

RS. 2000 TO READERS

THE
MERRY

MAGAZINE

Vol. III

MADRAS, 16th FEBRUARY, 1935.

No. 7

ROMANCE



THE MERRY MAGAZINE

(PUBLISHED EVERY SATURDAY)

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SPARKS FROM OUR ANVIL

It is announced that by a new decree Herr Hitler has granted himself the prerogative of mercy.

It is however thought extremely unlikely that he would use it with retrospective effect!

In the course of another cable to the Princes, Lord Rothermere says that the mind of the British nation is rapidly changing with regard to India.

Still, it must have been something of a shock to his Lordship to find the extent of the change manifested at Wavertree.

The Hungarian Faculty of Law has recommended Sgr. Mussolini for the Nobel Peace Prize for 1935.

It would, if given, enhance the dignity of the art of sabre-rattling!

Mr. Churchill says that he is not responsible for his son standing for Parliament as an Independent Conservative.

The electors however took no chances!

Charlie Chaplin's film 'The Gold Rush' has been banned in Germany.

This is thought to be in the interests of the financial stability of the country.

Speaking on the importance of irrigation in India, a retired British engineer declared that 'Engineers are not born, but made.'

We would go one step further, and add—Not in England alone.

Senator Huey Long of Louisiana says that no man must ever own more than four millions.

This has dashed the hopes of many in America, who had hoped to become multi-millionaires.

The Rt. Hon'ble Mr. Sastri says that if the League of Nations should die, a more glorious idea will arise.

This of course pre-supposes that it is now living.

Addressing a meeting of students on the eternal question of politics, he is reported to have said: 'Youths were likely to be carried off by immature reason into the region of speculation.'

This adds one more to the causes of youthful mortality!

The Finance Committee of the Assembly has agreed to a grant of Rs. 20,000 towards the cost of improving the gardens of the Government House in Delhi.

This is not generous enough. Men can after all take care of themselves, while plants cannot.

A conference of Madras Christians has resolved to accept the J. P. C. Report.

We understand that, as a result, the new India Bill will go through Parliament unscathed!

Opening the debate on the Report in the Assembly, the Law Member is reported to have said: 'Some characterised the report as a swindle and fraud.'

If any responsible person has said so, he was clearly guilty of—*redundancy!*

A journalist has calculated that it takes eight hours to read the new India Bill.

And gives you a head-ache in return!

Referring to the restoration of the 5% cut in the salaries of All-India services, it was revealed that the Home Member had gone on wearing the same coat for twenty years.

We suggest that steps should be taken to celebrate the Silver Jubilee of the coat.

H. H. the Agha Khan exhorts the Muslims to turn their attention to rural reconstruction work.

His Highness will, it is understood, watch the progress of it with anxious interest—from afar!

There is a move to persuade Mr. Lloyd George to enter the Cabinet.

Many think it is time, Mr. MacDonald is given an opportunity to write his memoirs.

In answer to a question in the Assembly, Sir J. Bore replied that Sir F. Noyce represented the interests of the immigrants into Burma at the Indo-Burman negotiations.

And yet we heard nothing of it!

RUKKU'S ROMANTIC HOUR

It would be rash to predict the verdict of the historian on the after-effects of the avalanche of periodicals that has descended over the land these two years and more. Literature of the light variety has swamped the Tamil land particularly and, if the historian should assess impartially the cause and effect of this phenomenon and apportion to it a proper place in the pages of history, he would find the making of history an arduous task. But we, luckily, are engaged in writing a story and not history and we shall therefore content ourselves in gathering such ingredients as are required for the purposes of our story, leaving the more arduous task to the historian of the future.

If Kutty, sitting on the window-sill, was idly turning over the pages of a Tamil humorous magazine, the historian wouldn't certainly notice her. But we cannot ignore her, though she is only eight and can neither read nor write a whole sentence in Tamil. The demand for more light literature, from a people inured to poverty and suffering, as a safety-valve for their misery, had made publishers of popular periodicals embellish the written word with pictures. And these, though crude, had yet an irresistible appeal to Kutty and children of her age.

Down on the floor Kutty's brother, little Balu, barely five years old, was busy trying to set right the clock-work inside his disabled toy-engine. As Kutty's mother Rukmini came into the room and opened the *almirah*, Kutty looked up and knitted her brows at what she saw. For, her mother was standing before the open *almirah*, doing nothing but holding its door wide open, with a vacant look on her face.

"Are you looking for this book, *amma*?" asked Kutty holding the book aloft: but her mother heard her not and stood still looking into the open *almirah* deeply thinking over something. Kutty wondered what it was that so engrossed her mother's attention. Leaping lightly from the window-sill and beckoning her little brother to follow, she joined her mother and peered into the *almirah*, standing on her toes. Balu emulated her. As far as Kutty could see, there was nothing strange inside the *almirah* to engross so much her mother's attention. The



Kutty looked up

usual clothes, empty bottles and black-knacks met Kutty's gaze.

"What is it, mother?" asked Kutty, tugging at her mother's *saree*.

"Sh!" silenced her mother, a little impatiently. "You two run away and play!" And then, she saw the book in Kutty's hand and snatched it from the child.

Leaving the *almirah* open, Rukmini sat on a chair near-by and turned to page 48 of the book.

The enterprising editor had featured on page 48 a Ladies' Page alleged to have been written up by a lady for the benefit of ladies but in fact translated into Tamil from an English periodical. Rukmini was reading this page for the 52nd time though one would think from her concentration on the page that she was reading it for the first time, in all her thirty-two years of contented life.

"You have left the *almirah* open, mother!" warned Kutty.

"Never mind! You two run upstairs and play there. Don't disturb me when I am reading."

"I don't want to play!" protested Balu and tried to climb into his mother's lap.

"Balu, if you want another motor-car you must go and play upstairs with *akka*! Run along now!"

But Kutty, shrewd for her age, guessed that something strange was afoot. Taking her brother by hand, she pretended to take him upstairs and as her mother was so intent on reading, she hid herself behind the door and pushing Balu behind her and cautioning him not to make any noise, watched her mother.

"Wives in this part of our land," said the writer in the Ladies' Page, "neglect their personal appearance. When the husband returns home he hates to find his wife and home untidy. The poor man has been away and slaving all day, to enable his wife and children to live in comfort. It is deplorable that while elaborate care is taken in making oneself presentable when a lady goes out of the house on a visit or shopping, scant regard



Her mother was standing before the open *almirah* doing nothing.

should be paid to the feelings of the man whom one has married for better or worse. People who call all marriages as mistakes forget that, after a time, romance is stripped of its glamour and dull monotony usurps its place. The warmth of domestic felicity must be kept glowing by daily attentions to the creature-comforts of the husband, by looking after the children and by making oneself pleasant in speech and appearance. Women have only themselves to blame if they neglect these fundamental principles of happiness in the home, which, after all that is said and done, is woman's proper place."

Rukmini closed the book and heaved a sigh that denoted perfect agreement with the writer's views and regrets at not having thought about the subject from this angle. Rising from the chair she went and stood again before the *almirah* debating a question in her mind.

From their hiding place, the children saw their mother taking out the best of her *sarees* and choosing a gay one from among the lot. Kutty thought that she had guessed her mother's intentions. Bending low, she whispered something in Balu's ears and while their mother was selecting a petticoat to match the *saree*, they burst on

her, dancing and shouting. "We know what you are going to do!"

"Didn't I tell you to go upstairs and play?" asked Rukmini, a little harshly. Tears gathered in Kutty's eyes. "Oh, mother, you are going out and surely you won't leave us all alone here?"

"Who told you I am going out?"

"Look, look, you are going to wear that lovely *saree*!"

"Yes, I am."

"And wearing it, you are not going out?"

"No."

"Why?"

"Come here you silly," called Rukmini and gathering the children to her told them that thenceforward they should wear their best apparel even indoors. But to Kutty the idea didn't appeal. What was the use of a lace *pavadai* and an embroidered frock if these couldn't be paraded before the neighbours. However, for a change, she welcomed with beaming face her mother's suggestion.

Rukku set to work immediately. The children's faces were washed and their hair combed and plaited. After dressing them, she laid *thilakams* on their foreheads and kissed them. "Now," admonished Rukku, "you two must run upstairs and play while I get dressed. And you must go to sleep early to-night for mother has much to do."

Rukku's toilet was elaborate and effective, though to be perfectly true, the effective part of it was spoilt by the Accountant General. And thereby hangs this tale.

Rukku's husband, Ramaswamy, was an unromantic accountant in a Government Department. The Accountant General had picked many holes in Ramaswamy's method of analysing items of receipts and expenditure and had called for explanations which in official parlance are called audit objections. And there was a particular date before which these audit objections had to be either refuted or meekly agreed to. It was the irony in the nature of things that the last date for replying to these audit objections should coincide with the date on which Rukku was turning a new leaf in the history of making herself and the home brighter.

At seven in the evening the children were fed and cautioned once again to go to sleep early. At seven-thirty Rukku fried some *pappadams* as an extra dish for her lord and master. At eight, he arrived with a bundle of papers tucked beneath his arm, and a face that had grown as long as the audit objections obsessing his mind.

He didn't notice that the children were dressed in their best. The Cerise *saree* with a wide black band of border, the orange low-neck petticoat and Rukku's entrancing welcome-my-lord-and-master-smile were all

absolutely lost on him. He cut short Kutty's ecstatic outburst by shoving the child to one side and walking up the stairs. Kutty was again on the verge of tears and rushed to her mother and hugged her knees. Balu who always emulated Kutty tugged at his mother's *saree*. Rukku soothed the children. "Your father is worried over something. Didn't I tell you to go to sleep early? Now, as soon as he comes down, I'll take you upstairs and put you to bed. He will be alright in the morning and perhaps give you a bright copper coin."

"But, mother, we will be all alone upstairs and Balu will cry."

"He won't. He is a nice boy. Aren't you Balu?"

Balu shook his head which showed his determination not to be a nice boy at all. Kutty felt like calling her father a *Bootham* (demon), a favourite expression of hers, but since she heard his footsteps she lapsed into silence.

Ramaswamy drifted towards the kitchen, unmindful of the group who were discussing him in the hall. Rukku hustled the children upstairs, put them to bed in haste and with a final warning to them not to keep awake, hurried to her lord and master, who was waiting for his night meal.

As Rukku served the food, she employed in vain all the known artifices to draw the attention of her lord and master. She had to ask finally:

"Is anything the matter?"

"Nothing."

"Kutty is so upset because you didn't notice the pretty clothes she had put on."

"Is that so?—Bring a pinch of salt!"

"And she kept awake so long merely for—"

"Another tumbler of water—"

"After all, the children can see you only for a few hours daily and they resent it very much if you are cross."

"Oh, never mind; and stop your lecture. I have other things on my mind."

"You could tell me what they are. I am supposed to share your sorrows and joys," Rukku beamed.

"You share the joys alright—and a lot of good you could do," snubbed Ramaswamy, and rose to wash his hands.

But it was Rukku's romantic hour. Snub or no snub she had resolved to change the scheme of her life. If her husband snubbed her, if he was unappreciative of her elaborate toilet, it was because she had been neglectful of the fundamental principles laid down by the writer in the Ladies' Page. After a hasty meal and leaving the kitchen in a state of disorder, she went seeking her lord and master up the stairs.

He was at his desk, bending over his office papers, his head held between his hands, like one in great sorrow. From the room beyond came muffled sobs. Rukku hastened into the room and found Kutty sobbing as if her heart would break.

"Sh! dear. Whatever is the matter?"

"*Appah* was angry with her," explained Balu in a hoarse whisper.

"I wanted only a story," sobbed Kutty.

"Never mind. I will tell you a story. Now then go to sleep. Once upon a time there was a king who had a wife who was as beautiful as the moon—"

"Shut that door! or stop your chatter!" bawled Ramaswamy from his desk.

Rukku rose and shut the door like the obedient and accommodating wife she had resolved to be.

Rukku's story to the children lacked the usual verve and vigour as Rukku's mind wandered off and on to the husband outside holding his head between his hands and to the writer of the Ladies' Page. The story instead of soothing the children and making them sleep, made them fidgety. Kutty picked holes in her mother's story. Balu contradicted parts of it and Rukku lost her temper and scolded the children for being naughty. They had to lapse into silence and shut

their eyes as ordered by their mother. "Now sleep!" commanded Rukku and the children pretended to sleep.

Rukku gently stroked Balu for a few minutes. She laid another pillow by the side of Kutty and rising, sought her lord and master. He was engaged in biting the end of his pen, staring at a blank sheet of paper before him.

Rukku noticed that the *pansupari* plate by his side was left untouched. She reached for the nuts and offered them to her lord with a winsome smile.

"Don't want!" snapped her lord.

"It helps digestion," pleaded Rukku.

"Shut up and leave me in peace!" commanded her master.

But it was Rukku's romantic hour. On other days, on other occasions, such a reaction from her husband would have started a first-class row to the delight of neighbours. But, thanks to the writer of the Ladies' Page, the calamity was averted. Rukku was not to be defeated of her purpose or deflected from her plans. She was made up of very stern stuff indeed.

"You work in your office all day. Must you bring these nasty papers even into your home and scold your wife and children?" asked Rukku.

"These papers keep you in food and clothes, woman! We would be in the street but for these papers. Down, down on your knees and repent for the sacrilege to Almighty Red-tape!"

"Food and clothes are not the be-all and end-all of existence."

"What else does one want?"

"A little love—some affection—all that would bring happiness."

"Happiness! Love! Affection! Try them all on an empty stomach on a cold, wintry morning! You women have funny notions!"

"It is funny, isn't it? You go away early in the morning, you work all day, and come home and you try to be nasty to me and to the children. What is it that we get out of it all?"

"A home, and creature-comforts. I do the work and shoulder the worries. I wish I were in your place, just now and not compelled to ransack my brains to find answers to these blasted audit objections. Well, well, it is my funeral. Go away!"

"I am not going away," said Rukku, and drawing a chair, sat very determinedly on it.

Ramaswamy, for the first time during the evening, looked intently at her. The Cerise *saree* caught him, metaphorically speaking, squarely on the jaw.

"What's the idea?" asked he.

"What's the idea in what?" asked Rukku.

"The orange-pink-black-colour-scheme? Been out anywhere?"

Rukku's smile was ravishing. It changed to pity at the mere-male mentality.

"Another of those funny ideas of you men! Why do you think that we women put on our best to create an effect on others? Can't we do it to please ourselves or those whom we love."

"If I haven't known you all these years I would say that you are either drunk or that some screws are loose in that thinking apparatus of yours. However, I am not going to allow you to prevent me from the faithful discharge of my duties."

"Please let us talk. I want to talk to you a great deal to-night. Throw away those papers and sit in that easy-chair."

"Throw away these papers! You are mad! I'll be suspended. It will be the end of my career. Get out!"

".....I would love you to."

"I have never asked anything of you—" Sob.
"Don't lie! Only day before yesterday you asked for five *palams* of asafoetida."

"You would deny me—" More sob.

"Get out and stay out—"

"I haven't married you—" Regular series of sobs.

"I'll throw you out and lock that room!"

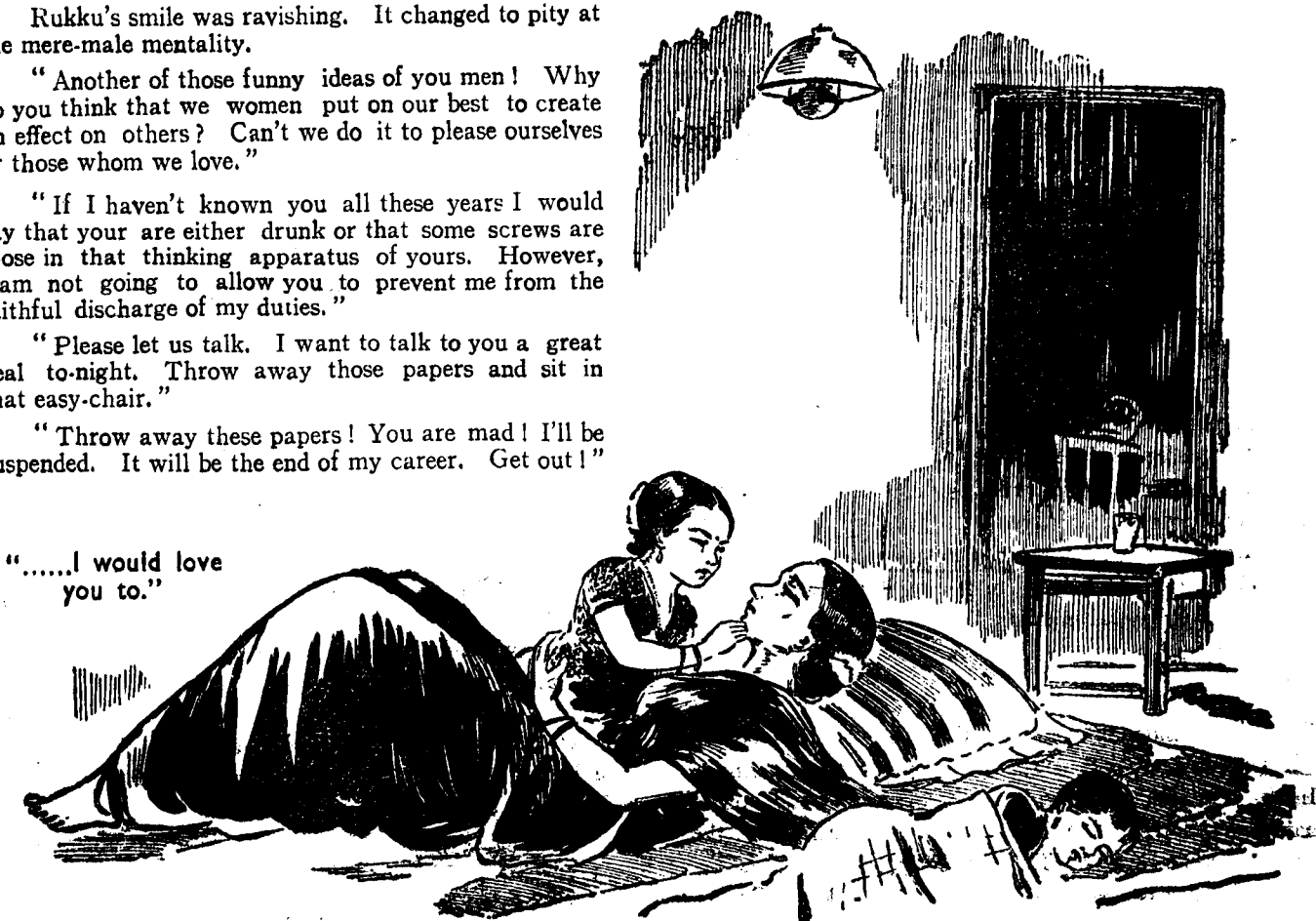
But at this dramatic moment, little Kutty emerged from the aforementioned room and walking up to her mother caught her by the hand and lead her inside, not before flinging the contemptuous word "*Bootham!*" at her father.

Kutty made her mother lie down and nestling close to her whispered, "He is a *Bootham*, *amma*, why did you go and speak to him?"

"Weren't you asleep dear?" asked Rukku brushing away her tears and drawing her child closer to her.

"No, *amma*. Sleep would not come to my eyes. I was listening and I thought he would beat you. I was afraid *amma*. With this *saree* and jacket, you look very beautiful. Will you wear every day *sarees* and jackets like this? I would love you to."

And thus in Rukku's romantic hour, Nemesis put into the mouth of her child what she expected out of her husband. And Rukku gathered Kutty in her arms and said, "When you grow old, Kutty dear, you will be more beautiful than your mother and may the great gods give you a darling as precious as you."





By 'KEBI'

A talking picture called "India Speaks," full of scandalous statements and debasing propaganda against India, is reported to be showing now in America. Enquiries made of the Indian Press show that scurrilous statements, which would shatter the fair name of our country, built up through the ages, have been picturized and are being passed off as a true picture of the conditions existing in India. The following extracts from an advertisement of the film, published by the *Bombay Sentinel*, gives an idea of this astounding bundle of lies.

"Read its Amazing Revelations! Mysterious Rites! Savage encounters! Episodes of barbaric luxury and unbelievable mass misery! Tortures and sadistic phenomena! Polyandrous Oriental Women! A jealously guarded white girl captive of the Lamas! A new and picturesque romance of regions seldom penetrated by CIVILISED MAN!!"

Oh Malignity! Is your name America?

For the first time in the history of the cinema, two persons have been sentenced to see a film. This was the unique ruling of Judge Samuel D. Levy of the Domestic Relations Court in Brooklyn (America), when he ordered the parents of a nine-year-old girl to see the British film "Little Friend" to help them unravel the tangled skein of their matrimonial mix-ups.

Long-winded speeches are the order of the day in our Legislatures, both at the Centre and in the Provinces. In dealing effectively with such orators, whose other name is "bores", we have a lot to learn from the Australian aborigines. They consider rambling speeches injurious both to the speaker and the spoken. So, to

protect both, there is an unwritten law in that great land that every public orator must stand on one leg when he is addressing an audience. When he places the other leg on the ground, his oration must come to a close. And it will not be long, unless the speaker happens to be an Indian *Sadhu*, who is noted for his marvels of patience.

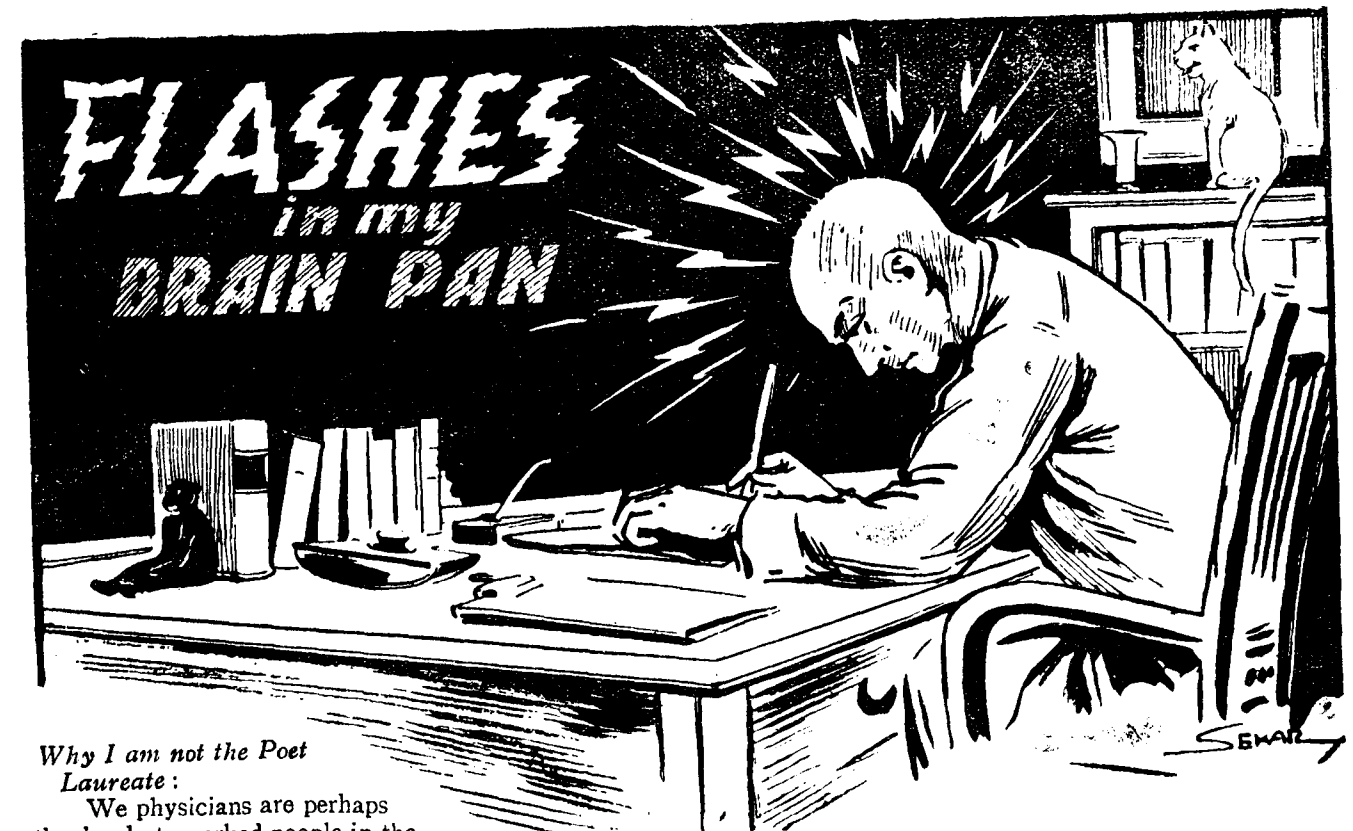
From Poona comes a strange story of hidden treasure, guarded zealously by a be-spectacled King Cobra, with an ever vigilant eye for the prying man. A game of marbles, in which several street urchins participated, has helped to bring the legend to the spotlight. In the course of the game, one of the marbles rolled into a hole in the ground and when one of the youngsters put his hand into it to retrieve it, there was a sharp hiss and a huge cobra struck out. Luckily the boy escaped the thrust and raised a hullo-bul-lo. Volunteers were not lacking and the cobra was despatched to his Maker. It was full seven feet long, with a "spectacle pattern" on its hood. No one is now prepared to dig for the treasure, for who knows how many more cobras are lurking under-ground to punish the marauder!

Flashes from my brain pan:

Professor Einstein says that space is limited. Editors said it first.

"An Air Mail pilot is always loyal to his employer," says a Postal official. Yet, isn't he always taking a new post?

When a woman says that it is a 'duck' of a frock, rest assured there is a large bill attached to it.



Why I am not the Poet Laureate:

We physicians are perhaps the hardest worked people in the world, said an eminent doctor, last week. I don't see why you should complain, doctor; after all, yours is a doc's life.

Moral-Conveying Ditties:

He lived for wine and song and whoopee;
Soon he was without a rupee.

Which reminds me that everyone wants to make whoopee; only the question is make Who Pay for it afterwards?

Sport Note:

A woman player tripped and fell
During a cricket match at Dover;
Whereupon a wag remarked,
"Just another maiden over."

Epitaph:

Toll the knell
For Mr. Gamp;
He stood on the corns
Of a boxing champ.

Sour Bachelor's Advice:

Fall from the house-tops
Fall down a well;
Fall from anywhere
But don't fall for a gal.

Poor Beast:

Bore (relating alleged experiences):—The lion made straight for me but I didn't budge an inch. Instead I looked straight into his face, and what do you think he did?

Victim:—Went and made a complaint to the Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals.

Have You Heard This One:

A meeting of English hair-dressers recently declared its intention to discourage too much curling of the hair. Britannia rules out the waves.

Shady:

One:—That man always spends freely, though he hardly ever works. I wonder what he does for a living.

Two:—You mean *whom* he does.

Cheeky Chat:

"If you dare to kiss me, young man," she said,
"I will give you a slap."
"If that's how you feel about it," he said,
"Please get off my lap."

Tack it From Me:

"What does a tactful man do if he accidentally swallows a box of nails?" asks an essayist. Our answer is: he remains a tack-full man.

Crazy Answers Corner:

Why are salmon pink?

Our tame oracle says they are pink because they generally have their homes in the Red Sea.

On the up-and-up:

Walking up the stairs is a very healthy exercise, says a doctor.

Yes, and when hubby comes home late, it is a very STEALTHY one.

Epitaph:

Let's shed a tear
For Mr. Monde
His wife was quite near
When he kissed a blonde.

Definition:

A good boxer is very much like the fellow who's caught a cold. The latter blows his nose, and the former knows his blows.

THE EDITOR'S COLUMN

LAST week I offered Rs. 2000 for solving 'Singles'. It has been very enthusiastically received and consequently I have decided to offer another Rs. 2000 in prizes, this time for solving 'Chimers'. All you have to do is to find out Eight words represented by as many pictures—words which rhyme with a set of eight words given. You will find all the details on Page 41. I do believe I have beaten hollow the previous record of altruism set up by the magician in 'Aladdin' when he offered new lamps for old. As before, the set will be repeated in our issue of the 23rd.

If I haven't mentioned Auntie these many days, it is because I don't wish to enter into a controversy with her. But the old woman hasn't been leaving me alone. In addition to giving me hell in the office, I find that she is constantly referring to me in her weekly notes. I am going to tell her that she is not to wash her dirty (or any description of) linen in public. The chief reason for the disagreement and the temper she showed is her objection to my giving away big prizes like the above. She thinks I am wholesale and she tries to show me how competitions should be run. I believe she has something up her sleeve and it is possible she may start a competition herself next week. But you know you are not to take Auntie seriously. Her advices are all right. Advice, said somebody, is meant to be passed on. That's what Auntie does.

And she is by no means the only pest in my office. There is the week-end poet (week-end because he appears every Saturday regularly)—I mean the staff poet. He is irrepressible. This week he is in the role of a tipster.

Our very confidential tip to you:
When your father's lost his temper,
Buy him our bumper hamper
Of fun and frolic: What I mean
Is buy him the *Merry Magazine*.

Or buy him anything—

Editor.

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A FEAST OF FUN

The Winner
"What was the result of that terrific fight the Duchess had with her husband?"
"She retains the title."

Quite Safe
Mrs. Deleigh (meeting politician at party): "I've heard a great deal about you."
Politician (absently): "Possibly, but you can't prove it."

Both The Same

Grandma was helping Peggy to make out a list of little guests for her holiday party. "How about the Morton twins?" grandma asked. "Well, there's no need to ask them both," Peggy answered, "they're exactly alike."

Not Before

"Am dere anybody in the congregation what wishes prayer for deir failin'?" asked the coloured minister. "Yassuh," responded Brother Jones. "Ah's a spen'thrif, an' Ah throws mah money round reckless like." "Ve'y well. We will join in prayer fo Brotheh Jones—jes' afteh da collection plate have been passed."



"What are you doing at this time of the night?"
"Shay! 'old dis housh while I inshert the key!"

As You Were

When I was young and in my prime
I thought it great to have a dime.
Now income tax has left me flat,
And once again I feel like that.

Full of Them!

The pawnbroker
To his fellow creatures
Always possesses
"Redeeming" features.

Wasting Time
Visitor in Museum: "Say! Don't start looking at things or we'll never get round!"

Nudist Visitor

A small girl said there was a new baby at her house. "Has the baby come to stay?" she was asked. "I think so," she said. "He's taken all his things off."

One Floor-Walker to Another

"Why am I here? Well, it's like this. There was a Flower Carnival in our town the other day, and someone called out to me 'Throw me a flower.' We live on the third floor and my wife's name is Daisy, and—well, you know how these things happen."

Topsy Turvy

A THRILLING FANTASY PART THE SEVEN

THE FANTASY SO FAR:—

Professor Thurkov of Modalkar and his student Nargun visit the Temple of Bhima on a drizzling evening. In the presence of a colossal statue of the Indian Hercules, they both grow sentimental. Thurkov wants to become young again like Nargun and Nargun expresses a desire to become an old and respected professor. The Witch of Modalkar now enters the scene and grants their wishes. A strange transformation takes place. In Professor Thurkov's body dwells the personality of the Student Nargun while Professor Thurkov's personality lies inside the Student's physical shell. Many difficulties stand in their way and not the least of these is the problem of language, as each is ignorant of the other's mother-tongue. And then follow the perplexities of college life. Nargun as Professor asks Thurkov as student to lecture to the class. The latter not only acquits himself creditably of this task, but also reports breaches of discipline committed by fellow-students and thus incurs their displeasure.

Now read on:—

PROFESSORS and assistant professors and lecturers and tutors and fellows—tired after a morning's strenuous work—were seated at the Round Table. Banana biscuits and tea were served—and the staff fell to eating and drinking.

"Hullo, Professor Thurkov! Why so late?" the query from a dozen members greeted Nargun as he nervously entered the Common Room. He faltered: "Nothing the matter; a little business detained me."

A spectacled member—he was the Assistant Professor of Botany—asked Nargun: "Have you signed the Principal's circular?" Nargun answered: "What circular? I saw none."

The circular was shown to Nargun whose face changed as he read it: "My God! The circular asks us to set a paper! How the deuce is one to go about it?"

Few could understand the reason for Nargun's dismay, and some whispered: "It means setting papers for exam.—for Selection Test, I s'pose." Nargun mecha-

nically scribbled a rough forgery of Thurkov's initials and settled down to the repast.

One of the elderly professors complained: "Mr. Secretary of the Club, I ask you, why's the tea so weak? Are you using Cora dust or Lipton's or Pennsylvania boot-polish? I ought to resign my membership of this useless club."

The Secretary, an old hand in his line, coolly replied: "By all means, resign. The world will go on very much as before—shall I give you pen and paper, Professor Saheb?"

The Professor of Logic and Philosophy interposed; "Colleagues, listen to me. The utility of

the Staff Common Room must not be judged in terms of cut-and-dry maxims of good or bad tea. The real remuneration for our monthly subscriptions ought to be realised in the shape of the good feeling of sociable relationship it engenders in the harmony it produces, in the Advaitic unison it forges....."

A mischievous member—one of the younger professors—seriously cut in: "Professor Sahiboo, oh, clear

this doubt, please! Is the word 'resignation' categoric or syncategoric? I must know that, oh you professor Sahiboo of Mental and Moral Science!"

The Sahib forgot, naturally, the theme of his original peroration and branched off to an entirely new track: "Sir, I can't understand your covert insinuations against the glory that's due to Logic—the formal Logic of Aristotle! Mind you, Logic was, is and will be the Science of Sciences, mother of Mathematics and grandmother of Physics and brother-in-law of Grammar and your subject, History was, is and will ever be no worthier than, no whit worthier than, a puny phantasm,

a worthless microcosm of knowledge,—and this I can demonstrate to you by either barfara or felation, and you choose the figure as well as mood and yet can't thou not daunt me! He that dares the Sun but scorches himself—and he that tries to blacken the fair face of Logic but blackens his own character, sir."

"I perfectly agree," "I concur," "I abet the statement,"—many of those present said in ironic chorus: and the Logical gentleman turned to the table and his tea.

Another, who had finished his tea, remarked: "It is my desire that we go to our respective classes. This is



"Mind you, Logic was, is and will be the Science of Sciences, mother of Mathematics, and grandmother of Physics, and brother-in-law of Grammar....."

what Aristotle, the philosopher or philosophers calls the SAP type of proposition! Mark, the mystic symbols—s. a. p! But here comes a regular students' deputation! Whatever is wrong with them?"

It was Gorwali, the Cricket Captain, and two or three of his team mates. "May I come in?" he courteously asked, but without waiting for a reply, entered the Staff Common Room.

He straightaway addressed himself to Nargun, whom, like everybody else he mistook for Professor Thurkov: "Sir, we are in a dilemma—from which you alone....."

At the mention of the word 'dilemma', the Logic Professor flared up: "Who is speaking of a dilemma here? Is it Complex constructive or Simple destructive? I am at your service!"

Gorwali bowed and proceeded: "This is a very different kind of dilemma, I fear. One of our best players in the Cricket XI has refused to play at the last moment. We depended on Nargun entirely to make our runs and to dismiss our opponents' batsmen.....and he has disappointed us. Moreover, our opponents are playing a District Superintendent of Police in their Eleven and we are afraid that unless we too field a responsible person like a Professor, utter demoralisation will set in our camp. That's why we have come here with a request that one or two of you, our revered masters, would deign to accept an honoured place in our College XI."

Nargun, in Professor Thurkov's weeds, was really amused; but the other professors looked blue. "I can't," snapped one; "I hate Cricket," observed another; "Never bowled a ball in my life," remarked a portly gentleman; "What is Cricket?" asked a fourth; "What a pity, my heart-weakness prohibits any field-games!" moaned a fifth; and so on and so forth.

Gorwali again tried Nargun: "Nargun said that you are a thundering good player and that you could be played. You will be a moral asset to our side! Pray do accept a place in our XI."

Nargun chuckled in glee: of course his figure was unduly heavy, but his innate ability with the bat and ball cannot have left him; and why should fatness curb his batsmanship, anyway? He therefore cheerfully said: "Captain Gorwali, I accept the honour. 'Tis true I was once a terrible cricketer, but you see, my bulk is a nuisance. I shall do my best,—not very good, perhaps quite worthless I should think, as regards fielding, but I promise you a 100 runs and five at least of the opponents' wickets. Let it not be said that the renowned Professors' Club could not send in even one player to the Cricket field.

I shall be at the Gymkhana at 11. 30."

Gorwali did not hide his surprise and was still uncertain what sort of Cricketer his Professor Thurkov would make. The chief thing was that the Cricket XI was complete. What a shrinking, cowardly set of professors they all were! Jabberers and nothing more!

There was a flutter in the Common Room when the students' deputation withdrew. The professors asked themselves in stark incredulity: "Professor Thurkov a century batsman and a demon bowler! It was the joke of a lifetime! When had they heard of Professor Thurkov's cricketing proclivities! What a surprise!"

"I see Professor Thurkov's game! When he runs up to the wicket, ball in hand, his elephantine form would put the batsman in a merry mood and he would himself hit his wicket—and lo! Professor Thurkov will bag a wicket at a cost of zero runs!" said a young member.

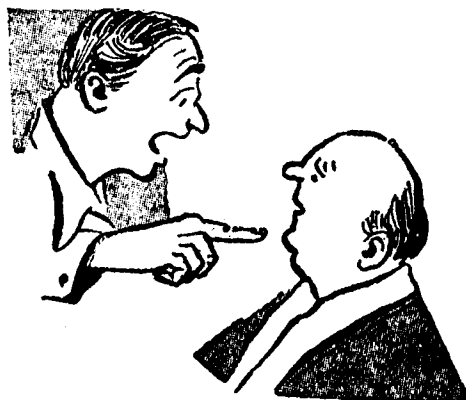
Another emulated cheap humour: "Have the Gymkhana people ordered appropriately big and bulging pads and gloves to suit our esteemed friend, Professor Thurkov?"

Still another joined the raillery: "A new law must come into force—fat-body-before-all-pitch—to get out irremovable batsmen like our learned colleague! In fielding too....."

Nargun was in a fever-pitch of excitement. He roared: "You thingummum good-for-nothings, come and see me play; you puny feather-weight futilities, shut up, will you, or do you want some body-line stuff to put you in a better humour and under a competent surgeon's care?"

It was as though a thunder-bolt had dropped from Heaven. Bhima-like, Nargun faced his erstwhile tormentors, vowing mentally to pulverise the whole lot and dissolve them in concentrated sulphuric acid. And the various professorial nonentities shrank like a snail

DO YOU KNOW?



1. What is the greatest ocean-depth known?
2. What is a sphygmomanometer?
3. What is meant by flotsam and jetsam?
4. What are the four best elegies in English literature?
5. Who was Cassandra?
6. What does S.I.W. mean?

Please see answers on Page 16.

within the shell of brazen silence, and there were even some whispers of "Pardon"; "Didn't mean, really!" "Least said, soonest mended!"

The aged and venerable Professor of German got up and delivered a harangue: "Der Gott is Gutt: der blodsinnigen—nou, I mean, dat is gutt delashuns must bemoil us: dat vish de brober bay or gunducting our azzoziations! Det us redire to our baried glasses—de bell ish jush now gone!"

That did the job: the professors forgot their woes and differences and petty quarrels, picked up the pieces of chalk and volumes Shakespeare and Milton and Carlyle and Gide and Vincent Smith—and filed past Nargun, who had no work for the afternoon, and who therefore stood there undecided what next to do.

He tended to philosophise a little: "What are these professors! They're prone more to quarrel than we students; no stature, no stamina, no sobriety, no sanity! I shall never, never, be a professor! They're like the proverbial frogs-in-the-well, which are supposed to consider their narrow circle the very limits of the world! But, at any rate, there are some notable exceptions! What a fine man is Thurkov?.....Thurkov and I, here are we in changed identities these 20 hours nearly, and none the wiser by one poor scruple. Are we to remain thus for ever? Oh, the very thought is monstrous! Shall we go to the Temple of Bhima this evening too,—and risk all on the chance that the Witch might return and recant the unfortunate curse! This world is a petty

museum indeed—a tragi-comedy of utter essential unimportance!"

As he looked out of the window he saw Thurkov coming towards the Common Room. That was nice. He could talk to Thurkov in privacy in the Common Room or in the professor's own private room and explore all likely possibilities of extricating themselves from the nasty fix they had got themselves into.

Nargun and Thurkov, transformed as Thurkov and Nargun, met and talked like thoroughly sobered folk: each narrated his own multifarious experiences for the day, half in merriment and half in disgust and visible recoil. They decided to risk their all on another visit to the Temple of Bhima.

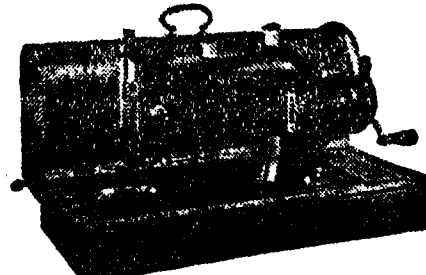
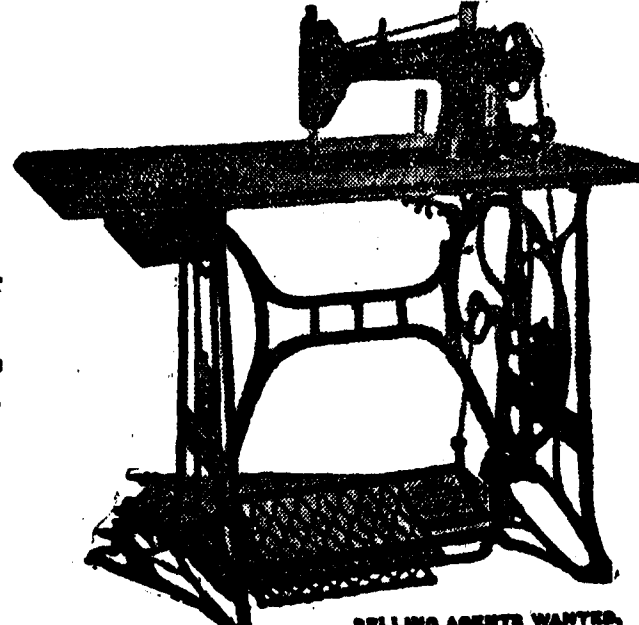
Nargun promised to meet Thurkov at five or thereabouts at the Government Gardens from which, unobserved by the idly curious, they might wend their way to the luckless Temple of Bhima of hallowed memory and sinister legends. And when they parted, Thurkov cast an imploring look at Nargun, and the latter returned the compliment: already a fond attachment was growing between them, defying heredity and forged by the simple circumstance of a common misfortune. Never father loved son or son father as Thurkov and Nargun did each other.

[In part the eight of this fantasy, the surprising climax is reached, and with it there is an end to the difficulties of Thurkov and Nargun.]

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SELLING AGENTS WANTED.

THE LEGAL ASPECT

By S. NANJUNDIAH

ON the morning of the twentieth day of October in the year of doubtful grace nineteen hundred and thirty-four, there came an accursed letter from an equally accursed man called father-in-law. Its contents ran thus:—

Illegalur,
18th Oct., 1934.

SIR,

It pains me greatly to think that I have, after all, squandered my money on a good-for-nothing lout. You have for the last ten years devoured lots and lots of my hard-earned money. I stood you for full six years at the college. Entertaining high hopes of you, I gave you a graduate wife who cost me nearly as much as yourself. Even after the completion of your education I have been sending you huge monthly remittances, eagerly hoping that you would soon stand on your own legs. But I learn that, far from making any attempts to secure a decent living, you are idling away your time, contributing to worthless magazines. In these circumstances, I consider that any further help from me would be a criminal waste of money. And I feel it my duty to desist from encouraging your loathsome idleness. You may therefore take it for certain that you cannot get a pie out of me hereafter.

Yours, etc.,
Kabardhar.

At first I was shocked. My own finances had long ago disappeared. The only source that kept me running all the time was the purse of my father-in-law. Now that it had also failed, I was suddenly left in the lurch. Not knowing what to do, I sat for a while greatly perplexed.

But soon I recovered. Whr-r-r went my thinking apparatus, and that in the legal direction! Heaps and heaps of ideas crowded my head. The whole legal aspect of the matter flashed into my brain. Before long I was quite satisfied with the strength of my cause. Well, I would not wait for a minute more! The blighter's bare-faced effrontery dealt a blow at the very root of my self-respect. As a first class self-respecter, therefore, I could not but decide to invoke the long arms of the law to wreak my vengeance against the bloke.

With the least possible delay, I drafted a notice.

Lawoor,
20th Oct., 1934.

SIR,

Take notice by these presents that a suit will be instituted against you in the High Court of Judicature, Maddington, on the non-fulfilment by you of the conditions noted below. The time allowed for such performance is one month from the receipt of this notice.

The sudden cessation of succour intimated to me in your letter dated the 18th Oct., 1934, is improper and illegal. As your daughter is alive, the legal relationship

of father-in-law and son-in-law has not terminated. You are, therefore, not entitled to set at nought the relationship between us and the contract attaching thereto.

Your remarks about me and the aspersions cast on the magazines to which I contribute are, to say the least and that legally, libellous; and you may prepare yourself for a suit for damages as well as a criminal prosecution for defamation.

There are, however, two alternatives before you.

You may either resume sending me your monthly remittances, in which case the *status quo* will be restored; or,

If you are desirous of terminating the relationship aforesaid, you may take back your daughter along with her accretions on payment of the money value of the happiness she has had at my expense. Such happiness is assessed by a competent authority at the modest sum of a lakh of rupees.

Failing to choose either of the alternatives, the suit will be instituted as aforesaid.

Pendente liti you cannot even catch a glimpse of your daughter. This condition may be relaxed a little when the case is decided in my favour. If during pendency you fulfil either of the aforesaid conditions, the doctrine of acceleration will apply *mutatis mutandis*.

You are also hereby prohibited to communicate with me or with my wife until and unless the dispute is amicably settled. Communications, if any, must be directed to my counsel, Sir Voyadi Ooltasami, Maddington.

Yours etc.,
Son-of-law.

The draft was ready in a jiffy. I submitted it to Kamala for approval. It was not only approved but also countersigned. It was despatched immediately.

I knew full well that the obstinate boor would not care a fig for the notice. Litigation was inevitable and I set about the task forthwith. As the case was an important one and the first of its kind, I decided to entrust its fate to no less a lawyer than Sir Voyadi Ooltasami—that famous legal luminary of Maddington and the undisputed leader of its Bar.

Again the pen went over the paper like a locomotive. Goodness knows where I got the enthusiasm from! If one could however guess, I feel that I was solely inspired by the righteousness of my cause. In five minutes the letter of instructions was also ready for despatch.

Lawoor,
20th Oct., 1934.

Dear Sir Voyadi,

A highly controversial dispute having arisen between my father-in-law and myself, I am obliged to seek your help in the matter. In view of the importance and

novelty of the case I feel that it cannot be handled except by a man of your eminence. Your success, Sir Voyadi, in the famous 'Thair Vadai Defamation' case amply justifies my confidence. Indeed I indulge in no mean flattery when I say that the name you have established for yourself in that case echoes and re-echoes in all the coffee clubs of South India to whose *Thair Vadai* trade you have given no small impetus. I am quite sanguine that the justness of my cause, chiselled as it will be by your own talents, will bestow success on your labours.

Now, Kabardhar is my father-in-law and I his son-in-law. The indiscretion of marriage I became guilty of, happened ten years ago. I protested at that time that "Unless he agreed to support me until I stood on my own legs," I would not consent to take his daughter. He solemnly undertook to do so. As will be seen from his letter and my notice in reply thereto (both enclosed), he has now abruptly repudiated that contract. I hold, for the reasons given below, that this act on his part is contrary to law.

Firstly, according to the common acceptance of the term—and it is superfluous for me to add that every legal term should be understood in its etymological and ordinary meaning,—'father-in-law' means legal father, that is, father in the eye of the law. His status as such is the deliberate creation of law and is obviously intended for the benefit of the son-in-law. The moment, therefore, one man thrusts his daughter on another man, the relationship between the two men becomes, for all legal purposes, the same as that between a natural father and his son—except with this obvious difference—that the natural father produces the son and the other, the son's wife. But in other respects, and particularly in respect of the estate involved, there is no difference whatever according to law. So long as the two men continue to be father-in-law and son-in-law (that is, until the linking woman takes her departure to the divorce court or to the next world) this relationship will be inferred by law, even in spite of a contract to the contrary. The fact that the inflicter of daughters is dubbed 'father-in-law' and nothing else is open only to this interpretation.

In my case, however, there is, in addition, an express contract also and that contract rests solely on the stipulation aforesaid.

The natural father under the Hindu Law is bound to support his son so long as any ancestral property remains in his hands. It logically follows from the interpretation given above that this wholesome rule applies to the father-in-law as well. Now, in the case of my father-in-law even the tumbler with which he daily drinks water has been inherited from his ancestor.

There is absolutely no self-acquisition of his except a huge 'tummy' and a few diseases. Well, I claim no share in them. I need scarcely say that in these circumstances I am not only entitled to be maintained out of the ancestral estate but to claim a partition also. We shall, however, postpone assertion of the latter right for the present.

Secondly, the remedy lies on principles of equity, justice and good conscience also. It is a well recognised canon of natural justice that when live-stock are entrusted by one man to another they should be accompanied by an estate to rear them on. The unwanted girl was thrust on me but she was not followed by anything like an estate. And she has now, unwittingly though, multiplied herself fourfold. We can therefore invoke the court's equitable jurisdiction also.

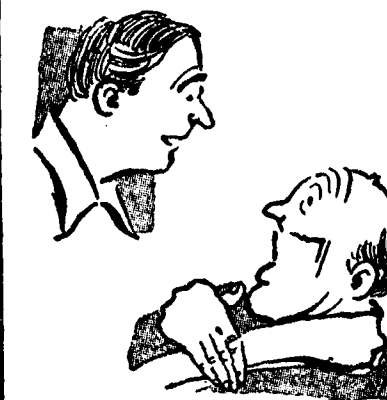
Lastly, even if any breach on my part is alleged, reasonable notice ought to have been given before even the contract could be repudiated. And in this case, where no less than a human relationship is sought to be severed and a poor young man sought to be thrown out into the open world to start his life afresh, the reasonable notice cannot certainly be for less than five years. It is needless for me to tell you that if the Court orders at least this notice, I can, in the meanwhile, set my house in order.

But you can take a firm stand on the first two arguments themselves, as it is clear that the breach, moral as well as legal, is wholly on the other side. Kabardhar's contention that I am idling away my time and that I make no serious attempts at 'job-hunting' is entirely beside the point. The stipulation was that he should support me until I could support myself. The causes that lead to my still remaining a dependant are, therefore, irrelevant.

I would also request you to try to obtain immediately a temporary injunction restraining the defendant from committing the breach, viz., the unlawful cessation of remittances.

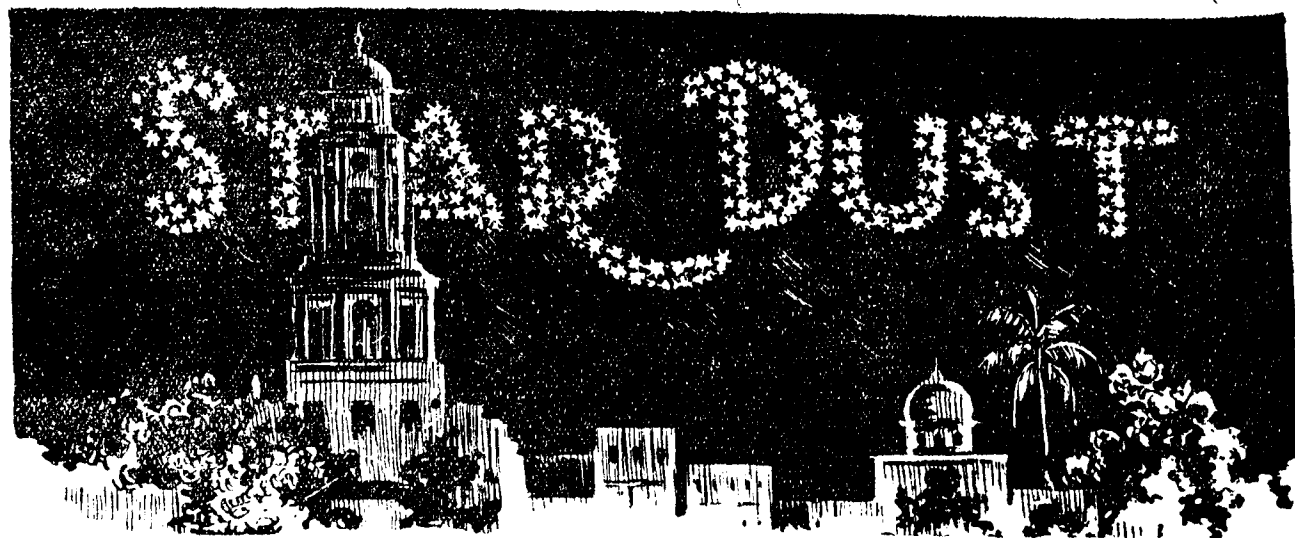
(Continued on page 22)

YES! I KNOW!



1. About 35,400 feet,—i.e. nearly seven miles—in the Pacific.
2. It is an instrument to measure the blood pressure of the arteries.
3. In maritime law, floating goods cast into the sea to lighten ships are called *flotsam*; when they sink without any trace, they are *jetsam*. The words have come to apply to all vulgar cast-off things.
4. Milton's *Lycidas*, Shelley's *Adonais*, Matthew Arnold's *Thyrsis*, and Tennyson's *In Memoriam*.
5. Daughter of Priam, the King of Troy, who made only evil prophecies. The name is now applied to persons who foretell ominous things.
6. It is an army term for 'self-inflicted-wound'.

For questions see Page 12.



Film Cities and their Offerings.

The world's largest film output is, in the aggregate, derived from three centres: Hollywood, Elstree and Berlin. By considering their offerings one can obtain a very accurate and interesting idea of the respective film cities.

Hollywood is by far the largest of them all. Her ambition is to suit the world; not only the American public, but the Hindus, the Chinese—any outpost that possesses a screen and a projector. Her God is the box-office. Art must go overboard if the public wants Mammon! If they tire of Mammon, give them art!

Next, we have Berlin where the Germans make films to suit themselves. An international success, with them, is just a happy coincidence. The star system, such as they have in Hollywood, does not obtain there.

Then London. Poor England, she is between two fires. She has not produced great film personalities; such of her actors there are, are drawn from the stage with their stage technique. As there are not many English women who can act just as well as their Hollywood and German sisters, she imports them from America and Germany—a Lubitsch complex.

Her unending stream of musicals in what she fondly believes to be the Viennese manner, is all due to the influence of the fanciful German and his Chevalier successes. London has the unexploited heritage of literature worth filming. But the inspiration and energy necessary for these are not there.

Bad Boy.

John Barrymore makes no secret of the fact that he used to be a bold, bad boy.

In a recent interview, he said:

"Was I tough? I went in for theft as a kid. I used to steal money from the other members of the family in small amounts, and once I hoarded the stolen coins until I had enough to buy a necklace for a symmetrical lady in Philadelphia, many years my senior, with whom I was

in love. Another time I appropriated my grandmother's jewels and hid them. While detectives were in the house, asking questions, I looked rather too innocent and my grandmother, who watched my face, drew her own conclusions, got rid of the detectives and used the well-known and well-worn slipper on me.....As a young man, I borrowed money, ate in saloons and slept where I could; and why the law never caught up with me is, to this day, beyond my understanding."

Mr. Queer Jobs.

One of the most versatile of minor jobs in filmdom is that of Jim Freeman, a Manchester boy, who works at the Paramount Studios, in Hollywood. Among many other jobs, he stalks around with a vapour gun, chasing insects which annoy players and buzz around the microphone; he stands by with a towel when temperamental stars burst into tears, and goes round with a long pole, a roll of cloth, a bag of nails and a hammer and gets rid of squeaks and echoes by nailing down noisy floor boards, and muffling unwanted reverberations.

Odds and Ends.

Bing Crosby recently became the proud father of twins—on Friday the 13th; now they call him "Bing Crosby!"

Until recently, June Knight wore a blonde wig. Sometime ago her hair was badly burnt by a hairdresser and it was necessary for the head to be shaved in order that her golden tresses should grow again. Now she is able to wear her own hair.

Marlene Dietrich, in order to give her hair that lovely golden glow which is one of the greatest points of her attractiveness, powders it with gold dust.

SOME people have a craze for writing diaries. They may live in the same place year in and year out; they may take the same route to catch the same tram to go to the same office but they all keep a diary. Nothing may happen to them out of the ordinary; sweepstakes may not bring them luck; even accidents may not visit them; but they still write a diary; they must chronicle the placid tenor of their lives. Such a man is my friend, Narayana Iyer. He is so great a disciplinarian that he wouldn't alter the time of his morning meal any day even by five minutes. He lives a quiet and unexciting kind of life. If he wasn't such a stickler for regularity, he might find something to put in his diary by taking a new route to his office—"I went to office today by the Rangayya Naicken Street and not by Purshottam Street which is my usual route." But unless he were told that a circus tent had been pitched in Rangayyan street he would not dream of taking that route to his office. Then what sort of things does he put down in his diary? In point of fact he does not write a

diary; he writes essays in his diary. At the top of the page he mentions some casual incident and then proceeds to point a moral. An illustration will perhaps explain clearly what I mean. On the page marked 4th December in his diary of last year you find this—"On my way home from office I caught sight of a dog one of whose legs was injured—I suppose by some reckless car. Though it is admitted on all hands that traffic regulations should be stiffened, there has not been the slightest indication during the past six months, of any attempt on the part of anybody to make an agitation and force the hand of the authorities. Obviously nobody cares what happens to a dog. If this kind of apathy towards the safety of the dumb animals prevails in this country of Ahimsa, I do not know what it is like in other countries where people openly pooh-pooh the doctrine of Non-violence!"

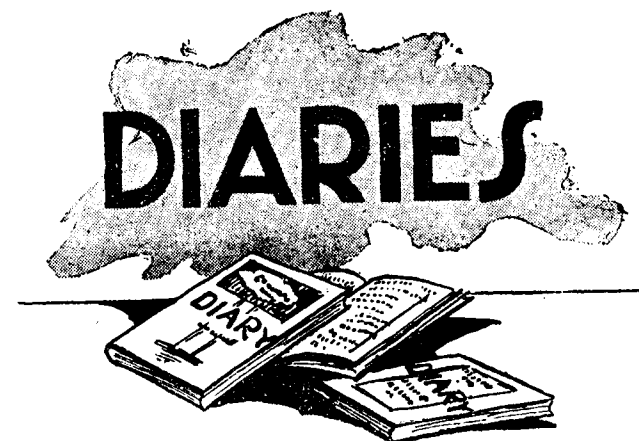
A friend of mine who 'hails' from the banks of the Kaveri (which is supposed to be congenial to mathematical genius) fills his diary with accounts.

This entry is typical.

Tram to office	...	0-2-0
Post Card	...	0-0-9
Tiffin	...	0-1-6
Flower for wife	...	0-0-4
Pan (for self)	...	0-0-3
Tram back	...	0-2-0
Total	...	0-6-10

I used to buy a diary every New Year's Day in the past, but as nothing worth mentioning happened to me or to any of my belongings (except that once my bicycle almost ran over a pup) and also as I was lazy, I left those diaries unfilled. They are now being used by my nephew as 'rough notebooks'.

My brother writes a diary because he says that his diaries will be invaluable when he becomes famous. "You never know," says he in reference to the truth contained in the subordinate clause of the previous sentence, beginning with 'when'. The thought that his diaries may prove to be the germs of future autobiographical literature makes him very careful in his entries. The entries attempt to be literary pieces. The other day for instance, I read what he had written on the 14th February. It was as follows:—"Climbed up the roof of the house to watch the sunset. Golden and russet clouds lay piled on one another; slowly, all the glory departed; the clouds lost their gold and began to wear



By
'TIRUMALAI NALLAN'

an ashen hue; the sun sank slowly inch by inch; the whole thing was inexpressibly sad." That is just like my brother. The sinking of the sun below the horizon takes place every day and has taken place every day since the world began and I am sure even my neighbour Raghavendra Rao, who is a clerk in the local Co-operative Stores, has seen the sun "sinking slowly, inch by inch"—but Raghavendra Rao has a sense of values; he knows it is not worth while putting such thoughts into a diary; in fact, he knows that the drop of ink which has gone to the writing of that passage may be more usefully shed in writing the house-hold account.

If Narayana Iyer and my brother belong to one extreme, Ramakrishnan belongs to the other. Ramakrishnan has travelled all over Europe except two or three countries and of course he wrote a diary when he was touring the places. I shall give here a few extracts from his diary:—

July, 22.—Arrived at Vienna. Hotel fairly comfortable; not at all costly. Vienna seems to be a nice place.

July, 30.—Prague. Baggage trouble again. Can't understand a word of this infernal language, etc.

September, 2.—Milan. Lost my guide-book in the bus.

October, 4.—Lausanne. Rather chilly. Slept well last night.

Madras, 16th February, 1935.

DEAR MOTHER,

I HAVE just been making a drawing of something that, in my opinion, is the means of the future regeneration of India. How I came to think of it is quite a story.

One afternoon, I heard a commotion on the verandah outside our barrack-room. I went out, and saw a man beating our boot-boy. It was a man wearing a *topi*.

"Hi!" I shouted, and asked the man why he was beating the boy.

"I am an electrician employed by the contractors," explained the man with the *topi*. "I was beating this fellow for being insolent."

"What did he do?" I enquired.

"He refused to carry my tools," said the man, bursting with indignation.

"There is some mistake," I replied. "We employ this boot-boy. You have no right to make him carry your tools." Several of my comrades came out, and they growled in agreement.

"What!" shouted the man. "Won't you support me in dealing with this black fellow?"

"Which black fellow?" I said innocently, looking at him, and looking at the boot-boy.

The man flushed, and became very angry. "Bah! Low-class soldiers!" he said, and spat and walked away very quickly.

He had only taken a few steps, however, when his manner completely changed. His shoulders drooped and he began to raise his *topi* repeatedly. A very large man, also wearing a *topi*, hove into sight.

"You scum!" howled the very large man. "Haven't you completed that wiring yet?"

The man began to stutter in a low voice, and seemed quite panic-stricken. The large man took no notice of his excuses. "You are fined half a day's pay!" he shouted. "You lazy, good-for-nothing black fellow!"

While this scene was in progress, a car drew up silently on the road, and a European leaned out of the window. "De Souza!" cried the European, sternly.

The very large man suddenly cringed, and hurried towards the car. He took off his *topi*, and began to speak to the European in a fawning manner. The European, however, scarcely listened. With an air of disgust and scorn he told De Souza to be more careful in attending to his duties. The very large man began to plead, but the European slammed his gears and drove off, belching smoke into De Souza's face.

I went back to my bungalow and when I thought of these incidents, I felt ashamed. The workman had

The Letters of

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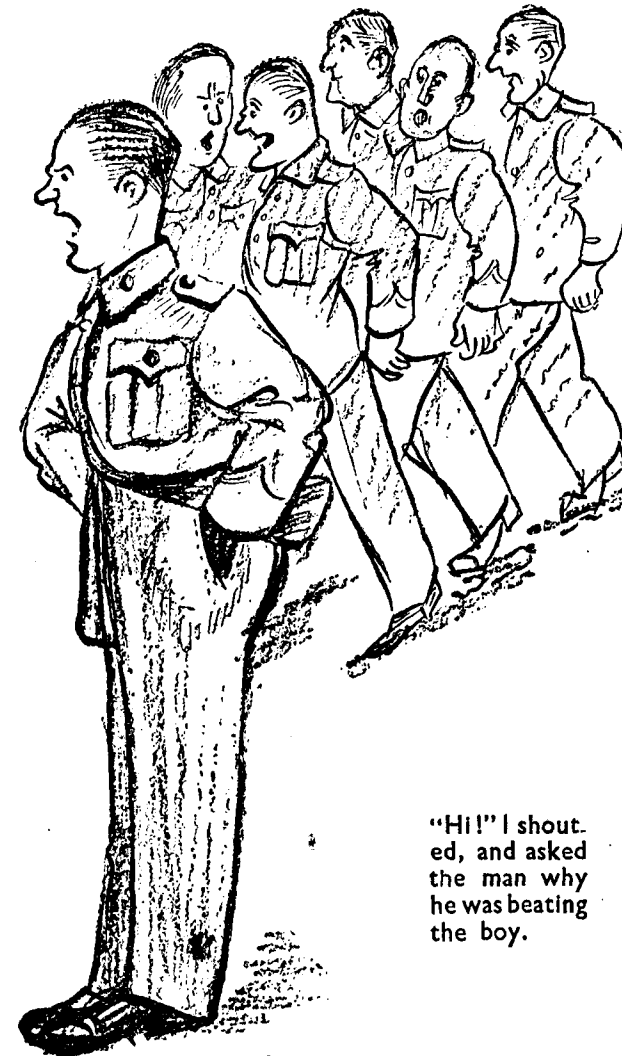


shown contempt for our boot-boy. When we refused to share his disdain, he showed contempt for us. The foreman showed contempt to the workman, and the overseer showed contempt to the foreman. It worried me to think that the whole system of precedence in India is based on contempt for one's fellow-man. The result of these cogitations was my epoch-making drawing.

A shocking thing which strikes a soldier on landing in India, is to see Europeans treating Indians like dirt. At first, the soldier wants to protest against such dis-

Private Joyfull

Turns Reformer



"Hi!" I shouted, and asked the man why he was beating the boy.

graceful conduct on the part of his countrymen, but after a while he sees that it is part of the system. He notices that Indians have the same custom. He notices that one class of Indians treats another class like dirt. In fact, this doing dirt to people is unnatural to a newly-arrived Englishman.

There is a class of people in India called sweepers. The respectable middle-class Indians regard these sweepers with disdain. Indians are well-bred, so they do not actively abuse the sweepers; they just ignore them. A sweeper is thought to be a degraded form of life, whose humanity and personal feelings are beneath consideration. He is thought to be fit only to handle filth.

As long as there are sweepers in India, India will fail to achieve greatness as a nation. There are about sixty million sweepers in the country, and a society founded on the degradation of one-sixth of its manhood can

never become self-respecting.

I have talked to sweepers, water-carriers, farmers, shop-keepers, soldiers, lawyers and all kinds of Indians. They are quite worthy men, certainly the equals of similar men in other countries, and often very charming too. Yet among themselves they are eaten by a canker called the inferiority-complex. They show contempt for one another and enforce degrading distinctions on one another.

Thoughtful Indians often blame their inferiority-complex on to the English. But in spite of the many sins our nation has committed in India—usually with the best of intentions—the cultivation of the inferiority-complex is not one of them. Rather, I would blame the Indians for investing us with a superiority-complex.

Although there are other great religions in India, the system of thought which prevails in daily life is derived from Hinduism. Hinduism has such a deeply-rooted philosophy that it colours the life of the members of any community that comes to India. No race can entirely resist the infiltration of Hindu thought into its life. The history of India is a history of successive races which came, ruled for a time, but were slowly absorbed, until they lost their identity under the all-embracing Hindu umbrella.

Even a humble soldier, who has little contact with the general population, finds his outlook acquiring a Hindu tinge during his stay in the country; and an Indian Army man, who serves in India for years, often becomes completely Indianised. I admit that an Indianised Englishman is sometimes an objectionable creature, who is grossly insulting to Indians of all classes. But I must say that the Indians themselves taught him to be like that. They taught him unconsciously, by the example of Indian ideas of inferiority and superiority.

It seems obvious that if cultured Hindus desire to hold up their heads in the world, they must first allow their uncultured fellow-Hindus to hold up their heads. The high-class man who despises and oppresses a low-class man, is perpetuating a principle which recoils on his own head; for no one is so high that there are not people still higher, to despise and oppress him in their turn.

Some people will say that this is a matter of caste, which no one must interfere with, because Queen Victoria said so. Yet it does not strike me that way. Right at the very bottom, the great idea of Hinduism is the essential sacredness and harmony of all forms of life. Well, even a sweeper is a form of life, and it cannot be beyond the wit of Hindu leaders to arrange for the recognition of the human dignity of a sweeper. I believe that even the essentials of caste observances could be preserved intact, while granting this recognition. But

(Continued on page 22)

The Story of My Life



VII.

"Oh God!"—Anybody.

I am not a Metropolitan by birth. It was only later in my life—when I went up for my degree that I received the metropolitan touch. Till then I was a mofussilite, an 'up-country' boor, an uninformed yokel, a bucolic booby; which is as much as to say that I had not come across those wonderful modern inventions and innovations so indispensable to life like Cocktail Shakers, Safety Sock-Suspenders, Patent Cigarette lighters, Bath Cubes, Superior Bromo, guaranteed Hair Oils, Brilliantines, Face Waxes, Vanishing Creams, 'Zip' shirts and MacCullums. I ate, drank, slept and worshipped as others did in the country and found life enjoyable too.

But the number of deities worshipped bewildered me—the number and character. Temples dedicated to Gods and Goddesses were sprinkled about the country in great profusion. Some were magnificent edifices, others lonely cottages in deserted heaths. Likewise

MIE

worship. Others were ferocious and blood-thirsty, essentially non-vegetarians. I have an idea they secretly used to scoff at the other set, calling them milk-sops and weak-kneed pacifists. They themselves, on the other hand, (apparently) relished sacrifices of goats and fowl and an occasional pot of something strong.

The citizenry worshipped the patrician Gods as well as the plebeians with utter impartiality. Of course, some of the deities were needed only on certain occasions.

Each of them was a specialist in one thing: *Mariamamma* was in charge of the smallpox department. Whenever an epidemic broke out, she was sent for; *Karuppan* attended to cholera cases; *Chotalai* had specialised in children's diseases while *Kali* was a sort of general practitioner. Some of them were assassins too, professionals who could be hired for a certain fee to despatch one's enemies (it was said).

Now, in addition to the daily service, once a year there was a grand festival when processions were taken out and drums banged. The biggest event of the year in the locality, however, was the celebration of the anniversary of the reigning deity. To this event I was taken one year.

There was a fair usually on such occasions. Besides, it was also a big social event. Fashionable ladies came to show off the latest things in *sarees* and jewels: the not-so-fashionables came to copy them. Vermilion, scarlet, deep blue and utter yellow were also greatly in prominence. The *elite* came and said to one another: "My dear, what a beautiful *saree*! How too too thrilling!" whereas they meant "You cat and oh! What a *saree*!" Young maidens came early and took up strategic positions; and young men, after having undergone regular spring cleaning with the help of the barber, *dhobi* and toilet soaps, paraded grandly on the grounds very self-consciously, imagining themselves the target of a hundred pairs of beautiful eyes. There were also the *beaux* from the colleges in the Metropolis who carried with them a *blase* attitude, an air of insufferable tolerance, a suffocating smell of pomade and a desire to appear favourably before the feminine section of the crowd—rustic tho' they were. Scandals were exchanged oftener than *pansupari*. The usual sharpers, card-trick experts, sweetmeat-sellers and toy-vendors were present, adding the necessary flavour to the whole affair.

The programme began at about 4 p.m. with the letting off of a thousand monster crackers and the banging of a hundred drums. It must be understood that the drums were not banged indiscriminately, casually, according to the whim of each drummer. It was rhythmic movement consisting of periods and climaxes—a composition in fact which the drummers knew by heart. An elephant beautifully caparisoned with its red umbrella and shining brass ornaments was then taken out in a procession.

The hero of the day was the God-man, the man who was supposed to be inspired by a visitation of the Almighty within himself. There was such an institution in the temples—especially the caste temples to which he was an appendage. The honour of becoming one was much coveted and the appointment being for life, the selection was very strict. There was a painful initiation to be undergone. The aspirant had to prove to the

multitude that he was a worthy vehicle of the word of God. He had to perform miracles. If he survived the ordeal he was elected and the accoutrements awarded to him. They consisted of a piece of red cloth for the waist, another to be used as a cross-belt, jingling anklets and a sword with the shape of the figure 9. On ceremonial occasions like this he put them on, grasped the sword and exhibited various symptoms of divine inspiration like malarial shivers and whooping cough paroxysms.

He was, as I said, the hero of the day. People with grievances submitted them to him and he granted reprieves and dispensations generously—for a fee, of course. In order to impress the multitude sufficiently, he generally used to begin the show with a few hacks on the head with the sword which affected his income not a little. Tho' under the spell of a non-earthly fervour, he was human enough to cast appreciative glances in the direction of the ladies' pavilion.

Besides this official God-man, there were honorary ones who just acted for the occasion. Their fervour—like 'Dutch-Courage'—owed itself to certain liquids which they imbibed before the performance. It was an epidemic with them. One started the St. Vitus' Dance, touched his colleagues who were waiting and they joined him. They always strove to outshine the regular professional but with little success. They never attracted a clientele but carried on still, out of animal spirits—and probably other spirits.

The procession returned after reaching another shrine half a mile away, the drums, pipes, bugles and conches still in attendance. The elephant advanced slowly and the *mahout* stood sometimes holding its tusk and sometimes putting his hand in its mouth to show off. I felt envious of him and decided that I would become a *mahout* myself when I grew up. The ancients in their *Balaclava* caps and scarlet blankets were not impressed. They started talking about the days when they were young. The elephant experts declared how they were able to distinguish the elephants by the mere smell.

After the return of the procession there was an interval when the priest conducted the service. The

priest was a powerful person indeed! One of his predecessors it was averred, was so powerful, led such a blameless life that he was said to have ordered about the deity himself! He used to make the God carry home a bag of cakes every night for his wife. He would tie them up and say, "Oh *Deva*! Carry this for me." And it was done. The *Deva* grew tired of it, especially as he had to walk soon after dinner. But he could not do anything to this spotless man. He bided his time until one day the priest, while bathing, left out a toe unwashed, thus remaining unclean. That night he was killed!

After the service came the long expected fire-works. That year they had got down a pyrotechnic expert from afar and something big was expected. He began with a sky explosive. With a thrill we saw the shell mounting up—detected it by means of a spark. But having gone up as far as it could, the shell started coming down, instead of exploding. It gathered momentum and the horrified spectators saw destruction facing them. There was a stampede. The shell fell down—none knew where: nobody was looking up. A search party went in quest of this erring rocket. At last it was discovered in a field a few hundred yards away. Not one was bold enough to approach it. Like a wild animal in a cage, they contemplated it from a respectable distance. Old men declared what they would have done had they been younger; young men told one another what they might have done had they not had an attack of malaria a week ago, or had they not had a bad cold. Someone then suggested water. So water was thrown at it. A grave was dug and it was rolled into it with a bamboo pole. Then the grave was filled in and everybody breathed a sigh of relief.

The expert when questioned by an angry management, also got angry and said he had expected it because they had not supplied him with enough materials. He threatened to walk out but was pacified. Then he went on to the next item.

This was a repeating rocket which was meant to explode more than once—in fact 6 times—and shower green, blue, silver, golden and pink stars. A wonderful thing full of suspense, colour and exhilaration. Our friend's rocket started all right. But an unexpected change in its direction slightly spoilt the effect. Instead of climbing after each outburst it started coming down. The second constellation was exuded about 25 yards from the ground. Down.....the third about 5 yards. Crash! it fell among the busy and unconscious drummers who were all the while pounding away. Once it touched the earth it recovered itself and began to explode with conscientious regularity. Some of the drummers got off with a few burns; the rest without a few sq. ft. of their skins.

The expert showed uneasiness but blustered a good deal. A deputation waited on him which rather forcefully urged on him the instant cessation of activities and hinted at a desire to see him in a well-known place. In fact, they gave him hell and told him to go there. He left hastily. And I.....



The hero of the day was the God-man—the man who was supposed to be inspired by the visitation of the Almighty within himself.

The Letters of Private Joyfull—(Continued from page 19)

such details are not for a foreigner to discuss. A fellow like myself can only see the broad outlines.

Reformers have all sorts of grandiloquent schemes to bring about this recognition, but the defect of reformers is that they are far more interested in themselves than in their reforms. I once listened on the outskirts of an uplift meeting, and the only idea I got was that the speaker was a very great and noble man. He knew a lot of fine-sounding phrases, but nothing of the hard facts of his subject. He was just being a noble reformer, but was not reforming anything in particular, except perhaps his hearers' notion of his own importance. Well, I am not of importance to anyone but you, dear Mother, and so I just have a simple practical idea in my head; and the scheme does not even include a *Rao Sahib* for Private Joyfull.

My idea is that the only way to create world-respect for the Indian intelligentsia, is to remove the degradation of Indian sweepers. As long as there is filth to be carried in India, the filth-carriers will be disdained, and the principle of disdain will spread upwards, and poison Indian society.

So my drawing does away with filth-carrying. It is a drawing of a simple sanitary house-latrine, with a simple supply of flushing-water, and a simple cesspool-connection. The whole installation would cost about a hundred and fifty rupees in urban areas, and much less where land was available around the house. The apparatus could be kept in order by the most fastidious person, and maintenance-charges would be negligible.

To give effect to this revolutionary concept, I have thought out a simple law, compelling the landlord or owner of every urban dwelling and tenement to instal this apparatus. If the owner neglected to fit it within a certain time, he would become liable to a monthly fine somewhat exceeding the cost of installation. The local authorities would instal the apparatus, and recoup itself out of the fines.

THE LEGAL ASPECT—(Continued from page 15)

As my wife who is the cause of action in this case is a regular subscriber to the Maddington Law Reports, the cause is within the jurisdiction of the Court.

I being still alive, the suit is not barred by limitation.

Failing the civil remedy, I intend setting the criminal law in motion against the man. He is guilty of cheating me—me, whose interest he is bound to protect both by contract and by law, he being still the father-in-law and I his son-in-law. He is therefore criminally liable under Section 418 of the Indian Penal Code. But I shall consult you about this later.

I may now be permitted to add that the motive behind the contemplated litigation is not wholly personal. A favourable decision in this case will be a god-send to the whole world of sons-in-law. So far as I am aware, no Court in the whole world has as yet adjudicated on

So human beings would no longer be required to carry filth. Ah, you say, what is to become of the poor sweepers, when they have no more filth to carry? Well, they will cease to be poor sweepers, and will become employees of the All-India Development Corporation.

The All-India Development Corporation is another idea of mine. It would finance itself by floating a huge public loan, and gradually become self-supporting. Except for meeting interest-charges and the repayment of capital, it would not make a profit, but work as a public utility corporation. It would find employment not only for an army of ex-sweepers, but also for large numbers of the intelligentsia who are at present unemployed.

The Development Corporation would take in hand the one-third of India which at present lies derelict. Wherever you travel in India, you see enormous tracts of land which are frightful deserts because no one has the enterprise plus the capital to make them fruitful. Time and again, in these apparent deserts, I noticed signs that there was water only twenty or thirty feet under the ground. These huge areas could be brought into cultivation. Similarly, India abounds in sources of untapped mineral wealth, and everywhere there are potential industries awaiting the magic hand of capital and organisation. Indian people have too long expected the Government, with its heavy responsibilities and limited funds, to take the lead in such enterprises. The Development Corporation would enable Indians to undertake their own rehabilitation. Ten million men are hard enough for all the work that cries to be done. At present, the ten million men are simply employed carrying other people's filth. The very existence of such a class keeps the whole of India in chains.

But I don't suppose anyone will listen to the ideas of a mere private soldier.

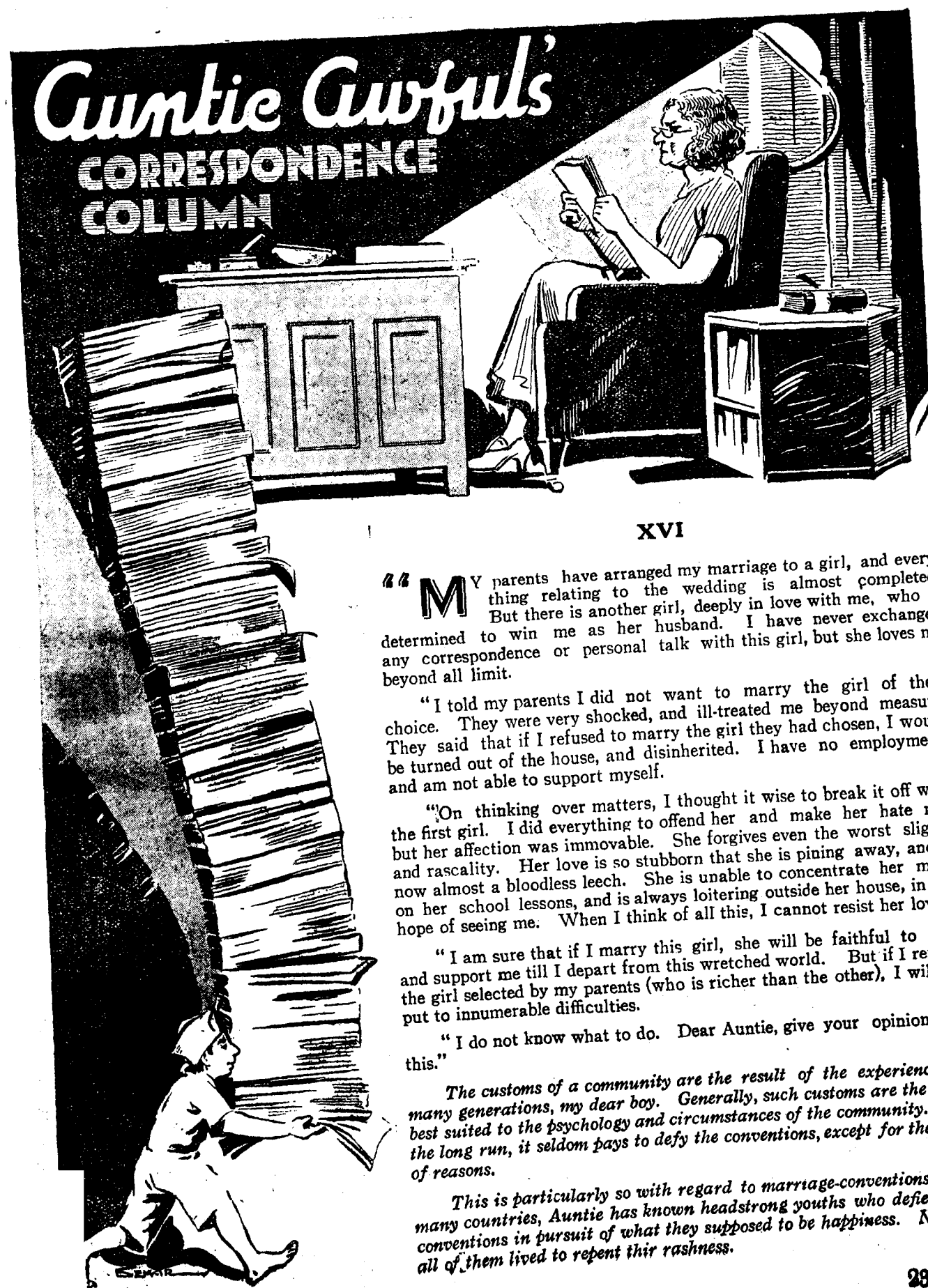
Your Loving Son,
OBEAH JOYFULL

this point. And for want of such a precedent the lingering sons-in-law are tamely suffering a thousand ills at the hands of their cruel, imposing and covenant-breaking fathers-in-law. I have therefore deemed it my duty to bring this urgent problem before the Court. I am suing more or less in a representative capacity. As the motive is thus more philanthropic than personal, I expect and am confident too, that you will not only conduct the case gratuitously but even bear the costs of the suit from out of your own pocket.

Thanking you in anticipation,

I remain,
Sir Voyadi,
Faithfully yours,
Son-of-law.

Sympathetic reader, you will be informed of the result in due course.



XVI

"MY parents have arranged my marriage to a girl, and everything relating to the wedding is almost completed. But there is another girl, deeply in love with me, who is determined to win me as her husband. I have never exchanged any correspondence or personal talk with this girl, but she loves me beyond all limit.

"I told my parents I did not want to marry the girl of their choice. They were very shocked, and ill-treated me beyond measure. They said that if I refused to marry the girl they had chosen, I would be turned out of the house, and disinherited. I have no employment, and am not able to support myself.

"On thinking over matters, I thought it wise to break it off with the first girl. I did everything to offend her and make her hate me, but her affection was immovable. She forgives even the worst slights and rascality. Her love is so stubborn that she is pining away, and is now almost a bloodless leech. She is unable to concentrate her mind on her school lessons, and is always loitering outside her house, in the hope of seeing me. When I think of all this, I cannot resist her love.

"I am sure that if I marry this girl, she will be faithful to me, and support me till I depart from this wretched world. But if I refuse the girl selected by my parents (who is richer than the other), I will be put to innumerable difficulties.

"I do not know what to do. Dear Auntie, give your opinion on this."

The customs of a community are the result of the experience of many generations, my dear boy. Generally, such customs are the ones best suited to the psychology and circumstances of the community. In the long run, it seldom pays to defy the conventions, except for the best of reasons.

This is particularly so with regard to marriage-conventions. In many countries, Auntie has known headstrong youths who defied the conventions in pursuit of what they supposed to be happiness. Nearly all of them lived to repent their rashness.

Among your people, it is the custom for parents to arrange marriages, and your letter makes it obvious that the custom is a wise one.

All over the world, young girls develop hysterical passions, founded on fancy. Young men often succumb to the glamour and drama of such a devotion. Your letter shows that you do not love the girl. How can you, when you do not really know her. You are merely fascinated by the extremity of her passion.

You belong to a community who get married in their teens, hence the wise provision that parents should protect their children from wayward fancies. If you wish to enjoy the privileges of other communities, who follow their own fancy in marriage, you must also accept the penalties of such arrangements. Members of communities, who choose their own brides, cannot usually afford to marry until they are thirty years of age.

Daisy (Coonoor). "It is very cold this time of the year. When sitting in the house of an evening, my knees always feel chilly. Please suggest a remedy for this." Find a young man, my dear, and get him to sit on them.

Secret Society (Madras). So you want a recipe for invisible ink, or suggestions for some other means of communicating secretly with your companions? Auntie thinks that the most secret way of communicating with your friends would be by means of advertisements in the personal column of a certain local periodical. No one ever reads it.

Mother's Help (Rangoon). If you want to give your mother a surprise for her birthday, why not present her with a box of cheroots? Choose the sort that have fireworks concealed in the middle. When the first one goes off with a bang, it will be a lovely surprise.

Henry (Solon). To relieve the pain caused by in-growing toe-nails, cut neat holes in all your shoes, so that the toes will protrude. Then suspend the shoes around your neck by means of the shoe-laces, and walk in comfort.

A Lover (Ceylon). "There is a relation of my uncle's in Southern India, a girl fifteen years of age, whom I love and want to marry. She is in a convent-school, and this year will pass her III Form. I want to stop her studies this year, as I have passed only the IV Form. I am in touch with her brother, who is in a college. She is in India, and I am in Ceylon, and I want to know how to convince her of my love. I also want to convince her brother, whom she will meet when they both go home for their vacation. How can I make her stop her studies?"

You set me a difficult problem, dear boy. Unless you have a private wireless-station, it is not easy for you, in Ceylon, to communicate convincingly with the girl or her brother, who are in India. As your messenger is not a Mercury, but a prosaic postal peon, your best hope of carrying conviction is by equally prosaic proposals. Write to the brother, and tell him straightforwardly what material sacrifices you are prepared to make, and what provision you can offer the girl. If your proposals are attractive, and the girl is fond of you, she may be willing to give up her education and marry you. Unless you can prove your sincerity by some such concrete offer, you can hardly expect the girl to abandon her studies. Whichever way the matter turns out, Auntie wishes you every happiness.

Curiosity (Penang). "I did not think you would be as smart as all that, in your previous answer. You made one little slip, but it did not matter, for it made me laugh. Now tell me what you understand by *tong-kangs*, *tong-kats*, and *Orang-Putehs*." Really, dear boy, how could you be so cruel, not only to Auntie, but to all her readers in distant places who have never heard of a *kriss*, a *kompang*, and all the other funny things you have, way down in the Straits? However, dear Nephew, all the things you mention may be encountered during a visit to Penang. Travellers land from the harbour in a *tong-kang*, refresh themselves after the fatigue of the journey in a *tong-kat*, and then go sight-seeing. If they visit the Zoo, they are sure to see an *Orang-Puteh*.....but on the same side of the bars as themselves. And now it is Auntie's turn. What do YOU understand by a 'Jabberwock', a 'Pobble', and a 'Slithy Tove'? It is quite a fair question, because all these terms appear in the works of a well-known English poet.

Bicycle (Jullundur). "I bought a bicycle for my little boy two years ago. I have extended the draw-bars to their greatest length, but even so the bicycle is getting too small for him. What should I do?" As you cannot enlarge the bicycle to fit the boy, my dear sir, why not cut down the boy to fit the bicycle?

Clerk (Circumlocution Office). Auntie agrees that the piles of letters you receive every day are a dreadful nuisance. The best thing you can do is to procure a large basket, and throw all the letters into it, unopened. Now and again, of course, people will send you indignant requests for a reply, but if these also go into the basket unopened, they will not cause any inconvenience. However, you must be careful to maintain a register of all letters received, and this will convince inspecting officers of the efficiency of the office. Every six months, empty the basket, and deal with such letters as still seem to require a reply. The beauty of this system is that in six months most letters have answered themselves. The circumstances under which they were written no longer exist, or the sender is dead, or something.

Inexperienced (Rawalpindi). Auntie is sorry to hear that your husband did not give you any housekeeping-money last week. Yes, my dear, soldiers are paid weekly. It appears that it rained four days last week and your husband told you that soldiers are not paid for rainy days. Auntie does not think that rainy days are the cause of the trouble: it is more likely to be wet nights.

Apprentice (Howrah). You send me the following extract from railway regulations: "When trains moving in opposite directions are approaching each other on separate lines, drivers will be required to bring their respective trains to a halt before the point of meeting, and be careful not to proceed till each train has passed the other." You want to know what you should do if you are one of the drivers in question. Auntie thinks that the only thing to do is to build a rest-house beside the line, and settle down there until you have reached pensionable age. The passengers will be able to walk to their destination.

Curiosity (Penang). What, are you still puzzling about the Pobble and the Slithy Toves? Let Auntie quote you a line:

".....Everyone knows
That a Pobble is better without his toes."
Now have you got it?



By Ram Saran Sharma

AS Indra bent before the big family safe she espied a nicely wrapped package.

Indra's grandfather had died a few days before and she was now the only living member of the family—an heiress to a huge fortune. She was hardly out of her teens and yet was beautiful with big Eastern eyes, a creamy skin and the face of a Diana. She had rushed home on hearing of her grandpa's death.

Out of idle curiosity Indra unwrapped the package and she saw a brass disc. Her curiosity was aroused. She peeped into it as she saw some writing on it. The writing ran:—

"The great sage Vogmitra told me that in consequence of a sin of mine, a curse would run in the family. The curse is that he whom my heirs love will suffer. The curse will be most intense in the seventh generation when the object of love will die. The seventh descendant can redeem it by doing a pious act, when the writing shall be effaced.

But alas she will be a lonely girl who will lose her father and brothers when young. To her is left the act of atonement."

Indra stood still and thought. A lonely girl..... a lonely girl.....the words seemed to hammer themselves into her ears. Was she not lonely? Had she not lost her father and brothers when quite young?

She shuddered at the very idea of the curse. Her lover to die! God!

Indra called the old *chowkidar* who was present at her grandfather's death.

She shuddered at the very idea of the curse.
Her lover to die! God!

"Dhani Singh, did Grandpa say anything about me when he died?" she asked with evident anxiety in her voice.

"Nothing, Huzoor," replied Dhani Singh, "absolutely nothing."

The *chowkidar* bowed his head. He felt sorry for her.

Indra was silent. Strange, that he had said nothing. "Did he say nothing?" she asked.

"No, nothing particular," said the *chowkidar*, "only, master appeared to be in great grief and said, 'The great family will end'."

Alone, Indra sat thinking. She had no doubt now that she was the seventh heir referred to. That was why her grandpa had said that the family would end.

She owed a duty to the family. Could she not do something to remove the curse?

Suddenly she got up. She put the disc in her bag. Her mind was made up.

II

Indra sat at her desk, a famous woman now. Her name was ringing through the country as the most charitable woman.

Hundreds of students owed their study to her charity. Dispensaries were run at her expense. Widows were fed by her bounty. She had done something.

A servant entered with a card.

The visitor was Mr. Amar Nath. "There is absolutely no arrangement for primary education of poor children. Something ought to be done," he said.

"Yes, what do you propose?" asked Indra.

"I propose to start a fund."

"How much do you think you will require?"

"About fifty-thousand."

"Well, I shall give you that," said Indra calmly.

Mr. Amar Nath gasped. To give away such a big sum! Good Heavens! She must be worth millions to be giving away so much. However, it was a good day's work.

He said, "You are noble. You will earn the lasting gratitude of the poor by this act of generosity....."

The moment Mr. Amar Nath left, she took out the brass disc with trembling hands. Rubbing her moist eyes she scanned the disc. The ominous script was still there.

With a moan Indra buried her face in her hands and gave herself up to a burst of tears.

What was she expected to do?

III

Years passed. Indra was living at Hardwar in a hut. She had not married, for, did she not know the terrible curse? Proposals for marriage had come by the hundreds but she had rejected them all. Her looks were poisoned, she was fated to suffer and be an outcast from the kingdom of love.

And here she was trying to wash off her curse by acts of piety.

Hundreds of *sadhus* were fed at her place every day.

She bathed in the Ganges, ate little and was all day long worshipping the Gods.

It was evening. The great *mahant* Jagan Nath Giri had come to see Indra.

He was told that she was praying and would come out to see him after that. He waited.

Indra bowed before him.

"God bless you," said the old Sanyasi, "why have you taken to such a hard life at your age, my child?"

"Maharaj," said Indra, "one must wash away one's sins."

"Surely your sins cannot be so great," said the Sanyasi "You have atoned by your prayers."

"Is it a pious act?"

"Indeed it is, worship of God is the most pious....."

Indra was not listening again. Hope gleamed in her heart.

Trembling, hesitant, Indra took out the disc. And then gave a moan.

The writing was still there.

IV

Indra came out of a shop.

There were dark circles under her dreamy, melancholy eyes.

A child's cry attracted Indra. It was a dirty looking under-fed weakling. Indra turned to go. But something stopped her. Her heart melted within her.

"Why do you cry, my child?"

"My dollie, he snatched it away."

"Who?" asked Indra tenderly. The child pointed in one direction. Indra took him up and wiped his tears away with her kerchief.

"That was my only one, I can't buy another. I have no money. My papa and mama are dead."

Indra felt a surging pity for this poor forlorn child. Her eyes filled. She pulled out her purse.

As she put her hand in, she felt the brass disc. She trembled as she remembered the curse and took it out.

And as she looked at it she saw there was no writing on it!

In a fit of ecstasy Indra covered the bewildered child with kisses. Her tears fell, her face was aglow.



Indra felt a surging pity for this poor forlorn child.

"THE ADMIRABLE RAMU"

By 'THEA'

66 RAMU! I say, Ramu! Oh-h—! Where the h—! are you? Ramu!"

"Coming, sir, coming."

"Ramu! I say, Ramu!! I am d—d if I won't sack him straightaway."

"Coming, sir, coming."

"I say, what do you mean by keeping me waiting like this? Don't you know I am dining out?"

"Yes, sir, the *dhobi* has just come."

"The *dhobi* just come? What has that got to do with this?"

"Sorry, sir, but he was just telling me that he has lost your dress shirt."

We, Iyengars, are a long suffering race. Sufferance is our badge or something as somebody said. But this nearly got my goat, set my teeth on edge, you know what. Here was Gopal Iyengar, the last of an illustrious race, with a date with the fairest lady in all Madras, faced with a cataclysm. A bright idea flashed in my mind.

"Oh, well, it doesn't really matter. We have that spare shirt."

"I am afraid, sir, we have lost that too. You know, sir, after the party with Miss—ahem—Mister Florence White—, yes sir, very well, sir."

"Now, don't stand gaping there like an old aunt. I must be off in five minutes. Ask the driver to get the car ready; and, is the bath hot?"

"Yes, sir, but I presume Stencer's are closed just now, sir."

"What has Stencer's got to do with my bath?"

"I presume it is too late, sir, to buy a new shirt."

"Do you mean to say I haven't a shirt to put on this evening?"

To put it mildly, I collapsed. At 7 P.M. no one expects any reputable shop to be open, or fair dames to sell dress-shirts. And without a dress-shirt!—I might as well have thought of appearing in His Majesty's Box at Ascot without a top-hat, or shaking hands with—Mussolini with a top-hat on. A soft voice broke the silence.

"If I may suggest, sir?"

Silence, dead silence.

"I believe 40 is your size, sir, and collar 17. I have a shirt ready for you, sir."

"Ha! That is something. You are a jewel among *dhobis*, Ramu. Pity you were not an ambassador or something."

"Not at all, sir, if I may take the liberty. My uncle who was Ambassador at the Court of the Nawab of Ohore used to tell me....."

"Never mind the Nawab, but where did you get this shirt from?"

"From Mr. Sitaram, sir."

"But he is not in town."

"No, sir, but his bearer is."

"Oh well, where's the beastly thing?"

"In the dressing room, sir."

Well, well, so far, honesty has been the sheet-anchor of the Petupati Iyengars. But here was I, not in false feathers, or false light, but actually in a borrowed shirt, to say the least, that is.

I must say, I was up rather early the next morning. Only ten-ish, when Ramu rattled about with the tea things and woke me up.

"Well, Ramu, what date is it?"

"Twenty-sixth, sir."

"Oh, well, is it Sunday?"

"No, sir, Monday."

"Well, well, where are the papers? Any letters?"

"No letters, sir, but your aunt Kamala called, sir."

"Oh hell! When?"

"At 4 P.M. yesterday, sir."

"Did she expect me to be at home at 4 p.m. on a working day? Oh these women!"

"Exactly, sir. I told her that you were out, sir."

"Good man, Ramu. Did she say anything?"

"Nothing very much, but I gathered she was a little annoyed, sir. There was a gentleman with her, tall, oldish-looking, with diamonds in his ears."

"Oh, Ramu, that is a parasite, a vampire, a veritable blood-sucker. Next time you meet him, shoot him down Ramu, and earn the gratitude of the Petupati Iyengars, a race that never forgets."

"Very well, sir. But your aunt wanted to come in and wait but the old gentleman was rather in a hurry, and took her away, sir."

"Sweet are the uses of....., of....., of.....?"

"Adversity, sir."

"Right you are, Ramu. Imagine my coming home on a working day and meeting his face, in addition to Aunt Kamala's! You know he wants to ruin me!"

"Indeed, sir?" Slightly suggestive, slightly polite.
 "He wants to kill me!"
 "Yes, sir."
 "He wants to massacre me."
 "Yes, sir."
 "I shall tell you all about it in detail later; but you know he has a daughter. Susi—Susi—"

"Susila, sir."
 "Oh, yes, Susila. Don't seem to have seen her."
 "No, sir? A very pretty girl, sir."
 "Right ho Ramu!"

"Yes, sir. Lunch will be ready at one, sir."
 To say the least, I did not like the proposition. It is all very well to speak of Petupati Iyengars, and all that, even if we have to speak of such things in the midst of Gopal's delicious dishes—Gopal, you know, hereditary cook of aunt Kamala. But, dash it all, one is not going to marry just to please other people.

I rang the bell. No response.
 I rang again. Ramu appeared.
 "I say, Ramu, this isn't decent of you at all. You know your grandfather worked under my grandfather."
 "Yes, sir."
 "And dash it all, can't you switch some brains on to the matter?"

"It is a rather difficult and complicated matter, sir, calling for a very judicious and tactful judgment based on immense and all-comprehending knowledge of human nature—a matter, sir, which I, with all the hereditary training received in your family cannot hope to solve in a manner likely to cause satisfaction in any measure or quarter, sir."

"Right ho Ramu!"
 "Yes, sir, lunch will be ready at one-thirty, sir."
 Funny man, Ramu. Can't understand him at all.
 The next two days wore off fairly lightly except for an occasional telephone call from aunt Kamala, which, as usual, Ramu tackled to mutual satisfaction.

The third day when I was nibbling the crust of a bread, Ramu came in with a letter.

"Well, well, we all have our calamities. Nothing like courage. A smiling brow on a—a—well, well. If aunt Kamala comes, you may tell her I have gone to Pondicherry."

"Yes, sir."
 "And look up the trains, and keep my bags ready."

As the bloke said, there is a divinity or something which—er—well, well. I should have hated to marry old Narayana Iyengar's daughter. Never mind his one lakh dowry. Petupatis had always independence of character. It all happened thus.

After a week at Pondi, I joined the local club. After a week of joining the club I met one Saraswathi, a nice girl, pretty, one that paragoned description and wild fame, one that excelled the quirk of blazing pens, and all that. Well, you know, we were partners at tennis, and being partners in a big tournament we got pretty close together. And you know. After a fortnight, I had to leave hurriedly for Madras as aunt Kamala was very insistent on my coming back.

"Ramu! Is my grey suit ready?"
 "Yes, sir. Two gentlemen called sir."
 "Well, I can't waste my time on subscription hunters. I'm never at home to them."

"They said they would call again, sir. Rather insistent, this type of people, sir."

"But I tell you I'm not at home."
 "Very well, sir, but I gathered from their talk that they belonged to the legal profession, sir."

"W-w-what do you mean?"
 "They were rather loud, sir, for gentlemen. And they didn't seem to believe me, sir, when I told them that you were out. Regular Dodson and Fogg, sir."
 "Oh, hell! The Shylock! The Barabbas!"
 "A lakh of rupees, I believe, sir. Avaricious people, sir."

"Rack your nut, Ramu. There's a good old soul."
 "Thank you, sir. If I may suggest?"
 "Yes?"
 "You might settle your matter for 80,000, sir."
 "But I haven't got a bean, and what I get, I get after squeezing that Brahma Press of aunt Kamala. Have you ever squeezed a Brahma Press?"

"No, sir."
 "Don't."
 "No, sir, I haven't studied chemistry."
 "Very well, very well."
 "60,000 might do, sir. The learned gentlemen did not appear altogether unreasonable, sir."

"Not a pie. Which is the nearest way to Adyar Beach?"
 "I shouldn't be so desperate, sir?"
 "What else can a Petupati do?"
 "Marry her, sir, and save your money."

"Marry her? Marry her! Is it Ramu that is speaking? Marry an unknown girl? Marry her? I am disappointed in you."

"She is an Iyengar too, sir. Keeps a car. Very beautiful, and well-bred. After all, sir, once you get married, aunt Kamala cannot keep your money any

longer, sir. If I may say so, the P. & O.'s best ship is sailing in a fortnight's time, sir. I am sure aunt Kamala will be disappointed sir, if you do not fall in with her wishes. A forceful personality, sir."

"Forceful, yes. But not where a Petupati is concerned. Never mind, I shall sacrifice old Narayana Iyengar's lakh. Just to spite aunt Kamala. See that you invite her for the wedding."

Wedding all over. My Tennis-partner bride gone in to change. Comes Ramu with a letter:

Madras,
 25-5-34.

My dear Son-in-Law,

After all, God's will must be done. My desire on earth, to see my daughter wedded to a Petupati has been fulfilled. Your mother-in-law and myself etc., etc., etc.

Your affectionate
 Father-in-law,
 NARAYANA IYENGAR.

P. S. Herewith enclosed is a cheque for one lakh.
 "Ramu!"
 "Yes, sir."

"You double-dyed villain."

"Yes, sir."
 "You knew it all the time."
 "I had, indeed, my doubts, sir."

"Right! ho! Ramu."

"Very well, sir."

"I say, Ramu."

"Yes, sir."

"I say!"

"Yes, sir."

"When does 'Queen Mary' sail?"

"On the 28th, sir. A saloon has been reserved for Mr. and Mrs. Petupati Iyengar. Here is the confirmation card, sir."

"Can you make a 1,000 note when you see it?"

"I shall endeavour my best, sir."

"Try this. Don't try to cash it at Narayana Iyengar's bank."

"Thank you, sir."

"And—ah well (a rustle is heard) Right ho! Ramu."

"Good night, sir."



"Try this."

"Thank you, sir."

The Vicar and His Novel

By "TEDDY BEAR"

"YOU'D better hurry up," said Marion for the fourth time. "Mr. Dooley must be waiting for you. His man has already been here three times. What do you think he could have called you about?"

"How can I tell you what's on a Vicar's mind?"

I put all the speed possible in chewing and gulping down the forty-five prawns put before me, and repaired to the Rev. J. Dooley's bungalow.

He was sprawling on a sofa-chair, in his drawing-room, and appeared to be in high spirits. I almost thought he had perfected some invention for reaching one hundred and twenty years without taking the trouble of being born a hundred and twenty years earlier. He greeted me in a very lively mood, almost wrenched my hand off my wrist, offered me a cigar and motioned me to a chair. Visions of a fat fee, for some darned thing or other, rose before my eyes; quarts of whisky, new suits, motor-rides, shilling Coronas and a holiday in Paris floated before my eyes, only to disappear by his sudden and rather unusual remark.

"You see, Mr. Walton, I am going to write a novel."

"The devil you are," I thought to myself. This was most unexpected. Snake-charming would be more in his line.

"I see. What can I do in this important affair?" I asked.

"I want you to go over the plot with me, and discuss it in its entirety," he explained. "Where you think a change should be made I shall be glad to arrange the text accordingly. There is going to be no fiction, no impossible and fantastic ideas in this—ah—romance; everything is going to be true to life and within possibility. After the work is over, you know, the usual remuneration will be awaiting you."

"All right, Mr. Dooley, let's hear the plot and the lot."

"The romance begins at Wigan, Lancashire," he unfolded.

"What a place for a romance!"

"Why, do you think romances never start in Wigan?"

"Not that they don't, but they shouldn't."

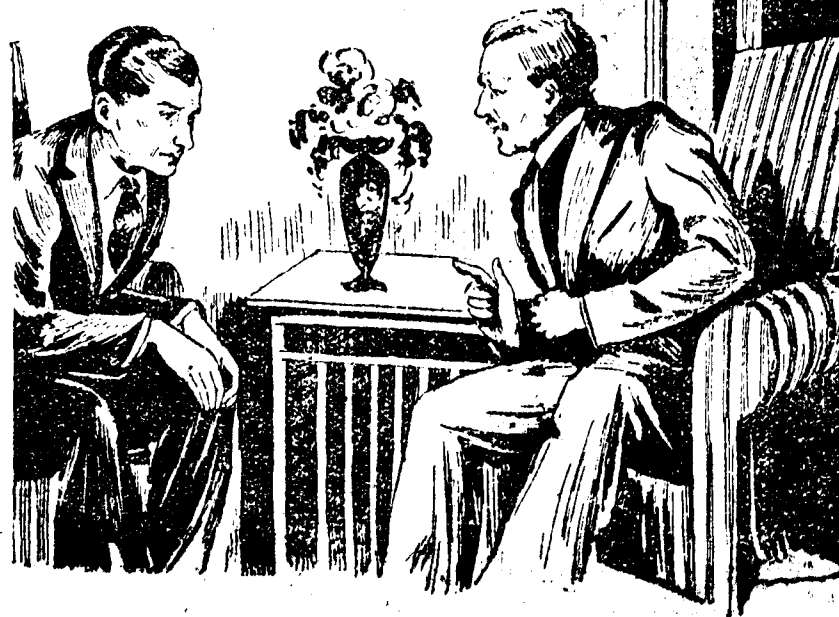
"And why shouldn't they?"

"Because Wigan is enough to drive one to seek a divorce; moreover, in novel-writing, France, Switzerland, the Alps, Italy, and especially Austria and Spain are the chief places for romance."

"And why Austria and Spain, especially?"

"Because that's where we have the Viennese nights, and the Spanish Moons. Haven't you heard that all the love songs are about the Nights in Vienna, for instance *Good Night Vienna*; and the Moon in Spain, for instance *Meet me where the Spanish Moon comes peeping o'er the elms*? But—"

"Ah, you are wonderful, Mr. Walton," sighed the Rev. J. Dooley, perhaps thinking of his old romantic days.



"But," I continued, "it would look very silly if one sang *'Meet me under the Madras Moon'*, or *'Bombay nights are calling, calling you and me, when the dew is falling'*, etc., etc., because there is no dew in Bombay; and one cannot be too chummy under the Moon in Madras—the cops there are very watchful. Then again there would be no sense in a song starting with *'She is dreaming of Lancashire, where her lover is left behind'*, because now-a-days every girl when getting married is very watchful and cautious, and the poor lover or husband has no chance whatsoever, of being left behind, or to remain behind, especially in a place like Lancashire. All this goes to prove that romance has its home on the Continent and your little modern romance will have very little chance of success if it starts in Wigan. Nobody will ever read your book beyond the first page if the romance starts in Wigan."

"But I should like to keep the characters purely English," he protested, greatly aggrieved.

"All right; then say that the romance starts at Dinklesburg—you know the small village, ten miles from here. Nobody knows where Dinklesburg is, so the readers will not question your choice of place. Pray proceed."

"Well, there is a rich farmer."

"Rich farmer you said, Mr. Dooley?"

"Yes."

"Cut it out, cut it out; you grossly forget the taxes; there is no rich farmer now-a-days."

"All right, we shall say there is a farmer, named Whiteley, who has three daughters."

"Three daughters! Preposterous, Mr. Dooley," I protested. "In these days of depression, when prices of whisky and baccy are so high, and that of farm-produce so low, no man will ever have three daughters, especially a farmer. Three bouncing boys will be of more use about the farm. But three daughters!!! No-no-no, you'll have to cut it out altogether."

"Do you mean Mr. Walton, that a farmer never has three daughters?"

"Eggs—act—lee. Not only he doesn't, but he won't."

"Won't what?"

"Have three daughters."

"But you have three daughters, Mr. Walton?"

"But I am not a farmer," I apologised, "moreover, my daughters were born much before the price of whisky went up, before we owed to America, before we abolished the Gold Standard, and before Excise-duty was imposed on steel, sugar and matches. Later on I would never have had three daughters."

"So what do you suggest?" asked the Rev. J. Dooley.

"Two daughters are the limit," I suggested. "In a romance, two daughters are absolutely essential, as occasionally the author makes both of them fall in love with the same man."

"But how can two girls fall in love with the same man now-a-days," enquired the Rev. J. Dooley, "there is more likelihood of one girl falling in love with four men."

"You mean, on account of the present-day scarcity of the members of the male sex in the world?" I asked.

"No, not that," he explained, "but because one fellow may have a car, the other a motor-boat, the third one may be handsome, and the fourth one may have a large bank-balance."

"I stand corrected, Mr. Dooley; I never thought of that. Pray proceed."

"Well, so we shall let this man Whiteley have two daughters. Now, in the same village where Whiteley lives there are two young men. Harry is rich, handsome, well-educated, but a wastrel, a wrecker of homes, a girl-enticer, a liar, a lady-killer, a complete moral-wreck and a breaker of hearts. But he is so fascinating and can act so well that he will disarm the most suspicious and cautious girl in a minute. The other man, Tom, is plain-looking, uneducated, works on his father's farm, is honest, kind, generous, hard-working, frank and open as the Sun, sympathetic, a man who sings at his work,—but poor. Now, both the Whiteley girls are very beautiful."

"No—no, Mr. Dooley, this is very silly. A farmer can never have two beautiful daughters. One alone must be beautiful, and the other plain. Now if a count, an earl, a Government Secretary, or a Member of Parliament were in question, it would be quite proper to say that he had two beautiful daughters, but not so with a farmer."

"Do you mean to say, Mr. Walton, that all lords, counts, earls, Government Secretaries, or Members of Parliament have beautiful daughters?"

"Decidedly," I said; "have you ever read *'The plain daughter of the third Earl of Binkoo is on a visit to Switzerland'*, or, *'the clever but ugly-looking daughter of Mr. Jayson, M. P. for Easom, is convalescing at the Riviera'*, or, *'the youngest and cock-eyed daughter of Mr. Boog-goo, the Finance Minister, has taken up aviation'*?"

"No, I have never," agreed the Rev. J. Dooley.

"There you are," I said, "and even when these earls' or M.P.'s daughters are married, you will read in the papers: *'The bride looked charming in a gown of beige Crepe-de-Chine'*, or, *'the beautiful bride was given away by her uncle, the 365th Count of Dinklesburg'*, or, *'the lovely bride was supported by her maiden-aunt'*, etc."

"I see the point now."

"Yes, but don't sit on it," I almost said in a whisper; "pray continue."

"Now this beautiful girl falls in love with the poor but honest young man, Tom."

"No, impossible," I said, "now-a-days, beautiful girls never fall in love with poor but honest men who sing at their work."

"Why impossible, Mr. Walton?"

"What a question to put! In the first place because these poor people who sing at their work get the sack, sooner or later."

"Why is that so?"

"Because they sing at their work. Moreover if a beautiful girl marries a poor man how will she get her hair bobbed, dyed, waved, shingled or Eton-cropped? Where will she get money for paint, rouge, powder, and scent? And how will she get her face 'lifted'?"

"Why get her face 'lifted'?"

"So as not to lower her prestige. It is essential that this beautiful girl should fall in love with the rich, handsome breaker of hearts."

"And why?" persisted the Rev. J. Dooley.

"There is no sense in a romance unless the girl breaks her heart."

"And pray why is that so?"

"Why? Because, unless a girl breaks her heart, she doesn't get any sense knocked into her head; besides what's the good of having a heart unless it breaks? According to modern ideals the girl should fall in love with the rich fellow, and scorn the advances of the poor but honest man. Proceed, please."

"Then this rich fellow," continued the Rev. J. Dooley, "proposes to the girl that they should elope, and get married, because his father would never hear of his marrying a farmer's daughter. He arranges everything one night, and instructs his chauffeur to keep the car ready, under the evergreen tree, in the back-lawn, at about eleven p.m. At the time arranged, when her parents are supposed to be fast asleep, the girl meets her lover, and they start on their secret trip. Somehow, the girl's father wakes up, understands the whole situation in a flash, takes his speed-roadster out, and follows the eloping couple, after telephoning the police."

"No—no, this is absolutely absurd, Mr. Dooley."

"Absurd? Absurd? You don't say so, Mr. Walton?"

"I do. Because modern fathers never chase eloping daughters, nor do they communicate with the police."

"Then the whole thing will have to be changed?"

"Yes, you must write that while the girl is eloping with her lover, she urges the driver to hurry up, and drive fast, as there is a possibility of being chased by her father. Hearing this, the driver turns round in his seat, and stopping the car, informs her that she need not worry about that, because her father has heavily tipped him to see that the elopement is successful."

"Tut, tut, Mr. Walton, it's not going to be so ridiculous as all that?"

"Nothing ridiculous about that," I assured him; "your's is a modern romance; the modern reality, therefore, must be there."

"Yes, but what about the mother?" asked the Rev. J. Dooley; "doesn't she eat her heart out, when she hears of this outrage, this—ah—elopement?"

"Oh, no, no, NO; when she hears that her elder daughter has eloped successfully, she looks about her to see if she can get hold of another goof, who will run away with her younger daughter."

"Now, this sounds very silly."

"But such is modern romance."

"And the father?"

"Why, the next morning the chauffeur telephones to say that the elopement has been successful, and the pair have arrived safely at the destination. Hearing this the father heaves a sigh of relief, decides to treat himself to an extra quart of the finest whisky that evening, takes up the morning-paper, and cuddles up on the sofa, like one bereft of all cares."

"Ah, you are wonderful, Mr. Walton," sighed the Rev. J. Dooley.

"Thank you, you may continue now," I said.

"Well, they marry at the Registrar's, and the honeymoon starts. They stay at one of the finest hotels, say, Hotel de Grenville. The young man gives a grand dinner to all the hotel residents, and champagne flows like water."

"You can't say that, Mr. Dooley."

"Can't say what?"

"That champagne flows like water."

"And pray, why can't I?"

"Because if you say that, the Chancellor of the Exchequer will come to know that there are some people who can still afford to make champagne flow like water, and then in the next budget we shall have some more taxes."

"Ah, you are very clever, Mr. Walton."

"And while you are about the dinner, don't forget to say something about the food, as well," I suggested.

"Quite so, quite so," agreed the Rev. J. Dooley, "to start with, I can say 'Ye Olde Englise Roast Beef' is served."

"What? English roast-beef? Preposterous, Mr. Dooley! Who has ever heard of English people sitting down to a dinner of English roast-beef?"

"Do you mean to say that English people never eat that?"

"No, never: besides there's no sense in English people consuming English roast-beef. Now if there were a German, French or a Swiss family, things would be quite different."

"Then what should I say?" asked the vicar.

"You must show them eating Italian Gorgonzola, German sausages, Swiss rolls, Brazilian corned-beef, Canadian salmon, or Australian bacon."

"Ah, wonderful, Mr. Walton. I like Australian bacon."

"Or Italian spaghetti, Madras chutney or Spanish pickled onions," I concluded.

(Continued on page 36)

SAY IT WITH

"HAVE a cigarette, Sekar."

I passed him the stationery.

"No, thanks. I've given up smoking."

"Now tell me about her."

"How did you guess it, old lad?"

"Psychology."

"Kamala and I parted brass rags."

"When?"

"Yesterday 5.17 p.m. Madras Time."

"Why?"

"Because I had the courage to tell her that her jewels exhibited her to the world as a show-case."

"Then?"

"That in her orange saree, she reminded me of a blazing sun-set."

"Nothing wrong, so far as I can see."

"She took the first as a compliment and the second as an insult. She told me to wear smoked glasses and if I thought I would insult her any further, I was jolly well mistaken."

"Then she gave you a piece of her mind?"

"A sizable piece."

"You all the while behaved like a microphone and let her rip?"

"By the flute of Krishna, no! I gave it her hot."

"She then gave you the raspberry?"

"She sizzled a bit, told me as long as she was a student of Queen Mary's College, she would have nothing to do with me and went away in full sail."

"You've given up smoking and what else?"

"Don't be idiotic. Rally round your chum of boyhood memories and pull me through this mess."

"I can, provided you're economical with rhetoric."

"What do you mean?"

"If you want to land Kamala home, forget that you are a smile-monger."

"I understand."

"Study her psychologically. Sort out her likes and dislikes. You get me?"



FLOWERS

"I get you but I wonder how this is going to get me Kamala."

"Get hold of her younger brother and her maid-servant and pump out of them Kamala's favourites."

"Will I be helping you if I mention that Maurice Chevalier is her favourite film-star and mauve her favourite colour?"

"Not by a long shot. Go about your job carefully. Collect data and forward them to the Intelligence Department."

"The problem is, how to get them round."

"A mouth-organ and a saree will do the trick."

"Meanwhile, how am I to nurse the good old heart? It has got the 'pip'."

"Take a spot of Seneca."

"?????????"

"A Greek philosopher, you muff, not a herbal drink."

"What else?"

"Breakfast on aspirin."

"Thanks."

Eleven days later Sekar rolled in to roll out his report. Within five minutes I learnt from him that the task of Sisyphus was child's play in comparison with the job of hanging round the youngster and the maid-servant for data. Sekar's memorandum, when submitted for circulation, can be analysed thus.

Miss J. P. KAMALA

	Favourite	Abomination
Film-star	... Maurice Chevalier	Mae West
Colour	... Mauve	... Scarlet
Sweets	... Chocolate	... Jilebi
Vegetables	... Tomato	... Brinjal
Fruits	... Orange	... Jack-fruit
Science	... Botany	... Economics
Authors	... Marie Corielli	... Virginia Woolf
Precious stones	... Emerald	... Nil
Pets	... Parrot	... Cat
Ornament	... Slave-bangle	... Anklet
Perfumes	... Lavender	... Jasmine
Things Feminine	... Flowers	... Hair-pins
Hobbies	... Philately	... Painting
Games	... Tennis	... Basket-ball

The list fairly enabled me to sum up Kamala. "Sekar, old boy, your girl seems to me to be a lady of remarkable tastes. In boiling down your report, it resolves into one significant indication. You notice, there are two of her favourite things which come under one head—Things Botanical."

"Tomatoes and oranges?"

"No, no, no! You're miles out in your grasp of the problem. In your chart, we find Kamala dead nuts on botany and flowers. 'Science' and 'Things Feminine' are on a higher plane than fruits and vegetables, you'll agree. Further, botany and flowers are relative."

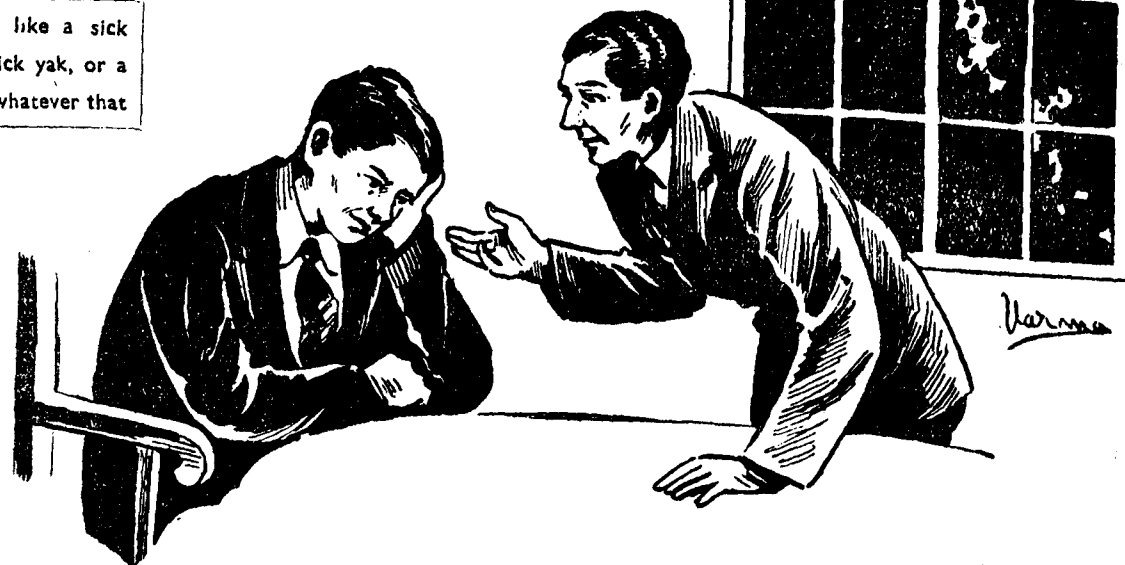
"Do you suggest that botany books should be showered on her? Must I ever talk of petals, stamens, calyxes, sepals and such rubbish in my wooing?"

"Sho-o-o-o. Give me a chance. Botany will only appeal to her mind. Whereas flowers will touch Kamala at many angles."

"Like isobar or cross-bar or whatever it is called. The temperature-line, you know, that touches the good old world of ours at so many places. I take it, flowers will touch Kamala's mind, her imagination, her femininity, her vanity, her sense of smell, her sense of sight, her instinct for adornment and what not."

"You've put it all right. At the same time, you're giving me a pain in the thorax. Cut out this simile business. You will undo all the good work I've been doing."

Sekar moaned like a sick moose, or a sick yak, or a sick zebra or whatever that largely goes in for moaning when sick.



"Righto. You want me to say it with flowers?"

"Yes."

"How?"

"Arrange with a florist to send flowers daily to Kamala. Don't give away your name. Kamala will wonder wherefrom she is getting the flowers. She will compare and contrast you with this unknown admirer. Her complexes will shriekingly assert that this is the man for her. She will endeavour to find out his address."

Then you may reveal yourself as the sender. When she discovers you are *he*, she will fall on your neck and kiss you on six places."

"Seven."

"I accept the amendment. Don't send the same flower over and over again. She will be fed up. Jot it down in your diary like this: Nov. 14: roses. 15: violets. 16: carnations. 17: daisies. 18: gilly flowers. 19: chrysanthemums. 20: jessamines. 21: pansies and so on."

"Friend of my college days, I don't know how to thank you." Sekar broke down under an engulment of emotion.

"Wish you success, old boy. Don't be disheartened, if you fail to impress her even after the magnolia stage."

"I know. Faint heart never won a fair lady."

"Anyway, it can win a black beauty."

"You want me to jettison Kamala? Make no mistake about that."

"Oh, no, nowish you good luck."

Eight days passed by. I accidentally ran into Sekar at the Willingdon Theatre during the interval. I opened the proceedings with a hearty slap on his back.

"Hullo!"

"Hullo!"

"Fancy meeting you here!"

"Ditto from me."

"How did you like the silly symphony, *The Big Bad Wolf*?"

"It was topping. Who's afraid of the Big Bad Wolf?"

"Who indeed? Any progress so far?"

"I've come to the buttercup stage."

"The what?"

"Buttercup."

I digested this. I meditatively examined my walking-stick to see whether it would be suitable to dust his jacket. I fixed him with a steely eye.

"I could sooner understand you sending a cheese-cutter or a milk-jug or a claret-cup or even an egg-whisk. But buttercup.....you take the cake as a champion blunderer in A-1 class."

"Fancy a chap like you, advising me to say it with flowers and not knowing what a buttercup is. You're a satire on your university. Buttercup is a flower, you simp. Add it to your collection."

I reeled off apologies.

Sekar glowed with pleasure at the turn of things.

"What will you be sending to-morrow?"

"Rhododendrons."

"Rhodo—what?"

"Rhodo-dendrons. I say, the second bell has gone. We shall meet again."

We parted. And we met again by appointment at the band-stand, after a week.

"To-day I sent Mignonettes."

"Good."

"Tomorrow, Lilacs."

"Good."

"Day after to-morrow, Daffodils."

"Afterwards?"

"Dandelions."

It was strange to hear this chap talk of flowers, who two weeks ago knew as much of flowers as a Chinaman knows about rotifera, talking as if he had been running a flower-show.

"All this is good, Sekar. How is the receptivity of the receiving-set?"

"Excellent. Flowers are making good impressions. This morning, I tapped the youngster. Kamala, it seems, conducts researches on azaleas, decks her hair with *Champaks* and what not. There are now in her room more flower-vases than you can possibly count."

"A good report. How is her mental state?"

"She is as happy as a caterpillar with its young ones."

"Stop! You're giving me a pain in the medulla oblongata. I've proscribed similes for you and yet you—"

"Sorry, old chap. I quite forgot. Habit is second nature, you know, just like a rattlesnake when it is—"

I legged it for the Aquarium. It pays you in the long run to study fishes and girls rather than listen to similes, however colourful.

But the irrepressible Sekar duly materialized on the door-step a fortnight later. He flourished a letter before my face. He was oozing happiness.

"What do you think this is? Have a shot at it."

"Letter from your sweetheart?"

"You've given the nail a correct hit. She found me out through the florist."

"Congrats."

"I've hooked her. A trout couldn't have risen to an evening fly more surely than Kamala to my bait."

I looked pained. Simile-slinging had become a disease with Sekar.

"Now onwards I walk the primrose path with Kamala," he continued. "We both will never forget you, the lodestar of our destinies. I shall bring Kamala round to present you with a tie-pin. Or do you want cuff-links or a cigarette case? We shall name our eldest son after you, what?"

"Sekar, your kindness is overpowering. All I want is to see you happily married, living in a house with roses round the door, kiddies on the floor and all that sort of thing, you know. You haven't told me yet the gist of the letter."

"I quite forgot. Kamala says, let the dead past burn its dead."

"Bury, you mean?"

"No, no. She expressly uses the word 'burn'. By burial, there is the possibility of exhuming past incidents. Kamala, you know, is a sensible girl. Incineration—I think, that's the word—is what she wants. She wants me to meet her to-morrow at 5 p.m. at the War Memorial. At 9 p.m. you shall have a verbatim report of the proceedings. I now move for an adjournment."

"Take a count out."

Punctuality and promise do not count with young lovers, except of course, in keeping trysts. Sekar, in the delirium of his happiness forgot my existence, with the result, he didn't turn up at my residence for nearly a fortnight.

I was oiling the gramophone when who should walk in but Sekar.

"Hullo!"

Sekar replied to my greeting with a colourless ditto.

"What's the matter?"

"After all, I've blown in like the South-West Monsoon."

I flashed a reproachful glance.

"The whole scheme ended in a fizzle, what?"

"I fluffed my lines. Lend me your ears, old boy, and bring out the good old balm."

Sekar disburdened a heartfelt with tears in his voice. When I was listening to him, I was reminded of great noble endeavours in history which had come within an ace of success but had come off as absolute floaters for want of proper handling.

"Sekar, you're a prize idiot."

Sekar moaned like a sick moose, or a sick yak, or a sick zebra or whatever that largely goes in for moaning when sick.

"I never thought Kamala would turn me down so abruptly as an over-browned *dosai*."

"Any girl would do that when you're not able to distinguish between a flower and a vegetable."

"It isn't my fault. When the florist sent me a note saying he had exhausted all the varieties in his stock and that he would once again begin with rose, I asked him to send this flower. I was deceived by the name."

"Did he send?"

"No. He asked me to reconsider my order. Only that morning I saw its name in the market report of the *Madras Courier* and so I insisted on it."

"You can't blame the florist. He thought you had finished with flowers and were beginning with vegetables."

And no wonder, Kamala received *cauliflower*s.

"Ah, wonderful, Mr. Walton, my wife likes Madras chutney."

"You see the point now, Mr. Dooley?"

"I do, although I am surprised to learn that English people never eat English things."

"You should not be surprised. As a matter of fact, it is never done, especially in fashionable circles. If the above-mentioned things do not suit you, you can say *fillets de boeuf*."

"What is that now?"

"Oh, you must not ask the names of these foreign things. The best thing to do is to eat them quietly, pay the bill and come away."

"And if you ask what it is?"

"It may mean something serious. For instance, I remember the case of a famous maiden-aunt of mine, who, while on the Continent, visited an Italian restaurant in Germany, and was served with *Rouff de la Brandozee*. She liked it so much that she called at the back-door to see the hotel chef and get the recipe from him. She learnt to her horror that *Rouff de la Brandozee* was nothing but Chinese bandicoot, highly spiced, and roasted in cod-oil and vinegar, with a generous dash of ginger. She fainted on the spot, and died before she reached the hospital. At the inquest the jury returned a verdict of 'Death due to curiosity.' The Coroner changed the verdict to 'Death from natural causes,' because it was the case of a woman."

"What a terrible, terrible fate, Mr. Walton!" sighed the Rev. J. Dooley.

"So that's how things stand," I said; "for instance, have you ever heard of the French people drinking French coffee, Indians consuming Indian *chutney*, Madrasses eating Madras curry, or Italians eating Italian macaroni?"

"Yes, ah—no, I mean," said the Rev. J. Dooley.

"Well, while you are describing the dinner, don't forget to mention the Hotel Orchestra playing."

"Colonel Bogey's March?" suggested the Rev. J. Dooley.

"No."

"Annie Laurie?"

"You see, Mr. Dooley," I explained, "English music is played only on the Continent, in America, and very occasionally in Canada. You must mention a piece from one of the Italian Operas or a selection from the American Jazz."

"I think it can be arranged accordingly," nodded the Rev. J. Dooley. "Now we come to the most important part of the story. After their honeymoon they settle down on 'DREAMLAND', a big farm, purchased by the rich husband. They live happily there for five years, and—"

"Hold on, hold on," I interrupted, "this is too long. Whoever heard of a married couple living happily for five years! It is absolutely impossible in these days, and your readers will think you have created a 'King-Kong' of the matrimonial world. The limit is one year, but if the young man has a lot of money, and provided there is no other blue-eyed Johnny on the spot, the girl may hang on to her husband for a year and a half."

"Otherwise?"

"Otherwise she snaps her fingers at him, sells him a pup, jilts him, bluffs him wholesale and retail, gives him the slip, does the bunk, lets him down, or in other words, she runs away with the other chap."

"Ah, wonderful, Mr. Walton," sighed the Rev. J. Dooley.

"And then after one year, the time comes for the girl's heart to break."

"Break, you said, Mr. Walton?"

"Yes, break, Mr. Dooley; crack, burst, fuse-off, tear-up, melt, get cut-up, burn, shatter into smithereens."

"Most peculiar, this."

"It is. You see, this is the time when a girl finds herself divided between love and hate."

"Between love and hate? What does that mean, Mr. Walton?"

"I don't understand it myself; but that is what most of the novelists say, so you also must say that; else your readers will think that you know nothing about love..."

"But why the heart-break, and how?"

"Because the girl falls in love with another man, and asks him to elope with her—"

"But?"

"But he can't, he won't, he doesn't want to."

"But, why doesn't he?"

"Because he can't get a new nose or a new jaw in the market."

"I don't understand you," distressingly complained the Rev. J. Dooley.

"What I mean, Mr. Dooley, is this. If this fellow elopes with this girl, her husband is bound to follow him up, and when he finds him, he is sure to break his nose and his jaw for him."

"I see, I follow you now."

"So, fearing this crude, but possible surgery to his face, he doesn't elope, and the girl breaks her heart over it."

"I see now," said the Rev. J. Dooley. "Dear me, dear me, this novel-writing seems to be a complicated business. I never thought there were so many important points to be observed, so many minor details to be studied. I feel very much discouraged about the whole thing. I think for the present—"

"WHAT?" I almost shouted, guessing what he was about to say, and seeing all chances of a fat fee disappear into the thin cigar smoke which pervaded the room.

"I am going to drop the matter," concluded the Rev. J. Dooley.

"Yes. But not on my head. Good night, Mr. Dooley."

"Witty as usual, eh—Mr. Walton? Good-night."

And so I went home. Marion is still bribing me with pancakes, pies and chicken-hash, (and some preparation which I seriously suspect is *Rouff de la Brandozee*, but I dare not ask) to tell her about the conversation I had with our Vicar, the Rev. James Dooley. I mean holding out, as long as it is humanly possible, or till Marion finds the way to my heart through my stomach, when I shall break down and confess how I lost a fat fee and a valuable customer by trying to be too clever.

THE CUSTOM OF KISSING THE BRIDE

By J. S.

THIS custom is not a modern one but dates back to ancient Rome, "Where a couple would take certain pledges and then would confirm them with a Kiss." Perhaps its most ancient origin dates back to the fact in the Bible, of God's breath being blown into Adam's body, and the significance of the kiss was where "Soul speed forth companion Soul to greet."

Formerly it was done in church, now it is done at home. The *York Missal* and the *Sarum Manual* both declare a kiss to be necessary after the marriage ceremony and that it should be done in Church. Also in a play by Marston, where he says:

"The kisse thou gavest me in Church here take."

Different countries have different customs as regards kissing the bride. Kissing in the presence of others is

not considered strange among Western nations but the Orientals do not think well of it; so there is no kissing of the bride after the marriage ceremony among the Orientals.

Amongst the Americans, the man lifts up the veil of his bride after the marriage ceremony and kisses her. The bride-groom must be the first to kiss the bride, though after him the bride is kissed by her intimate friends.

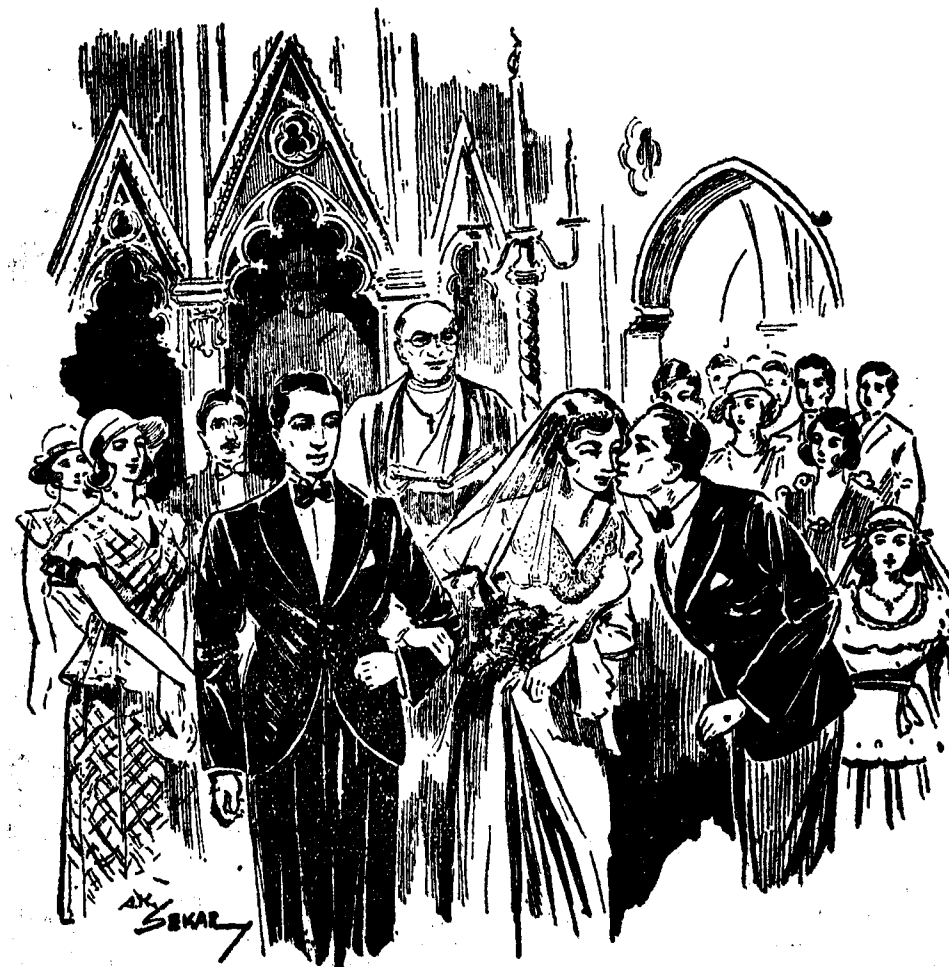
It is a bit strange that the significance of a kiss being the co-mingling of souls, the bride should be kissed by parsons and her friends. The custom has become obsolete now. In Yorkshire they still scramble for the bride's first kiss as it is supposed to be very lucky. Public opinion has changed with time and now the marriage parties are supposed to remember that kissing should be done only in the vestry.

As regards Scotland, it was generally presumed that after the wedding ceremony was over, the bride would kiss each and every male member in the assembly. It is a strange paradox that the modern generation demanding so much freedom in every respect, should have done away with kissing when their grand-mothers soon after the ceremony were kissed by their husbands as well as their old and new relatives.

In Brittany, it is said that the bride must kiss the bride-groom and each guest after her health is drunk.

In the pre-Reformation days in England, after the bride and the bride-groom were united in holy matrimony, the priest gave the benedictional kiss to the bride-groom, who thereupon imparted it to the bride.

T. Sharper Knowlson says that kissing is a Caucasian habit. He attributes the discovery of its origin to Lombroso who says that it must have had its origin in the maternal caresses developing into feelings of trust and reverence.



THE HERMIT'S HOARD

MY fellow traveller was reading a newspaper. An air of wealth to surfeit, exuded from him. Somehow, his face, specially those eyes, which looked into mine, struck me as familiar. Suddenly it dawned upon me that he was none other than my old chum and classmate, Seshan. Recognition was mutual and as I opened my mouth to speak to him, he with his familiar lisp greeted me warmly.

"Hallo, Chellum," he said, holding out his hand. "We have not met for donkey's years. How are you, old man?"

"How are you? Where have you been all these years?" I asked, grasping his hand.

"I have been everywhere. In fact, after leaving college I have been knocking about all over India for some time. I am very glad to meet you. This reminds me of our old college days."

"You have changed and grown old before your time," I smiled. "What dire calamity has greyed your hair?"

"It is a long, long story. I have seen life these few years," he told me.

I insisted upon his telling me about himself. He began.



As I lay there panting with anxiety half a dozen Pathans with rifles slung on their shoulders came from the hill-top.

"DHALO"

A year after I got married, a morbid stroke of fate overtook me. My ears began to thicken and my face showed discoloured patches. I consulted a doctor and he said it was that fell disease,—leprosy, that had me by the throat. The diagnosis struck me dumb and I realised as if in a dream that I had become an outcast and that my future life was to be a miserable nightmare. I tried different injections and the latest treatment. The effect was little or nothing. I was a doomed man. In course of time the disease began to get a real hold on me and my friends began one after another to give me the cold shoulder. I could only take this trial in my life with a philosophical shrug.

Lying on my bed one day, perturbed and disconsolate, I made up my mind to renounce the world and leave my wife and relations for ever, so that they may not have to see my sufferings. Thus determined, I steeled my mind and donning the orange-tawny red garb of the Hindu *bikshu*, I left Madras for Benares. There I joined a set of *bikshus*. Begging all through the day, I kept body and soul together with a single meal in the night. I could feel that even my brother *bikshus* were avoiding me; and often in the anguish of my heart I thought of throwing myself into the Ganges and putting an end to my misery. But even then life looked so dear that I had not the strength of will to do it.

One day a *sanyasi* came, a sombre figure whose bright, intellectual face shone with an inward glow. In my pitiable condition I was drawn towards him and I approached him with reverence. I noted that unlike others he did not try to avoid me. I went up to him and addressed him in Hindi. He only looked at me and would not speak at first. After a while he addressed me in perfect English, in deep sonorous tones.

"My son," he said, "you have suffered. The disease that is eating into your vitals is not incurable. God in His infinite mercy has probably left it to me to heal you. Be of comfort." I was elated. I knew at once that my redemption was at hand. "Master," I faltered, "I am a sinner. Cure me and give me life." I fell at his feet and worshipped him. He just nodded his head and said with a smile: "At sunrise tomorrow morning dip yourself in the holy Ganges and come to me, my son."

"So I shall," I replied and withdrew, seeing that he had closed his eyes in deep meditation.

With renewed hopes filling my heart, next day at dawn I plunged into the sacred waters and washed myself with meticulous care. I then hastened to my redeemer and fell at his feet.

The *sanyasi* smiled at me and taking a handful of green leaves he squeezed out the juice which he smeared all over the affected parts of my body. Juice from another handful of leaves he made me drink.

"Go, my son," he said, "by tomorrow you will be cured."

I fell at his feet once again but he looked away and appeared to be lost in deep meditation. So I left.

Next morning when I got up I felt fresh and strong. I could feel I was my old self again. My body had lost all discoloured patches. My recovery was miraculous. My first thought was to run to my saviour and thank him. I prostrated before him and whispered with tears of happiness in my eyes: "Thou hast indeed saved me. My gratitude is boundless. Hereafter I am thy slave."

"No, no," he rejoined, "the path of duty lies before you. Go, my son."

Finding me insistent on doing some service in return for his benefaction, he thought awhile.

"My son, if it is your wish to be of some service to me, listen. But your duty will be perilous."

"Nothing would be perilous if it is done in your service. I shall be honoured to do your behest," I replied.



.....a figure clad in white from head to footapproached me and stared at me as if to find out who I was.

"So be it," he agreed. "Far away in Chitral, on the border of India, on the fourth mile-stone on the great Frontier road you will find a solitary peepul tree on a hillock. Under that tree, on the eastern side of it, if you dig, you will find a brass vessel which contains the ashes of a great man. Take the pot and commit the ashes to the Ganges at Hardwar. Other things you find in the vessel are yours; but you must keep apart half of it for *dharma*. Now, go and carry out my bidding. God will bless you."

"Thank you, master. I shall do it," I agreed and left.

My friend now lighted a cigarette and continued:

Next day, I found that my benefactor had vanished. In a week I was trudging along the Frontier Road on my perilous quest. I spotted the peepul tree as described by him and retrieved the brass vessel from its resting place. Its mouth was tied up with tough fibrous bark of some tree. It was heavy. Before I could examine the find, some instinct within me cautioned me that I was being watched. So I immediately hid the pot under a rock and walked away from it. I had not gone a few steps when two bullets whistled past me. I fell down pretending to be hit. As I lay there panting with anxiety half a dozen Pathans with rifles slung on their shoulders came down from the hill-top. After scanning me all over with much mirth and carefree laughter they searched my body to see if I had any money on me. My wretched plight made them laugh and one of them, a blood-thirsty devil, prodded me on my side with the butt-end of his rifle.

"Infidel," he said.

I was mute. I realised that silence only would save my skin. They then led me through tortuous mountain foot-paths to their village about a mile away and produced me before their chieftain, a tall, stately

Pathan, blind in one eye. He stared at me and guffawed to the ribald cross-grained crowd that had gathered round me and exchanged a few words with them. I continued my silence. I was then made to stand near a post in the porch of the chieftain's hut and tied up to it with thick thongs. I felt sick with fright and hunger. Before the ruffians retired to their houses, I was given a little water to drink and a bit of coarse wheaten cake. Anxiety and exhaustion drove me to sleep even in my uncomfortable position. But I had only fitful snatches of sleep.

It was midnight. A bright half-moon lit up the quiet village. Far away from the hill-tops a jackal howled to its mate. I was in pain. "Oh God!" I cried in dismay and struggled to free myself. After a while, a figure clad in white from head to foot, in a *bourka*, evidently a woman, approached me and stared at me. I kept silent.

"Stranger, who are you?" asked the figure. "Are you an Indian? I heard you cry out in English."

Hope gushed into my heart. "I am from South India," I replied. "Who are you?"

"I am an English girl kidnapped from my father's bungalow at Mardan about a year ago. My father is Capt. Nitram of the Sappers and Miners. I shall release you if you will save me too," she whispered.

I assented.

To cut the story short, both of us escaped while the Pathans were sleeping and reached the British frontier pickets by daybreak. Before we started, I had taken possession of the brass vessel which I had hidden by the road. The Officer Commanding Mardan heard our stories. The girl who was only about fourteen was sent to her parents who had gone away to England in sorrow when all hopes of finding their darling daughter had failed. I was regarded as a hero and received the con-

gratulations of the British Army officers at Mardan. A week later I left the place."

"Pray, continue. What about the ashes?" I asked

I opened the brass pot only at Hardwar. Imagine my surprise when I found the pot half full of precious stones,—diamonds, emeralds, rubies and other costly gems!

In The Next Issue

RAJAS, BAHADURS AND ME P. P. Samuel
(Mr. Samuel on the craze for writing Books of Reminiscences which has spread to India)

THE NEW RELIGION "Longwaiting"
(Is a story in High Life: of Gods, and Goddesses and Knights, Heaven, Hell and Insurance Head-Offices)

VIVA VOCE Ajit Krishna Basu
(The Nightmare of all examinees. If only it were like Mr. Basu's story!)

JUST JANE 'May Bird'
(Not quite enough of her though)

MUDALIAR MEETS HIS MATCH Elmer Delville
(There is a match box; a matrimonial match and a match of wits in this story and there is a lot else besides.....)

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(Our regular features and the final Instalment of Topsy Turvy, a thrilling fantasy)

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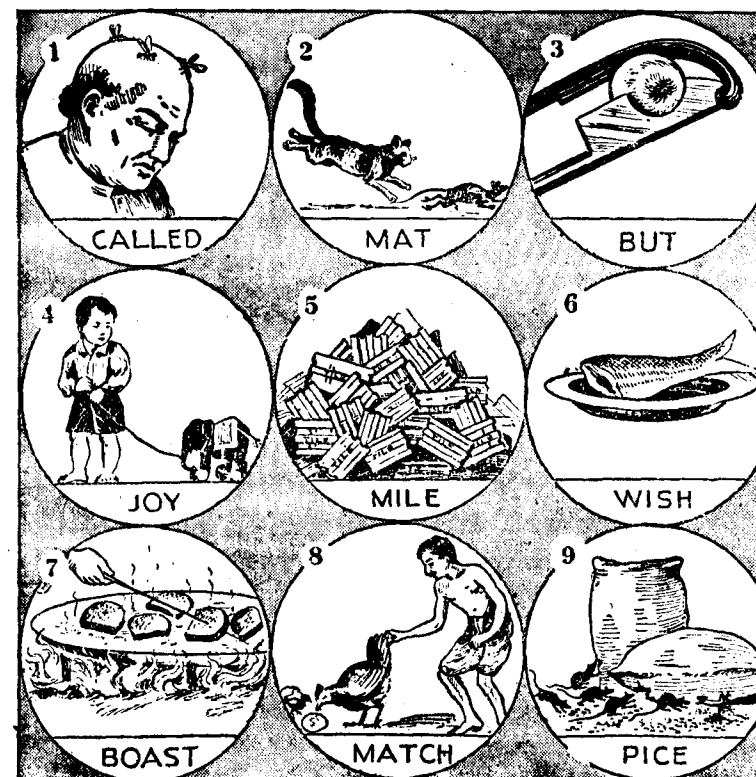
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Chimers



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Solutions must be filled in on the coupon printed in the next page. Any number of solutions may be sent in but an entrance fee of annas eight must accompany every entry submitted. Where copies of the *Merry Magazine* are not available, competitors can send in their solutions on ordinary paper but an entrance fee of annas ten is payable with each entry thus submitted. All entries must be received by the last post on 13-3-35. Any received after this date will be disqualified. Entries from local competitors will be received in person at our office till 6 P. M. on that date. The first prize of Rs. 1000 will be awarded to an all-correct solution, the second prize of Rs. 600 to the solution with one error and the third prize of Rs. 400 to the solution with two errors. An all-correct solution is one which agrees in all respects with the Editor's key solution kept in safe

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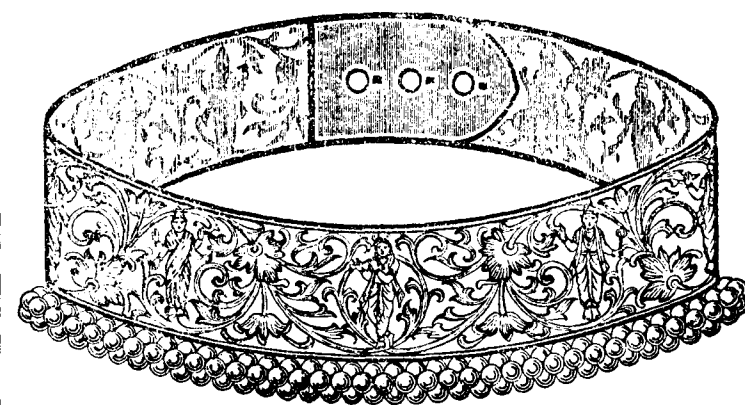
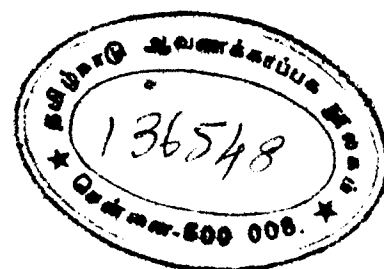
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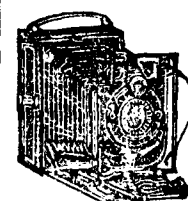
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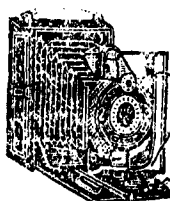
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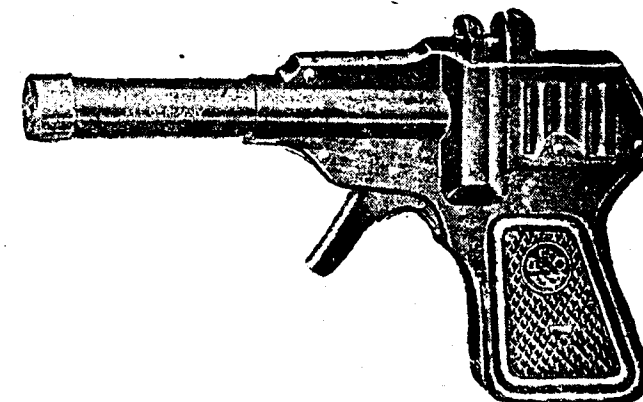
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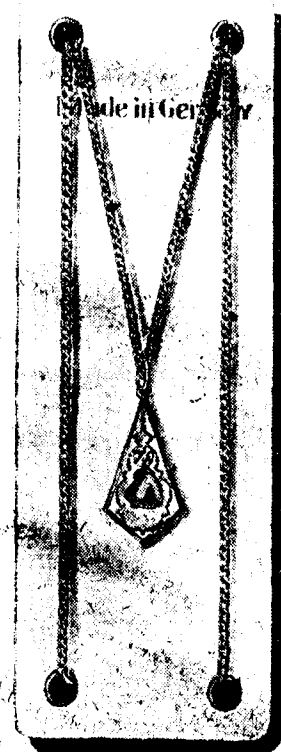
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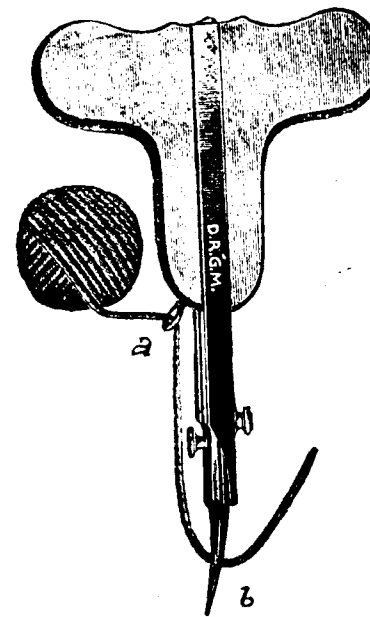
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(The Efficient Rug-Work Apparatus)

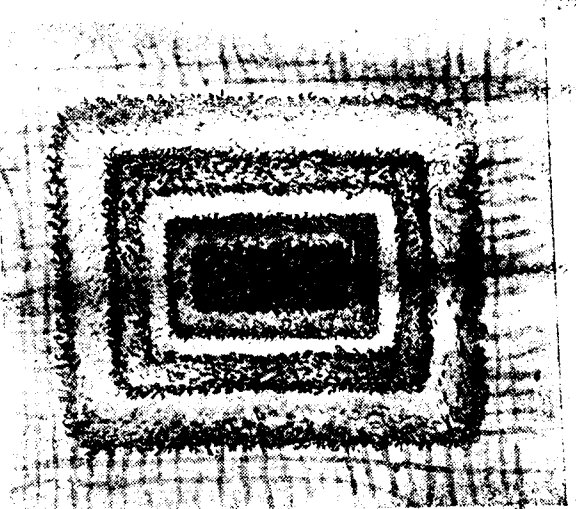
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Ladies and Children can work with this apparatus easily, and in a short time. All kinds of carpets and embroidered curtains used on all important occasions, such as marriages, festivals, meetings, public functions etc., can be made without difficulty with this apparatus.



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