

2000 TO READERS

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THE
MERRY
MAGAZINE

Vol. III | MADRAS, 23rd FEBRUARY, 1935. | No. 8

THE CASTOR-OIL-MOON

In contra-distinction to the usual Honey-moon!
The Honey-Mooner:—I didn't bring you here all the way so that you may read books, you know!
The Honey-Mooner:—Oh, yes, and don't talk of honey-moon! It has been castor-oil, all the time!

OFFICE OF THE REGISTER
22 FEB 1935



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MADRAS

THE MERRY MAGAZINE

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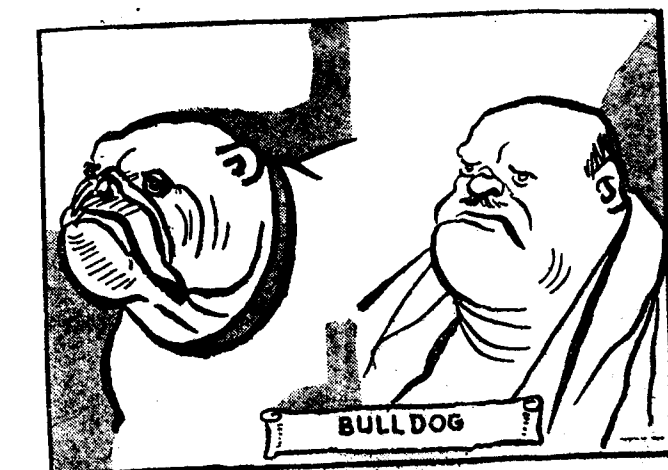
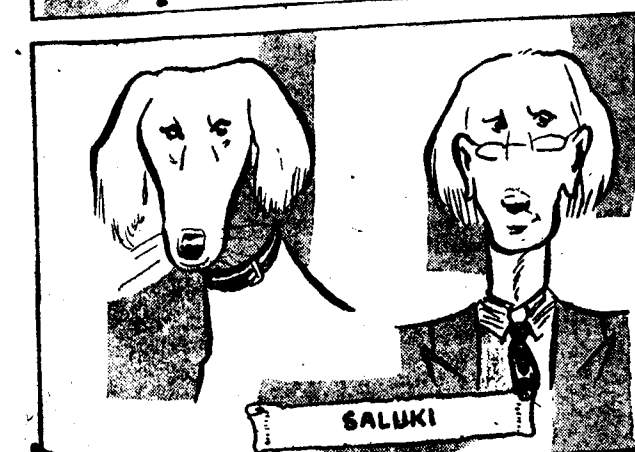
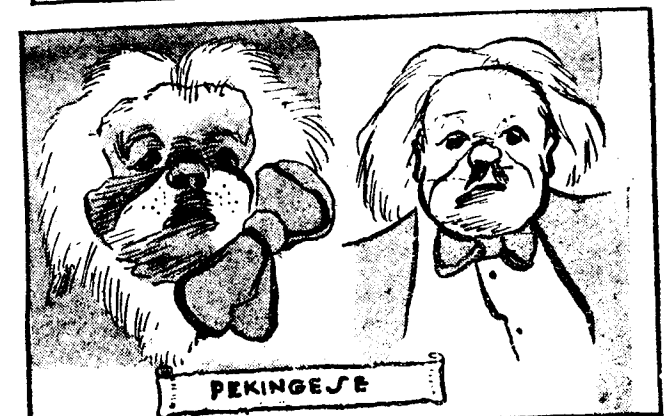
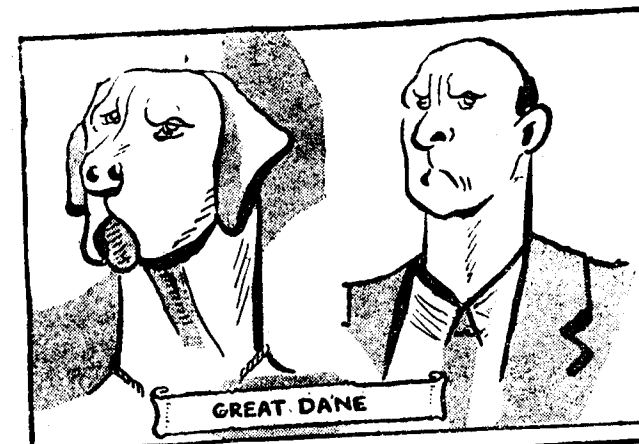
The MERRY MAGAZINE

Vol. III

MADRAS, 23rd FEBRUARY, 1935.

No. 8

Animal Physiognomy : Studies in Harmony



1-23-2-35

—'MALI'

66 JIMMY," said the boss to me one morning, "the plague is very bad over at Ghorpura."

"Whom have they there?" I enquired.

"A sub-assistant surgeon and three constables," replied the chief, "and they are all scared stiff. I don't blame them."

"Isn't the village evacuated?"

"A good many of the people have left," said the chief. "But there is always a certain number who cling to their homes. And there are the relatives of the sick, too."

"It would be better if we could persuade them to clear out, and give the village a good clean-up."

"The only way to clean it up is to burn it, and that's impossible. In fact, any method of combating the epidemic is pretty difficult. You can't persuade the people to kill rats. They won't exterminate vermin. You can't go intruding into their houses and disturbing their women-folk. You can only give advice and provide facilities, and hope for the best."

"If only there were some of their own people to give them a lead!" I sighed.

"My word, that's an ideal," said the chief. "There's this new Village Welfare Society. I wonder if they'd tackle it?"

"Aren't they rather—political?" I asked.

"May be. Anyhow, they claim solely to have village welfare at heart. Here is an opportunity for them to show their colours. Look here, if I can get these fellows to co-operate, will you go out and run the show?"

"Willingly. But will the welfare-chaps want me?"

"Well, to do any good, they will have to exercise a certain amount of official authority over the villagers. And whoever wants to impose authority, must accept authority."

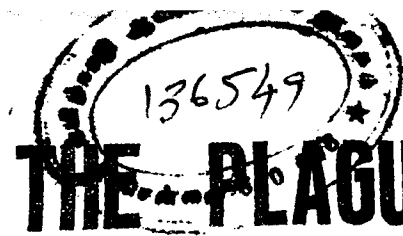
"All right, chief. I'm willing to try anything once."

The big noise of the welfare society was inclined to hum and haw. He wanted to strike some sort of vague but advantageous bargain, and to manoeuvre for various fine-drawn points of prestige. "Come, Mr. Lall," said the chief, "we are not footling in committee-rooms and assembly-lobbies. This is *practical politics*. Quick judgements and quick decisions. Make up your mind whether I have any ulterior motives, and if I haven't, abandon your own."

"But I must consult my colleagues....."

"Do so, by all means. But do it quickly and decisively. Please, Mr. Lall, don't let the methods of debating-societies and bazaar-hucksters enter into this. No one will be happier than myself if your organisation vindicates itself by taking a generous and responsible attitude. But promptness is everything."

All things considered, the good Lallji did not do badly. A day passed without result, and no doubt



THE PLAGUE VICTIM

By 'EMBUSQUE'

Meanwhile, I had collected stores for the work in hand.

"Hullo!" quoth young Emery, seeing me booted and spurred. "Whither away?"

"I'm going over to Ghorpura to tackle the plague."

"And what are your favourite flowers?"

"You won't be attending my funeral yet awhile, old boy."

"Well, I'd sooner the plague-bugs were biting you than me."

"Not a chance, old son. Plague-fleas cannot jump more than knee-high. I'll wear boots and leggings in the infected area, and sleep in the open jungle."

The conversation reminded me of the risks that would be run by the bare-legged volunteers. I'd have to keep them out of the houses, in the sun. Plague-fleas don't like sunlight.

On arrival at the outskirts of the village, I lectured my little force. Briefly, plague is conveyed from rats to human beings, and from one human being to another, by the bite of fleas. Our operations were directed at the destruction of the rats and the elimination of the fleas.

Half the volunteers proved useless, but the remainder turned out to be stout young fellows. Six of the volunteers, one of the police-constables, and a village sweeper, formed the real plague-fighting force. The weaker brethren were employed in maintaining a cordon round the village, supervising the little refuge-camps, and such-like second-line services. My small body of 'storm-troops' worked in the village itself.

The leading volunteer was a smart young B. A. from the south, and he was invaluable in lecturing the villagers and persuading them to follow our directions. More important still, he set an example in ignoring unreasonable caste-restrictions while at work, while maintaining proper observances in his personal life. However, only the sweeper had the hardihood to accompany me into plague-infected houses. His risk, which was much greater than mine, was explained to him, but he showed a stolid undemonstrative courage which I thought completely admirable.

We soon established a routine. The first daily job was the rat-traps. The sweeper and I collected the bodies in a portable tank of creosote, and the volunteers disinfected and re-set the traps. Then we began work on the next batch of infected houses which we had secured permission to enter. The sweeper put poisoned baits down every rat-hole, and sealed the hole with cement. The volunteers brought along our portable tank and ran out a hose, and I sprayed each room with a tree-spray. The routine was soon running smoothly, a job to each man,

the committee of the society wrangled endlessly. But on the second day, Mr. Lall produced a dozen volunteers.

We were not without our difficulties. The owners of some houses could not be found; the owners of others were obstructive. And the supply of anti-plague serum ran out.

I had not been inoculated against plague before setting out, and when the serum was running short, I thought it better to wait until more arrived.

That day, I was spraying a house in which all the inmates had died. While dealing with a particularly lively collection of bedding, I felt a tiny prick on the back of my hand. Looking down, I saw a flea hop off the skin.

Anti-plague serum, while not an infallible protection, greatly lessens the fatality of the disease, even if the inoculation is given after the patient has become infected. I decided to rush off to the nearest town and get an inoculation. I explained the situation to the volunteers, and promised to be back in two or three hours. Lighting a cheroot to steady my nerves, I hurried off to my car. Then, hastily thrusting away the cheroot, I slammed in the gears and drove off.

For the first ten minutes I stepped on the gas, but after that I felt so queer that I had to slow down. Hell, I thought; am I sickening for it already? Why did my head ache? Why did I feel so hot?

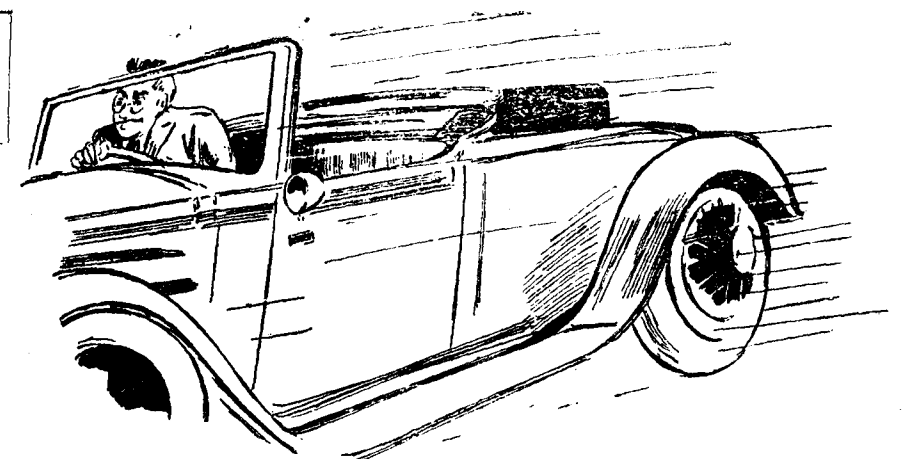
Nonsense, I reflected. The hood of the car was none too thick. I had come away without my *toppe*. I was getting a slight touch of the Sun. I could feel no definite pain.

Couldn't I? There was a strange sensation in my side! Impossible! No, it was real! A dull, burning pain. Should I stop and examine myself? Bah, why waste time! The sooner I got to the hospital, the better. I grit my teeth and trod on the accelerator.

Damnation, what a filthy disease to die of! What a shame to leave those decent young volunteers exposed to it! But they were inoculated. What a fool I was, not to get a shot before going to the village!

How big was the pain? About the size of a rupee.

I grit my teeth and trod on the accelerator



A bubo. Ugh! It seemed to be getting bigger.

I was driving like a demon now. I flew shrieking past bullock-carts, and roared through villages, scattering fowls and dogs before me. An astonished and indignant policeman waved his arms impotently.

The pain was spreading. My God! It was the size of the palm of my hand. Would I ever get there?

The last few miles were an agony. My whole side seemed to be burning. With screaming brakes I drew up in front of the hospital, and fell into the arms of the house-surgeon.

He took one look at me, dragged me into the casualty-room, and stripped off my coat, shirt, and under-vest.

"Quick!" I said. "Some anti-plague serum!"

"Oh, you want an inoculation, do you?" said the surgeon. "But I'd better get the picric acid first."

"Picric acid?" I howled, flabbergasted. "Damn the picric acid! Inoculate me, quickly. My whole side is afire!"

"Yes, I know it is," said the surgeon. "That's why I'm getting the picric acid."

He held up my coat, shirt, and vest. In each was a large burnt hole, the size of a dinner-plate. On my body, under my arm, was a huge blister.

The terrible burning pain was a burn! I had forgotten to extinguish the damned cheroot before starting. Throughout the journey, my clothes had been smouldering against my skin!

'OUGH'

A Naval officer has written to the *Times* on the difficulty a foreigner has in pronouncing properly the various words in our language ending with "ough". He said: "To help a foreign friend some time ago I devised a sentence which seems to embrace them all, with the idea that, once this sentence had been learnt by ear, the comparatively few other words containing the syllable "ough" could easily be memorised. The total number of words in question I made out to be sixteen, and the different pronunciations seven, all of which latter are included in: 'I thought I got my cough through a quick though thorough wetting in the rough ploughed fields.'"

A lady correspondent supplemented this with the

following: "I taught this puzzle to foreigners more than fifty years ago:

Wife, make me some dumplings of dough,
I think they'll be good for my cough;
But mind they are boiled thoroughly through.
But still not heavy or tough.
Now I must be off to the plough,
And the boys when they've had enough,
Can keep off the flies with a bough,
While the old mare drinks out of the trough!"

To all these we may add "sough" (pronounced as a lady pig), concerning the wind, and "hough" (hock), the joint on the hind-leg of a quadruped.

RAJAS, BAHADURS, AND ME

WELL, well, this craze for autobiographies has reached India at last! Whoever had thought that the Lethargic East would sit up and take notice! But here is Dewan Bahadur Doraiswamy's ponderous book of reminiscences, which reminds the philosophic reader (that's me) of the truth of the dictum, 'Life is short, but biographies are long'. It runs into eight hundred and sixty-four pages of close print and, according to Messrs. Chari and Chari, the publishers, it is cheap at eighteen rupees. Dirt cheap, I should say. And they proclaim on the yellow cover, "It pictures the whole kaleidoscope of Indian political life since the days of Edward, the Peace-Maker. Post free in India, Burma and Ceylon."

The publishers are on to a good thing, I shouldn't wonder, for 'Rajahs, Bahadurs and Me' is as monumental a tome (whatever it means) as was ever written by a Moderate.

Naturally, the book contains yards and yards of 'what the country needs at the present moment'. Likethis: "Take it from me, gentlemen," says the Dewan Bahadur, with all the authority of a ripe old schoolmaster, "take it from me that what India needs at the present moment is intellectual clarity, political sobriety and social sanity. But, unfortunately, what do we see around us to-day? Volatile Extremists running rabid with political programmes having no pretensions to rhyme or rhythm

And so on he hammers the poor Extremists through a couple of dozen pages of red-hot, straight-from-the-shoulder stuff. 'Crushing!' as the Raja Saheb remarked when he was accidentally sat on by his favourite elephant.

But taking it by and large, it is, like the autobiographies that pour out in waggon-loads from the printing houses of England, more a barrellful of assorted anecdotes—actual and alleged—than a treatise on public conduct. Here are a few, taken at random from its profuse pages.

"A friend of mine, Khan Bahadur—, was taking an evening walk along a railway line when an Express came dashing round the corner. He was slightly deaf and a trifle short-sighted, and noticed the approaching train only when the cow-catcher was within a few yards of him.

4

"Dash it!" he yelled, stepping briskly aside, 'I am not a cow, sir; I am a Khan Bahadur!'"

The author, like almost every autobiographer, tells quite a few natty stories against himself. Once when he visited a

neighbour, he tried to get into conversation with the neighbour's little son.

"Look here, my little lad," he said affably, "what do you want to be when you become a man?"

The nipper leaned his head to one side and thought for a moment.

"I want to be a Dewan Bahadur," he said firmly.

"Why?"

"Because, I can eat lots and lots."

"Who told you that?"

"Daddy says, the Dewan Bahadur over there eats eight meals a day."

The author was once introduced to a picturesque Rao Bahadur, on the platform of a railway station.

And when the train was about to move out, the latter handed him a large card, quite eight inches by five, with a few hundred words printed on it.

"What's this?" asked the D. B.

"My visiting card," said the R. B.

"My mistake!" said the D. B. "I thought it was your autobiography."



—accidentally sat on by his favourite elephant,

Dewan Bahadur Doraiswamy has had the good fortune to see much of the humorous side of politics. A young candidate was addressing an election meeting when a whiskered, elderly man, a supporter of the rival candidate, rose to heckle him.

"Look here," he shouted at the top of his voice, "you are too young for the Council."

"No, sir," replied the young man earnestly, "I am thirty-five if a day."

"Thirty-five? But you have no moustache!"

"I take after my mother, sir."

"No," snapped the old man. "Certainly not. I have seen the lady."

During his long and distinguished career the D. B. had the opportunity to shake hands—and even rub shoulders—with the best people in the land. And in his memoirs he gives many extracts from his diary which show that he was on slap-me-on-the-shoulder terms with the bluest blood in India. Here is an example:—

"Accepted a pressing invitation to dinner at the palace of the Maharajah of Navaratna. His Highness slapped me lustily on the shoulder and conducted me to a seat near the head of the table. And dinner over, he took me aside for a moment to ask me what I thought of his new diamond necklace.

'It reflects the brilliance of your Royal countenance,' I replied, almost chucking him under the chin."

And another:—

"Had tea with the Viceroy's private secretary. Cakes a trifle stale. Tea not half bad, mixed by the secretary's wife. Shook hands with the lady. An enjoyable evening on the whole."

The book abounds in passages of penetrating insight such as: "The difference between an Englishman and an Indian is not the difference between a top-hat and a silk turban—it is something deeper, more elemental!" Not clear? Well, therein lies his merit. His aim is to set you thinking—not to feed you with spoonfuls of mental tonic.

Perhaps Dewan Bahadur Doraiswamy's book of reminiscences will be best remembered by posterity for the quantity of staggering information that it contains. For instance: "There are Jews with their noses turned up." And again: "There are twenty-five thousand two hundred and ninety-nine titled Indians in India, and not one of them has blue eyes!"

And now, gentle reader, don't you get such a topping tome. Get a copy of the book, big boy, and read it from cover to cover.

In The Next Issue

CACOPHONES By P. P. Samuel

("There is an element of music in telephones," said someone; "Mebbe," says Mr. Samuel, "but not in gramophones. They make me 'phoney'.")

THE METAMORPHOSIS By V. B. Prasad

(Even a worm will turn! Some do it because of the screw, others when pricked: This one did it because there was a girl—rather girls.....)

THE NEW ENERGY By 'Jason'

(in two parts) PART I
(Nothing to do with monkey-glands. This is a thriller. There is a murder.....and then? You ask.....Well, read it—as the Income-Tax Collector said to the man who had made a false return.)

LITERATOR IN EXCELSIS

As Narrated by 'Pandit Vittalbai Puri'

('Playrite, novelist, yes-sayist, biographer and con-versist, narrates a varnished tale of his 'chameleon career'.)

Sequel To 'WHO KILLED THE MANAGER?' By 'Arpin Lusene'

('Arpin' picks holes in 'Embusque's story of the above title which appeared in the issue of the 12th January and 'Embusque' patches them up.)

JOYFULL'S CINEMA SHOW

(It was not a talkie; but you will talk about it for weeks)

Also

Our regular features—Star Dust, One Thing and Another, Do you know? &c.

You'll say, "Hold me Horace!"

Keep this copy of The Merry Magazine.

It may bring you a Prize.



By 'KEBI'

"MADRAS," said a lace-turban and long coat in the tramcar last evening, despairingly, "has gone race-mad, stark race-mad." We had just reached Round Tana and a huge crowd had gathered on the pavement, eagerly awaiting the appearance of the 'Race Book'. This remark set the molecules of my grey matter stirring. Why should Madras not be race-mad? It is only an innocent form of madness, compared with the conditions in other climes, for, madness is essentially one of degree. It has manifested itself in other ways in other places. The Punjab and Sind have had a glut of armed dacoities. Gangs of marauders swoop down on villages like wolves on a fold, pillage and plunder, shoot down the residents like nine-pins and ride away with the booty. The police, say the newspapers, are investigating. Then there are the periodical 'combings' in Red Russia and Brown Germany, where, for nothing, people are bumped off by the cart-load. Another form of idealistic sport is that indulged in by the Chicago gunmen, who play skittles with human targets. Just target-practice, only it is styled 'putting on the spot'. China has its own brand of sport; blowing up bridges, derailing trains and kidnapping missionaries.

Considering all these forms of madness, it struck me that Madras' malady was mild. And I told the lace-turban and long coat so.

He looked at me suspiciously, as a worm looks at a hen and said, "So, I take it, sir, you too are a victim of that madness."

"I am," I replied. "And what is more, I made a decent pile last Saturday, you poor fish! Yes, I am mad but so are you. Otherwise, you won't waste your Saturday afternoons at home."

He turned green, then blue, chameleon-wise.

More madness.....

There is an old saw—Spanish I think,—which runs, 'Any fool can be a father.' And that is exactly what every man-jack in Italy is trying to be to-day. For 'Children Galore' is the *mot d'ordre* in that country at present. Dictator Mussolini sets great store by fecundity and is offering handsome prizes to the most prolific parents. Recently, a sum of 4,000 lire was distributed to proud mothers, who among them, contributed a quota of 912 children. Other prizes, ranging from diplomas to flats were also distributed. Besides, as an inducement for marriage, every groom is given a policy by the National Insurance Institute, by which he receives, the day his

family reaches a total of six, half the insured capital and can cease to pay premiums on the balance!

Certainly, we in India cannot afford this luxury, for if such prizes were offered, the state would go bankrupt in a week!

Still more madness.....

Was it not the Mayor of Casterbridge in Thomas Hardy's classic of that name—he was not Mayor at that time—who sold his wife on financial grounds? Well, here is a parallel from life. A young man of Dhandhuka (Bombay Presidency) adopted this extreme course to pay off his pressing liabilities. He held an auction and sold his wife, aged about 15, to the highest bidder, who offered a hundred rupees. But unfortunately, the matter reached the ears of the Ahmedabad Police, who arrested the young man. The girl was rescued and placed in an Ashram, to be taken care of. And the purchaser? Ask me another.

All of which goes to show that Truth is really stranger than Fiction.

An old man of Osaka is baffling the best brains of that blessed Land of the Rising Sun. He is able to talk with the aid of a tuning flute. Mr. K. Nagatsuna, for that is his name, was operated upon for cancer of the throat, in his fiftieth year, and had his vocal chords removed. Nothing daunted, he bought a tuning pipe and connecting the reed to his windpipe, learnt to control it. He is now stated to speak clearly, though he stumbles at some intonations. The telephone, however, corrects some of his faults. I am further told, Mr. Nagatsuna sings well! What are we coming to?

From the English law-courts:

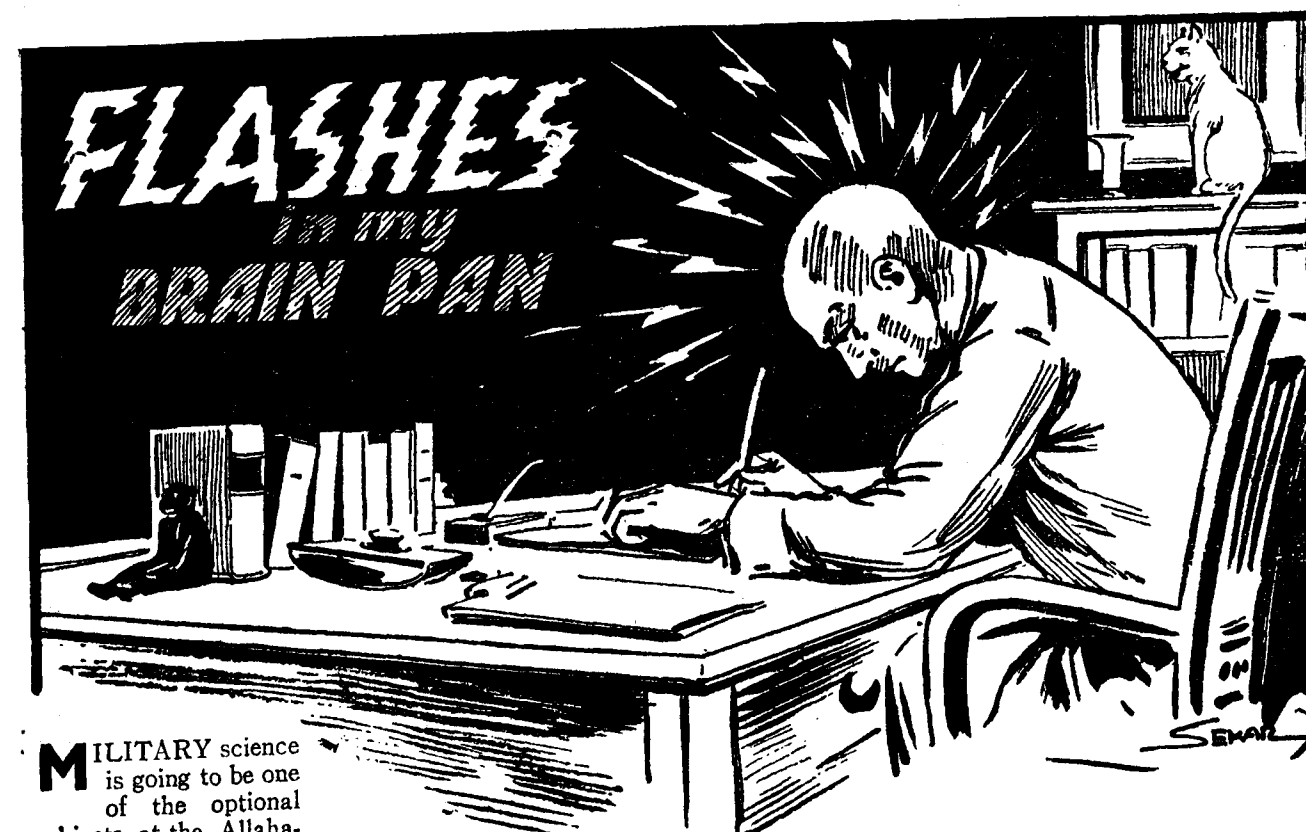
North London solicitor to motor cyclist:

"Where were you at the time of the accident?"
"Underneath the car that collided with me."

Kent Magistrate to accused:

"You were drunk, while driving last night?"
"No, sir. I was not drunk. I was only intoxicated."
"Well, I wanted to fine you a pound, but now I will let you off with twenty shillings."

Harold Ashton (aged 22), owner of a two-seater car, in which two men and three girls were crowded, with another man reclining on the sloping back of the vehicle was fined £ 3. "for driving under such conditions as not to have proper control." Of course, anybody would lose control under those circumstances.



MILITARY science is going to be one of the optional subjects at the Allahabad University, in the B. A. Examinations. We understand this subject will be very popular with women-students.

A plaque outside a house in London announces "Here John Constable worked and died". And then our bosses expect us to work too.

It is reported that a sparrow has been killed by a golf-ball. Some use has been found for golf after all.

Is 'there anything in astrology?' asks a reader. Money, boy, money.

An advt. says: "Dress money goes farther now." Yes, to France and America.

"Safe vanishes," says a headline. Couldn't have been a safe then.

"A forgiving wife offers another chance to the man who left her," says a London paper. Let's hope he'll be able to get away further this time.

"Stone is one of the commonest conditions," says the *Lancet*, "with which the surgeon is called upon to deal." Especially when the 'stone' refuses to pay the surgeon's bill.

A Chicago man presented his wife with a book on '201 ways of committing suicide.' We should like to

know which of the 201 ways she selected to make him commit suicide.

"Well's History is a veritable milestone on the road to learning," says a review. Most students think it is a veritable mill-stone.

A peasant in Austria bit three nurses, and five doctors. We do not understand his biting the doctors.

"Women are sweeping the male off his feet," says a correspondent. That explains why so many men are taking to aviation.

Mr. Davies, M. P., says, walking is now as dangerous as coal-mining. Tut, tut, coal-mining is mere child's play.

Athletics and physical training of a kind not suited to the feminine temperament are strictly forbidden in Italy. We should like to know what irate girls do when their husbands come home late or drunk.

A young lady from Huddersfield wishes to know why the modern young man is so much wrapped up in his own importance. Because after buying all the clothes for the modern young woman he has nothing else left to wrap himself in.

THE EDITOR'S COLUMN

A set of cartoons by 'Mali' replaces the regular 'Sparks' in this week's issue. The idea behind this substitution is to make the *Merry* as little topical as possible. The 'Sparks' whose intrinsic merit is universally admitted, are only for the moment. This week's—nay, to-day's—questions are to-morrow's history and the 'Sparks' while they scintillate to-day cool off and even turn grey to-morrow. The *Merry* is neither for to-day nor to-morrow—it is for all time.

But if a substitute is needed, none will question the credentials of 'Mali' whose cartoon is appearing this week and will appear every week in future. 'Mali' touches life at many angles and lays just that emphasis which accentuates human foibles and follies. He needs no introduction to readers nor does he require an advertisement. I have full confidence in his ability to please all of you.

Another feature I have to mention is the arrival in our midst of 'Pandit Vittalbhair Puri', alleged relative of Babu Piche Lal, and godson of Mrs. Malaprop. He has dumped on us some letters where he tells us the main incidents in his hectic life. "Hereinafter following I beg to introduce myself to your Honor's benignant perusal and commiserating disposal for which action of Editorial gracefulness I invoke your stupendous longevity and multiform felicitations," says he, and the rest of it ought to make amusing reading.

Turning now to mundane affairs, the Competition Editor is half-way through the entries of the 'Give and Take' Competition which closed on the 13th instant. Results will be published in the next week's issue.

If you ask me why there has been some tardiness, I can only say that we have been seriously hampered by one whom you all know. Yes, you are right. He is indeed the staff poet. I suppose I am weak but here is his latest.

And when your teacher is feeling blue
It is surely up to you
To make him smile and grin:
Show him the *Merry Magazine*.

Well, notwithstanding these little worries I remain happy because I am your

—Editor.

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A FEAST OF FUN

Heavy Work

"Would you mind walking the other way and not passing the 'orse?" said a cabman, with exaggerated politeness to the fat lady who had just paid a minimum fare.

"Why?" she enquired.
"Because, if e sees wot 'e 's been carrying for a shillin', 'e'll have a fit."

On The way
"I woke this morning with a strange feeling that my watch had gone."

"And had it gone?"
"No, but it was going."

And he was right!

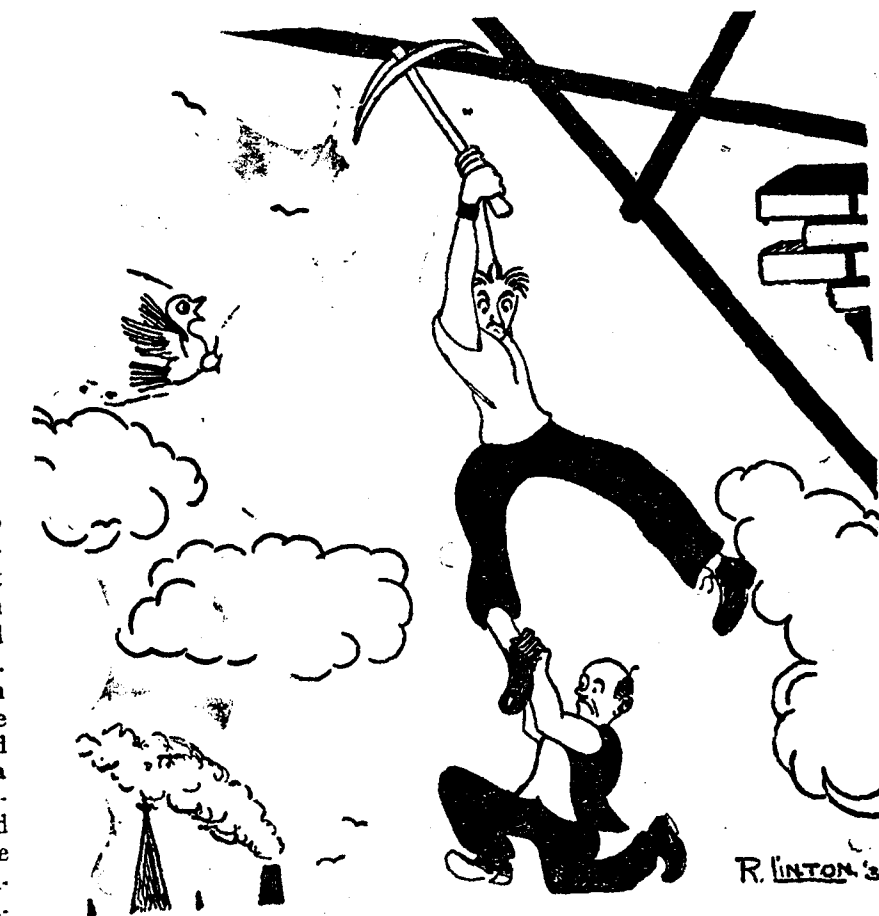
The bus driver was obliged to pull up very suddenly at the street crossing, and in doing so grazed the side of a taxi. The taxi-man turned on the bus driver and gave vent to a volume of vituperation, and abuse, and, as the busman sat smiling and unresponsive, kept it up until he was exhausted and could say no more.

Then the bus driver smilingly retorted:
"I thought you'd be cross."

Love's Language

Bride: "Won't oos 'ittle umpsie dumsie kiss oos 'ittle ootsie wootsie?"
Sleepy Passenger: "Won't those damned foreigners ever shut up?"

Mid-air Madness



The One Above: "Say, let go my foot or I'll hit you with this pickaxe."

R. LINTON'S

Cheer Up

Don't worry if your job is small,
And your rewards are few;
Remember that the mighty oak
Was once a nut like you.

The Expert

"Your methods of cultivation are hopelessly out of date," said the youthful agricultural college graduate to the old farmer. "Why, I'd be astonished if you got even ten pounds of apples from that tree."

"So would I," replied the farmer. "It is a pear tree."

In that Order

Dick (looking up from his newspaper): "I say, Jim, what is the Order of the Bath?"

Jim: "Well as I have experienced it, it's first the water's too hot, then it's too

cold; then you're short of a towel; then you step on the soap, and, finally, the telephone bell rings!"

Topsy Turvy

THE FANTASY CONCLUDED

What you have read:

On a drizzling evening, at the Temple of Bhima, near Modalkar, Professor Thurkov and his student Nargun grow sentimental. The Professor wants his long-lost youth back again and the young student expresses a desire to become a dignified and respected Professor. A vindictive old hag, the Witch of Modalkar, now enters the scene and grants them their wishes.

In Professor Thurkov's body dwells the personality of the Student Nargun while Professor Thurkov's personality lies inside the Student's physical shell. At home and at college they meet with several tragi-comic perplexities which they try to solve as best as they can. Finally, getting desperate, they resolve to re-visit the Temple of Bhima as a last resort to see whether by any means the curse can be nullified.

Now read on:

THE Government Gardens to the south-east of Modalkar was a thing of variegated beauty—expansive, rich and scintillating with the glow of colour and overwhelming with the irresistible perfume of a hundred different kinds of flowers. The inevitable drizzle in Modalkar and its royally fertile soil had given to the pattern beds in the Garden an Elysian felicity and had made them the hunting ground of the sporting innocents of romance. If you are in the Garden, you cannot choose but fall head over heels in love with somebody—at least with the Garden or with yourself. Its aloofness, its evening nonchalance, its spaciousness seemed often to hold inexorable Time itself in suspension.

With his newly acquired lolling and lounging, Thurkov wandered about the Garden, now and then stealing a glance at his wrist-watch to see that time wasn't exactly at a stand-still. His eyes wandered with renascent youthfulness, and lingeringly followed pairs of lovers walking arm in arm at a distance. It was glorious to be alive and



Alas, that such an idyl should be shattered by the reality of life!

young. But the unwanted memory of the past persisted in annoying him—as it was annoying Nargun too. If only the Witch of Modalkar had changed them all in all, without this trail of an unpleasantly clear memory! But why wasn't Nargun coming at all?

Thurkov saw the panorama as one enchanted—it was wonderful! Lo, who was it that was coming towards him! It was a girl, sure enough! An Anglo-Indian perhaps, or even some lorn French damsel,—her father, may be the local French attache, who knows! It was certain she was coming in an unmistakable straight-line towards him—but why, what might be the

The girl giggled,—this was the hugest of Nargun's jokes yet! "Come, come," she coaxed the shrinking Thurkov, casually patting him on the back, "dear boy, that was nicely acted! Capital parodist! What, glum still?....." She frowned a devastatingly cutting frown.

Poor Thurkov was fast succumbing to the perceptible charms of this daughter of Eve—so perfectly proportioned, so throbbingly alive, such merry blue eyes as one reads of in novels, but never meets with in indigenous beauties, such verve and finesse, and such a glorious abandon in utterance. On the other hand, he was caught helplessly between conflicting loyalties—loyalty to Mandodhari at home and loyalty to Nargun, whose friend presumably the enchantress before him was.

Thurkov tried to gain time to deal with the situation: "Don't frown like that, please! It is all right, I assure you. I like nothing better than to stand before you and hear you speak,—I'm telling you the truth, believe me. But I can't take the ground on false pretences! That's certain!"

We all know that when a professor speaks—as Goldsmith said of Dr. Johnson—he would make little fishes talk as though they were whales. Thurkov, try as he might, got more involved in his phraseology and only increased the girl's distrust.

She, at last, threw a bomb-shell: "I hate you, Nargun—you're a worm! Wish to retract your promise now? I care a pin for you now! Where are your vows and silly pretences? Where are your ugly caresses and insistent baggings? Fool I was to be deceived by such a worm as you!....." And the next instant, the impossible girl was whimpering and weeping, covering her face with her hands.

Thurkov approached her and immediately set himself, heart and soul to the work of pacification. He caught hold of the fair girl, gently brought her hands down and wiped her tear-filled eyes, her reddened cheeks and her quivering lips with his handkerchief, and cooed: "I'm sorry dear girl, I've unwittingly insulted you; I didn't mean it at all—oh, I'm ready now to pass all life in purgatory, mebbe, if only you were with me, dearest! I love you, I love you—I care not who knows it!"

The girl lifted her fore-head ever so little and the conquering radiance on her face illuminated by the sun in his setting after-glow, was too much for Thurkov. He forgot himself: he forgot the place and his faithful Mandodhari at home—these were negligible phantoms in life, but here, near the girl, was high heaven itself, a thing of indissoluble and surpassing beauty!

The girl was amiably responsive and her deep-drawn sighs were invitations that one could not misinterpret. His arms crept round her in a passionate clasp and she drew nearer to him and nestled close even; and with eager gasps they muttered things unattempted in prose or rhyme. Alas, that such an idyll should be shattered by the reality of Life! They heard a villainous shout and parted. Nargun,—vast, towering and vindictive—Nargun was there!



Nargun,—vast, towering, vindictive—Nargun was there!

reason? In better view Thurkov could now see her,—running, rather than walking, towards him! Why that confounded hurry? Was it credible—Thurkov was actually getting nervous.

Could he believe his eyes, trust his senses? What did the girl mean by laughing—no doubt she was adorable that way! She was very close to him now, and he knew nothing about her one way or the other! Another trick of the Witch?

"How could you stand there so dead serious?" the fair tormentor asked Thurkov, in a piping, penetrating voice.

The Chemistry professor framed a characteristic reply: "I'm sure there's some mistake. I am afraid you are addressing the wrong person!"

"You dared to do that?" Nargun asked, and shook his fleshy fists at Thurkov—and without waiting for a reply, turning to the girl, he said: "What does all this mean, Lucy Adriane? I shall murder you for this!"

"Who are you,—you blundering wine-cask?" asked Lucy in a rage.

"I am Nargun, your own lover," confessed, with tragic futility, the 'finished' Nargun.

"Nonsense, you rhinoceros! How dare you intrude on our privacy? You're not Nargun,—my darling Nargun is here!" she replied, leaning against Thurkov.

"And for my part," Thurkov declared, still more tactlessly, "I shall never give up this beautiful lady—my darling Lucy girl. I shall simply marry her!"

Nargun's defeat was complete. But he would see it through to the bitter end. This from his own professor! It was unthinkable, unnatural! He rushed blindly, madly at Thurkov, intending to make a *chutney* of his puny, fair body. Thurkov screamed and fell—and Miss Adriane raised a yell "Murder! Murder!..."

Could God—or whatever Gods there be—be expected to stand by and watch unmoved the most unnatural scene of pupil and master in dread impact? And the tantalising Eve,—fidgetting crying, and cracking determinations to doubly grim purpose? As it was, Destiny opportunely intervened.

The twilight hues and rustling leafy music and floating flower incense strained of a sudden, unnaturally at the spot. The little enclosure whereon the incredible tragi-comedy of an inverted love-triangle was being played, felt a crash as of thunder and illuminations as of lightning and suffocating fumes, as of burning sulphur.

Nargun had all but dashed the retreating Thurkov to the ground and Miss Adriane had very nearly flung herself between them when these startling phenomena stayed their grim purpose for the tiny fraction of a minute. The ominousness of the situation awed them all.

Like hunted, desperate creatures they stared aghast and stood apart from one another for a few seconds. Meanwhile they were conscious of someone else on the scene—nebulous, yet taking shape, so deadly, nauseating, earnest—freezing them, as it were, with its stare.

At the same instant, Nargun and Thurkov screamed as if galvanised into speech: "The Witch of Modalkar!" And then down they fell and prostrated themselves full length in front of the little, glowering, trembling, Sycorax-like monster. Miss Adriane stood stupefied—this was the

eriest thing she had ever seen, but how noxiously real! With supreme courage she just managed to stay where she was, awaiting developments—however ghastly they might chance to be.

And the Witch! She was certainly an awful deity. Her teeth chattered in a curdling monkeyish grin and the pin-point eyes emitted flashes of fearful brilliancy. Her tongue framed words at last: "Ye mortals, treble-barrelled fools ye are! Ye wish'd for, and I granted boons. And now you go about killing one another. For rage I could now render you into shapeless pulp!" The words reverberated in the deepening night—and they seemed to frame a final pronouncement of Death. But simultaneously, from the floor, came the despairing prayers: "Goddess True and Great, we are fools, but we pray thee, withdraw the gruesome curse! For countless generations we will worship thee!"

The Witch seemed to relent, for her face brightened up a little and a hideous chuckle shook her features: "I grant thy wish—but more for the sake of the girl here, than for you big stupids." She vanished, as she had come, by inches. And our protagonists too, doubtless, felt a change. They changed; indeed, very soon they were what they had formerly been!

Miss Adriane rubbed her eyes in bewilderment. Was it a vision or a waking dream? The spherical professor and the nimble pupil had got up—and gone was that repellent thing. The stars in thousands were swimming into view. Thurkov—was it another marvel in this day of many marvels?—gave not a thought to either Nargun or Miss Adriane: but straight walked away home.

And Nargun, left alone with Miss Adriane, was willing to (and able to) forget all (and forgive all); he took Lucy in his arms, and none were so happy as they. And so the felicities of Love prolonged themselves far into the night.

FINIS

DO YOU KNOW?



1. Who was Mendel?
2. What is meant by 'sent to Coventry'?
3. What are 'Consols'?
4. Who built the suspension bridge at Niagara Falls?
5. What is a 'spa'?
6. What is a dog-watch?

Please see answers on page 15.

THE NEW RELIGION

(A Story of High Life)

By "Long Waiting"

"And justify the ways of Gods and men."

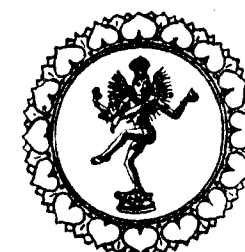
SIR E. S. Ramayyar, the Managing Director of the Easy Settlement Life Assurance Company, Limited, had an inspiration. He argued that if individuals could approach Gods and Goddesses for favours, why shouldn't organisations and institutions do the same? His business instinct echoed, "Why not?" It was merely a question of knowing the proper channel through which to apply and the *modus operandi*. He persuaded the Directorate to insure the interests effectively by contributing an annual donation of a substantial sum of money to Lord Nataraja at Chidambaram. The first annual premium was duly paid into the temple treasury and a prayer registered to the effect that the Easy Settlement policy-holders be blessed with long life.

Now, Lord Nataraja is one of your easy-going gents, a consul by profession, a bestower of largesses and a dilettante. I do not know if He sings and whistles—perhaps He lets His cousin Sri Krishna specialize on those lines—but the whole world knows that He dances away the live-long day. Apparently, He has expensive habits and the money paid by the knight of Madras came in handy; so, He readily promised to do His best regarding the prayer. He put through long distance telephone calls to Brahma, Vishnu and Siva; and He followed them up with a D.O. to the last named official, the most dreaded of the three Bosses at Head-quarters. The letter ran as follows:—

Chidambaram,

Kartikai 28,

Sri Mukha, 5034 Kali.



"The world is a Stage"
for
"The Plastic Dance of
circumstance"

MY DEAR SHIVJI,

I expect that you were annoyed to get my 'phone message. I know that you have already a grievance against me, but I have again been forced to take a liberty with you. I have always felt that it is all right for the Heads to sit on Himalayan heights or sail the Milky Ocean and draw up rigid rules and definitions of powers, but down here, in this sweltering heat and the maddening cackle, things have an absurd way of getting mixed up: however, I do not mean this letter to be a disquisition on the running of a State. The fact is that I have got badly committed to a Life Company here. In a thoughtless moment, I promised them that their policy-holders should be long-lived. Of course, I ought not have encroached on the powers of other Departments; but the word is given, and we have to maintain it—if only for the sake of prestige. I am sorry to make a long tale of it, but do issue orders to all concerned and oblige. I hope that I shall not have an occasion again to worry you like this; but, while I am about it, I may as well tell you that my position is quite unenviable.

How is the Memsahib? I saw her just for a minute when she was hurrying down to Madura last Chitrai. With best wishes,

I am,

Yours sincerely,

Tillai Natarajan.

Siva was annoyed. His Consort, who had a way of meddling with His official duties—She called it 'taking an intelligent interest in His work',—read the letter and looked at Him quizzically. He snapped His fingers and told Her that this boon-bestowing business was all nonsense and should stop immediately. But he had a sneaking love for His Agent-General—Nataraja. He wrote Him a strong letter of disapproval, and by the same post issued precise orders to Yama, the Director of Mortality.

Yama went red with rage when He saw the papers. He sent for his personal assistant, Rao Sahab Chitraputra, and asked him to read them. The latter went through them and looked non-committal, waiting for his cue. His face was ready to put on any desired expression at a moment's notice.

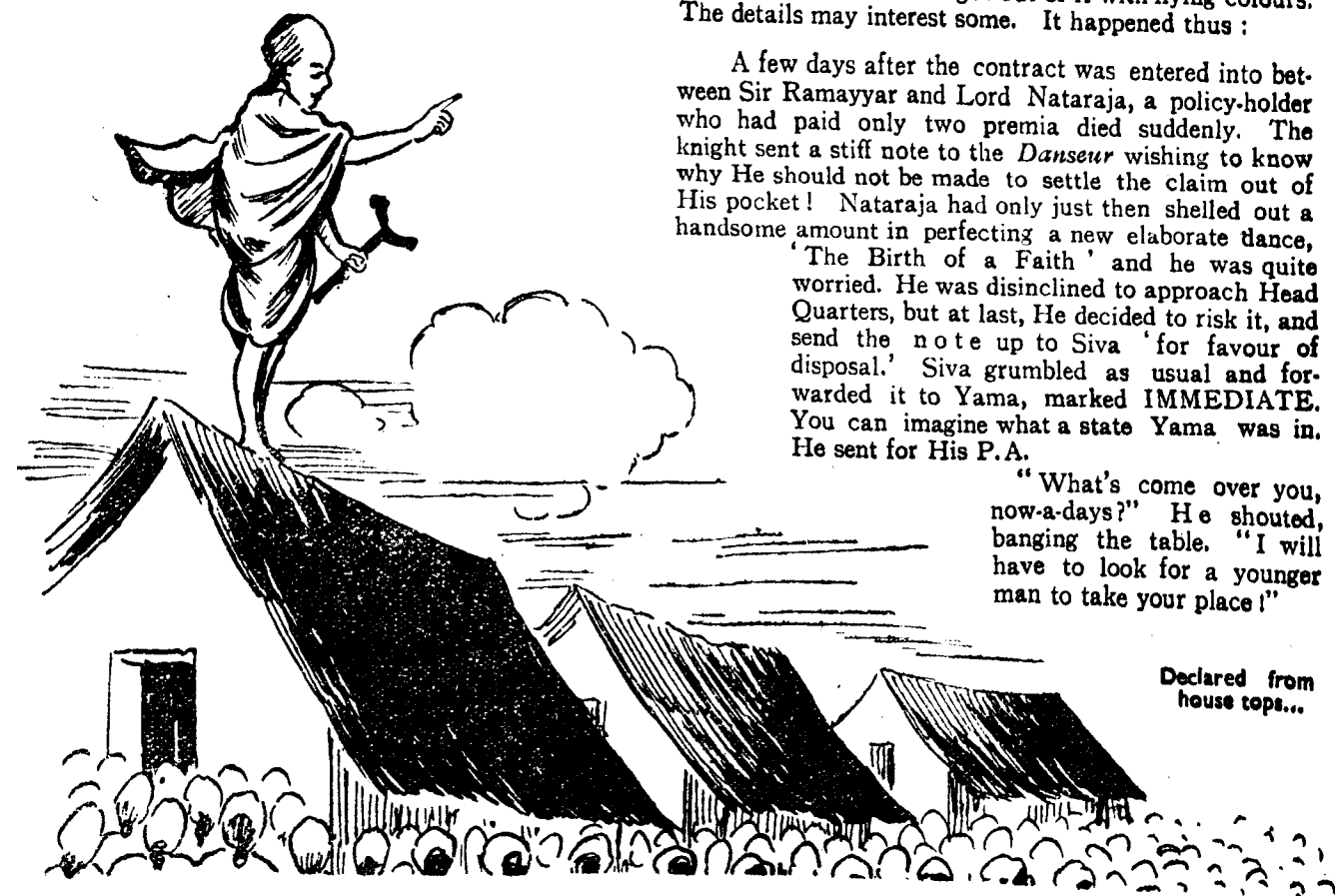
"Bestly interference, what!" snarled the Officer.

"Very bad, sir," chimed in the Rao Sahib, now sure of his ground, and looking deeply annoyed at this latest phase of official *zulum*. "Our time-table has always been considered proverbially irrevocable, sir."

"Are we going to stand this kind of nonsense much longer?"

The P. A. stood sympathetic, but silent. He wished to say, "Everyday, it is getting worse, sir!" but he knew better than that. Why go and get into the bad books of Siva? The Lord of Destruction could be a very nasty customer, mind you!

"And what are we going to do about it?"



"Your slightest wish is a command to me, sir," came the cringing reply.

"I suppose orders is orders," mused Yama, bitterly.

"Yes, sir," said the Rao Sahib, helpfully.

"And d—n it all, why the h—l could they not send a list of the names of those miserable worms whose date of return is to be put off? These *Bara Sahibs* leave everything to me!"

"Some kind of Celestial Cinderella," mumbled the Rao Sahib, and the next instant stood electrified at this most unusual flash of braininess.

"You are scintillating to-day," remarked Yama, smiling; "and coming to business,....."

"I shall write to the firm, sir, and get a complete list. I shall also instruct them to keep us posted up-to-date."

"Right-o! Do so. And see the letter out today.... One moment. You were saying something about the revision of your pay. Put up the papers to me."

"I am most grateful to you, sir. You are my father and mother, sir," murmured the Rao Sahib as he bowed low with a sickly smile on his face.

In due time, the necessary entries were made in the registers. Whatever His other faults, Yama is a good disciplinarian and does not tolerate slipshod work in His subordinates. The scheme worked well. It is true that He was pulled up once for the 'premature recall' of a man; and the affair caused quite a sensation in official circles. But He got out of it with flying colours. The details may interest some. It happened thus:

A few days after the contract was entered into between Sir Ramayyar and Lord Nataraja, a policy-holder who had paid only two premia died suddenly. The knight sent a stiff note to the *Danseur* wishing to know why He should not be made to settle the claim out of His pocket! Nataraja had only just then shelled out a handsome amount in perfecting a new elaborate dance, 'The Birth of a Faith' and he was quite worried. He was disinclined to approach Head Quarters, but at last, He decided to risk it, and send the note up to Siva 'for favour of disposal.' Siva grumbled as usual and forwarded it to Yama, marked IMMEDIATE. You can imagine what a state Yama was in. He sent for His P. A.

"What's come over you, now-a-days?" He shouted, banging the table. "I will have to look for a younger man to take your place!"

Declared from house tops...

"The work is new to the office, sir," pleaded Chitraputra meekly; "seven of the clerks are down with fever, sir, and the two new hands are worse than useless, sir. They have no education, sir, and they are very disobedient....."

"Oh, I should have appointed your two nephews, I suppose!" insinuated Yama, with a nasty smile of sarcasm.

"No, sir; I dare not criticise your selection, sir,—but if you are so kind as to.....," cringed the P. A.

"Stop all this rigmarole. Tell me how you explain such a *fatal* slip as this!"

"The Office has never done this kind of work, sir. It takes some time to get into the swing, sir....."

"Get into the swing? Look here, if more mistakes like this happen, you will have to swing for it!" He was mightily tickled by the joke and forgot half his anger. "You commit blunders, and I have to explain! All right. Go away.—I say, one minute, take away your personal file. More pay! Thank these silly rules for not being dismissed on the spot!"

"Very good, sir."

Chitraputra went away dejected, feeling that the snub was deserved. He returned, however, a few moments later with an armful of files and a bright smile.

"What the deuce do you want now?" cried Yama.

"About that case, sir, everything is O. K. sir."

He explained that the warrant was issued and acted upon full two days before the final list of policy-holders was received in the office and that Sir E. Ramayyar could not very well expect that his request would be acceded to *from the moment that he deposited the fees* in the temple treasury at Chidambaram! "We are creating a bad precedent in postponing deaths, sir,—presently, we will be pestered by every Tom, Dick and Harry clamouring for the same privilege, sir,—but really, *can deaths be ever postponed retrospectively*, sir?" came the staggering query.

In a moment, the dreaded Chief became all smiles. He said, "I knew that I could trust you, Rao Sahib."

Yes. Put up a draft. You can go now... I say, one minute. You had some papers asking for some revision of pay! Put them in the car. I shall pass orders to-night."

"It is very kind of you, sir."

.....Thus, the scheme worked quite well, so well indeed that people soon recognized that the policy-holders of the Easy Settlement had a charmed life. Illness did not kill them, fire did not burn them, water did not drown them, and even motor cars were powerless against them. In a short while, the Easy Settlement Office had to print proposal forms by the crore. It was even rumoured that men in deathbeds left off propitiating Sri Venkatachalapathi Swami at Tirupati, but took a policy instead with the Easy Settlement.

About that time, there arose a Prophet who hailed the Easy Settlement as a Heaven-born Institution—a Reformed Religious System moving with the Time Spirit. "Well, indeed, hath it been called Life Assurance," he declared from house-tops in a solemn voice, "for, verily, doth it not *ensure* long life for a small *consideration*?"—Again, "Did not Sri Krishna announce in the battlefield:

*Yada yada hi dharmasya,
glanirbhavati Bharata,
Abhyutthanamadharmasya
tadatmanam srujamyham."*

In the wake of the Prophet went architects building new Temples for the Easy Settlement. In the course of a few decades, the whole world was converted to the New Religion. And Lord Nataraja was the Presiding Deity.

YES! I KNOW!



1. He was an Austrian Abbot who formulated the law of inherited characteristics in plant and animal life.
2. It means tabooed or neglected, referring especially to social ostracism.
3. They were government loans in the form of annuities, made uniform in 1751 under the name 'Consolidated Annuities,' and 'Consols' is a popular abbreviation of the term.
4. John Augustus Roebling (1806-69)
5. A mineral spring; also refers to places resorted to by people on that account.
6. It is a nautical term, describing two periods or 'watches', from 4 to 6 p.m., and from 6 to 8 p.m.

For questions see page 12.

The Editor's Choice

By 'Good Tea Lover'

WHEN the editor of *The Gargle Humorist* had rejected my sixth article, I knew something was wrong—with the editor.

For I had shown these very same articles to some of my friends, and they had laughed heartily. And if my writings could provoke laughter in my friends, there could be only one inference—they (the articles, not the friends) were exquisitely humorous. Some of my more intimate friends had even said:—

"I never thought you could produce anything like this," and

"I wonder how you are able to write such stuff!!"

Having been thus encouraged, I decided to have recourse to the 'direct method'. I was through with the editor, and I determined to tell him exactly what I thought of him and his like. Accordingly I wrote:

AN OPEN LETTER TO THE EDITOR
OF

The Gargle Humorist

SIR,

You have, within the short space of a fortnight rejected six of my excruciatingly funny articles—articles which have sent those of my friends who read them into convulsions of laughter. One of them called them 'classics'; another pronounced them to be 'master-pieces of genius'.

Even after making due allowance for friendly flattery and personal egotism, I cannot but think they were at least on a par with some of the silliest stuff ever printed in your *Gargle Humorist*.

What could pique an editor more than be told that his paper had published 'silliest stuff'? Unconsciously, and almost without effort, I was developing a strong sense of wit. I continued:—

Sir, a scientist once said, 'There's a link that binds genius to madness, and writers to lunatics, for both are the result of excessive imagination'.

I read this sentence over and over again. What could be more provocative to an Ed.—a veritable writer—than be told that, scientifically speaking, he was not much better than a lunatic? I continued in this vein:—

Permit me to say, sir, that an editor is an egoist who finds solace for his diabolical work in rejecting acceptable articles, and publishing those that merit immediate consignment to the waste-paper basket.

I ask you, sir, have you a sense of humour? Did you laugh at my articles? Did you—like my friends (three of whom are educated young ladies)—call them (my articles—not the aforesaid ladies) 'master-pieces of genius' or 'classics'?

16

Evidently you didn't—and I am unable to conceive by what stretch of imagination you can pretend to be the sole arbiter to judge which articles are humorous and which not.

I read this portion again and again. Swift could not have been more sarcastic; Johnson could not have been more ironic.

I now decided to give a touch of the lofty and the great and concluded my letter thus:—

I am not pained at the rejection of my contributions—it pains me greater indeed to know that, while you are yourself devoid of a sense of humour, you have yet the hypocrisy to say, 'I regret I have to reject your article' etc. Regret! As though an editor is capable of 'regret'; as though an editor is not a bread and butter journalist; as though an editor has a heart that weeps at returning to the contributor an article its author loved so much!

But enough, sir! I do not wish to join the band of fools, idiots, scape-goats and demented men who pass under the name of 'contributors' to your equally foolish and equally idiotic journal.

Yours Most Out-spokenly,

To my utmost surprise I found that the editor had published this Open Letter in his next issue and had commented on it as under:—

I take pride and pleasure in introducing to my readers a new humorist. Mr. Garlic is a writer and there is a subtle wit when he says 'There is a link that binds writers to lunatics.' Thus, like the true humorist that he undoubtedly is, Mr. Garlic cannot resist the temptation to raise a laugh, even against himself.

If Mr. Garlic's wit is great, greater still is his humour. For example, he says some of his friends laughed at his articles—and who does not laugh at things ludicrous! I cannot but appreciate Mr. Garlic's humour—it is excruciatingly funny!

In conclusion, I welcome Mr. Garlic as a contributor to this magazine, although, as he humorously puts it, he is unwilling to join 'the band of fools, idiots, scape-goats, and demented men who pass under the name of contributors.'

—EDITOR, *The Gargle Humorist*

And to add insult to injury, the hypocrite of an editor had the effrontery to send me a cheque for my 'Open Letter', and to request me to send:

.....a few more articles from your facile and fluent pen, as humorous and as witty as the one you have already sent me!

(I didn't—Ed.)

Letters of Private Joyfull

37.

BOGGINS ARRANGES A CINEMA SHOW



Madras, 23rd Feb., 1935.

Dear Mother,

I do not think I have told you that we have a portable cinema apparatus in our barracks. Sometimes the War Office sends us films to demonstrate the handling of a new machine-gun, or to exhibit lessons in tactics and so forth. We also have private showings of films taken by different people in the regiment. These are not very thrilling. Part One shows a company marching up a hill; and Part Two shows the same company marching down again. I sometimes wonder if it would be more economical to take only one film, and run Part One backwards the second time.

We have a lovely film of the Colonel falling off his horse on the King's Birthday Parade, but unfortunately it is banned.

Our cinema apparatus is not very up-to-date. It shows silent films. There is a hand-dynamo which provides the light by the turning of a crank; and the projector is turned by hand, too. There has to be an interval between the showing of each reel, because the old reel has to be wound off, and the new reel wound on.

8—23—2—35

He recites it with great pathos,.....

Boggins understands the working of the projector, and acts as operator. I do the donkey-work, and crank the dynamo.

One week-end, Boggins took me to the village out in the jungle, where he goes shooting. I don't mean shooting pictures, but shooting animals and things. Boggins never brings them back alive. We always argue about this, because I maintain it is wanton to destroy wild life. Boggins says that the animals destroy the village crops, and anyhow, it is impossible to treat all life as sacred. If all life is sacred, it is a crime to kill vegetables. According to Boggins, a great Indian scientist has discovered that vegetables are sensitive, and have love-affairs and everything. When anyone wickedly cuts off a vegetable in its prime, the poor vegetable gives a dying shriek, and is mourned by all its relations. Their sorrow is increased by the fact that vegetables do not enjoy the consolations of religion in the face of such calamities, as we do.

Boggins has written a poem about it. He recites it with great pathos, and with tears running down his

17

cheeks, while gazing at a carrot or a bunch of Spring onions.

Never be cruel
To a vegeta-buel.
In all your dealings
Consider the feelings
Of every cucumber.
Don't cut asunder
A thriving young marrow;
Because you will harrow
The soul of its mother,
And cause all its brother—
Cucumbers to sorrow.
Just think of the morrow:
Generations of orphans,
The third 'uns, and fourth 'uns,
Will all keep in mind
That you were unkind.
It may cost you dear
In a future career.
For I shouldn't wonder
You'll be a cucumber
In your next re-birth
On this weary earth.
So never be cruel
To a vegeta-buel.

When we got to the village, we went and sat under a tree with Appu. Appu is the head-man of the village, and always seems to have time to sit under the tree with his hubble-bubble. It is a special kind of tree, with a plinth round it; and evidently only high-class persons are allowed to sit on the plinth. The big cheeses of the village gather there, and discuss high problems and State affairs, such as the price of a dead goat. The big cheeses are very courteous to us, and always bring two iron chairs and ask us to sit on the plinth. We greatly appreciate the honour, although nearly stifled by the hubble-bubbles.

On this occasion, we happened to mention our portable cinema to the elders, and they were very interested. It seems that they are all film-fans. When we explained that the apparatus could be put on a cart, and taken anywhere, they were quite surprised. They asked if the cinema could be brought to the village. We said it could; but we had no screen, because in barracks we showed the pictures on a white-washed wall.

At once the elders despaired. "Alas!" they cried, "we are very poor. We also have no screen."

"Nonsense!" said Boggins. "Anyone can make a screen. Let each of you provide a *dhoti*, and there is your screen."

"And what," asked an elder, highly scandalised, "shall we wear during the performance?"



They all said they had only one *dhoti* apiece, but really, each one was unwilling to lend a *dhoti* to the common cause. Boggins lectured them about co-operation, but they did not seem to know the word, and got restless and indifferent. So Boggins had an idea. He said it was an order of the Government.

"Oh, well," remarked Appu, with an air of resignation. "If it is an order of the Government, I will compel twelve men each to provide a *dhoti*." All the wiseacres nodded their heads. That was the proper way. Let other people surrender their *dhotis*.

"We shall have to hire some films," said Boggins. "You can all subscribe a few annas each."

A terrible cry arose from the village elders. "Oh, sir," they said, "we are excessively poor. We are unprecedentedly poor. We are famed for poverty, even among revenue officers. We cannot hire films."

"You can't have a cinema-show without films," expostulated Boggins.

They argued about this for some time, and eventually decided that the Government should hire the films. Boggins replied that the Government would be unable to hire the films, as it was in the power of a terrible demon called the Finance Member, who had a rooted objection to paying anyone anything. This fearful demon actually refused to give travelling-allowances to persons, unless they really did travel somewhere. The meeting agreed that it was a sad state of affairs, which would certainly



Boggins had an idea. He said it was an order of the Government.

be remedied when the country achieved Dominion Status. In the meantime, they decided to find some people in the village who could be made to pay. Quite likely it would be the same people who had to lend their *dhotis*.

So the arrangements were fixed up, and Boggins and I took our departure. The next day, we began to enquire about the hire of films. The agent said that he had only talking-films in stock; silent pictures were no longer available. We asked him to lend us a reel of a talking-picture. Our idea was to take it to barracks and run it through the machine, to see if a talking-picture would be all right if there were no talking.

It was an Indian picture, all about some heroes who had been dead for thousands of years, and deservedly so. They chased one another about in card-board chariots, and violently smote each other with tin swords. They all lived in one room, but it was a magic room, because some parts of it were on the banks of the Ganges, and other bits were in Ceylon. Whenever two characters wanted to make plots in privacy, they went out into the garden and stood under a tree. This was a magic tree, too, because it grew in all parts of Hindustan.

In one great scene, the hero pursued the villain for hours, in a state coach marked "Bombay City, Third Class." Unfortunately, the pursuit took place up and down the same small piece of road all the time, and it got quite boring, especially as the view was constantly interrupted by passing motor-cars.

However, the main objection was that quite half the reel consisted of a picture of a fat girl staring at the camera, and opening and closing her mouth. The uninterrupted view of her tonsils and epiglottis would have delighted an audience of doctors, but we found the exhibition rather monotonous, especially as we were not medical men. Still, as Boggins remarked, it might have been worse. We might have had to listen to what she was singing.

Anyhow, we decided it would be no good to show a talkie without any talking, so we went back to the agent, and asked him to find a silent film somewhere. He said he would see what he could do. We asked when he would see to it, and he said he would do so instantly; and he began to talk rapidly and with great importance down a telephone. It was only after we got outside that we noticed that the telephone had been disconnected. We wondered if it had anything to do with a buff-coloured letter lying on the agent's table, beginning, "Take Notice. If—"

We went back to the agent the next day, and as soon as he saw us he jumped up and said that the matter was receiving his immediate attention, but would we excuse him, as he had to see an important client at once. So we went back the following day. When we walked into the office, the agent gave a sort of groan, and asked if we were going to come and see him every day. We said we were, of course, and we thanked him for his courtesy in his dealings with us. The agent gave a sigh, and asked us to accompany him to a friend of his.

The friend had a most peculiar place of business. It was a shed, mostly made of kerosene-oil tins. It was crowded with a most amazing collection of articles, all festooned with cobwebs. The agent and his friend had a conversation for some while, and then the friend began to excavate in a corner where the rubbish was piled particularly high. At last he unearthed a considerable pile of cylindrical tin boxes, which to our delight we recognised as film-canisters.

"There!" said the gentleman. "Silent films!"

He was a very stout man with an extraordinary air of placidity and deliberation. He spoke very few words.

"Are the films all right?" asked Boggins.

"Silent films," said the man. "They are not too bad."

"What are your terms?" said Boggins.

"Reasonable," replied the man.

And, remarkably enough, it was clear that he really meant to be reasonable.

"Joyfull," said Boggins to me, "it is Friday already. Go and send a telegram to Appu, to say we will hold the cinema-show tomorrow evening, while I settle terms with these gentlemen."

So off I went to the post-office. Next week I'll tell you how we gave the show.

Your Loving Son,
OBEAH JOYFULL.



"The wedding-bells were ringing
And all the boys were singing"

—Old Song.

ONE of my uncles decided to jump off the docks—not literally but figuratively, with the woman of his dreams, granting that he ever saw a woman in his dreams: of which I have mine own doubts, for he was more prone to dream of himself falling into the craters of volcanos or being torn with red hot pincers than of his amorous interludes with lovely women. Such was the state of his inside when he slept. However, we will keep out all prosaic and squalid things like people's insides in a romantic narrative and pretend that my uncle was a hero in a novel.

Without meaning my present aunt any offence, I mention that my uncle's taste in beauty was deplorable. His powers of selection and discrimination were nil. That, I suppose, accounts for the amazing number of his (one-sided) love-affairs. This facility smoothed out things when the choice of a bride came up. My uncle refused to consent to no match merely on a point of the bride-elect's looks. It was only more important things like the dowry, the marriage ceremony and the distance to her home that proved difficult. Perhaps my uncle's *carte blanche* in the matter of the bride's looks also proved inconvenient, for of the many proposals that came, he didn't know which to accept. I believe he satisfactorily solved this difficult question finally by ascertaining the bank balances of the respective fathers-in-law.

My uncle—Swamy, however, wanted to see the bride-elect before actually signing the pledge. He had no faith in photographs because he himself had appeared almost handsome in a photograph. The girl's brother took him

to their place. The ladies of the house including the bride inspected him through half-closed windows and translucent screens. But showing him the bride was more difficult. The girl if frankly asked to go near him, would have refused; so a time-worn trick was adopted. Her mother bade her fetch a fan from the drawing-room, thus indirectly introducing her before the groom. Though the girl knew of the presence of her suitor in the drawing-room, she pretended ignorance of it and hastened into the room like an innocent and obedient daughter. She entered, espied 'strangers', blushed, looked down, snatched at the article and hurried out. While this was going on, the father-in-law (who had been notified) was busy with something near a table, and the brother or brothers-in-law were suddenly interested in a bird or flower in the garden. In fact their attention was suddenly transferred elsewhere. The groom slyly looked at her. The whole affair thus seemed accidental instead of a pre-arranged tableau. Swamy was more than satisfied and returned from the trade-show in extasies, with an armful of his sweetheart's photographs.

For the next few days he went about sighing like a tram-car, wistfully ogling at the photographs, dreamily rolling his eye-balls about, talking to the moon, and singing ostensibly to himself but incidentally inflicting the melodies on the whole household. In short, he lived entirely in another world, coming down to earth only for his meals and for snarling at anybody who disturbed him. He would fly into a temper if anybody made facetious remarks about the coming event. There was a cousin of mine who took a delight in ragging him. This cousin—Balan—told stories of how young men had been hoodwinked by the bride's people—how the bride's people had

presented pretty girls for inspection but had actually married off not so pretty girls who could not by other means be disposed of. Another story of Balan's was about a young girl who consented to marry a person but apparently the person she approved of was not the real bridegroom but the best man who had gone over there to discuss the match. The best man was rather a handsome fellow but the bridegroom was not; when she came to the marriage dais and found the real bridegroom complacently squirming and odiously smiling at her, she was thunder-struck. In her mortification and shame she threw the garland at him and went out. These stories made my uncle wild.

Meanwhile he was busy shopping and addressing invitations. While he was busy with the envelopes one day, Balan came upon him.

"Hello, Swamy! Addressing invitations I see; have you included...?"

Swamy muttered something about people minding their own business.

"I know, I know," sympathised Balan; "but suppose you leave somebody out—some of your best friends or suppose you do it all wrong? I remember what happened to a chap—"

Uncle Swamy didn't want to hear about the chap.

"—who didn't affix sufficient postage stamps to his invitations and the addressees refused to pay the surcharge with the result that all the letters were returned to the sender. The chap found when he was about to start for the wedding that he had none to accompany him. He tried to round up some others, but they refused point blank because he hadn't invited them earlier. He had to go alone. The bride's people declined to acknowledge him as the bridegroom because he was unaccompanied, said he was an imposter and kicked him out. A sad case indeed!"

Swamy at this stage told him to go to h—l.

"An exactly similar thing happened to another chap," continued Balan. "In this case however the bridegroom got hold of a few friends at the last minute and was saved the ignominy of being kicked out. But the returned invitations were redirected to the bride's by the postmaster who thought they were congratulatory messages. The poor chap had no money with him to pay the extra dues on all the letters, and he didn't want to ask anybody and so he slipped out into the garden and committed suicide. A great pity! The couple loved each other so well!"

White with fury, Swamy threatened violence and Balan discreetly left.

At last the day dawned. Swamy ran about making preparations and using language which cannot be reproduced here. He seemed to have gone clean out of his senses. He would never rest for a moment, did not eat as much as usual, bathed every half hour, shaved, if I remember right three times and sat before the mirror for fully an hour violently attacking his hair. He must have been a very imaginative person after all, for he

very frequently contemplated himself in the mirror. He set out about five hours before the appointed time and asked someone to drive a cow to the front gate that his omen might be auspicious. The party at last started in motor cars.

We halted at a bungalow near the bride's, where the bride's people were awaiting us. After tea the procession started to the bride's. Exhibit no. 1. went first. By his side was an attendant carrying a plate bearing the bridegroom's presents to the bride. Behind the groom walked his friends nagging him, while he responded with a sickly grin. There was a band which made a lot of noise, and livened up the proceedings. Washington lamps lighted up the show.

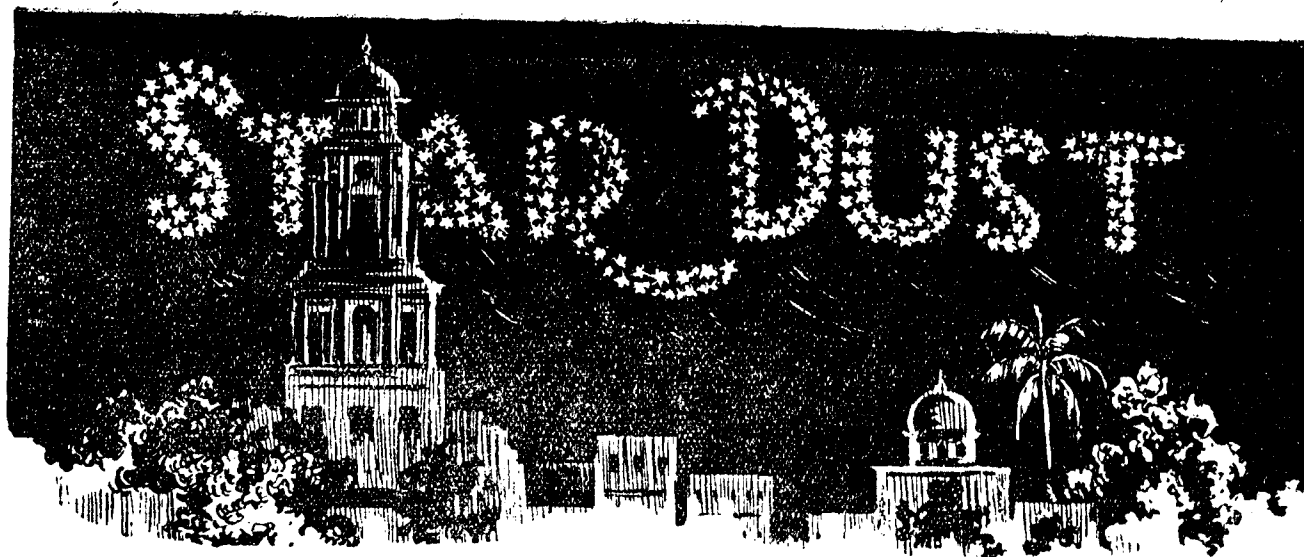
When we reached the destination we were received and led into the decorated *pandal* where we sat down on chairs, the bridegroom in a specially decorated one, looking the picture of nervousness and uneasiness. Rose-water was sprinkled on us until we were wet through and incense burnt until we choked. There was a craning of necks on the part of those assembled, especially the feminine section, to catch a glimpse of the happy man. Ladies whispered their criticisms. Gentlemen cracked jokes and arcanuts. The young sparks among the guests strove to catch the eye of the maidens. They twirled their tender moustaches, laughed loudly, spoke fast in English and tried to look like George Raft and Clark Gable. The maidens on their part whisked their *sarees*, slowly shook their heads so that their ear-rings might glitter and dance, opened their mouths wide to show their pearly teeth or closed their mouths fast to conceal their another kind of teeth. Some of them showed their profiles, others their bare arms while a few just showed common sense.

Then the music began. Nobody listened to it and the musician lost confidence and stopped, leaving the matter entirely in the hands of the violinist.

At last the bride entered the dais. The groom was made to stand opposite to her. The bride's position was an extremely difficult one. She had nowhere to look. If she looked down, she was considered unduly shy or even affected; if she looked at the groom, she was branded as a forward hussy; if she looked up, her 'dear' friends said she was looking up to Heaven in supplication; if she looked back, these same friends said she was afraid to face her husband; if she looked at anybody else, well, 'she was already giving the glad eye to somebody else.' I have never come across a bride who has come out of the ordeal without provoking comment. I call it beastly.

Well, anyway, Swamy and his bride exchanged garlands, rings, necklaces and shy looks. The band again made a horrible din; the *purohit* chanted and the guests clapped their hands (idiotically, it seemed to me; perhaps the influence of the talkie theatre). And the ceremony was over.

Then there was the feast which I have no time to describe now. Neither have I the inclination, for I am very hungry myself.



HERE are the reel names of some of the famous film stars.

Can you give their *real* names? Check your knowledge with the names given at the end of this page.
Reel Name:

- | | |
|--------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Dolores Del Rio | 6. Bruce Cabot |
| 2. Nancy Carroll | 7. Claudette Colbert |
| 3. Richard Dix | 8. Mary Astor |
| 4. Ann Dvorak | 9. Marion Davies |
| 5. Joan Crawford | 10. George Arliss |

£ 1,000 A Week to face Death twice a Day

This is about Clyde Beatty, the star of the "Lost Jungle". There is not the tiniest suggestion of fakery in this film.

His salary is £ 1,000 a week. But to earn this, he has to face death—and a terrible death at that—twice a day.

His beauty chorus eat 500 pounds of beef at a sitting!

There is never a performance where there is not at least one first class fight between two of the beasts—there are forty of them, lions and lionesses and tigers—with Beatty playing the role of referee and having the unenviable job of separating the contestants! His only weapons are a kitchen chair, a whip and a revolver which is loaded with blank cartridges. For the most part, the whip and the chair—the latter by the legs first—are sufficient weapons with which to hold the brutes at bay.

Under his contract, he is forbidden to travel ever by aeroplane—because of the danger involved! Sounds funny, doesn't it?

The Star Maker

Mack Sennett, the famous maker of comedies, has had an extremely interesting career.

His real name is Michael Sinnot and he used to be a boiler-maker with ambitions towards Grand Opera. Later he drifted on to the stage and in 1910 appeared in a film by D. W. Griffith.

A story is told that his mother always knew whether her son had plenty of money or the reverse, by watching his films carefully to see if he was wearing a diamond ring which he possessed. If he was not, she knew he had had to pawn it.

Mack Sennett's chief pride was a huge bath, which he had installed in his office, and in which he held many of his conferences.

Among his one time employees are numbered the late Marie Dressler, Wallace Beery, W. C. Fields, Gloria Swanson, 'Fatty' Arbuckle, Harold Lloyd, Ben Turpin, Buster Keaton, Louise Fazenda, Bebe Daniels and a lot of others.

Ginger a Princess!

Ginger Rogers has had hundreds of marriage offers since she crashed into the movies, but none of them surrounded by the glamour attached to the 'altar pleas' of the Prince Singhji of Rajpipla, who wrote:

"I am mad about you, Miss Rogers. Will you accept my love and adoration and come to India to live as my princess?"

His Highness enclosed a photo of himself in polo togs and attended by two turbaned attendants.

"It's rather tempting," Ginger confided to a correspondent, "but I think I'll pick an American when the time comes!"

And she has! Lew Ayres is the happy guy.

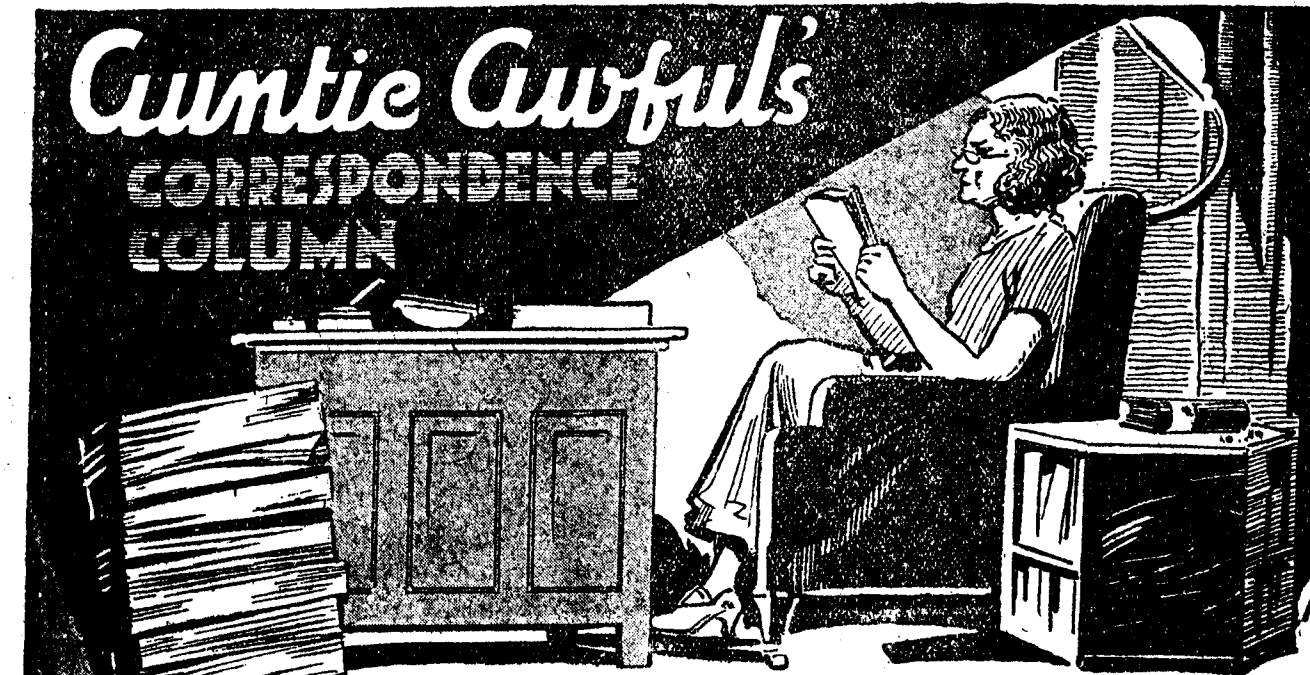
The thousands who attend the International Motion Picture Exposition in Vienna voted Wallace Beery and Katharine Hepburn as the greatest of all screen stars.

Real Name:

- | | |
|----------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. Dolores Ansunsolo | 6. Etienne Jaques de Bujac |
| 2. Ann La Hiff | 7. Lily Chauchoin |
| 3. Ernest Carlton | 8. Lucille Langhangke |
| | 9. Marion Douras |
| 4. Ann McKim | 10. George Augustus |
| 5. Billie Cassin | |

Andrews

Auntie Awful's CORRESPONDENCE COLUMN



XVII

THIS, dear boys and girls, is Auntie's Grand Competition Week. You will not find it announced on the front cover or anywhere, but that is because Auntie has had a little disagreement with the dear Editor. Auntie thinks he is too wholesale. I mean, the dear man is always giving away money. A thousand rupees for our readers: that kind of thing. Whereas Auntie's Grand Competition Week will not involve giving away anything. I pointed out that other magazines never give something for nothing; they only appear to do so. The dear Editor said, 'Exactly'. Well, girls, you know how hopeless it is when a man starts saying 'Exactly'. So Auntie is doing *satyagraha*.

I ask you, do people buy the *Merry Magazine* to get a thousand rupees? Of course not; they buy it to read Auntie's column. The dear Editor says, "No one will fall for your snide competitions, Auntie," so I want all you faithful nephews and nieces to rally round. You must overwhelm him with entries for my attractive contests. I'll teach him to refer to my valuable feature as 'flapdoodle'.

You will all like Auntie's Banana Contest. What you have to do is to find a straight banana, and send it to the office. Squeezing, rolling, and other manipulations are barred. The banana must be forwarded in a state of nature. Auntie will consume the winning banana.

Then there is Auntie's Limerick Championship. You have to construct a Limerick commencing as follows:

"There was a young lady of Przemyśl....."

The winner will be presented with a free introduction to the young lady, who is a resident of Poland.

Finally, in special consideration for the thousands of lady-readers who follow Auntie's antics with such breathless interest, we are having a tatting-tournament and crochet-contest. Obtain a piece of hessian, and embroider it with moral and sentimental mottoes in coloured thread. The finished work is eminently suitable for presentations. For example, if it happens to be your mother's birthday, what could be more suitable than the following framed motto:

"Now your hair has turned to silver, mother dear,
It will help to pay the rent."

The winning motto will be hung in Auntie's bedroom.

Auntie has replied to all serious enquiries by post. You boys and girls do certainly get into one fix or another!

Miss Ada. (Palni). "I have quarrelled with my young man, because he wants to go too far. What present may I send him, to show I will forgive him if he behaves himself?" Send him a tie-pin, dearie, and this message, "Its head stops it from going too far."

Early Bird (Srivilliputtur). "There are two of us in our house, myself and Babs. We are both children of the same father, and I am Babs' brother, but Babs is not my brother. What relation is Babs to me?" You are not early enough for this worm, dear boy. Presumably, Babs is your sister.

Rueful (Orattanad). "While I was in Malaya I met a girl by accident, and married her. Now that we are in India, she makes my life miserable. What do you think is the matter?" The matter, my dear, is that you have mistaken an accident for a heavenly arrangement.

Chetty (Kosapet). "Do you think President Roosevelt is right when he says that prosperity is just round the corner?" Certainly I do, dear sir. But they can't find which corner.

Sporty (Bareilly). "My motor-cycle is a real record-breaker." Well, my dear, if you are ever in these parts, I hope you will visit the gramophone-fiends who live next door to Auntie, and break a few records.

Seeta (Tiruvannamalai). "My father says that now I am marriageable, he wants me to keep my own counsel. What do you think he means?" Auntie cannot imagine, dear Seeta; unless he wants you to marry a briefless barrister.

Bereft (Erode). "Please, Auntie, could you help me find my husband? He is a man with one leg named Smith." The particulars you give are not sufficient, my dear. What is the name of the other leg?

Merry Widow (Bangalore). "I shared the compartment with such a nice gentleman. He was strange to the country, and did not know where he had to change trains. He wanted to know my address, but I did not think it wise to continue the acquaintance after the journey. Things were just getting interesting when we came to the junction, and he had to get out. I wish I could have thought of a way to enjoy his company a little longer." You should have told him that he had to leave the train one station after you did, my dear. That would have solved all difficulties.

Pte. Boggins (Fort St. George). "In our regiment, there is a Major who has risen from the ranks. Every time we salute him, he says, 'And the same to you'. What do you think it means?" It means, my dear, that having been a soldier himself, the Major knows what you are thinking while you salute him.

Aryan (Madras). "My office-superior is quite dark, yet he dares to talk to me as if we belonged to the same race." Why not explain matters to him, dear Aryan? Tell him frankly that you do not consider yourself a member of the human race.

Miss M. A. (Delhi). "I work for a high Government official. Whenever journalists come making enquiries, he shuts himself in his office, and mutters to himself. I cannot understand it." It is easy enough to

understand, my dear. Your superior is so exalted that he grants exclusive interviews only to himself.

Memsahib (Calcutta). "I engaged a new cook, and when I was giving an important dinner-party, he used my best pair of panties as a pudding-bag." Auntie sympathises with your embarrassment, my dear. The only thing to do was to explain the novel shape of the pudding by saying it was the latest idea from home. Of course, you had a second-best pair to wear at the party?

Lover of Beauty (Pycroft Road). "Why didn't you treat my enquiry seriously, Auntie? I asked what had happened to the Venus de Milo, and you said the statue was an awful example of what happens to a girl who bites her finger-nails. Please tell me the real reason." All right, my dear. The statue of the Venus de Milo was intended to grace the conference-hall at Geneva, as a lovely example of total disarmament.

Delighted (Alleppey). "Please tell us some more about the time when you were captured by bandits. Did Abdul the Bulbul take advantage of you?" No, dear boy; and unfortunately there was not enough time for Auntie to take advantage of Abdul the Bulbul.

Forward (Bowringpet). "I do not think you make the right use of your great opportunities. Why don't you tell us things that will help mankind to arise in the world?" Auntie can think of only two things, dear boy: alarm-clocks and step-ladders.

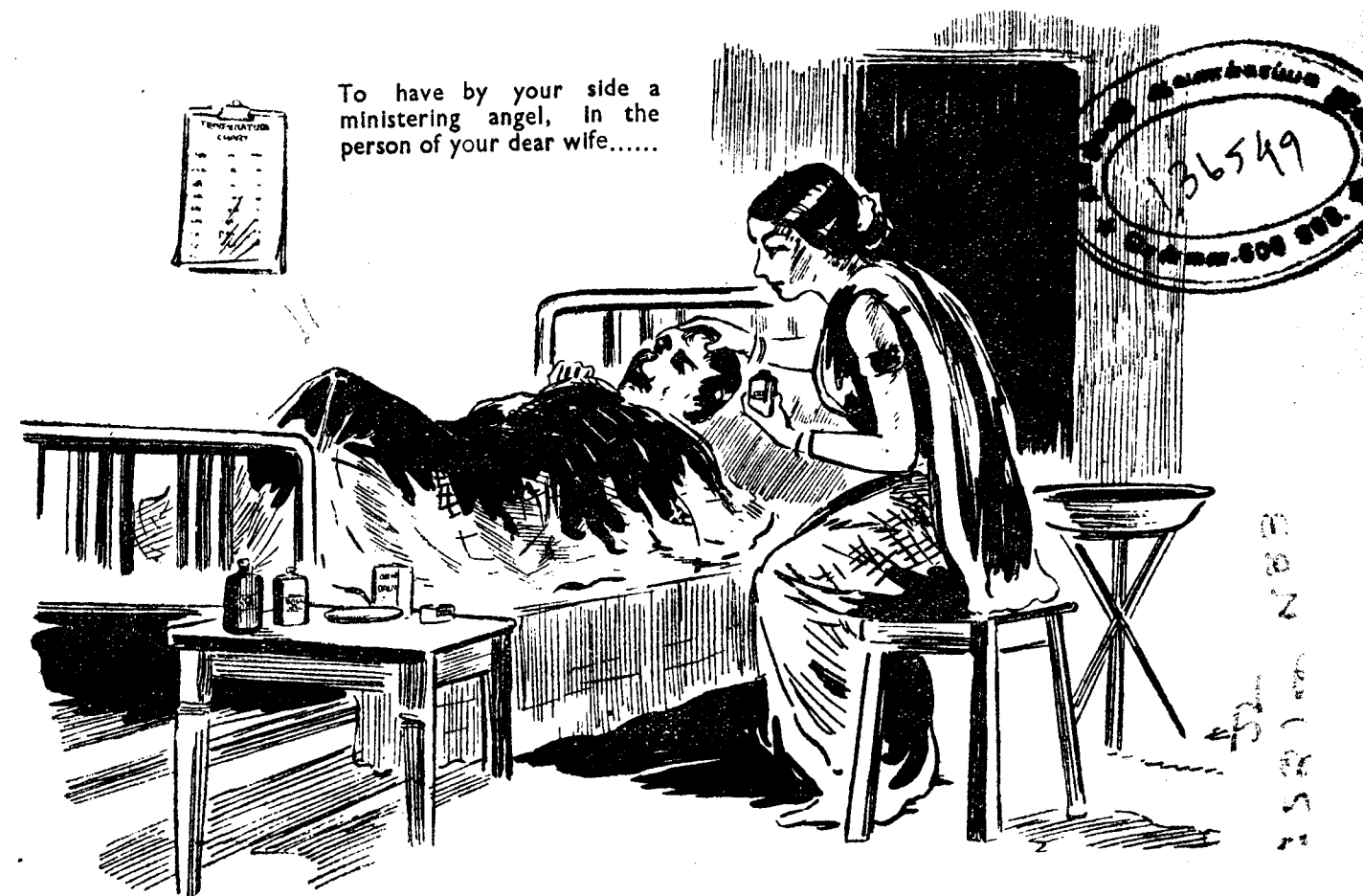
Eugenics (Cuddalore). "It would improve the race if we re-instituted the ancient custom of marriage by capture. Then only the strongest men would get wives. There is a slight flaw in your reasoning, dear boy. The deciding factor is not whether a man is strong enough to catch a bride, but whether the bride is willing to be caught.

Alarmed (Kavali). "I have been reading a book entitled 'The Imprudences of Youth', and it upsets me to find that I have been committing all these imprudences, and several more that the book did not think of. It seems that my only hope is to buy a lot of medicines. They are advertised at the back of the book." This is another of the blessings that the West has brought to the East, dear boy. As soon as a few people can read, there are always others to write books to tell them about the terrible state of their health. As we all have doubts about ourselves, it is a dead cert for the author. To make assurance doubly sure, he's got 'Bellyo' to make you fat, and 'Skinnytum' to make you thin, and you are certain to consider you need one or the other. Of course, there is no law to prevent you from buying an anna's worth of iron phosphates in ten-rupee packets. But the best cure is, not to read the book. Human nature is such that if a fellow starts to read 'Quackem's Home Doctor', he soon discovers that he suffers from every disease in the pharmacopoeia except housemaid's knee.

STOP PRESS. Owing to lack of entrants, this Limerick Championship is cancelled. Auntie has awarded the championship to herself for the following effort:

There was a young lady of Przemyśl,
Who said, "Well, I think a chemise'll
Be thin slumber-wear.
But what do I care,
Though a cold will get me, or a sneeze'll?"

SUSILA BY MY SICK-BED



To have by your side a ministering angel, in the person of your dear wife.....

OLD Subbu had been for a long time a prominent member of the local 'Old Bachelors' Club.' But, to the surprise of his friends, at the over-ripe age of well-nigh fifty, he got his pet ideas and views about matrimony out of his oldish head and decided to bid farewell to 'blessed bachelor-hood', as he used to put it. In short, he got himself yoked to a girl not yet in her teens. Soon after the happy (?) consummation, I met him casually on the road and thumped him on the back to the tune of "Congrats, old chap, better late than never, what?"

He turned back and eyed me with suspicion.

"You fellows are all laughing up your sleeves," he blurted out, "at what you consider my *faux pas*. To tell you the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth, I did not marry for money: nor was I love-sick and all that. I married, well, because I just wanted to have about me—somebody to—no, not to darn socks, because I don't wear socks—somebody to look after my old bones, to take care of me and nurse me when I am bed-ridden:

and of course, the younger the somebody is, the better for my purpose. Got that?"

I did; and nodded assent. Yes, he was right, good old Subbu was. For when pain and anguish rend the brow, don't you know what a consolation it is to have by your side a ministering angel and that too in the person of your dear wife? Has not some poet of old, sung something to that effect? And how true it is! At least, that is what I have felt scores of times. Of course, one should not be too critical about the actual results achieved. Man proposes and God disposes, you know. So it is only the intention that counts.

Look at my wife Susila, for instance. Whenever I get one of those splitting, throbbing, nerve-racking headaches—I confess I come from a *migraine* stock and generally get an attack once or even twice a week—I don't know what I would have done but for her. As soon as the premonitory symptoms manifest themselves, she puts me to bed, rubs an ounce or two of *Oleum Eucalypti* all over my *caput*—yes,



VIVA VOCE

By AJIT KRISHNA BASU

VIVA Voce! The very words frightened me. Yet I was preparing for the ordeal of the coming viva voce examination. I had finished with all the other subjects and this terrible thing remained yet to be undergone by me; the last and the bitterest. The parting kick, so to say.

I was chatting with Muthuswami who had obtained no less than eighty-five per cent marks in his own viva voce examination in the previous year. I was totally ignorant about what the examination was going to be like. In fact I had only a very slight and vague idea, which was no better than absolute ignorance.

"You will have to face a Board of Examiners who will ask you questions on any subject on earth," said Muthu, much to my discomfort. "What you have to do is just to answer as boldly and promptly as you can. That is the secret of success, I tell you. When you don't know the correct answer, hide your ignorance under a cloud of words, but don't betray ignorance by hesitating."

The advice, no doubt, was very excellent, but I wondered whether I would at all be able to act up to it. I thought I would certainly betray my nervousness, if not ignorance, as soon as I would have to stand before the d—d board of examiners. I imagined myself standing before the examiners and was almost going to shiver from head to foot when Muthu abruptly said: "This is the most enjoyable examination of all. I am sure you will enjoy it as much as I did."

"Enjoy?" thought I. "Far from that. I would be glad if I were allowed to send in a substitute to enjoy it for me." I said, "Oh yes. Surely I shall enjoy it. Now, what were the questions you were asked?"

"They asked me first of all what I would do if I were faced by a tiger on my way through a jungle."

"And what was your reply to that?"

"I said I would be the last man on earth to venture through a jungle and therefore there was no possibility of my meeting a tiger or anything like a tiger. And the examiners laughed."

"At you?"

"Not with me. And then they asked me whether there is hell. I had never thought about it, but instead of hesitating I said they would soon know it, as they were old people. And they laughed again."

"So these examiners are perfect laughers?"

"Yes. They have a keen sense of humour. And I think their chief aim is to see whether we too possess a keen sense of humour or not. And if you can show them that you have it, well, they are pleased, and you too will be, when the results are out. Understand, old chap?"

"Of course, of course," I said.....

So I began to prepare for the ordeal. The main thing was to impress the examiners, whoever they might be, I thought. At noon when father was at office and all at home fast asleep, I sat in my lonely study and began to ask questions and answer them myself. That is, I became the examiner as well as the examinee. I was sure that none was there to overhear me, and with that certainly I practised freely.

I stood before the mirror, imagining as if the mirror was my examiner, and said, "Good morning, sirs," with a polite bow. I rehearsed this for several times and then began actual questioning and replying.

"Where are the Himalayas?"

"In India, of course."

"How many rivers are there in India?"

"I have not counted them all."

"What do you know about Herr Hitler?"

"He has a peculiar kind of moustache."

"What will you do if you find your purse containing twenty-five rupees has been stolen?"

"I shall buy another purse and put more money in it."

Here I stopped. I could not make out what kind of questions I might expect from my examiners. I paused and then began to sing *Chendur Velandi*. I wondered and wondered as I sang; no fresh questions occurred to my mind.....

I heard a knock at the door. "Who's there?" I cried.

"I am Venkata," came the reply.

"Come in Venku," I said endearingly, opening the door gladly. This Venkata was and is, by far my best chum; a jolly fellow, a sportsman, a perfect talker, and what not. At my invitation he came in and sat down on a chair.

"Perfect jolly day," said he. "Life is really so worth living!"

"What has made you think so to-day?" I asked.

Mr. Editor, my bald *caput*—and face, not excluding the eyes; adorns my forehead with a thick coating of Occidental Pain Balm—so thick that blisters usually crop up as a sequel there to—thrusts a double dose of aspirin into my mouth and finally to wash the bitter stuff down, a pint or two of steaming black coffee. Who else would take all this trouble except my dear Susie?

And what is more, she cancels all her engagements for the day, including her usual attendance at the Ladies' Club, sits by the side of my bed, lest I should feel lonely and then pears forth into my, perhaps none-too-willing ears all the latest society scandals, retailed to her by her club-mates. Every now and then, just to make assurance doubly sure that I am not dozing away the while, she would lay her right hand tenderly on my greasy, throbbing, blistered forehead, roll my head from side to side and whisper into my ears, "How is your headache, my dear?" "Aren't you better now?" or something to that effect. And, on every such occasion, if I don't instantly conjure up a smile in between my lips, and answer, "I am much better now, honey," she would proceed straightaway to a repetition of the afore-said therapeutic measures, perhaps more laboriously than before. So that is that. If ever you get an attack of Cephalalgia—I dare say you would, after going through this article—just ask your wife to adopt this line of treatment and see for yourself how effective it is. I don't want anything for this bit of advice—no, not even thanks.

Of course, when the complaint is more serious than my weekly *migraine* bout, the care and attention she bestows on me naturally varies *pro rata*. On those fortunately rare occasions, the ease and aplomb as well as the thoroughness with which she carries out every minor detail contained in the instrument of instructions issued by the attending doctor would, I dare say, give credit to any professional nurse. At least, that is the considered opinion of my family doctor who attended upon me when I was down with enteric some time last December. Well, that reminds me, I have not, as yet, told you anything about it.

It was—yes, my diary gives the date as 12th December—that Dr. Deenadayalu, after a prolonged examination, pronounced his opinion that I was suffering from enteric fever.

"It is only a mild attack of enteric, madam," he assured my wife who was standing by my sick-bed, her face the picture of infinite concern, "and you need not at all be anxious about the outcome. But, I would advise you, madam, to engage a qualified nurse to look after your husband. I cannot stress too much the value of careful nursing in a case of enteric. In fact, if there is any one thing that counts in a case like this, it is only the nursing."

"But I don't think that a professional nurse is at all necessary," I heard, my dear Susila remark, "for I can do it myself. I can assure you, doctor, that you may as well set your mind at ease on that score. All that you want is that your instructions issued from day to day should be carried out to the very letter; and I can quite well manage this simple affair as thoroughly as, if not better than, any of the professional nurses. Moreover, for me it is a labour of love."

"Certainly, certainly," the doctor hastened to assure her. "But, if ever you need a helping hand from an expert with knowledge about nursing, just send word for my nurse. Well, here are some of my instructions," and he proceeded to give exhaustive details about maintaining temperature charts and so on.

"No, doctor, you need not trouble yourself to give me the *modus operandi* of these minor things, for I know all about the temperature charts, 'ice bagging' and such other things."

"So much the better," Dr. Deenadayalu heaved a sigh of relief. "An educated wife is indeed an asset. Good morning." He thrust his stethoscope into his pocket with studied carelessness, so that half of it dangled outside in the open air, patted my shoulder reassuringly, took his leather bag, and strode out of the room with short quick steps so characteristic of these medicoes.

After the doctor's departure, Susila, instead of sitting by my side and weeping her eyes out as many of her sisters might have done in the circumstances, or tempting the Gods and Goddesses with the promise of fabulous offerings to hasten her husband's recovery, set about carrying out her routine duties by my bed-side with a full sense of her self-imposed responsibility. As is only to be expected, I have only a nebulous, hazy idea about the incidents which happened in those hectic days that followed. But, the one thing that remains branded over my memory, is the careful nursing I had received at Susila's hands. The very first thing that she did was to put up a notice on the door—"Sick Room—No visitors, please." She then proceeded to prevent the possible spread of infection to other inmates of the house including herself, for which purpose she invoked the help of antiseptic lotions and other up-to-date sanitary contrivances. A drum of phenyle was indented for and the whole interior of the sick-room—the walls, the ceiling and the floor—was liberally sprayed with phenyle lotion every morning and evening. The contents of the room, including the furniture, the cot, the bed and my humble self came under her purview and each in its turn received a refreshing antiseptic shower bath every day. Sheets of fly-paper were placed at all odd places in the room, to destroy the infection carrying flies. A basin full of strong antiseptic lotion was kept ready in an easily accessible place by the side of my bed into which she would dip her hands with religious regularity every few minutes while inside the sick-room.

The above undoubtedly effective measures to combat the spread of infection did not, in any way, distract her attention from carrying out, what was of more importance, the routine bed-side nursing along accepted lines. Though the attending physician had recommended only a 2-hour temperature chart, Susila, in her unbounded enthusiasm, went a step or two further, and decided—of course, with the avowed object of hastening my recovery—to record the temperature every half-hour, day and night. To guard against any possible error, two thermometers of different makes were introduced simultaneously into my mouth and I was asked to suck at the glass rods for full five minutes. The reading in either of these was worked out, correct to the decimal place, every time.

(Continued on page 30)

"I shall tell you a secret," said Venkata. And then he whispered into my ear very softly, "I am going to be married."

"Is that so?" I cried. "Well, well, who's the lucky girl? Saraswathi, isn't she?"

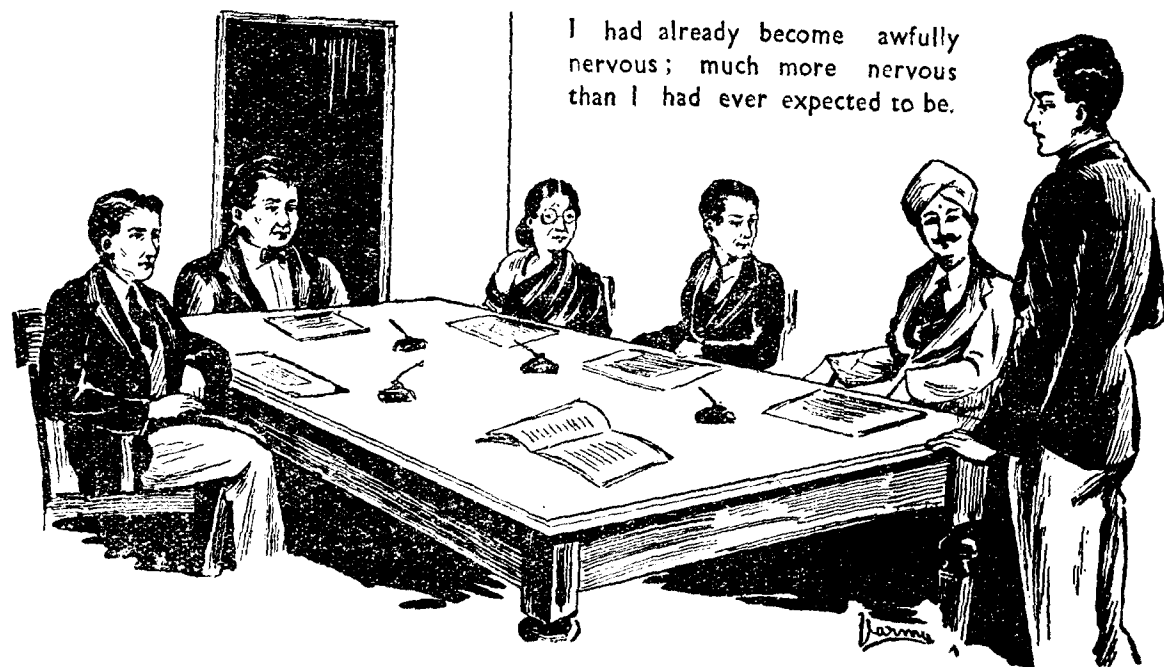
"Exactly, exactly. You are a good guesser, I see."

been to him only last evening when he asked me several queer questions to test my intelligence."

"Is that so?" I gladly asked. "And what were the questions he asked you?"

As she told me the questions, I jotted them down in my note-book.....

I had already become awfully nervous; much more nervous than I had ever expected to be.



Terms have been finally settled to-day and the ceremony comes off next month."

"I see! That is why life seems to you to be worth living. Does Saraswathi know of it?"

"Certainly she does. I am just coming from her. Now, what were you doing?"

"Thinking about the coming *viva voce* examination."

"No use thinking. Come with me at once. Let's go to see Marlene in 'Shanghai Express' at the Regal," Venkata said. And then whispered, "to-day I shall introduce you to my..." I understood what he meant.

I thought it better to prepare for the coming ordeal, but finding Venkata too insistent, I had to go out with him. Venkata's car was waiting outside, and inside the car was Saraswathi. We got into the car and the chauffeur drove towards the Regal Cinema.

"Here is my friend Dorai, dear," said Venkata, in his usual abrupt manner, "and this is..." he said to me, pointing his finger towards her, "Miss Iyer, or more intimately, Saraswathi, my would-be—would-be—there, Saraswathi, why do you blush?".....

During the interval we had some talk and finally the talk turned on to the coming *viva voce* examination.

While on this subject I may tell you something interesting," said Saraswathi. "You know, Mr. Ramanujam will be one of the examiners this year. I had

The day of the ordeal came but I had already overcome my nervousness to a considerable extent. I had thoroughly prepared the answers to the questions I had obtained from Miss Iyer in the hope that these questions were sure to be asked at the examination.

"I have committed the answers to memory," I thought. "The examiners will surely, admire my nice, prompt replies. And then, surely, I shall top the list. Oh, what a glory! What a joy!....."

As I approached the examiners, I bowed most beautifully, and my nervousness, made the bow much more polite than it would otherwise have been.

"Take your seat please."

I had already become awfully nervous; much more nervous than I had ever expected to be. It was therefore with considerable difficulty that I expressed my thanks and took my seat on a chair near my examiners, or, as I thought then, inquisitors. I had, as I have already told you, expected to be asked the questions obtained from Miss Saraswathi. But imagine my surprise, when the fat examiner (perhaps he was the Head-Examiner, judging from his manners and appearance) suddenly asked me, "When will India win freedom?"

I was terribly nervous and was all but shaking from head to foot. I was at a loss to make out the proper answer. I was going to hesitate, but Muthu's advice crossed my mind. So I frankly said, "Excuse me, sir, I know nothing about that."

There was a lady among the examiners. She burst into a kind-hearted laughter at my words. "Very witty," she said, finding some humour in my answer, and her two words put some life in me.

"Well, well, what is necessary for India to get independence?" I was asked again.

"Liberty, of course," I promptly replied, and there was laughter again. I was almost going to be disheartened when I was asked by the good old lady: "Whom do you love more, your father or your mother?" "I have never measured my love, madam," I replied. This answer seemed to please her, for she smiled very pleasantly and looked at me very kindly. The fat man was very much impatient to ask me a question, but was clearly at a loss to make out what question he would put to me. The lady and the other examiner cast a waiting look full on the fat gentleman's face as if saying to him in silent language, "Now, Mr. Fat Examiner, you may ask any question you like. Hurry up, don't tarry."

The fat man certainly understood the meaning of their glances and therefore, to take time, he smiled meaninglessly for some time during which, as I thought, he thought out the question he would ask me. Finally the mountain gave birth to a mouse. The fat man asked:—

"What do you think is the most unpleasant experience on earth that a man can have?"

"Appearing at a *viva voce* examination, sir," I said, nervously, and therefore frankly. There was a hearty laugh again. I was glad at heart and smiled in silence as they went on laughing.

"What do you think about Bolshevism?"

"I think nothing about it, sir."

"What do you mostly think about?"

"Now, if I told the truth I would say, 'I mostly think about the owner, or rather the owneress, of a pretty face, sir.' But nothing would make me confess that, at least before those examiners. I was hesitating; and the kind lady came to my rescue by asking me, 'Have you ever dreamt of flying in the sky?'"

"Yes, madam. Very often. And I have very often hurt myself by my efforts. Such dreams are often dangerous."

"Specially for the person that sleeps beside you," said the third examiner, a lean man, who had become tired of not saying anything.

"But I have none to sleep beside me, madam, I mean, sir," I said in reply to the lean man, and all the three examiners burst into a loud laugh.

I looked at the lean gentleman. He was one of the examiners, but it seemed he was no less nervous than myself. As I was looking at him just as a sufferer looks at a greater sufferer to find some comfort, the fat man cast a peculiar glance at me and began to survey me from head to foot. I wondered why on earth he did so.

"How tall are you?" he asked.

"Six feet, sir, and a few inches."

"Can you tell me why some people are tall and some are short?"

"Because some are destined to be short and some to be tall."

"So you believe in destiny, do you?"

"Yes, sir."

"Why?"

"Because it saves me from many arguments. This belief in destiny is a shorthand process."

"Very good. Now, who do you think is the greatest of all actors living at present?"

"I am....."

"You are? Ah, that's fine, that's fine. Very glad of it. Very glad indeed. Hal! Hal! Hal!..." The fat man laughed and became fatter for mirth. Now, the real fact is that I had intended to say, "I am unable to tell you that" but I was cut short just after "I am..."

"Now let us see whether you are really a great actor. What role will you take up?"

"The role of a man who has become awfully nervous. Will that do for you?"

"Perfectly."

"Then go on with your questions please, and see me represent nervousness."

The fat man and his colleagues began to ask me the queerest possible kind of questions and I replied to

"Three cheers for Dorai!" shouted my friends.



them all nervously. My representation of nervousness was perfectly natural, for obvious reasons. My examiners were highly pleased with my remarkably realistic acting (?). They were so highly fascinated that they thanked me heartily for giving them excellent pleasure for several minutes, before bidding me good-bye and calling in another candidate.

When the results of the examination were out, imagine my pleasant surprise on finding my name heading the list of successful candidates.

All my class-friends congratulated me heartily. Muthuswami shook hands with me. Venkata, in his joy, embraced me with all the intensity of a true friend's love and said, "Bravo, Dorai. You are a wonderful chap. You have appeared before a very strict set of examiners, but in spite of that you have shattered all previous records by securing full marks."

"Three cheers for Dorai," shouted my friends. I only smiled in silence and secretly thanked my nervousness.

SUSILA BY MY SICK.BED—(Continued from page 26)

On the first day, however, the reading in either of them kept steady at a high level, though in one it was a bit higher than in the other. All through the day and night, the temperature was exactly at the same high level. Naturally, Susila was very much alarmed that I was drifting on to fatal hyperpyrexia, and instantly sent for Dr. Deenadayalu, who excitedly rushed to my house in a jiffy. He felt my pulse, took my temperature and assured an anxious, panic-stricken Susila that there was absolutely no cause for anxiety.

"He has but a slight rise in temperature—so slight, indeed, as to be of little consequence."

"Slight?" I heard Susila's voice rise to a crescendo; "slight? Why! He has been having a temperature of 104°80 all through the day," and she handed him the temperature chart.

"Oh, my! What a chart!! The temperature has been phenomenally steady at the high level of 104°80, eh? Ha! Ha!! Ha!!! Evidently, you forgot to 'shake' the thermometer before using it!"

By the grace of God and thanks, no doubt, to Susila's constant and careful nursing, I made an uneventful recovery. When the stage of convalescence was reached, nutritious but at the same time judicious dieting offered some practical difficulties to my nurse-in-attendance.

"I cannot recommend anything better than a glass of egg-flip, the first thing every morning," I heard my doctor say during one of his visits.

"Egg?" Susila almost shrieked. "Don't you know, doctor, we are strict vegetarians out and out? Egg! Why, I won't touch it with a pair of tongs."

"There is no need for the use of tongs, madam, no need at all. All that you have to do is to beat two eggs in a glass tumbler, or preferably in an egg-whisk, steadily, till the whole thing froths up, and finally add milk and sugar to taste. So simple, you know, and, as for your religious or rather sentimental scruples, believe me, the

sooner you get rid of them, the better for the health of your husband."

"The—health—of—your—husband,"—those few words produced the desired magical effect on Susila. She agreed, though reluctantly, to forego her pet aversion if that would in any way help me to recoup my health sooner. In short, she consented to prepare the flip herself and give it to me.

"You don't have any objection, dear?" she purred.

"In the circumstances, no; for, you know—of course, so do the Gods, that I am taking in this animal food as a part of the treatment, more or less as a medicinal draught."

I distinctly remember my first draught of egg-flip. One morning she handed me a cup of whitish, frothy fluid and asked me to gulp it down. I closed my nostrils with my left hand, shut my eyes cat-like, prayed to my Gods to absolve me of this sin, opened my mouth as wide as a crocodile's, threw my head back and poured the nasty thing which smelt eggy all over, down into my mouth at one stretch. I managed to do it in a jiffy and it was such an easy affair. The next stage, the swallowing I mean, bristled with unexpected difficulties. I could not just do it, for I felt sharp, pointed things sticking to the inside of my throat, barring deglutition.

"Swallow it, swallow it down,—here, don't you hesitate,—one gulp and the thing is done," Susila was goading me on.

After many honest but abortive attempts, I gave it up and decided to spit out the whole contents. And spat, I did. With surprise not unmixed with curiosity, I scrutinized the contents of my mouth. Yes, pieces of egg-shell of varying sizes and shapes were floating in the white frothy fluid! No wonder, I couldn't swallow them!! Suddenly I had a brain-wave. The doctor had asked Susila, "to beat two eggs in a glass tumbler steadily." She had carried out the instructions to the very letter! No fault of hers, I assured her.

JUST JANE



By 'Maybird'

GIRLS are made of sugar, spice and all that is nice. That is the positive statement of almost all school-girls about themselves. But the Rev. Editor and I don't think so. I have known gals who are far from sweet. As for the Rev. Editor, some of the feminine contributors are responsible for his scepticism. Eh? What I mean is, that with the few exceptions of those whom we have a chance to hold near and others whom by law and otherwise we are forced to hold dear, girls are of a bitter-sweet commodity. What sayest thou?

I would however say this much. As per the traditions of the trouble-making Eve, girls as a community were thrust on the face of this earth like small bundles of temptations to spoil the smooth running of the masculine machinery. Mostly all of us are like beaten American flour in their hands.

I dare say the fair section of the readers will consider me prejudiced or broken-in-love and probably will call me names behind my back. But we boys are boys and as long as mediums like these Mags exist, we are bound to make a noise. Now listen, I have cause to grumble, because I am crossed in love. It is one thing to fall skull over toes in love with a girl truly, really and sincerely (I am serious this once) but quite another to be thrown overboard at the eleventh hour.

I went about asking advice from all my friends.

I first confided to my friend, Leander Lad. He is a sort of woman-hater and is reported to be heart-whole.

"I'm done for, laddie," I told Leander.

"Good," replied he, licking his lips.

"What the devil do you mean by 'good'?" thundered me.

"Good that after all you *did* something. Apart from fooling around girls and playing the goat, you have rarely done anything useful."

"Hang your gob!"

I was huffed. Who wouldn't? A feller is down and out and goes to another fellah for sympathy. The latter instead of trying to act the balm-applier fomentor and all that, rides the high horse! Was it playing the game with a pal? I looked daggers at him.

"Here, pull up your socks, Maybird, my lad and say unto my ears the troubles that may be worrying your kidney," he said.

"I say," I began, "I am not talking Hebrew. I repeatedly assert with all the force of my sound-box that I'm done for. I'm shelved. Put on the top shelf. Catch me?" I asked.

"Lead kindly light. I am still in the dark."

"Well," said I "if you cannot comprehend the lingo—or The King's English—I shall spell it. JANE has made a new catch now. Get me?"

"Pray, who is this Jane?"

"There you go baky on your roof, old top." Here I've been confessing the innermost vibrations of my heart about the ravishingly beautiful lass residing in Long-sight Street—

"I see light now," voiced Leander Lad, shaking his hard boiled head. "That bit of a girl with rolls of kiss-curls dangling all over her map, the gal who took your wicket by her first delivery, eh?; the sixtieth lass you swore you were nutty over—"

"Stop your wagging gob talking shop. She is not even the sixth on the list."

"Well?" Leander asked.

"Give me your advice. Put your Head-Office to a little thinking, work your grey spots and open out."

I awaited a satisfactory answer. But I was disillusioned by his response.

"Shun them, brother, shun them," cautioned he. "Be immune from the fair sex, the plain goods as well as the stunning stock."

"Have a heart, old coffin. Propose something practical. Asceticism is not in my line."

"Here's something practical and practicable. Just swig 1'5 Johnnie Walker and sleep over it. You would wake up with a heavy head and would not have time to think of—"

"Boozing to drown sorrows is a slur to my family name."

"Try for a fresh fish. There are plenty in the sea."

"You're N. G. You know that I have fallen for Jane. It would take Week-days and Sundays for me to get over the after-effects of my heart-break. The fact that Jane is angling for a new-fish has left blisters on my poor heart."

"Ha, Ha," laughed he. "She may be giving preference to he-men. Who is the new candidate on the field?"

I told him in confidence about the intruder. The new chappie on the scene was reported to be a button-

hole cousin of the Rockefeller bloke and possessed a solid fist, a thick face and a substantial look about him. He was a police officer, a detective or something.

"Maybird, considering your weight," grinned Leander, "you have not the ghost of a chance to issue him a challenge. Your church-mouse state, *re* finance, is another fly in the gravy. He is a good looking bird for all I know. If you will excuse my plain-speaking, it looks as if popping the Q and getting the 'hum' from Jane is a job next to impossible. Why don't you beat an honourable retreat?"

Well this was surely not what you may call encouraging. Was it? And his remark about the other feller's looks!! Insinuating, 'aint it? That got my goat.

"Apart from the dirty money and the beefy constitution, he has nothing to boast of. I told him in some heat. Mr. Leander didn't like it; but then he forced me to it. He should have known that my weak point was my face. I left him before he could re-open his trap.

However it was up to me to keep this new trout on Jane's bait off. I confess, I felt like the Poor Babe in the Wood. Jane was the only looker that could for the present make my heart run all pit-a-pat and as long as my liver and kidney functioned properly, I swore I would not let grass grow under my shoes. The new chappie may be a sergeant-major or an intelligent codger, one of the Official Police or the *moffusil* Charlies, but Maybird was going to do justice to his grand-pa's expectations, fighting and winning with mighty odds against him.



A bluff for a kiss!!

Listen, till recently Jane seemed inclined to cotton on to me and if it wasn't for this mighty meddler butting in, I might have hung my hat definitely at Jane's. Jane knew from my optics that I always considered a smile from her more satisfying than a sumptuous meal of curry and rice with ghee added. A glance from her and she could make mince-meat of my heart. In fact, it was an open secret that I was all elastic on her from last March. Such being the case, why this sudden change of weather? Apparently all was 'Not Quiet on the Western Front'!! That is why, though I was something of an optimist, I have now lost faith in the girlish community altogether.

Jane's new man (Jock by name) had 73 (seventy-three) pounds behind his favourite left fist or else I would have knocked his face to smithereens in a fair fight.

I told Paul my troubles. He replied that ditto was the case with every Mary, Lucie and Jubie. He had, he said, doubles of troubles himself. One damsel whom once upon a time he considered to be half-sister to an angel, had now turned out to be something of a graduated specialist in making gu-gu eyes at everybody. His opinion was that girls did consider varieties as the spice of their lives and advised me to have *nil* to do with them.

I then appealed to Thomas Kumari. He himself had been crossed in love so that you couldn't tell his heart from a dropped box of matches. But he thought that the only way open to me was by buttering her with some perfume called 'U-de-colony' or some such stuff. I hadn't heard of it. Moreover the sound of it gave me the idea that it was a costly affair and beyond my purse. He said he once ogled at a country dame who was fond of *Pal-mittai*. He earned an osculatory salute from her with nothing costlier than a packet of *mittais*. Thomas also told me of cases where down and out lovers had won favours and ultimately undying love with the aid of cheap materials like *Uluunthu Vadais*. I knew if I had tried such stuff on Jane, she would have given me a biff for a kiss!! I suspected Kumari was trying to rag me.

Mr. Markos, a club-mate of mine, came to know about my case.

"Why don't you oil her old man with a box of one-hour-pulling cigars?" he asked me.

"Don't pull my leg. You are talking through the back of your neck. The oldster only smokes a pipe," I replied.

I then thought and thought. Ah! Mr. Ed. would help, I thought. And now, hearken Rev. Ed., would you write off the advertisement charges of this agony column and give me a chance to square up with Jane? Here is the agony stuff.

Jane, you are my shoelacing, without you I cannot walk. Jane, you are my chair, without you I cannot sit. You are my aluminium plate, for without you I cannot eat. You are my mosquito-curtain, without you I cannot sleep. You induce me to sing, to croon and even be a budding poet with your inspiration.

"If like *Mittais* and *Vadais*, love was cheap, A'pore feller could then buy you a heap; And any other blokes comes courting you, dove I could ask him to hop it and give him a shove."

(The Editor's compliments, to you, 'Maybird', He gives you the 'pip', the 'raspberry', the 'bird'.

—Ed.)

MUDALIAR MEETS HIS MATCH

BY ELMER DELVILLE

"ARE you going far on this line, mister?" ventured a quiet gentleman in a second-class compartment, addressing the only other occupant. The inquiry was casual but inevitable while travelling, as everybody knows.

"No. Only as far as Pannalai."

"Bless my soul, if any; this train doesn't stop there!"

"What?"

"This is the Boompiddi Express and Pannalai is not a stopping place."

"Scandalous!" growled the younger man, "the railway company must pay for this joke. Why then did they book me a ticket? If I had my way I'd have those responsible stripped and boiled in linseed oil."

"And earn a front seat in perdition?" said the old gentleman. "Perhaps the ticket was meant for the Local that left Madras half an hour earlier."

"You're a sport," said the other. "I'm sorry. I talk as if you are responsible for the darned thing. But how in the name of blinking Moses am I to get down where I want to?"

"That's easily done," replied the other. "We have a longish way to go yet and there is plenty of time. I'll help you. Meanwhile let us forget it and get sociable. My name is Pandyan—and yours?"

"Balan. I am a diamond merchant in the city."

"Ah! How interesting!" Mr. Pandyan painfully sidled up his sixteen stone mass so as to be nearer to Balan. "I know something about diamonds, too. I traded in them years ago. I have been a jelly merchant, a coach for athletes and—"

"You look it," commented Balan.

"Don't I? Some of the earlier Olympic champions were trained by me."

Left to themselves throughout the journey the two got on very well together. The topics they discussed would have shamed the universities and shocked the village gossips. For his age Mr. Pandyan seemed to be profoundly interested in such modern crazes as birth-control and ballyhoo and showed much aptitude in horse-racing and beach dancing.

"You are going on a business trip to Pannalai, I presume?" asked Mr. Pandyan, after a pause in the conversation.

"Well, not exactly. I mean—yes—in a way."

Balan suddenly remembered that the other was just a train acquaintance. In his business he had to be wary of all strangers and be suspicious of everybody. Why should he tell this man he was on a holiday and why should he, as he was tempted to do, ask for his valuation of a diamond ornament he was taking for Sheila? It was safer in his well-worn leather case which was reposing just then on the rack overhead. Deftly he changed the subject.

"You have not told me yet where you are going," he said.

"I'm going to Muttur—my own village," answered Mr. Pandyan, buttoning up his coat over his mighty paunch. "It's about eight miles from Pannalai. This train stops there all right," he added with a giggle which ended, however, in a pant.

"Do you know anyone at Pannalai?"



.....used his hands.....

"Sure—many. Why, when I am not at Madras, I'm almost always at Pannalai. There is a regular motor service between my place and that. If you're not in a hurry, you could easily drop at Muttur and go back with me to Pannalai. Have a cigar. No? A cigarette, then. Between you and me Pannalai is a vastly interesting place, you know."

Mr. Pandyan was trying to be suggestive with his eyes but failed miserably and made himself look only more comic. Balan had travelled throughout the railway system. His business in diamonds and precious stones took him all over the country. Pannalai, however, was a third-rate town and he did not expect to make any sales there, but he did expect to find something more precious to him than even diamonds—Sheila.

If, after all, the train was not really going to stop at Pannalai, what was he going to do? Mr. Pandyan had said it was an easy matter. Here he was, most unconcernedly reading a newspaper! Only vigorous whiffs of ascending smoke indicated he was not asleep or dead altogether. Bluntly, Balan put the problem to him.

"Don't worry, my boy," he said coolly, "leave it to your uncle. Take a book and read or—here is yesterday's paper—keep your mind otherwise engaged. I'll—I wonder if the attendant isn't coming this way."

Declining Balan's offer to go up and see, he shuffled out into the corridor and then, as if he had changed his mind, he went back to his seat muttering. "Doesn't matter—I only wanted a little hot water. Oh, no, don't trouble yourself; I'll wait for the next halt. Another quiet smoke will put me right."

Balan again excusing himself, Mr. Pandyan took out the stump of a cigar and lit it. Forgetfully, he let the burning match-stick fall on the floor. He did not probably notice the crumpled newspapers there. Before one could say 'Sultan Pakiri', the papers were all ablaze. Who could have thought bulky Mr. Pandyan capable of so much energy? He jumped up with the quickness of a panther bitten by a snake, tucked up his dhotie and tripped about on the burning papers. Balan used his hands instead. Once Mr. Pandyan accidentally stepped on them, making Balan squeal with pain. Just then, another passenger happened to pass along the corridor and seeing the little excitement within walked in, and lent a hand—or rather a foot. He insisted on clearing away the burnt papers and in assisting them to re-arrange the bundles of bedding and other luggage and helping them to regain composure.

"Extremely obliged to you, sir," said Mr. Pandyan to the stranger. "You were just in time." Smiling his acknowledgment, the man returned to his own compartment.

"Pooh!" Mr. Pandyan swopped imaginary beads of perspiration from his forehead. "A very narrow shave," he said, "entirely my own carelessness. What a disaster if the railway carriage caught fire! Thank goodness—"

"Forget it, Mr. Pandyan," said Balan. "Let's talk of something pleasant or more useful. Tell me, for instance, how I really get down at Pannalai."

"Easy. The train slows down as it passes the station. Throw out your luggage on the platform. When it is somewhere midway, open the door and jump out. A young man of your stamp should do it in a jiffy. You have a ticket and therefore there will be no trouble with the railway people. I shall help you."

The thought of a quaint mode of getting down at a railway station appealed to Balan's sporting instincts. What he could not understand however, was that Sheila had mentioned that particular train and the time and she ought to know. She had even added that she would probably be there herself to receive him. The rest of his time he spent in building up theories and shattering them by turns. Either Mr. Pandyan or Sheila was mistaken. But who was? Sheila lived in the town, but then, Mr. Pandyan, as a man, might have travelled more. He was thus absorbed in mixed thoughts when Mr. Pandyan nudged him in the ribs.

"Here you are—you are there," he said.

"Where?"

"Pannalai."

Having rehearsed the whole procedure already in his mind, Balan was at no loss to get busy. He buttoned up his coat, put on his cap, adjusted his tie and prepared himself for the jump. He was on his feet and could therefore see only the edge of the platform.

The train steamed in. Balan threw out the suitcase, while Mr. Pandyan helped him with the smaller bag. When his carriage was nearing the middle he suddenly opened the door and jumped out. Evidently he had not allowed for the momentum of a moving train, for, he landed heavily on his nose. The mishap upset him, and his feelings were in no way improved by the discovery that the train did stop there after all and that there were other passengers for the town. He looked the most foolish man in the whole world. He lifted up his two bags and, still looking foolish, walked towards the exit, when who should meet him face to face but Sheila!

"Hello, Sheila!" cried Balan in genuine pleasure, trying to hide his bleeding nose, hoping that she at least had not witnessed his humiliation.

"You should have descended with a parachute," laughed Sheila. "You looked a perfect peach of a turtle lying there—tut tut tut—"

Sheila's words died away and her attitude suddenly changed. Without even a word of explanation she walked away from the spot, closely followed by Balan. She did not seem to be pleased and openly showed her annoyance. On reaching the further end of the platform, she abruptly turned round and walked back, Balan still at her heels.

"Can't you mind your business?" she snapped. "Why do you keep following me?" She spoke loud and her tone was certainly angry.

"Sheila! Are you crazy?"

"How dare you address me? I don't know who you are. If you molest me any more, I shall call the station master."

To say Balan was surprised, is saying nothing at all. He was stunned. The train was moving out. If this was the kind of reception that awaited him, it were better he was back in the train. Or was Sheila off her head?

"Pardon me, Bala dear," he heard a voice at his elbow.

"Sheila!"

"But that thick-headed dumpling was watching me from the train and he is so j—"

"Whoever that devil was, what has he to do with it?"

"Never mind," said Sheila, pulling him by the hand, "you'll hear more about it at the house. Come. But, by the way, I'll have to explain something. You see, when I asked you to come down for the week-end I counted without the rats at home. I told my parents I had asked a friend down and they jumped to the conclusion it was a girl. They'll die of shock when they find that it's you I've invited."

"Then why did you?"

"Please don't be offended," pleaded Sheila. "I did not know they were so narrow-minded when I wrote to you."

"But surely, they can't object to a man paying honourable attentions to a girl."

"Ah, ah, ah! That's another snag," blustered Sheila. "But let's have some fun, eh? I let them believe it was a girl-friend after all. Wait a minute. I also told them she was going to stay with some distant rela-

tions in this town. I have booked for you a room in the Travellers' Bungalow. You will stay there for the night, and tomorrow evening you will come to my place dressed in girl's clothes."

"Rubbish! You've taken a lot for granted. Why should I do this?"

"You'll know everything tomorrow. Let us have some real fun. I know you like excitement. Say you will do it, Bala. For my sake. You will make a perfect girl."

"How do you expect me to do it?"

"Leave that to me. I have borrowed a wig for you from the amateur dramatic society of the town and a saree and a blouse from a friend. With a little make-up—"

"Make the best of a bad job, eh? Alright, girlie, I'll do it. I don't understand all the mystery, but I'll do it for you. Come on, where's this bungalow?"

The next evening when Balan presented himself at 'Rosewood', Sheila was watching from her bedroom window, highly amused, for not even a close friend would have suspected him to be anyone but a girl. Balan knocked at the door. In his right hand he held his small leather case and with the left he was disentangling himself from the folds of the saree, which were getting uncomfortably mixed up with his legs.

"Sheila has told us what a dear friend you are," said Sheila's mother, after the formal introductions, "and how clever you are with fancy needlework. Perhaps she has been selfish in inviting you to come."

"Not at all," said 'Balammal' softly; then curiosity overcoming him added, "But why?"

"I suspect it is to help make her wedding jackets and things."

Crash fell the bag from 'Balammal's' lap.

"When is this—this—wedding?" Balan ventured to ask.

"Hasn't Sheila told you?" asked Mr. Gurumoorthi, Sheila's father, a retired Circle Inspector of Police.

"What a shame too, to keep it from your friend!" said Mrs. G., addressing Sheila, who only blushed and looked down.

"She did tell me, though," said Balan boldly. "But I did not quite catch the lucky groom's name."

"He is Mr. Muniswami Mudaliar, an old friend of mine," said the Inspector. "He was a vakil's clerk in



"But haven't I seen you before?....."

"Yes, you have.....you robber"

Madras, but he has retired. Why, he is here now. I mean, he came this morning and is staying with us for a day or two, but just now he is out—gone to the bazaar. He has vast property and—

"So, that's it," twiddled Balan.

"What is?"

"I mean that's the name I forgot. Congratulations all round."

Balan was trying to be unconcerned, but Sheila could see there was a storm raging within his breast. If she could have a word with him alone! Only a fortnight before she had repeated for the hundredth time her undying affection for him, and now like a bogey her parents had thrust their choice of a husband on her. If it was not for the fact that by her personal sacrifice she was saving her parents from financial ruin, she would have defied the whole world and gone to Balan. But would he believe it?

"I brought a small present for Sheila, which I hope she'll accept," said 'Balammal', trying to open the box he had on his lap.

His key wouldn't fit, try how hard he might. At last, taking a pen-knife, he undid the clasp and prised the box open. There were various packages done in brown paper. Balan was astounded. None of the packages was his. He opened one and found sea-shells, another contained beach sand.

"Somebody has been playing a practical joke," said Mr. Gurumoorthy.

"No, sir, it is plain robbery," said Balan and then proceeded to tell the story of the fire in the railway carriage.

"You travelled alone with a man?" Mrs. G. was shocked evidently.

"That's an old gag," said the retired Inspector. "I'm sure the man in the compartment is the main crook and the other passenger an accomplice. The fire was deliberately caused to take you off your guard. Remember his looking out into the corridor to see if his man was ready? When you were busy putting out the fire, a substitution of bags was made."

"How could they have produced a bag exactly similar to mine at a moment's notice?"

"That beats me too," admitted Mr. Gurumoorthy. "I can understand it if you were a diamond dealer or something of that sort, travelling a lot. Then, by means of spies they learn all about you—your habits etc. But in your case—" He simply shook his head.

The situation was becoming a little tense and any time now the bubble might burst. Balan was once even trying to scratch his head—over the wig!

"Bala!" called Sheila, "Come to my room and look over my things."

"Do go, Bala dear," persuaded the old lady, "and may I add that if you care to stay for the night, we shall only be too delighted. Our spare bedroom is for the moment occupied by Mr. Mudaliar, but you can sleep with Sheila."

"Oh, no," shouted Sheila and Balan together. "I must really be going," added Balan, by way of explanation. "My aunt will be waiting for me."

In Sheila's room Balan had a good opportunity to hear the whole truth of the story. He was satisfied to learn that Sheila did love him and him alone. Together they looked round the wedding presents that had already arrived.

"Who gave you this pendant, Sheila?" asked Balan, pointing to a diamond ornament that was lying on the dressing table.

"That's Mudaliar's present. He brought it this morning. Isn't it charming?"

"Sure it is," assented Balan. "It is so charming that I like to make one like it for my sister. May I borrow it for a week or so?"

"Need you ask, darling? Ah, there's Mudaliar. Promise, to avoid him."

Without a word Balan walked into the hall. He was introduced to Mr. Muniswami Mudaliar.

"Pleased to meet you, Miss Balammal," beamed Mr. Mudaliar. "But haven't I seen you before—at Madras?"

"Yes, you have—in the train, you bottle of shoe polish, you robber!"

"What does this mean, Inspector? To be insulted in your own house." Mr. Muniswami was in a fury.

"Mr. Gurumoorthy," said Balan, "this is the main crook you spoke of. Get the police to arrest him."

"What does it all mean," flurried the old man. "There must be some mistake somewhere."

"There's no mistake," cried Balan. "Mudaliar or Pandyan, stay where you are or I'll pound you to a pulp." He took out the pendant. "Whose is this?"

"Mr. Mudaliar gave it to Sheila," volunteered Mrs. Gurumoorthy.

"Yes, he gave me this morning," said Sheila.

"Yes, I did," said Mudaliar firmly. "The ornament is mine. Could you prove it is yours?"

"Sheila! Take this pendant to the light and read what is engraved at the back. Wait a minute. Mr. Pandya Mudaliar, do you know if there is anything engraved there?" No reply.

Sheila took the pendant to the light and read the tiny engraved words: "To Sheila with Love from Bala."

Old man Gurumoorthy's rheumatism was gone. He got up on one leg and hopped about before the astonished gaze of those present. Sheila ran to Balan and pulled off his unbecoming girl's clothes and presented him to her parents as the man she loved—the only man she had ever loved.

ARE YOU A GENIUS?

By J. Narini

WE have today societies and associations to take care of everything that is useful or interesting. Even the case of Alfonso mango is not neglected. What a pity that we have not yet formed a society to protect geniuses! And no one who knows anything of these interesting people will deny that they form a class in need of special protection. Had we such a society, Chatterton the boy-poet, would not have been compelled to commit suicide as an escape from poverty; Shelley would, probably, not have been drowned, and in the interests of his immortal poetry, he would not have been left by society to indulge in all quixotic hobbies. Carlyle would really have been freed of all his stomach troubles, and would therefore

have written all his brilliant books with far fewer shrieks and curses on his fellow men. And Schopenhauer, the German philosopher, would have been spared the necessity of recommending universal suicide as the sole remedy for all the ills of life. Of course, we can understand society would have a very hard time with a few men—men, for instance, like Mahatma Gandhi.

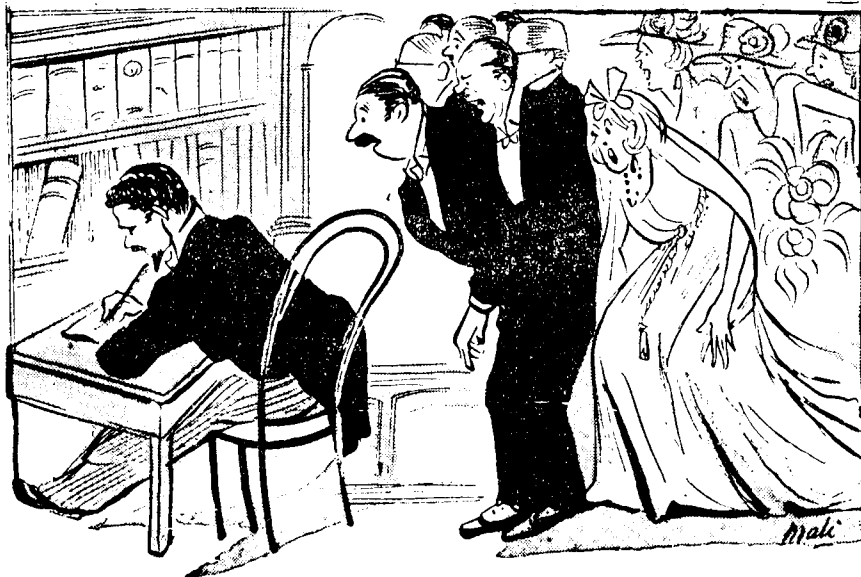
However, in the absence of such a society of experts, it becomes one's duty to find out whether one is not, in spite of a possible public opinion to the contrary, anything short of an eighteen carat genius.

More men than we imagine do sincerely believe that they are all at bottom first class geniuses! And, no doubt, it is only by a special grace of Providence that we are often spared the great nuisance of being compelled to share that belief with some of them about themselves. Men who have succeeded by sheer dint of perseverance are fond of thinking that genius is nothing but the capacity to take infinite pains. But this is only one of the innumerable successful lies which clever elders have thought it necessary to invent for the benefit of lazy youngsters. Genius has nothing to do with any Herculean capacity for work—indeed, it has nothing to do with any virtue whatever.

Another equally common mistake that is made about genius, is to take attention, concentration, and a few other qualities usually associated with brain power as indispensable attributes of genius. There is no doubt that the power of attention is a great gift and geniuses are found to excel ordinary men in it. History is rich with amazing records of it. Archimedes was so absorbed in his mathematical problems that he became conscious of the storming of his native city only by his own death-wound. The philosopher Carneadas was liable to fits of meditation so profound that it became a great problem for his maid-servant to find time to feed him. Who has not heard of the famous story of Newton that, while engaged in his mathematical researches, he often forgot to dine? There is a story that a great thinker called Cardon, while going to meet a lady-friend, fell into a meditation so profound that he forgot both his way and the object of his journey, so much so when he recovered from his reflections he was surprised to find himself directly under a gallows! Now you may say that no amount of concentrated meditation can make one forget anything that is really interesting to him. Well, we could accept this but for the story of the great Budaus. This extraordinary man, a great philologist, managed to forget everything about his own bride on the very day of his marriage! And when the marriage party missed him in the church for a long time and searched for him, they were surprised to find him absorbed in writing a book on—of all subjects—philology!



.....surprised to find himself directly under a gallows



.....managed to forget everything about his own bride on the very day of his marriage;
.....absorbed in writing a book on—of all subjects—philology!

Now, geniuses are capable of these wonderful feats of concentration, not because there are any great powers of voluntary attention in them, but because of the freshness and originality of their minds. In fact, you cannot attend to a thing for more than a few seconds at a time by your own natural capacity for attention. And it has been, strangely enough, found that in many brilliant men this power of voluntary attention is poorer than in ordinary men. But there is nothing strange about it at all when we know that the real virtue of the mind of a genius is that it has got that mysterious quality called originality. In the mind of a genius alone do objects 'bud and sprout and grow.' But a dull mind is unable to find any interest for long in anything. An idea in the brain of a genius becomes many-coloured—it flashes up unexpected sides and aspects. And when a subject branches infinitely before their fertile minds, it will naturally rivet their attention to them, and so, for hours, they may be rapt in them. But it is their genius that make them so rapt, not their power of concentration that makes geniuses of them.

If genius does not consist of attention and concentration—if these are not even necessary for it—what, then, is the real secret of its virtue? Is it something entirely different from the gifts of the ordinary man, or is it only a development and an advance on the lines of the intellectual make-up of the average man? Now, all our knowledge at first is vague. The new-born baby is unable to distinguish anything in things which appear to it as a vague whole. But we soon learn to analyse this and to find out the delicately differenced ingredients involved in this vague whole. And of these innumerable ingredients, we attend to some and avoid others. The cause of this choice—often not conscious—is that we are interested in some and not in others. Now, we have two kinds of interests: one is practical or instinctive which we share with most animals, the other is aesthetic probably belonging to man alone. And just as our instinctive or impulsive interests are far more

than those of any animal, the aesthetic interests of a normal man, born and bred in a civilized society, are far deeper and greater than those of a savage. The importance of this excess of interests lies in the fact that it makes you see everywhere many aspects of things which otherwise you would miss. It is therefore clear that the more varied one's interests are, the more the characters and aspects one is able to see in things. Thus, it is no wonder that the poet that comes into the world with an abundance of aesthetic interests, is able to conceive things inconceivable for ordinary men and give shape and life to airy nothingness in a way denied to ordinary mortals. This is a necessary condition for genius and a sure characteristic of their gift.

Mere abundance of interests alone will not, however, do. With this there must be united a rare brain energy to discover similarities in the aspects of things which your additional interests have made it possible for you to find out. We all discover similarities in things—it is absolutely necessary for all reasoning. But in a genius this power of discovering similarities is remarkably sharp. And over and above this, the time taken to find out the similarity also makes a great difference. To us the similarities of things strike but slowly and bit by bit, but for a genius they occur in a flash. Things that lie scattered about the whole universe and separated by periods of time, are at once brought before his mind by this unusual development of association by similarity. Here it is, if in anything at all, that geniuses differ from ordinary minds. A few illustrations will make clear the importance of this difference. The falling of apples had been familiar to people before Newton, but it required the brain of a genius like Newton's to connect it at once with the Law of Gravitation. Thus it is that, although men were ever familiar with the fact of the weak perishing and the strong succeeding at the cost of the former, it again required a genius to detect in it the law of 'The Survival of the Fittest.'

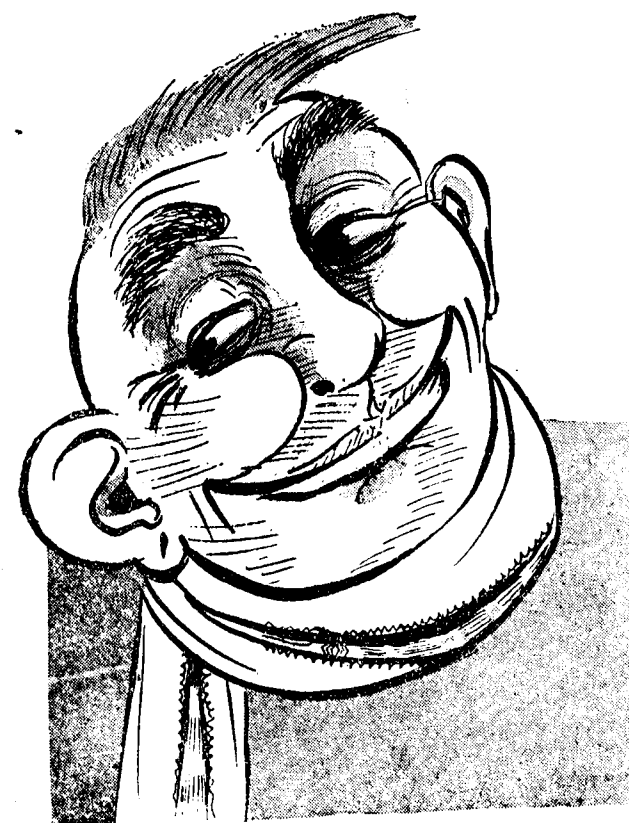
In the more imaginative field of literature too, the same law is at work. We have already seen that here what differentiates the dull prosaic man from the poet in his marvellous flights, is this extraordinary power to command similarities without deliberation and effort. To an idiot, the sun-set will not suggest a hero's death; but only supper time. Your blessed fool will never wonder at the glory of a rising sun, for, to wonder at it, one must be sensitive to all the shades of colour and sound and their mysterious influence on emotion, all of which go to convert the bare fact of the appearance of the sun into a glorious scene. The fundamental defect of our minds is its inability to see things in aspects other than those that we are accustomed to. The average mind is unable to break across in unaccustomed places. Unfortunately

(Continued on page 40)

THE instinct to be merry is a very human and deep-seated one; and like all other human instincts, is apt, sometimes, to take its victims beyond the bounds of reason. I feel therefore no hesitation in saying that it was this instinct, expressed in a rabid and somewhat irrepressible form, that kept Nero fiddling while his capital was burning. Not that Nero began to indulge in the pastime of fiddling just when he was told that Rome was burning; not at all. The fact, I presume, was that he commenced the pastime long before Rome began to burn; but that he was so taken up with it that he did not feel like abandoning it even when he was told that Rome was burning. If you care to reflect for a moment, you will realise that you are no better than Nero. Is not the world you live in so full of misery, death, disease, privation and sorrow that every smile would seem to be a sin? Do you renounce it on that account? Don't you snatch a joyous moment whenever you can and call your callousness the process of smiling through? Well, Nero had as much right to fiddle through.

The callous case of Charles Lamb is somewhat different. This man confessed that he was almost always tickled to mirth whenever he happened to see a solemn funeral procession passing by. To be frank, even on his behalf I am tempted to venture an apology. For, there appears to be as much store of mirth in serious themes as there is in light and flippant topics. Why do most of us have an inclination to have a merry-go at the seriousness of the Nambudri and the thrift of the Bania. The reason is that every one of us has something of the Puck in us and it is part of human nature to pull the leg of seriousness. Lamb did nothing worse.

There is yet another type which seeks mirth in a different way. A fat man once said to a fool, "Come, sing me a bawdy song; make me merry." And there was not a moment in the life of the two that they did not endow with mirth. This, perhaps, is rather the extreme type to which a hearty laugh is the very



L'allegro

By
R Jagannathan

essence of living. So, it seeks mirth in everything under the Sun. It will get into scrapes in quest of mirth and be no wiser for all the lessons it has learnt by the way.

So then, the quality of mirth is something innate in and common to us all. Nevertheless, it is difficult to define what it really is. Like one's own wife, it is an intimate and comprehensive subject, though not so exacting. As to its utility we may turn for a moment to Stevenson. "A smiling woman," he said, "is a better thing to find than a five-pound note." I, for my part, am inclined to regard this valuation rather low whether it is taken to refer to the smile or the woman or both. On second thoughts, however, I am tempted to say that it all depends on what kind of smile is under consideration.

The kind of smile I have under consideration is a pure, spontaneous one. It is not strained; 'it cheereth him that gives and him that takes'. Such a smile as Goldsmith provokes, innocent and amusing—

"The man recovered of the bite,
The dog it was that died."

There is just enough twist in the tail and no labour.

On the other hand, I refuse to smile at the hackneyed descriptions of personal oddities such as balloon tummies, bulbous noses, giraffe necks, etc. It is a pity that many a humourist's stock in trade is no richer. Of course, all art is a form of exaggeration; but you can't expect one to be looking at things all the while through a magnifying glass. I should prefer a varied fare. (The mixed metaphor is regretted).

Again there are some people who can't raise a laugh except at another's expense; presumably because they find that it is the easiest way of doing it. But such cheap art, besides being no art at all, lacks range, intensity and evolution.

There are others who think that you can't make people laugh unless you draw generously from imagination. On the contrary, the really humorous and mirthful incidents are in the realm of fact. Truth is

refuse to smile at the hackneyed description of personal oddities such as.....bulbous noses, giraffe necks etc.



stranger than fiction if only because it is seldom so much in evidence as fiction.

Mirth sometimes makes its appearance at very odd and unexpected corners. That is perhaps due to the fact that it is inseparable from life. A few samples herewith.

Tukaram or Ramdas, I forget who, but I am certain it was one of the two, was once standing on the bank of a river while his wife was bathing in the river. The said saint was entrusted with his wife's clothes. Just then an ill-clad beggar-woman happened to pass by. The saint's heart opened out with pity and without a thought he gave her his wife's clothes. As to what happened next between the saint and the wife, nothing is on record; but the fact remains that the saint became saintlier and died a very great man.

Baji Rao Peshwa was once campaigning in Central India and was stuck up in a wilderness with nothing for a bite. He sent his personal attendant in quest of food. The latter roamed far and wide and got a thing or two, but there was no fire to cook the stuff. Nearby he saw a corpse burning. He immediately went near it, took out a few burning faggots and cooked food for his master. The Peshwa was so struck with the man's resource that he advanced him.

When the conquering Marathas first occupied Panipat, there was a dearth of *chunam* in their camp; and their betel chewing fell very much in arrears. Thereupon, one of them who knew a little of Chemistry gave out a hint. And they went into the town, pulled the marble stones from the houses and burnt the marble to make *chunam*.

Who would laugh if these are stories?
Who would not laugh if these are facts?

ARE YOU A GENIUS?—(Continued from page 38)

the training and education of most of us is such as to make our minds, often in varying degrees, enslaved to routine, to cut-and-dried thinking. But the credit of great men—original men—is that they could show us that more useful and interesting orders of things are possible and that it is only that curious incapacity of ours to understand and take to those orders of things, that is responsible for a good lot of our misery, error, and boredom that we at present needlessly endure.

We may now be very curious to know if genius has any physical characteristics peculiar to it. Many experiments have been made in this field, but the results have not thrown much definite light. Of course, every one knows that the brain of intelligent men weighs more than that of fools and idiots. We naturally expect that geniuses must, therefore, possess greater quantity of brain matter than ordinary clever men. But this is found to be no sure test, as wonderful exceptions have come to light. The brain of Anatole France, the celebrated French novelist, it is said, was much less in quantity than is found in ordinary men. Possibly, the workings of higher intellectual powers are not so much due to the greater quantity of brain matter as to the presence of certain properties in the brain, or to a different arrangement of the molecules of the brain tissue. It is, however, certain that when brilliant thoughts flash across the mind of some genius, and the meaning of things which common men cannot grasp rise in his mind, the neural counterpart of them all is a lot of dawning and fermentation-like process, too faint and complex to be traced. And to-day psychologists and physiologists

are alike tremendously interested to find out exactly what properties in the brain matter produce these evanescent neural flashes and how a difference in all these would differently influence the character, tastes and brain-power of people.

When the secret is discovered, it will possibly be quite easy to bring out such changes in the human system as will produce results to our hearts' desire. It may then merely cost us the trouble and expense of an injection to convert a peevish man into a cheerful and good-humoured fellow; and our shops may then sell for a trifle, medicines that will convert a needlessly crying child into an ever-smiling baby. And who can say that a greater knowledge of biology and biochemistry will not find out a cheap method of transforming fools into full-fledged geniuses! Only just imagine a world where every one is a genius! And then it will be impossible to find a fool though the whole world be searched. And, if by chance one were to be discovered, what a great reception will he be given, not to the London Zoo, but to an international Zoo, perhaps at Geneva; for he would belong to the whole world even as a Shakespeare or a Kalidas, belongs to the whole world. And just as people to-day go to witness the great passion-play at Oberammergau, or the great miracles at Lourdes, they will then assemble from every part of the world to witness this miracle of the singular survival of a queer species, then extinct, but known to their forefathers as "The Fool". Great professors will make him the subject of their study for years together, and my God, what learned books will be written on him!

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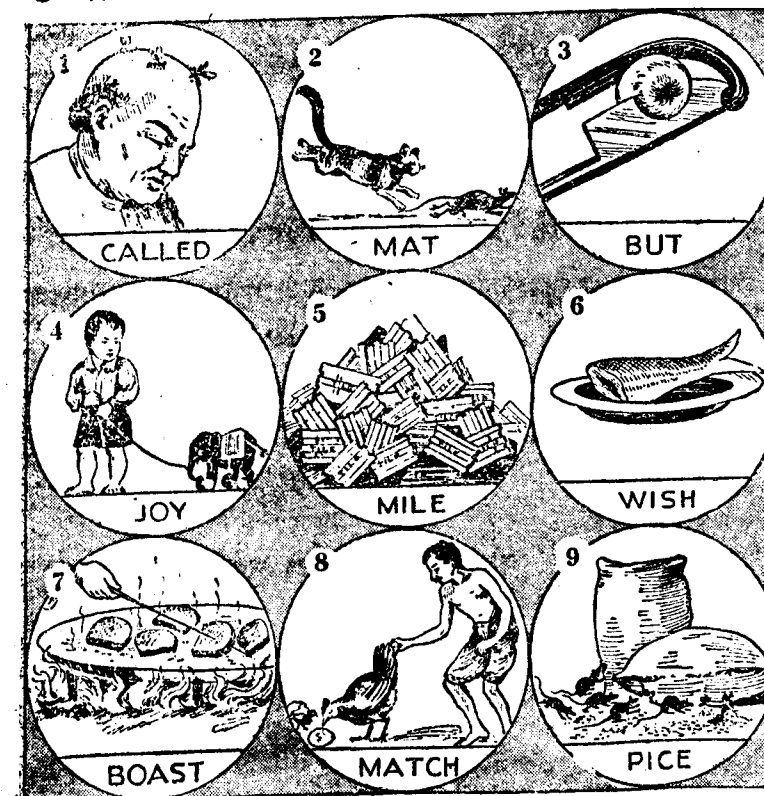
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This is a simple contest in which each picture represents a word to *rhyme* with the word given. Look at the picture No. 1, for instance. It represents the word **BALD**. This word rhymes with the word **CALLED**. This is the correct solution. All the other eight words are found similarly. When you have found the eight words write them against their number in the coupon.

RULES AND CONDITIONS

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



custody with the Indian Bank, Ltd., Head Office, Madras. Failing an all-correct solution, the first prize will be awarded to the nearest correct entry received. In case of ties, the prize money will be equally divided. The Editor reserves the right of pooling the first, second and third prize amounts and distributing them among the competitors according to the number of all-correct solutions received. In this competition, a competitor who wins a prize amount of more than Rs. 100 will not be eligible for any other prize. No correspondence can be entered into nor can interviews be granted. Persons connected with the *Merry Magazine* and its associated journals are not allowed to compete.

Coupons must be filled in legibly, numbered consecutively and sent intact along with the M. O. receipt issued by the Post Office. Entrance fee for more than one entry may be sent in one money order. M.O. coupons must contain the details of the remittance. This office will not be responsible for entries lost or delayed in transit. All entries must be addressed to:

THE EDITOR, 'CHIMERS' COMPETITION,
THE MERRY MAGAZINE OFFICE, BROADWAY, MADRAS.

ENTRY FORM "CHIMERS" COMPETITION COUPON

CLOSING DATE 13-3-35

1. B A L D
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.
7.
8.
9.

(PLEASE WRITE LEGIBLY)

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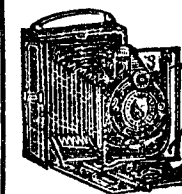
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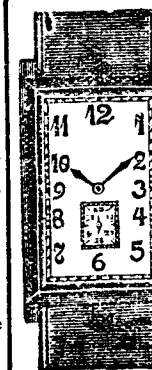
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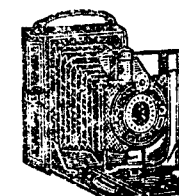
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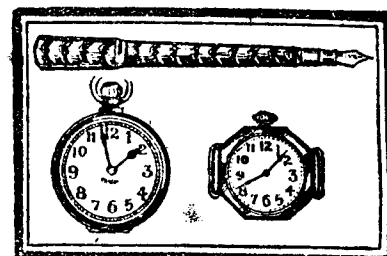
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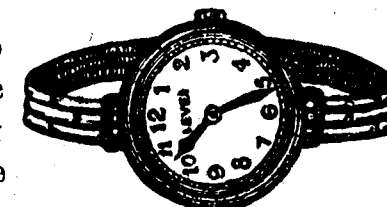
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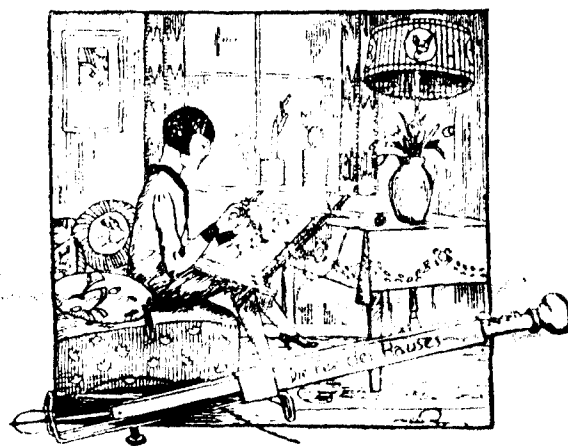
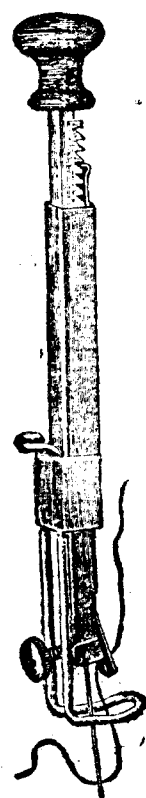
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