scrounging is still a necessity of warfare; but the soldiers have to scrounge for themselves.

Some of the soldiers' wives in the old days kept a record of their experiences, and their memoirs make very interesting reading. One of the most amusing of these female warriors was a Mrs. Murphy, whose husband was in Wellington's army in Spain. Originally, she was the wife of another soldier, but her first husband was killed at the crossing of the Ebro. The rule was that, if a soldier was killed in battle, his wife must marry one of his comrades the same day, as it would be impossible to have unattached women following the Army. So when the battle was over, Mrs. Murphy chose a fresh husband, and buried the old one and married the new one. As a rule, a soldier and his wife were very faithful, and they agreed beforehand whom she would marry in case of accidents.

At the battle of Vimera, the Colonel of the Regiment was severely wounded, and left on the field. Mrs. Murphy rescued him, and hid him in a farm-house, and tore up her under-clothes to bind his wounds, and scrounged a goat for food. At first, they lived on the goat's milk, but when some French soldiers came to live in the farm-house, they had to kill the goat and hide themselves in the attic. Mrs. Murphy used to creep out at night and scrounge the Frenchmen's bread. At last, she and the Colonel escaped through the French lines and rejoined the Regiment.

Mrs. Murphy presented her husband with a baby, which was born during the march from Salamanca. She would have been left behind to fall into the hands of the enemy; but the Colonel fought a rear-guard action until the baby was born, and then the mother and child continued the march on the Colonel's horse. In later years, this baby became a famous cavalry leader, and put up a monument to his mother in his native town.

Mrs. Murphy was in the retreat to Torres Vedras. Wellington had to reduce the country to a desert, and the soldiers were starving. Mrs. Murphy, however, noticed that the French still had some baggage-waggons, so she and some of the other wives wandered out to a French bivouac, and pretended to be country-girls. The French soldiers began to entertain them, and to drink wine, but while they were carousing, Mrs. Murphy and her friends scrounged a sack of flour apiece from the waggons, and made off with them while the Frenchmen were not looking.

Near the end of the retreat, the baggage-mules began to die of hunger, so Wellington had them all killed, and the soldiers ate them. Some of the mules were carrying the military treasure, which consisted of barrels of gold. Wellington always used to pay for anything which his army took, and so the inhabitants were friendly to him, and unfriendly to the French. As the Army marched along, Wellington had the barrels thrown down a cliff, so that they burst, and the gold was scattered all over the country, so that it would not fall intact into the hands of the French General.

Mrs. Murphy hung back until the Army had gone. Then she climbed down the cliff, and collected as much gold as she could carry. She fastened it in small packets underneath her clothes, and was so swollen and heavy that she could scarcely walk.

A lot of brigands were following the army, and some of them fell in with Mrs. Murphy. When she saw them approaching, she smeared her face with dirt, and pretended to be deaf and dumb. She seemed so poor and old and fat and ugly that the brigands did her no harm, but even gave her some bread, and advised her to make

herself scarce, because some of the other brigands would not be as particular as they were.

After all sorts of terrible adventures, Mrs. Murphy managed to stagger into Lisbon, just as the rearguard was embarking. She must have felt very happy at her success, because she had taken terrible risks and undergone fearful hardships; but now she was safe, and could go on the troop-ship to England, and buy her husband out of the Army, and be rich for the rest of her life.

Full of joy, Mrs. Murphy ran up the gang-plank towards the ship. But the gang-plank was slippery. Mrs. Murphy overbalanced, and fell into the sea. The soldiers could not save her, because she was so heavily loaded with gold that she sank like a stone. So, that was the end of Mrs. Murphy.

Nowadays, of course, a soldier's wife is not expected to be so hardy, but still, it is a good thing if she has some of the qualities of Mrs. Murphy. Even today, soldiers' wives have to live in wild places, and show enterprise and resource, and cope with strange conditions.

It is a great handicap if a soldier marries a girl who is silly or vain or useless. She has to be a good class of girl, who can work hard and manage well when her husband is poor, and yet be fitted to take her place in society when her husband has risen from the ranks.

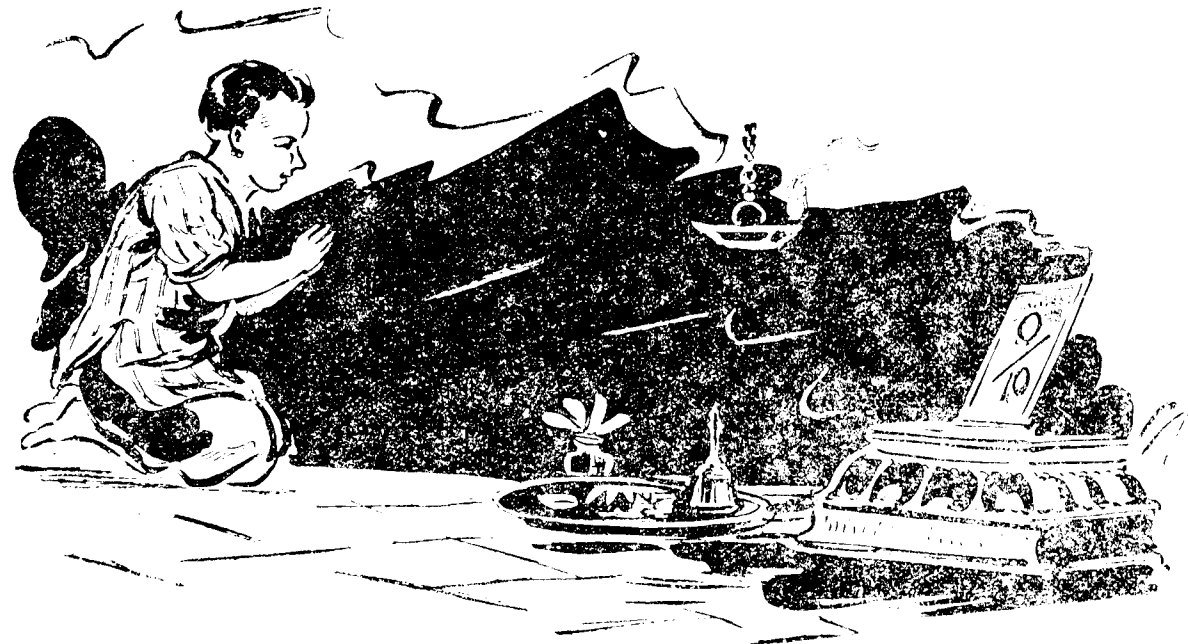
Your Loving Son,
OBEAH JOYFULL.

A Drunkard's Day-Dream



Water! Water! Everywhere!
But not a drop to drink.

VARADU'S ZERO = WORSHIP



By "TIRUMALAI NALLAN"

THE news spread like wild fire. People avoided one another's eyes. They of course talked conventional trifles and airy nothings; but everybody knew what all the rest were thinking. Varadu had obtained zero for the third time in four days.

The boy had been gravitating not slowly, but very surely, towards that circular point in his school-career. Rumour had been very busy, and hints and whispers of a deterioration had been in the atmosphere. Koma had darkly insinuated at the real state of affairs. Sambagam had observed an increase in the boy's appetite and had logically enough deduced that something was rotten in the state of class marks. Neighbour Anantachari had been unusually genial.

A very informal meeting of the members of the household was called 'to discuss the situation and suggest remedies.' I have the honour to state that, with reference to *etcetera*, and what not, I presided. In my opening remarks I said that the situation was serious and something ought to be done about it. They agreed enthusiastically.

Jana said that she was certain the teacher was partial to other boys and that I should speak to him about it. I ruled the suggestion out of order on the ground that her reason was as old as the hills, and that, even if the teacher was favouring other students at Varadu's expense, the only remedy was to send the man a bunch of bananas and some cocoanuts—a course, I firmly

pointed out, calculated to encourage unhealthy pedagogic appetites, and incidentally to deplete our budget allotment for *pansupari*.

Sambagam's contribution to the fund of suggestions was barbarous and consisted of a scheme of retribution on an elaborate scale. With one voice we turned down her proposal; and I appropriately remarked that I was not going to spank my dear boy every day, just because some mouldy, measly teacher had given him zero; and Sambagam might go and boil herself in *sambhar*, if she liked. She walked out in protest.

Aunt Koma sprung the surprise of the evening. "Varadu is a bright boy," she began and we listened with interest. "But he is a shy and nervous sort of child. I think the truth is that he feels overwhelmed in the presence of his teacher."

"You are quite right, Auntie," I said. "That is what I think myself."

"Yes, but what do you suggest now?" asked Jana.

"I am coming to that," said Aunt Koma. "We ought to prepare him for the school."

"I don't quite understand," I began.

"Wait. The thing to do now is to give him lessons at home in the evenings."

"Or mornings," I said, remembering my grandmother's dictum that the brain is brilliant in the mornings.

"But who is to teach him?" asked Jana.

"This person," said the malevolent Aunt Koma. I was angry. I was angry because she wanted to land me into trouble. And I was angry because she referred to me as 'this person'.

"Engaging a teacher means expense. Besides, the boy should be taught by a person, with whom he is familiar," concluded Koma.

"I will vacate the chair," I said in anger and poetry. For I was sitting on the floor and 'chair' was a figure of speech.

"You may, but you will occupy the tutor's chair or bench or stool or whatever it is," quoth Jana.

* * *

The next morning we began. I had made up my mind to employ my own methods to educate the boy. I would teach him philosophy and religion and science. I would teach him art and architecture. Even music. But the *Ramayana* to begin with.

When Varadu came into the room, I asked him to sit beside me. Sitting together inspires a feeling of confidence in a boy.

"Look at that on the shelf," I said. "What is it?"

"It is your turban."

"Bright fellow," I said, "there is actually a turban on that shelf. That doesn't belong there. It ought not to be there. But never mind; I was referring to the book on the shelf."

"But there are two books," said Varadu.

"Yes, but don't you see the other one is the Catalogue of All and Sundry Goods at the Flotsam Co. That is a book which doesn't matter. In fact it isn't a book. The book I meant is the one in red cover. Go and bring it here."

Varadu brought it.

"Look here, my boy, this is the *Ramayana*. Do you know what it means?" I asked.

"It means something very long," replied Varadu.

"No, it doesn't. It means the story of Rama, Sri Rama, or rather Sri Ramachandra. You have heard the story of Rama, haven't you?"

"Yes, Grandmother Koma tells me stories of Rama when I go to bed."

"It is a good thing that she chooses that hour. For Auntie's version of the *Ramayana* happens to be vastly different from that of Valmiki, in point of emphasis. According to Valmiki, Rama is the hero who carries out his duty in the face of everything. For example, his going to exile. For instance, well, so many other things. You will find all that in the *Ramayana*. The substance of my point is that Rama is the *Karmayogi*, *par excellence*. The *Ramayana* is the expression into action, and the vindication, of the principles of the *Bhagavad Gita*."

Varadu was studying his fingers and was obviously finding out that they were not very clean.

I said, "Listen, my dear Varadu. Your thoughts, of manicuring your fingers may be postponed for a time. I have given you Valmiki's version of the *Ramayana*. In a nutshell, of course. Well, now, what does Koma say?"

"She says that Rama killed Ravana," said Varadu, gratuitously answering my question.

"He did that. Aunt Koma is correct on that point. But incidentally, let me tell you I was not addressing the question to you. It is a rhetorical sort of question addressed to myself. Well, what does Koma say? She says that Rama performed many feats of physical prowess and daring; that he fought against great odds and won the fight; that he cut off some female monster's nose, etc. Well, now, that is putting the emphasis at the wrong place. Do you see?"

Varadu nodded. He did not appear convinced however. Probably he wanted to stand by Aunt Koma. The best thing was to give him the story of the *Ramayana* over again and correct Koma's version.

"Do you know who is Lakshmana?" I began with a question.

"Yes, he is Kuppu Rao's father," said Varadu promptly.

"You are thinking of Lakshmana Rao, my dear chap. Knowing Lakshmana Rao as I do, I do not think it is appropriate to recall him when we are engaged in a study of the *Ramayana*. But, let that go. Lakshmana is the brother of Rama."

I began to tell him the story of Rama and Sita from the beginning. When I reached the point at which King Dasaratha gives a feast to celebrate the birth of Rama, Varadu said he was feeling hungry.

That evening Varadu returned from school. We all made a rush at him and snatched his slate. The zero-mark was perfect. Probably the drawing master was asked to do it.

Spending only two hours on the study of the *Ramayana*, I could not finish it before the tenth day. In the meantime, Varadu had gone on acquiring zero marks regularly. On the tenth day I sent a bunch of bananas to Varadu's teacher. That evening Varadu's slate displayed three marks, ten being the maximum. The next morning Jana despatched two cocoanuts. The slate showed an increase of three marks in the evening. The next morning I sent some sugar-candy with a slip of paper on which I had written: "Make it nine." The man at the other end was obviously elated. He made it ten.

UNEMPLOYMENT, 2.

HERE we are!

We concluded the last discourse interrogatively, rather a clever way of ending a discourse.

Well, how to make religion feed us?

This wise.

Two of you get together and constitute yourself into a firm, not necessarily incorporated under the Indian Companies Act. Proceed to a place about three hundred miles from your town or village. Any place where you are absolutely unknown. Time your arrival at this place, wherever it is, to midnight. Just before dawn, one of you attain the 'altogether' i.e., a state of complete nudity, except for a length of stout cocoanut fibre rope round the waist and a sacred thread thrown across the shoulder treble the prevalent size. Don't ask me, why the rope and why the *yagnopaveetham*. They are part of the scheme. Of course, the rope-fellow must have a growth of beard at least sixty days old—the older the better, his hair all askew and matty and his anatomy liberally covered with primordial filth. If your beard is still a thing of the future, don't worry. Observe the other directions. Your disciple—the other fellow, the other half of the firm—need not attain the 'altogether'. However, his clothes must be pretty rotten and that 'holey' indigent beggar wouldn't look at for love or money, and his general condition humilio-hungry doggish. Before the world and his wife wake up, choose a multiramous banyan tree on the precincts of the town (there are always multiramous banyan trees outside our towns) and sit down under it like Buster Keaton in the nude. Your disciple will sit just five feet away from you, his whole being radiating reverence. Don't talk, don't smile, look as abysmally idiotic as you can. The slightest spark of intelligence in your eyes would be fatal. Flies and other vermin would want to dine off your filth. Don't flick them away. The other fellow will attend to that, aspiring as he is, for initiation. If sitting for hours on end is rather a bit of a strain to your vertebrae and the lower extremities, lie down once in a while at full length, in a way as if you do not know what you are

doing. If you want to relieve your overwrought feelings, you may indulge in a bit of cursing, choosing as your target the thing you most detest in life, but do the cursing silently, moving the lips ever so slightly.

The first representative of the proletariat that passes your way stops at sight of this *scenario* and gingerly approaching the other fellow asks him in a hushed voice what the matter is. The other fellow doesn't reply anything. He places his index finger on the tip of his own nose, which, properly interpreted, means, "Silence! You inquisitive son of a cocoanut palm. You are in the presence of Divinity! Go to blazes!"



It is a commonplace of human psychology that the less one's curiosity is satisfied the more it grows, gains a firmer hold on one, gnaws and tantalises one's soul. So the son of a cocoanut palm forgets why he started from home, goes on staring at Divinity and finally squats down.

Presently another son of a cocoanut palm chances by and receiving no other explanation except the index finger and nose apex of the other fellow, sits down, too, expectantly, reverently.

Before the world is two more hours old, Nude Divinity and the other fellow will have been encircled by a seething mass of about five-hundred specimens of silent, prayerful humanity.

Now the other fellow shall give up the index-finger-nose-tip dodge. By dribblets the information should percolate into the skull of the mob *via* the other fellow, that he is following Divinity for the last ten years; that not one word passed through Divinity's lips all this time; that Master sometimes at dead of night divides Himself into three parts, the head in one corner, the trunk in another corner and the legs in a third corner, a strange celestial *nimbus* playing around the dismembered parts of the body; that Divinity does not eat anything, drink anything, except on very rare occasions and that too only out of the hands of the other fellow.

The word goes round the town, with the elemental force of the south-west monsoon at its intensest, that a *Digambar Mahatma* has

blessed the town with his august presence. The hundreds swell into thousands. Before another hour is out, a beautiful dream of a *parashala* (hermitage) springs up by Divinity's side, with green boughs as props, greener twigs as rafters, greenest mango leaves and the flowers of the season in riotous colours adorning the entrance, and cocoanut branches, fresh cut, covering the sides,—a thing of joy and beauty, fit for *Vyasa Maharshi* to live in, the whole structure reared by the godly hands of the godliest in the congregation.



The local Zamindar comes.

One elderly widow in the mob relates to an awed audience of about fifty other widows that she dreamt of the advent of the *Digambar Swami* last *dwadasi* night. A *punditji*, with the lower part of his ears elongated with the weight of stone-studded gold *kundalams* and a Kashmere shawl thrown rakishly athwart his sable thorax, makes himself the centre of a hundred gaping lay sinners and relates to them, between liberal pinches of snuff, that he saw this *Digambarji* on the slopes of Mount Kailas, half his body in an anthill, twenty years ago, when he went there on pilgrimage. A local, asthmatic *sadhu*, financially a failure, relates to another ring of rapt auditors that, from certain signs which he alone can recognise on the body of the *Digambar Swami*, he must be at the lowest, three-hundred and seventy-five years old, or 'Gentlemen, I am a Hell-bent *papi*.'

The elderly widow, the *punditji* with the *kundalams* and Kashmere shawl, and the asthmatic *sadhu* are looked at by lesser mortals with heavenly envy. The stock of these chosen three is rocketed up to unheard of heights.

The crowds go on swelling. At the wish of the other fellow, the surging, swaying mob, is cleared by self-appointed, amateur traffic policemen to a distance of thirty feet all round the *parashala*. A strong, crude fence springs up in no time. Devotees are let in, in ones and twos.

Bhajana parties by the score invade the sacred spot, one party getting black in the face in a commendable endeavour to drown the frenzied yells of the other parties. A devotee of the God of Simhachalam produces a couple of gigantic, ghee-fed, burning torches with small tinkling bells attached to their iron sockets, and dances a pre-Aryan dance, woefully singeing the hair on his broad chest, some twenty-five of his friends beating time with brass cymbals, big as tennis bats. A platoon of *pundits*, deeply learned in ancient lore, get together, tie their *kanduas* round their ample waists with a picturesque knot over their navels, form themselves into a circle clasping one another's hands and looking their holiest, repeat *Rigvedic* hymns in a *yajnic* chant.

Offerings to Nude Divinity commence pouring in—fruit offerings, cash offerings. A great temptation seizes the Master to grab the coins, white and brown, and to devour an assortment of fruit. It simply shouldn't be done. Every devotee touches Divinity's feet with reverent hands, lifts off a little dust from the Divine soles and places the sacred *sripadarenu* on his or her forehead.

Sterile ladies who have made a round of all the Gods and Goddesses of Hindustan with their heart's consuming desire still in the womb of doubtful future, rush to *Digambarji's* presence and in a fit of progeny-

desiring frenzy, bare their necks of all their gold trappings and place them at the Feet of the Master. The Master vouchsafes no answer to their mute appeal. So the other fellow lifts the left hand of *Swamiji*, as gingerly as if it were Sakyamuni's tooth, and places it on the childless ladies' heads—a benediction by proxy. The ladies kiss the sacred Feet and turn homeward to their husbands.

Young unmarried ladies, whose immediate objective is not babies, but husbands rich as Croesus, strong as Hercules and beautiful as Adonis, flock to the Presence in their hundreds, resplendant in their silks and sleeveless blouses, cheeks tingling with maidenly modesty, and empty the contents of their home-savings boxes at the Yogi's feet.

The local zamindar comes along with a cart-load of luscious fruit and tempting Bombay and Bengal sweets in silver trays. With the cool authority his money bags invest him with, he swaggers to the August Presence in that gait peculiar to the *zamindars* and wants to hold high converse with the Mystic. The Mystic indeed has eyes, but they do not take cognisance of the *zamindar*. Sorry fool! He knows not that money bags are anathema in Heaven, that Divinity makes no distinction between *zamindars* and *zingas*. The *zamindar* looks crestfallen and appeals mutely to the other fellow. The other fellow negatively nods his head and says "tut, tut." The *zamindar* produces from somewhere a handful of sovereigns, puts them on a neat pile of young betel leaves with a ripe banana to keep the sovereigns company and holding his right elbow with his left palm, he places the yellow-green offering accompanied by a smile at the *Digambar Mahatma's* feet. The Mahatma is busy with quiescent, half-closed eyes, communing with the Infinite. The other fellow takes pity, as who does not, at sight of gold? He peels the banana, waits for an opportunity and shoves it between the lips of the Master. Divinity trembles with temptation. Banana so near, yet so far. With a supreme effort He says to Himself

sit down like Buster Keaton in the nude.

"Devil, get thee behind me." He recovers his balance, bites the banana and spits the bitten piece, not earthward, but up skyward. The zamindar gathers the pieces his hands all a-tremble and goes home triumphantly to the *zamindarini*. The populace cheer him on.

The shades of eventide lengthen, merging presently into a glorious, mystic night. The other fellow stands up and raises his hand. The incessant babble of a thousand tongues melts into an awe-inspiring silence. "Bhaktas, the Master will now retire into the *parashala*. We will resume our *bhajan*s and prayers at His Feet tomorrow. Peace be on you" This announcement is received with a deafening shout. *Digambarji* is conducted by the other fellow into the *parashala*. The *chela*'s injunction notwithstanding, the *bhajan*s, the *kalakshepans*, the *vedic* hymns and the torches continue far into the night.

Inside the *parashala*, safe from prying eyes, far from busy ears, the firm get a move on with the eatables, piled up like hills. The residue, on which a few hundreds could feast to repletion, is handed over to the imitation policemen for distribution amongst the clamouring mob as consecrated *prasad*.

Another day dawns. The crowds, with offerings votive and non-votive, surge around dying for *darsan*. The hours crawl by—six, seven, eight, nine, ten, eleven, Noon! Lo! The *Digambar* Mahatma walks out of the *parashala* and stands at the threshold, looking blankly at the eastern sky till two p.m. Then He lies down supine.

Before retiring for the second night, the other fellow will again hold up his hand commanding the immediate, silent attention of the perspiring *bhaktas*, "Ho, Brothers!" he will say, "Bits of Universal Soul! I saw a vision last night in which the Master directs me to scatter to the poor all the *kanukas* made to him." This bit of unexpected news is greeted with howls of divine joy. An *ad hoc* committee is formed on the spot with power to co-opt, the wealthier of the local merchants constituting the committee. A lively discussion ensues about the christening of the committee. Finally it is called the *Gomathpur Digambar Mahatma Annadana Samajam*. Cash and gold offerings, amounting to about one third of the previous day's takings, are handed over by the other fellow to the *Samajam* with due ceremony.

A third day dawns. The sun runs its diurnal race almost to the ridge of the Western horizon. Still the *parashala* holds the Holy Body of the *Digambar* Mahatma. The pilgrims send up fervent prayers for a sight of the Mystic. An old lady, bent with the weight of age, too poor to ride in a bullock cart, tramps a weary twenty miles from her village with nothing

but a few basil leaves to offer to the *Swamiji*. The crowds give way before the ancient dame. She enters the enclosure, with the basil leaves held in the cup of her palms, and stands a few feet before the *parashala*, mumbling a silent prayer. A deathly silence falls on the encircling mass of humanity. Heralded by the other fellow, Mahatma *Digambar* comes out of the *parashala*. The devout old lady advances with unsteady steps. The Yogi looks at her with a baby stare. Wonder of wonders! He lifts a basil leaf from the old lady's trembling palms and places it in his mouth. The crowds send up to the heavens an unearthly yell, resembling an ocean in labour. The Mahatma goes back into *samadhi*. The old lady now becomes the cynosure of the ecstatic mob. The lady herself is choking with emotion and wants to give up her ghost there and then.

So the days pass on. District judges whose slumbers are disturbed by the fearful thought of their having possibly sent a few alleged miscreants wrongly to the gallows; prosperous lawyers wallowing in wealth built on the shifting foundations of thumping lies and capitalists, grown rich overnight, come to the *parashala* with cash to wash their consciences at the divine *ghat* of the Master's Feet.

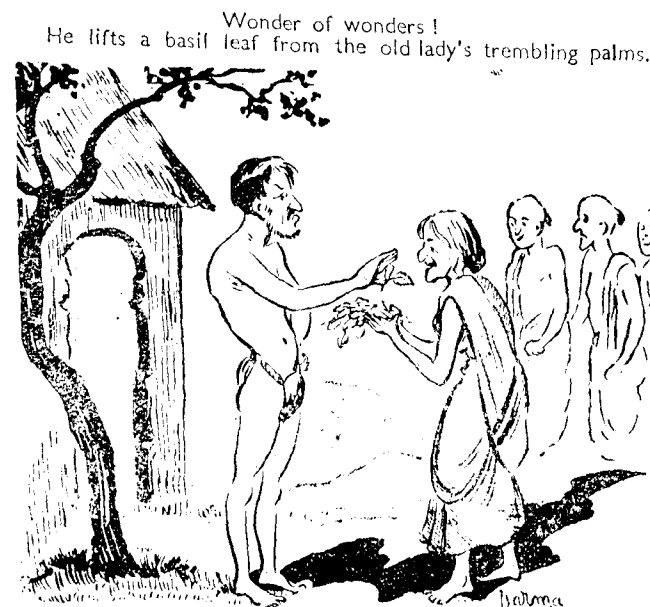
Every three or four days, the other fellow makes over to the *Gomathpur Digambar Mahatma Annadana Samajam* a small portion of the loot. (This must be done. Don't be too greedy.)

On the 27th day, the other fellow unfolds another vision of his, in which the Master evinces a desire to visit the Vindhya forest. Consternation among the *Gomathpуреans*! Let a few days tick by. On the 32nd day, at a time when it is darkest before dawn, Mahatma *Digambar* and his partner pass into the Unknown, otherwise any place outside a hundred mile limit, with the gold and cash.

Pitch your tent in another distant part of the country and work up the same agenda. Within a couple of years your firm will have made the biggest pile ever made by a *burra sahib* of Clive Street. Wind up the firm by voluntary liquidation. Go sixty-four, sixty to Divinity and forty to the other fellow. Live the rest of your natural lives like the Sybarites of Ancient Greece.

Another two of you.....(Say, put the lid on yourself. You can't have the whole Magazine for yourself—Ed.) Oh, all right. One word more, Mr. Editor, and I have done. I have got a few more corking ideas pregnant with easy money inside them. Just hold your souls in patience. We shall meet anon.

Meanwhile, if any of you want to have any doubts cleared about the *modus operandi* or want any other advice, please write to me c/o The Editor, enclosing two one anna stamps to cover postage etc. You see, I am a poor, unemployed devil myself.



Wonder of wonders!
He lifts a basil leaf from the old lady's trembling palms.

THE tear-drops, that fell from Vijaya's eyes came not in a gush; for they did not accompany any outburst of extreme emotion. They came slowly from the deep springs of her thoughts, beginning in a very modest way, gradually gathering strength and falling like a leaf in autumn, mellow and



have dinned this into my husband's ears umpteen times and he did not seem even once to disagree with me. But, when the time for action comes, all his courage seems to ooze out, God alone knows where.

It is no doubt true that, in theory, the man who is responsible for my sister-in-law's

dignified. But, on that score, do not regard them as idle tears; for they were not idle. On the contrary, they were full of import. Would you therefore mind listening to them? This is the story they tell:—

Men have no feelings; that is why I believe they play with other people's feelings; especially their wives'. Am I not a case in point? It is well nigh twenty years since my husband tied the *thali* round my neck. To the best of my recollection, I have not displeased him in any material particular. I have borne him six children—as many sons as daughters—and the eldest girl is to be given in marriage next year. I have shared with him all the vicissitudes of fortune; and you know what a toilsome trail it is from a petty clerk's wife to a respectable officer's wife. During all these years, I have not nagged him or worried him on my selfish behalf to buy me costly *sarees* or diamond ear-rings or *klavar* nose-ring, or the thousand and one minor vanities that every woman hankers after. Yet, what is the reward of it all? I seem to have no more hold on him than a bagatelle, when it comes to deciding an issue between me and his own people.

Let it be first understood that I have nothing disparaging to say, and even if I happen to have anything, I would think not less than twice before saying it, against my sister-in-law, if only she could stay away from me and mine. But, of one thing I am firmly convinced, and that is, that together we cannot hit it off and it is no good trying to blink this cardinal fact. I

TALE OF A TEAR

BY R. JAGANNATHAN.

peace and good conduct is my brother-in-law. Against him no speech. He has been with us since his boyhood; all who know him will agree that he is a very earnest lad, who has worked his way. We had all been living harmoniously till his marriage. His wife's arrival into our fold entirely changed the aspect of things. She never knew our early struggles and privations. She was a pet, a spoiled child of her parents, and came to us with all sorts of high-falutin' notions. To tell you frankly, she did not pull her weight, nor did she evince the least desire to do so. If that were all, I wouldn't have minded. She even began to patronise and boss over me. I could hardly be expected to swallow this.

We belong, as it were, to two distinct civilisations. I belong to the turmeric school of toilette; she to the Pond's cream school. I wear my *sari* in the *sanatanist* and sanctimonious *madisar* style; she in the new-fangled *mambazha-kattu* mode. I part my hair in the middle of my head; she at the third of the arc. I regard cooking as a thing of art; she sniffs at it as a lowly occupation. Work is my pride; vanity is her pursuit. I have six children; she has none.

Is there any chance for us to pull together? But my husband does not realise it. To him his brother is the self-same young lad, whom his father consigned to his charge just before closing his eyes ages ago. Age has not dimmed that death-bed vision. And he regards my

(Continued on page 39)

THE EYE OF SIVA

By S. K.

66 **H**ULLO! Harry, did you read Miss Aristicia Stirup's *The Real India*?" asked James Durer, as he entered the smoking room of the Travellers' Club.

"Silly stuff!" replied Henry Stimson, laying down his *Evening News*.

"Sensational book, that. Beats Miss Mayo to a frazzle. Horrible people these Hindus must be. Beasts, not humans. I feel sick, when I think of all those abominations."

"Chuck it, Jimmy," said Stimson. "Rot, d...d blasted rot. I know. Hindus are as human as ourselves, neither more, nor less. There's no need for you to turn up your elegant nose."

"Speaking from experience," began Colonel Battington, D.S.O., "I should class the Hindus very low indeed. Superstitious, filthy, addicted to the most obscene rites, but cunning and subtle. Their one saving virtue is the wealth that they have hoarded up from time immemorial....."

"Now there, Colonel," interrupted Stimson, "you are one of the victims of the biggest frauds in the world."



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"What do you mean, Stimson?" asked the Colonel, with a touch of annoyance.

"I have also had some experience of India," explained Stimson, "and I found the Hindus to be quite different from what we were all led to suppose. Very decent fellows, in fact. And mark this, Colonel. Your knowledge of the people is confined to Kipling and cantonnments and *chaprassies*. But I have come into touch with the real India."

"Indeed!" said the Colonel with restrained scepticism.

"Just so," went on Stimson. "Cart-loads of lies are spread about India down here. There must be a reason behind it, I thought. It couldn't all be sheer stupidity or ignorance. We have known India for three hundred years, and that is time enough to blow all the lies into the stratosphere."

"I have served in India for thirty years," stated the Colonel solemnly. "I know the country from Peshawar to Trichy, and from Quetta to Mandalay. You perhaps 'did' India in six weeks. Yet you go on making impossible assertions without the slightest attempt at proving them."

"That's neatly put," said Durer. "What do you say to this, Harry?"

"You haven't listened to me fully," complained Stimson. "As I was saying, there must be a reason for the circulation of all these lies. I am satisfied that there is a racket behind it all, a world-wide business thriving on these lies."

"Explain yourself," said the Colonel sharply.

"Miss Aristicia Stirup never stirred out from her apartment-house in whatever London suburb it is, to write this book. She's been paid by the chaps, who run this graft, to fill her book with lies of all kinds, from stories to statistics."

"You haven't made yourself clear at all," said Durer. "You are making a number of wild statements, one after another. What's this graft of which you are speaking? Why do you question the integrity of Miss Stirup? How do you—"

"Enough!" exclaimed Stimson smiling. "Your cross-examination gives me the headache, Jimmy. Remember, I am not a witness in the box. My theory has a proof, but that's in the form of a story. Somewhat autobiographical."

"Let's hear it," said Durer.



Huge idol standing, fearful of face, and form.

Even the Colonel, who was fingering his *Morning Post* all the while, laid it down to listen to Stimson.

"It's like this," he began, sending a long wreath of smoke circling up to the ceiling:—

I went to India for the first time in 1920. Business trip to Calcutta. I was then chockfull of these lies. Listened on board to the story about the Prince, who said, that not a rupee nor a virgin would be left in India 24 hours after the British gave up control. I fell in with an American millionaire chap on the voyage. Name of Morton. Not yet quite forty. Looked shrewd, though I found out later there was a kink in his brain. He was making a round-the-world trip for the fun of it. He promised to meet me at Calcutta, when we parted at Bombay. And sure enough, he called on me a fortnight later. I showed him round the city, and one night took him to Fontanelli's, the famous Italian restaurant.

A young fellow was watching us from a neighbouring table. After a time—perhaps he was listening to our conversation—he came to us and quite brazenly introduced himself to us as Grenville, the journalist.

"My profession makes me an outcast in the European society here," he laughed. "But that has its advantages as well as its disadvantages. I needn't stand on the formality of an introduction. You seem new to the

place, and I can help you in seeing around etc., if you want me. And in return you may give me your impressions of India, to be used as I think fit."

"I don't think he said all this at once, but that was the gist of his talk. We became quite friendly in a few minutes. A capital *raconteur*, that chap. The stories he told! I soon found out Morton was a romantic sort of chap, except where stocks and shares were concerned. Absurdly romantic. That was the kink in his brain. One day he spoke about a novel that he had read—*Eyes of Kali* or some such stuff by Percival Pointer."

"Must be a ripping yarn," said the Colonel. "I have read Pointer's works, though not this story. I suppose it's all about the wretched idolatry of your friends, the Hindus?"

"I too read it," Stimson continued, "but much later. The usual rot about an ancient idol with priceless gems for eyes. Adventurous Englishman steals them and is pursued by vindictive priests. In between is thrown a spicy morsel about an English damsel, who is about to be immolated at Kali's altar. Saved of course by the adventurous thief at the eleventh hour. And the novel ends with the sound of wedding-bells."

Morton liked that kind of stuff. And what's more, he wanted to live it too. Grenville cautiously admitted that he knew some things like that happening in real life. Morton pressed him. Finally he admitted that he could introduce us to a Bengali, who might lead us on to adventure with a big A.

We met Chatterjee at Fontanelli's three days later. A most impressive figure. Oldish and patriarchal. Broad forehead, suggesting dignity and wisdom. Calm, collected eyes, that seemed to look on life with a condescending interest. Dressed in flowing Bengali robes. Spoke perfect but stilted English, like a character from a mid-Victorian novel. With his dignity and his poly-syllabic pedantry, he appeared a huge joke to Morton, who would often provoke him by addressing him as Tatterjee.

We talked of many things, from ships to sealing-wax and from cabbages to kings. Slowly but steadily, Grenville tried to put on the agenda the main object of our meeting. Chatterjee fenced and parried and talked of other things. At last Morton could endure it no longer.

"I am a blunt American," he burst out, "and can't stand this nonsense. What's your price for showing us your Devil's temple?"

Chatterjee looked shocked. Like a father discovering a child at his mischief.

"My dear sir," he protested with a raised eye-brow, "whatever do you mean? And why do you set about insulting my religion?"

His eyes spoke even more eloquently. They seemed to hint that a civilised person, like Chatterjee, could

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The expedition started within a week. Chatterjee took us by devious routes into what we thought was the heart of a jungle. Tall trees grew all around, and it was dark there even in the tropical noon. Birds and insects sang and chirruped and trees and bushes rustled in the breeze. In the distance could be heard the dim sound of a mighty river coursing on its way. Suddenly we came on a ruined temple in the last stage of dilapidation and decay. Plants and shrubs grew wild in the crevices in the walls, and the accumulated dirt of centuries carpeted the floor, which was inter-grown with jungle grass and rank under-growth. The interior of the temple was darker still and we could find our way only with the help of a couple of electric torch-lights. And what a stink greeted us! Something dashed past Morton's forehead in that Cimmerian darkness, and he almost shrieked.

Past spacious halls and corridors, we marched into the *sanctum sanctorum*. A small room, where darkness took visible shape before our eyes. Not a window, not a crevice in the wall through which light could peep in. And the air was suffocating.

Stimson paused and the Colonel hastily cut in.
 "How does it prove your point, Stimson?" he asked.
 "It proves only that there are unbelieving rogues in

"But you haven't listened to the whole story yet," answered Stimson. "Grenville asked us to keep the matter close, and actually hustled Morton out of India within a week. A couple of months later, after I had returned to England, I received a letter from him. That huge diamond was paste! Chatterjee very wisely didn't want a share in the loot, the clever rogue!"

"Well done, Jimmy," laughed Stimson. "Complainant under cross-fire. Barrister Durer in brilliant form. But my story has a sequel. Last year I went again to Calcutta and supped at Fontanelli's. Grenville, as before, forced himself on me, though he didn't recognise me. We talked on the phenomenal gold-exports from India. Tactfully Grenville referred to the old stories, which pictured India as an El Dorado, and spoke of hidden wealth in ancient idols. Suddenly I asked:

'Sorry, if we have met before,' he remarked blandly. 'But you can't do anything in the matter.'

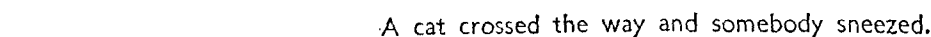
'You believe in a lot of infernal lies about India,' he told me—'What is the harm of paying for the luxury of your faith? Superiority complexes are expensive things!'

"It proves only," flared up the Colonel, "that a credulous millionaire can be deceived by a pair of cut-throat rascals."

"That's easily done," smiled Stimson. "Did you read what she says about the glorious sunset on the Madras beach, Colonel?"

"That's all right, Colonel," interrupted Stimson. "But do you exactly remember what she says? She describes the sun sinking slowly into the sea. But the sea lies to the east of Madras! I'll bet a hundred pounds that she never travelled outside England. And why should she gather up all these lies, if not to give a handle to men like Grenville and Chatterjee?"

"Shut up, Jimmy," commanded Stimson, taking up his paper again. "You lawyer chaps can never be satisfied."



But the auspicious day was always a-coming and never actually came. Once I almost fixed it. It was a Sunday, and everything was in order. It was the off-day for me. My friend, Mr. Gubby, was also free. But the fates did not permit it, and on the Saturday night, Mrs. Gubby who was to have formed the fourth of our party suddenly took ill, and Mr. Gubby had to change his mind.

Personally, I am ashamed to admit any belief in superstitions. They are foolish. And yet from what I have heard, read and seen of them, I am not inclined to burn my fingers in testing them.

not want to miss her visit to the temple, she returned home, sat on the verandah for a while and then proceeded to her destination. So far everything went on all right, and she reached the temple safely and performed the worship. On her return, however, she stepped unwarily on a plantain peel and measured her length on the stony road, spraining her ankle and bruising herself badly.

She got all right after a week, of course, and always used to say that the gods in heaven took her piety into consideration and saved her from a fatal accident. I have got my own opinion on the matter, however, and think it was not the gods but my rank misfortune that saved her. Though I do not wish it, her death would have left me about ten thousand rupees which I need very badly, and I am not yet certain when I am going to get it.

To return to the picnic, however. As I have already stated, though I am not exactly superstitious, I am not also foolish enough to tempt misfortune, and so when we found a cat crossing our path, I thought it wise to put off the picnic to a later date.

But that picnic turned out to be the plague for me. Every day, when there was nothing else to talk about, Shanta made a habit of reverting to it, and asking me ominously whether there was going to be any picnic or not.

This was truly maddening. There is nothing in a picnic that you don't find at home. And the only

attraction is, the fields and the open air or the sea. And if you look at it reasonably, you might find all the advantages on the lawn by your house. One might have a dip in the local cattle-pond with as much satisfaction as one can derive from a sea-bath. But women, when they get a notion into their blessed heads, will stick to it with a disgusting pertinacity. And though I had offered a visit to the pictures, a new *saree* and many other pleasing substitutes, Shanta was determined to see the picnic through. And so, at last, it had to be, and preparations were started for it, as if it were a marriage ceremony.

The venue for the event was fixed by Mr. Gubby. He said it was a picturesque place on the outskirts of a forest, with a stream passing by. The description which he gave of it floated great poetic visions before my eyes. Shanta remarked, it was simply splendid. But there was the difficulty of reaching the place. By the shortest route, it was fifty miles distant.

"Why not find a nearer place?" I suggested.

"What's the good?" said Mr. Gubby. "You cannot find the same scenic grandeur everywhere."

"Then how are we going there?"

Mr. Gubby said something of a car he was going to buy. It was a second-hand seven-seater which he had bargained for at a cheap price.

* * *

The fateful day dawned at last after weeks of decisions, indecisions and alterations. Shanta was up early. I don't think she got a wink of sleep thinking of how she was going to have a good time.

The previous evening, I had decided to make some purchases of sweet-meats and eatables. But the rest of the party thought it was against the picnic spirit, and said we should leave these matters to Nature and our resourcefulness. Mr. Gubby, moreover, was a hunting enthusiast and had recently secured a gun. So, evidently, he was thinking of a brace of partridges or wild fowl and perhaps of fresh fish, too, from the stream. Though, how he was going to have the latter—whether by shooting or angling I had no idea.

However, to come to the main topic, Mr. and Mrs. Gubby came in their car by sun-rise. The top of the car was covered with a collapsible tent, some chairs and a boxful of odds and ends. My wife, a thoughtful soul, had taken a basketful of eggs, and a brand new Primus stove, to speed up cooking. For myself, I thought precaution the better part of wisdom and provided myself

surreptitiously with a pocketful of sandwiches and some biscuits. And by eight o'clock, all things and ourselves deposited in the car, and Mr. Gubby at the wheel, we set off.

I must here give credit to Mr. Gubby for his expert handling of the car for at least ten miles. And then, there was a sudden end to our progress. We could not ascertain the reason at first, and there in the middle of the road, far away from any where, we were stranded with that load of a car on our hands.

Mr. Gubby, though inwardly shocked, put on a light expression, took off his coat, rolled up his shirt sleeves, and like the expert mechanic you see in the pictures, set to work on the machine. For nearly half an hour, he did nothing but open the machine, put it shut, then reopen it, have a look at it from every possible angle, then squint at it and so on. And he might have gone on with that for ages, but a lorry meanwhile came from behind, and the driver, an uncouth man, began to greet us with plenty of vocal explosives, which made poor Mr. Gubby boil with rage. We might have had some amateur boxing, had not Shanta stepped in and tackled the driver in her own inimitable way. This not only cooled the man, but he volunteered to put our car to rights and having given it a good look, said it was suffering from nothing more serious than a thirst for petrol!

Poor Mr. Gubby! He cursed himself for not discovering this before and went to look for the tin of petrol and found to

his chagrin a can of water lying in its place. It was his own fault, of course. In his hurry, he had substituted water for the petrol and he went pink and black with suppressed rage.

The next petrol-station was two miles off and as Mr. Gubby was mainly to blame for this misfortune, he had to leg it to and fro with the can. And so, by the time we got going again, it was mid-day, with the hot tropical sun blazing over-head.

To cut a long story short, we reached the place by two in the noon, feeling famished and exhausted. True to our programme, we thought of pitching the tent, but the ladies, the more practical ones of the party, thought it would be much wiser to have some fresh tea and eggs. So, the stove was taken out, but the dashed thing would not burn in the midst of a whirl of winds. A plain jungle-fire was, therefore, clearly indicated and was set going, after a couple of match boxes had been emptied.

Then, came the question of water. The stream which Mr. Gubby had talked of in superlative poetry

turned out to be a muddy pool. The nearest village was a mile off. So, we decided to filter the muddy water with a thick layer of cloth. The colour of it could not be filtered out, however, but the difference was not discernible in the tea, and it passed off.

With the hot tea warming his inside, Mr. Gubby waxed eloquent on out-door life, and we set up the tent by four o'clock. Preparations for lunch took an inordinately long time, and it was then that we appreciated the difficulties of the culinary art and realised what a lot of things was needed to make our meal. To get those trifles that we had neglected to bring with us, we had to purchase from the village grocer at prices bordering on the fabulous.

Mr. Gubby, who had gone with his gun to shoot wild fowl, found those creatures absent. Itching, however, to shoot something, he shot a hen in a field, thinking it was nobody's property, but its owner happened to be taking his afternoon nap under a tree. Awakened by the report, he demanded an explanation, as well as damages, from the perplexed hunter.

As there was very little of the day still at our disposal, we had to give up angling, sight-seeing and other poetic

pastimes and hurry on with the prosaic lunch, which, when served, consisted of eggs burnt to cinders, tea without milk (the milk having trickled out of the bottle on the journey), and a few pieces of biscuits, the major portion of them having gone with Mr. Gubby, in his pockets, when he went a-hunting; and as there was no time or materials to cook the hen he had killed, we decided to raise the tent and return home for a late dinner with all possible despatch.

Meanwhile, the village folk having been apprised by somebody of our presence, came to see what kind of queer creatures we must be, and one of them must have struck a nail or something in the back tyre of our flivver, which fact, we discovered only when we started on our return journey.

The result was that we had to spend half the night fitting a new tyre in, and when we reached home, a new day had dawned upon four hungry persons, who had sallied forth the previous day in such high spirits and expectations.

To tell the truth, I was not sorry for the experience. It has cooled the ardour of Shanta for out-door life, and she will not be forcing a picnic on me in a hurry next time.

TALE OF A TEAR—(Continued from page 33)

sister-in-law as an inexperienced little thing, who should not be taken too seriously. I am quite willing to admit that all this is good philosophy, albeit somewhat cheap; but my point is why should I be a jackass for ever and brook her impertinences and contrariness?

A happy chance offered itself, when my husband was temporarily transferred to another station. He said he would come back after a few months and went alone. After his departure, I went to my mother's house for a change. On my return, I avoided my sister-in-law, took another house and set up a separate establishment with my children and awaited my husband's return. My brother-in-law came to me many a time and implored me to break off the establishment and live with him and his wife as before. I took courage and told him in so many words that we seemed to keep better harmony apart and that there was no need to disturb it.

But yesterday my husband came on a brief holiday and told me that he would be posted back to this place in a few month's time. I explained to him the merits of my arrangement and he nodded assent—with mental reservations, I am now led to suppose. He went away by the evening train today and I had reckoned that my Waterloo was won without much of arms. But my brother, who went to the station to see him off, has come

back with a different story. He is worth hearing again:

"Well, sister, Baby and I (Baby is the pet-name of my brother-in-law) were with him. Baby looked very miserable from the start and was continually imploring him to live together on coming back. He, after a thought or two, said:

'If you can settle the matter with your *madhini*, I have not the least objection.'

'I have spoken to her many times, but she won't listen to me,' despaired Baby.

Then they kept on talking for some time, but so far as I could see, no conclusion was reached. I thought you had won. But, fancy my surprise, when just before the train was to leave, he told me:

'Tell your sister that I want her to break off the separate establishment and go and live in Baby's house.'

What am I to call my husband's mind? Isn't it made of wool?

* * * *

In the meantime, another pearl had grown into shape and rolled down from Vijaya's eyes.

Keep this copy of The Merry Magazine.

It may bring you a Prize.

BONKS MEETS PORTMANTEAU

BY
H. N. CLAY.

BONKS sat in my comfortable chair with his legs resting on my desk, reading a magazine, when my front-door bell rang.

"It must be the postman," I said hopefully. Bonks slithered lower down into my chair, the soles of his tremendous boots scraping against the edge of my 'The Fall of Xerxes'.

"It can't be the postman," he declared.

"I will find out anyway," I said and went out of the room.

It was not the postman. In fact it was as far removed from a postman as Devon is from Darjeeling.

"Ah," it said the moment I had opened the door, "ah, you are just the man I was looking for, sir."

My heart missed a beat. He did not look like my tailor—nobody can—without letting a steam-roller run over his face—or even like the man from the income-tax office. And yet—

The man who was looking for me, and who carried a brilliant red portmanteau in his right hand, and a cigar in his left hand, pushed me away from the door and made for a chair.

"Now, sir," said Portmanteau. "Here I am and here you are and here are my samples and there is my card."

He whipped out of his breast-pocket a thin strip of paste-board and held it under my nose. I read: "W. W. Bronx-Madison, Representative, the Phoenix Fire Extinguishers Co. the Alfa Electrical Incorporation"—and the legend did not end there.

"Now, sir," Portmanteau went on. "I will just put before you a few irrefutable facts. You are a human being, you eat, you drink, you wear clothes, you read Edgar Wallace."

At this juncture, Bonks stampeded in from the neighbouring room. I heaved a sigh of relief. If there was one man on God's good earth to tackle this compound-named fish, it was Bonks.

"Ah," cried Portmanteau as soon as he spotted Bonks. "Ah, now, would you believe it, sir, but I have been looking everywhere for you this last hour or so." And he produced another of his cards.

Bonks looked curiously at the print. Suddenly his lips tightened.

"Hmm," he said. "So you represent the Phoenix Fire Extinguishers Co?"

"I do," returned Portmanteau promptly, "and the Alfa Electrical Incorporation, not to mention—"

"Well, we don't need any fire-extinguishers at the moment. Nor any dynamos. So you know where you are," Bonks finished cryptically.

"Now, now, sir," Portmanteau waved a long finger deprecatingly "aren't you being a little too hasty? Let us suppose your house suddenly took fire—what would you do?"

"I know what I will do, if you don't leave at once," Bonks returned darkly.

"And then, sir, I must show you my new cigarette-lighter. No petrol, no flint—"

"I don't want to see your new cigarette-lighter," Bonks hissed. "So scoot."

Portmanteau turned to me and shrugged his smart shoulders wearily. Then once again his face lighted up.

"Ah," he cried, "I have something here you simply can't resist. A new fountain-pen. Our own patent. Guaranteed to last a life-time."

Bonks took the fountain-pen, and turned it lovingly in and out of his fingers.

Then stooping, he placed it reverently on the floor and proceeded to jump on it.

That ought to have daunted any man.

But, if you think Portmanteau was daunted—well, think again.

"You've only spoilt the floor," he declared with the most disarming of smiles.

Bonks clenched his enormous fists and took a step forward.

"If you don't buzz off this minute, I will wipe it with you," he threatened.

Portmanteau gave a wild whoop of joy.

"That reminds me, sir," he yelled "our vacuum-leaners are the best on the market."

I do not know what happened after this. Instinctively, I ran out of the room and pulled and bolted the door behind me. On the other side a cyclone raged. No. A cyclone plus an earthquake plus a tidal wave. Biffs, thuds, wallops, smashes, crashes, more biffs, more thuds. After what seemed an eternity someone knocked feebly at my door. With a wildly beating heart I opened it. Bonks was facing me: that is, if you could still call it a face. It was more like the Euclidean construction which Smith Jr. got his father to do.

"Where's Portmanteau?" I asked. "You've sent him away?"

"Oh, I dunno." Bonks rubbed his rapidly swelling left eye and extracted a small bottle from his coat-pocket.

"What's in that bottle?" I asked more curious than ever.

Bonks let his jaw drop. "You don't know?" he seemed surprised. "It's Pratt's Vervifier. Guaranteed a golden remedy for 'that depressed feeling'. Portmanteau's just sold it to me."

NO ENTRANCE FEE!

RS 10000!

"GIVE & TAKE" COMPETITION

First Prize Rs. 600 Second Prize Rs. 400

CLOSING DATE 13-2-1935

There are nine simple words given in this puzzle, but each has either one letter too many or one letter missing—

Where you see "Give", ADD one letter which completes the word.

Where it says "Take", TAKE away a letter to leave the right word.

A clue to each word is given. In the first line, for instance, the clue is "Light". And you have to take away a letter from 'GLUIM' to get the right word. On removing (U) from the word, you get the solution—'GLIM'. Solve similarly the other eight.

IMPORTANT RULES AND CONDITIONS.

A. GENERAL.

(1) This Competition comprises FOUR sets of the "Give & Take" Puzzle appearing in the consecutive weekly issues of the *Merry Magazine*. The Second Set appears in this issue (12-1-35.) The third and fourth sets will appear in issues dated 19-1-35 and 26-1-35 respectively.

(2) Competitors may send in any number of complete attempts. A complete attempt is one which contains entries in all the four sets: I to IV.

(3) A competitor can use a blank for only one solution; if there is a mistake, the competitor must cross out the word and rewrite it.

(4) Each Entry Form must be filled in and signed by the Competitor.

B. HOW TO SUBMIT ENTRIES.

(1) Keep the Entry Forms until you have all the four of the set. Let us assume that you wish to send in 20 entries. You must have exactly Twenty Entry Forms in each set making altogether eighty,

Cut Here

"Give and Take" SOLUTION COUPON	
1	LIGHT GLUIM
2	A QUADRUPED OW
3	THIS TAPERS AT THE END TNAIL
4	PURE CLEA
5	UNDULATIONS BHUMPS
6	OVERCOME BET
7	GO ABOUT RMOVE
8	MONEY IS INVOLVED IN IT ILL
9	CLOSE DNEAR

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

Signed.....

Address.....

Wait for all the Four sets. (See Rules.)

SET No. II.

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Entry Forms in each set must be consecutively numbered. There should not be any difference in the number of entries between one set and another, i.e., if there are twenty entries in set I, there should be twenty entries each in set II, III & IV.

Then fill in the solutions.

If a Competitor is unable to find twenty different solutions in any one set, he may fill in one or more of the solutions he has already entered in the other coupons of that set. Send all the four sets together after 26-1-35 and before 13-2-35.

C. PRIZE AWARDS.

Each set of coupons will be checked separately. The first prize of Rs. 600 will be awarded to an all-correct complete set. An all-correct set means the correct solution for all the four sets which agree in all respects with the Editor's Key Solution set, kept in safe custody in the Indian Bank Ltd., Head Office, Madras.

Only the correctness of the solution in each set and not the corresponding serial number will be taken into consideration in judging the entries. For instance, an all-correct solution may bear the reader's serial No. 5 in set I, No. 7 in set II, No. 9 in set III and No. 11 in set IV.

The Second Prize of Rs. 400 will be awarded to a complete solution set with one error: i.e., All-Correct solutions in three sets and one error in the remaining set.

If no all-correct solution is received, the first prize will be awarded to the complete solution set with one

error, and the second prize to the complete solution set with three all-correct and two errors.

A reader who gets a first prize can get a share or shares in the 2nd prize also.

Solutions must be written *only on the coupon portion*. All entries must be received by last post on 13-2-35. Any received after this date will be disqualified. Entries from local competitors can be delivered at our office till 6 P. M. on that date. In case of ties, the prize money will be equally divided.

No correspondence can be entered into nor can be interviews granted. Persons connected with the *Merry Magazine* and its associated journals are not allowed to compete.

No entry will be considered unless accompanied by the coupon portion.

Coupons must be cut along the dotted lines, filled in legibly and sent intact. This office will not be responsible for entries lost or delayed in transit.

Intending competitors who are unable to secure copies of this Magazine from the agents in their area can address our *Subscription Manager* for the required number of copies either by sending stamps or Money Order to cover the cost for the copies or order them V. P. P.

'GIVE & TAKE' COMPETITION-2.—RESULTS

The Correct Solution is:—

- | | | |
|----------|----------|-----------|
| 1. GRIT | 4. BAR | 7. BATTEN |
| 2. BOND | 5. SAGE | 8. CLENCH |
| 3. LATER | 6. MOUSE | 9. PEER |

NINE Readers Share the First Prize Of Rs. 150, Each Getting Rs. 16-11-0

1. Mr. P. SUBBA RAO, Vizianagram Palace, Benares City, U. P.
2. Mr. G. S. VENKATARAMAN, 47, Shroff Building, Parel, Bombay, 12.
3. Mr. B. SATHYANARAYANAMURTHY, C/o. Vysya Hostel, Kilpauk, Madras.
4. Mr. B. L. GURU RAJA RAO B.Sc., Organic Chemistry Deptt., Indian Institute of Science, Hebbal P.O., Bangalore.
5. Mr. G. RADHAKRISHNAN, Clerk, Construction Audit, Chief Auditor's Office, S. I. Ry. Trichinopoly.
6. Mr. S. SEETHARAMAN, Medical Shop, Srivaikuntam.
7. Mr. R. M. DHARESHWAR, C/o. D. Mangesh Rao, Near Playground, Isamia Bazaar, Hyderabad (Deccan).
8. Mr. M. S. MANI, 89, Royapettah High Road, Mylapore, Madras.
9. Sri. K. ALAMELU, C/o. The Poor Relief Printing Service, Palace Road, Cochin.

The following 98 Readers Share The Second Prize of Rs. 100, Each Getting Rs. 1-0-0
The prize amounts will be sent by M.O. on 15-1-35.

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. S. R. Athmanathaiyyar, 3, Sydoji, Triplicane. | 16. S. Chidambaram Pillai, Kallakurichi (S.A. Dt.) |
| 2-3. S. Balasubramaniam, 1/8. South Mada St., Mylapore, Madras. | 17. Visalakshi Ammal, Main Road, Pudupalam, Cuddalore Dt. |
| 4. K. Kadirvelu Mudaliar, No. 2, Khana Bagh St., Triplicane, Madras. | 18. G. V. Subba Rao, Sri Anantha Medical Stores, Chingleput. |
| 5. M. A. John, 78, Pilliar Koil St., Triplicane. | 19. P. Lakshmiah, VI Form, B. H. School, Kalabasti. |
| 6. N. Krishnan, 29, B. S.M.S. Hostel, Madras. | 20-21. A. Arthanary Chetty, Anthiyur. |
| 7. P. S. Rajagopalan, 303, Thambu Chetty St., G. T. Madras. | 22-23. A. Arumugam, Bookseller, Bhavani, Coimbatore Dt. |
| 8-9. S. M. G. Shankar, 5, S. N. Chetty St., Royapuram, Madras. | 24. V. S. Venkateswaran, 123, Rajah St., Coimbatore. |
| 10. R. Somasundaram Aiyar, 82, Apparswami Koil St., Mylapore, Madras. | 25. S. N. Santhu Chetty, Satyamangalam, (Via) Erode. |
| 11. P. K. Sulochana Bai, c/o. G. T. Mudaliar, 24, Tiruppalli Street, Sowcarpet P. O., Madras. | 26. Gadi Narayana Murthy, C/o G. Jagannatha Samy Pantalugaru, Gadivari St., Berhampore, Ganjam, (B. N. Ry.) |
| 12. K. Vazeer Ali, Old Town, Kudanad St., Anantapur. | 27. R. Darmaraja Iyer, Clerk, Post Office, Madura. |
| 13. C. S. Natarajan, 182, Sannadhi St., Sholinghur. | 28. Miss. C. Barboza, c/o The District Munsiff, Palni. |
| 14. K. C. S. Muniswamy, Taluk Office, Tiruvannamalai. (N. A. Dt.) | 29. V. S. Nair, Teacher, Kallal P. O., Ramnad Dt. |
| 15. B. Mohamed Kasim, 49, Sonager St., Cuddalore, O. T. | |

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The Editor of THE ODD MOMENT will pay the above sum to the reader of the *Merry Mag* or The Odd Moment who correctly forecasts the first horse in the 4th Race at Guindy on Saturday next January 19th. In order to assist those competitors residing outside Madras entries will be accepted which are postmarked not later than 2 p. m. on the day of the race. In the event of a tie or ties the prize will be divided; and will be in proportion to receipts. No correspondence will be entered into and the Editor's decision will be final. Address your coupons: Weekly Racing Contest (Jan. 19th) The Odd Moment, 160, Mount Road, Madras. Stamps or Money Orders will be accepted at the rate of Rs. 8. for each coupon, copies of which will be found in *The Merry Magazine*, The Odd Moment, Original Vel, Popular Race Guide and All-India Race Guide. Readers in Madras may hand their entries to the Odd Moment representatives at Guindy right up to 10 minutes before the race.

ALL THAT YOU HAVE TO DO IS TO FORECAST THE WINNER COUPON Entries Stamps

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I forecast that the result of the 4th Race at Guindy on 19th January, 1935 will be as follows:

1. _____

I agree to accept the Editor's decision as final.

NAME _____

NOTE:—Prizes will be despatched on the Monday after the race and results will be announced in this magazine and the Odd Moment in later issues.

'ODD MOMENT' WEEKLY RACING COMPETITION

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NOTE:—Prizes will be despatched on the Monday after the race and results will be announced in this magazine and the Odd Moment in later issues.

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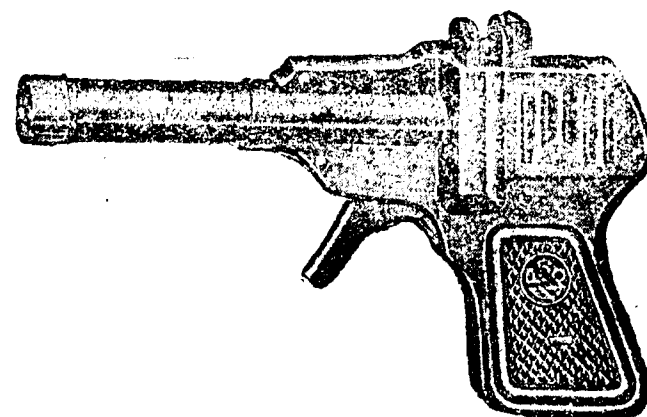
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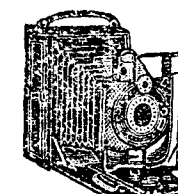
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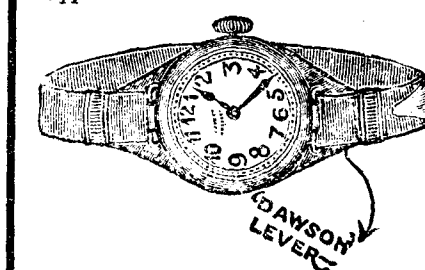
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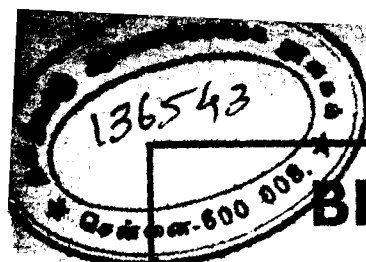
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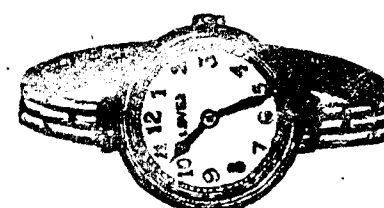
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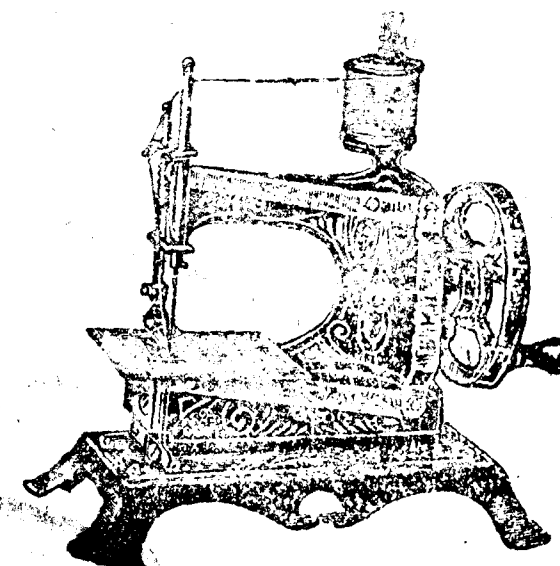
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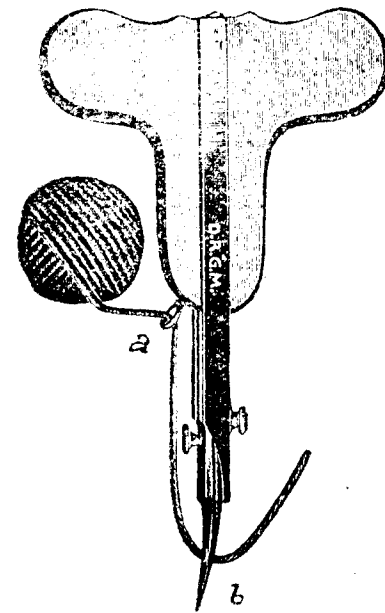
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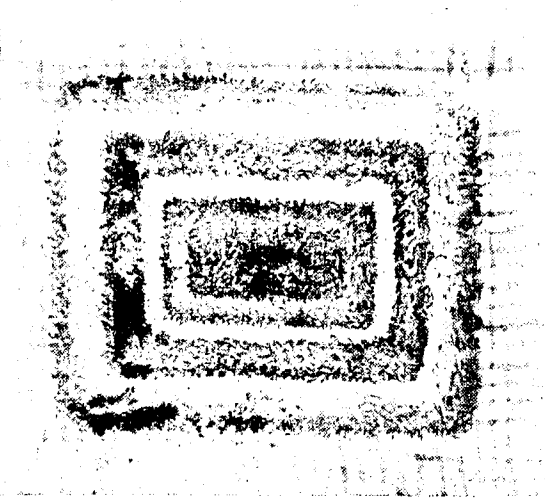
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