

185

A NEW FREE PUZZLE

THE 185

MERRY

MAGAZINE

Vol. III

MADRAS, 9th MARCH, 1935

No. 10

THE PEET AND THE TEST



HE: I'll do anything to make you happy.

SHE: I'll be happy if you leave me alone.

THE MERRY MAGAZINE

(PUBLISHED EVERY SATURDAY)

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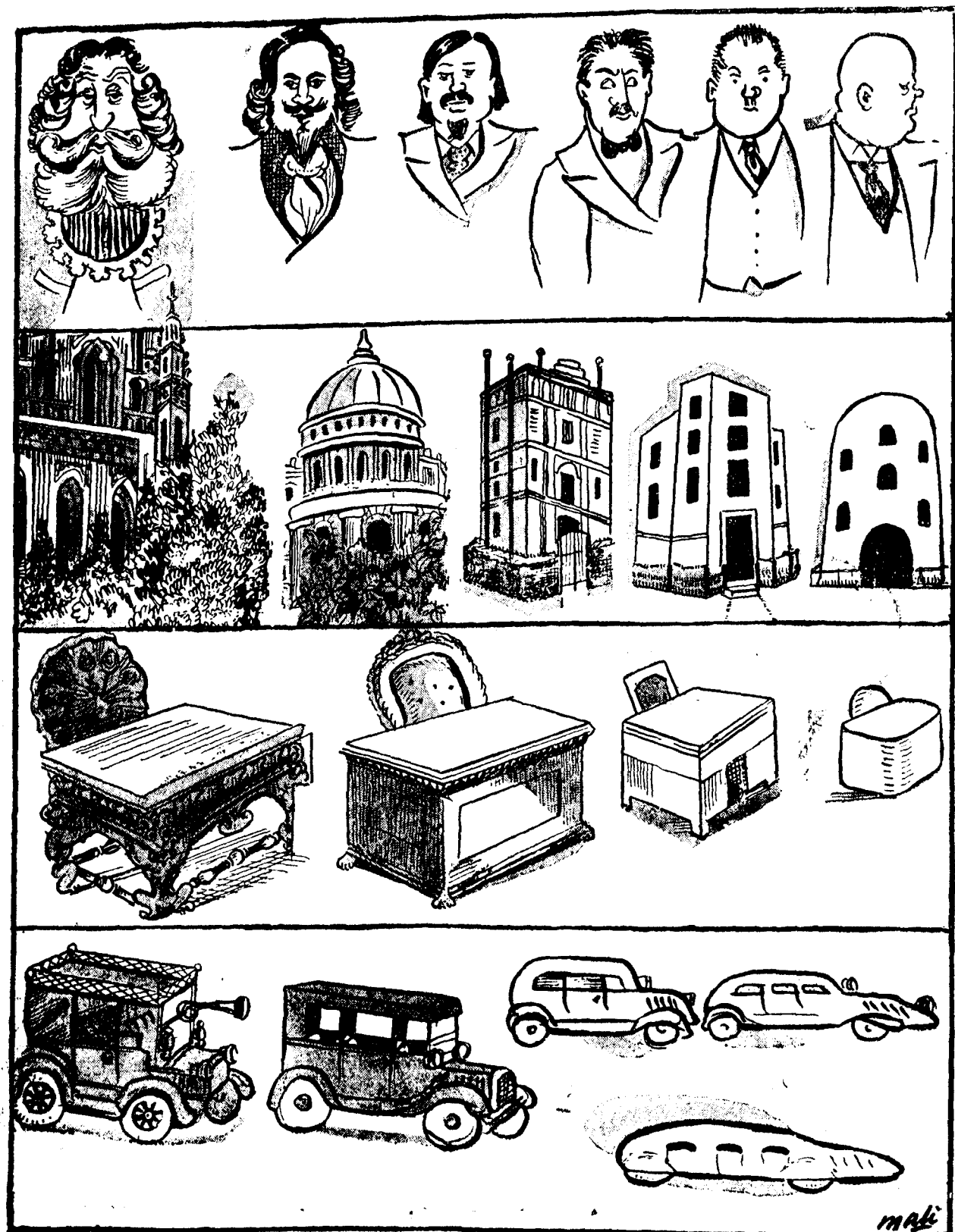
THE MERRY MAGAZINE

Vol. III

MADRAS, 9th MARCH, 1935.

No. 10

PROGRESSIVE CHANGE IN STYLE, IN MEN AND THINGS [As Mali sees it]



THE MIRROR OF LIFE



By Dewan Bahadur K. S. Ramaswami Sastri

Juvenile Education

I love juveniles and I love education and I love juvenile education and specially have educated juveniles but I hate the juvenile education of to-day. You may ask me if it is good form or a mark of true culture to hate. Dr. Johnson was a good hater. Nay, he said that he loved good haters. Was he in bad form? I am not referring to his face or his size. He really could not help all that. It seems that President Wilson wrote a poem when he was young. Presidents could be poets or rather could have been poets. Nay, Presidents must be poets, for both deal with numbers. To both of them numbers come. The poet lisps in numbers as the numbers come. The President lisps on numbers as the numbers come. It seems Wilson said that he did not mind his face as it was to others that it gave the jar. Was Dr. Johnson an uncultured man? So it is not wrong to hate. I am myself child-like. I love children and all child-like things. But I do not like what's childish and crude and immature. I am specially furious when no attempts are made to outgrow childishness and crudity and immaturity. That is the real defect of juvenile education in India.

Another fundamental defect of modern Indian education is that it is neither modern nor Indian. We are in India of the twentieth century. But our boys—and now our girls also—belong to Europe of the eighteenth or the nineteenth century. It is true, it is a

pity and it is a pity it is true. I fear that I am getting serious. The thing is getting on my nerves. The other day I was invited to see a school drama. A little boy came on the stage and said that he was Dick Whittington. Now I have got considerable respect for Dick Whittington who was the Mayor of London six times till London became sick of him and drowned him in the Thames. But I dislike his cat. I have got only one pet aversion in life. (Between us, I have many pet aversions, but I have only one each day.) I hate cats. They are so sleek and smug and self-satisfied. They have an unlimited fondness for milk and an absolutely unlimited vanity. Dick Whittington had to bring a cat and so I was prepared to eat my aversion (not the cat) and keep quiet. But the boy brought a celluloid English cat. I heard some such words as the cat and fiddle. I began to get mad. Everybody there began to get mad too. A cow was tethered outside the hall. It jumped over the moon. Or at least the boy said so. I rose in wrath and jumped over the benches and chairs and strode into the orchestra. The musicians spread into more directions than the music had done. I jumped on to the stage. There was murder in my mind. There was murder in my eyes. The boy was just telling everybody that he was Dick Whittington. When he saw me come tearing in like a no-confidence-motion incarnate, the Mayor fled. The mace fell on the ground. The Mayoral chair tottered. If the boy was the real Mayor, woe unto him. If he tried to rule me out of order I would have murdered him, at least to avoid rulings on points of order. But the boy fled

I rose in wrath and jumped over the benches and chairs.....

by the side-entrance and vanished, throwing the cat on the floor of the House. I believe that the Annual Report of the Adminis-



tration of the Madras Presidency has made a special reference to the fate of that cat at my hands.

That ended my attendance at school dramas. But still I had a sneaking fondness for prize distributions. They are so grand. Everybody is so happy except the non-prize-winners. I am a hardened blank-winner. I never had any prizes in school or in life. But I like to see others happy. I went in. The chairman had a gorgeous gold lace turban that was bobbing up and down, probably to make the diamond ear-rings flash in the electric light. Did I tell you about the true inwardness of gold lace turbans? I shall do so another day. The Chairman said:

"Gentlemen, the first item is prayer." Everybody stood up. Out came a prayer. The boy began:

"Where the mind is without fear and the head is held high."

I like Tagore. I have even inflicted on the world many books on Tagore. But why all that unreality? Cannot an Indian boy in South India pray in Sanskrit or Tamil? The boy's mind was in fear. The Headmaster was glaring at him so that the boy may awake into that heaven of freedom. The boy's head was not held high because he was afraid to meet the Headmaster's eyes. I had already achieved some notoriety as the murderer of Dick Whittington's cat. So whenever I stood up in a meeting the boys used to fly. The boy looked at me. He rolled his eyes from the Headmaster to me and from me to the Headmaster. He was about to pray that the world should not have narrow domestic walls. But the cruel walls were all around. There was no escape either from the Headmaster's birch or from my murderous hands. The audience looked bewildered. The Chairman looked up. Till then he had been asleep. He snatched a copy of the *Gitanjali* and shoved it into the boy's hands. Recitations are best done not from memory but from the book. At least that is the vogue to-day. Nowadays boys recite from a paper in their hands. It was not so in the old unregenerate days to which I had the misfortune to belong. But before the boy could read, he saw me. The boy began to feel like a Casabianca standing on the burning deck. I told the Chairman that I had a few observations to make. But how could any one speak before the prayer or before the Chairman's introductory speech. That was a point of law. The Chairman had not brought his volume yclept *The Law of Public Meetings*. He did not anticipate such a debacle in a prize distribution meeting. I was a lawyer too. I felt some qualms of the legal conscience. I said:

"I will withdraw if the boy will sing a Sanskrit or a Tamil prayer."

The Chairman fell in with my suggestion. He was in a hurry. He had to be at the Banqueting Hall at 8 p.m. The boy began *Suklambaradharam* and then got stuck in the mud. The car had skidded. I kept grim. None could prompt him as the others had forgotten too. The Chairman had recently attended the Tamil Lovers' Conference. He suggested a Tamil prayer. The boy began *Kulamtharum*. Then the car skidded again. There was none to give a helping hand. I got mad again. But this time I controlled myself and fled from there. I see that I have not written my promised essay on juvenile education. That wretched boy has spoiled a beautiful essay. Let it go.



Do You Make these Mistakes in ENGLISH?

MANY persons say "Did you hear from him to-day?" They should say "Have you heard from him to-day?" Still others say "between you and I" instead of "between you and me." It is astonishing how often "who" is used for "whom", and how frequently the simplest words are mispronounced.

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Name _____
Address _____
Age _____ Occupation _____

I haven't seen the little fellows called vitamins. My doctor has. But then he has trained eyes that can spot not only the vitamins in your system but the elusive beans as well. It seems he is able to see the cute little lads at play, and hear them too. The other day he listened-in to the music of my vitamins with the aid of his stethoscope and announced at the end of the performance that all wasn't well with them. The G's it appeared, were a bit blue about the gills.

Rather depressing news, I should say, for the G's are the avowed aristocrats—the *Sahebs*—of the Vitamin world. A constitution deficient in vitamin G will be more or less like the new Indian constitution with the Raja *Sahebs* left out of it. "A poor starter," as His Highness the Aga Khan might remark with a shudder.

Naturally, I was flabbergasted when the doctor told me what it meant to be below par in Vitamin G. "Giddiness, lassitude, loss of breath, lawyer's liver, banker's back and school-master's spleen," he explained, "are only a few of the ills which are directly or indirectly attributable to the absence of the required concentration of the precious G in the system."

I rolled my eyes despairingly.

"Now, now," said the medicine man, in his best bedside manner, "don't you go and get excited. It is bad for your B's."

I thought of the poor B's whom I had imperilled and rolled my eyes again.

"Now, now," said he, not quite in the bed-side manner this time, "now-now-now! Where are your red corpuscles? After all, you are lucky it is your G and not X. Had it been your X2, for instance, you would have had *advocatitis*!"

I stopped rolling my eyes: it was matter for joy. "I thank whatever gods may be," I cried, "for my unconquerable X2 (whatever it be)!"

The doctor ignored my poetry. "He-John's Super G Concentrate," he prescribed. "One tablespoonful, three times a day."

It is a wonderful kick-you-up, the Super G. Each fluid ounce contains:

Vitamin G Concentrate 200,000,000 international units (10,000 honest-to-goodness units)

Vitamin M3 Extract 100,000 international units (900 believe-me units)

Vitamin X2 21,000 He-John units (100 by-my-eye units)

etc. etc.
in a palatable base containing buck and beans.



VITAMINS

And it is advertised far and wide in the very modern way by men who know their psychology text-books by heart. Like this:

"Daddy, why is Sukku called 'Smiler'?"

"Because, Ramu, he always smiles, you know."

"What makes him smile, daddy?"

"Health, my boy, health!"

"What makes him healthy, dad?"

"Ah, I am glad you have asked me that, Ramu. Sukku's mother gives him a teaspoonful of He-John's Super G Concentrate every night at bed-time. It is full of vitamins and hormones and sunlight and oxygen and similar health-giving, smile-making principles."

Ramu (thoughtfully): "What is full of what, daddy?"

Daddy (pretending to be asleep): GR-R-r-r-r-r-r!

AND THE TABLOID TYPE:

"BG," said the colonel.

Meaning: *Blasted goose!*

"BG," said the doctor.

Meaning: *Buy G (He-John's Super)*

AND THE POETICAL TYPE:

"The year's at the spring,

And day's at the morn;

Morning's at seven;

The hill-side's dew-pearled;

The lark's on the wing;

The snail's on the thorn;

God's in his heaven—

All's right with the world!"

Sings the Super G bird.

AND THE POETICAL TABLOID:

Said Sir Jayendar Jabberjee

One day to Mr. Gandhi, "Ji,

You *must* take He-John's Super G."

I was, I should confess, taken in by the wiles of the doctor and the advertiser combined. But the proof of the vitamin (unlike that of the proverbial pudding) isn't in its eating, but in its effect on one's corporation. Following the doctor's advice I cut down my fodder to one-third its usual bulk and supplemented it with a tablespoonful of G, an ounce of bran, half-an-ounce of raw cabbage and two ounces of assorted roots. A month of it and I had to consult another doctor, who treated me for dyspepsia. "Don't be a born fool," he said "and go about the landscape munching cabbage and bulbous roots like a bilious quadruped. Eat what you like, man, and don't bother about the vitamins."

I took his sensible advice and put on twenty pounds in as many days. Not fat, mind you, but solid flesh!

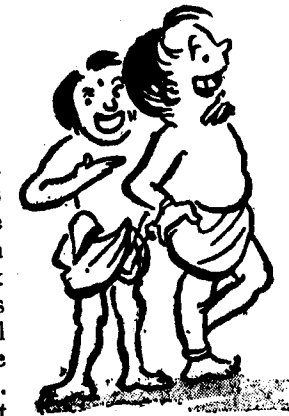
Never again shall I touch the vitamins. They are an over-rated stuff. And my own experiments serve to prove my theory that vitamins exist more in medical imagination than in raw cabbage.

All the best doctors, I am told, experiment on rats, for the rodents are very much like children (it seems), and what is good for the one is good for the other. To begin with I bought two large cages and two small rats of the same age and weight. I put Henry (Rat No. 1) in the red cage and Richard (Rat No. 2) in the blue one. Richard was fed twice a day (according to the instructions of the super G doctor) on carefully-weighed quantities of rice soaked in vitamin concentrate, raw cabbage, branmash and bulbous roots; while Henry was brought up in the orthodox way of bringing up children—three full meals and two good thrashings a day. After a period of six weeks Henry was found to weigh a little more than twice as much as Richard.

Richard: 4 ounces

Henry: 8.4 "

Rather convincing, but the doctor said that my experiments were futile as such experiments ought to be made on *white mice*. Anyway, Henry was all chin and tummy and blubber and flesh, while vitamin Richard was a mere bag of bones. And when they were brought together Henry went up to Richard and sniffed at a pariah dog sniffing in rats' language, "Bah! Vitamins! Bah! Rah!"



...and make faces at his grand-children.



INFERENCE:

(1) If you want your child to grow up into a healthy, wealthy and wise citizen, give him three large meals and two sound spankings a day.

(2) Vitamins are better left in bottles.

Like monkey glands. I know a man who once went through a full course of monkey-gland treatment because his doctor told him he could knock forty years

off his age. The old man was sixty-five and a widower, and he didn't mind dropping bang to twenty-five and starting life over again. But a full month's treatment left him still at sixty-five with the only difference that at times he felt quite full of vitamins and wanted to crack nuts and make faces at his grand-children.

Yet I fear the vitamins will have a long run before people are disillusioned and find at last that they have no use for sensitive little fellows who sneeze slightly and die the moment they are warmed.

Well, well, this lecture has got to stop here. "Too much of anything," as Solomon's favourite wife remarked in a stage-whisper, when she was almost stifled by the weight of her jewels, "is good for nothing."

(Do you agree? Then I shall rewrite your cheque—Ed.)

In The Next Issue

THE RED LINE By 'Embusque'
(Punctuality is the courtesy of kings and the satisfaction of office clerks. Our hero was no 'Late Latif')

SUBBU THE SPLENDID SALESMAN By 'Jippy'

A Short Story
(All about stream-lined bodies, automobilic and human salesmanship with sex-appeal)

SUSTI By John R. Chapman
A Dog Story

THE MAGICIAN AND HIS WAND By Ajit Krishna Basu
(A very old poem annotated by Mr. Basu with lucid comments)

THE DANCE OF DEATH By 'Akthar Singh'
(The story of an idiot's love and a courtesan's sacrifice)

WOMAN'S LOVE By R. Jagannathan
(The first instalment of a series of four family portraits. Love and Conventions.....)

Also
Our regular features.
A howl from start to finish!



By 'KEBI'

ONE of the scourges of Modern Madras is the gramophone. Gone are the days when it was an object of curiosity, the cherished treasure of of the 'haves' and the envy of the 'have-nots'. It is now the night-mare, the *bete noire*, of both the 'haves' and the 'have-nots'. Gone are also the days, when road-side tea-shops (well-known as *cha-shops*) used to be recognised by the sign-boards outside. Now a screeching gramophone is the land-mark. You hear an earthquake-like rumbling noise and rest assured that there is relief to a parched throat, hot tea in a dirty cup, but to be drunk from the saucer, to be *a la mode*. But the moment you enter the shop, you are greeted by a whine and your nerves are at once rattled, as if on the rack. And before you know it, you are out in the street, under the blazing sun, a dust wind playing upon your white shirt, trying its best to soil it, in keeping with the background, *sans* tea, *sans* one anna.

In the circumstances, do we pity the poor neighbour, I mean the man who lives next door to a tea-shop. Poor fellow, he must be a mere bundle of brittle nerves, which get disintegrated at the first touch.

But you, sponsors of the noise menace, let the following be *in terrorem* to you. Mrs. Shorter of great Missenden (Bucks County, England) was punished for what I consider a much lesser offence, to wit, keeping cockerels. Her neighbour, Mr. Eric Beach complained, at the County Court, that the crowing of Mrs. Shorter's cockerels was a nuisance, kept him awake at nights, and was detrimental to his health. He slept with his windows closed and covered with blankets, with wool in his ears. He tried every room in his house, but the noise penetrated everywhere and in the daytime he found himself dozing because of lack of sleep at night. Judge Hargreaves visited the locality in question and finally granted an injunction restraining Mrs. Shorter from keeping cockerels within 150 yards of Mr. Beach's property. The latter was also awarded £ 24 damages.

Fatal motor accidents are the rage now. Step on the gas and stop at the telegraph post. So, I thought I would be doing an act of humanity by passing on this free advice given by Sir Henry Curtis-Bennet, K. C., while criticising the police evidence in a case at the Sunderland Quarter session, to motorists of Madras, who are unfortunate, in escaping with their lives even after an accident.

"If you are ever stopped in your car by the police," said Sir Henry, "don't for goodness sake, touch the car in any way, or you will be said to be leaning on it for support. Don't sway at all when you are walking, or you will be said to be staggering under the influence of drink. Spring smartly to attention, standing upright outside the car, and say 'I am not guilty of whatever you are about to charge me with.'"

Sterling advice, worth its weight in sterling, if you know what I mean.

Well nigh a decade ago, Charlie Millar, an eccentric millionaire-lawyer of Toronto, left a bequest of £ 100,000 to the mother who bore the largest number of children between the years 1926 and 1936. Hitherto, Mrs. Mathew Kenny (aged 31) of England was hot favourite for the prize and was expected to win in a canter. For had she not been responsible for ten children in eight years and was she not expecting twins shortly? But Mme. Johanna Iordache, a young woman of the Rumanian village of Imotest, evidently heard of it only recently, and is making a bid for the bequest. A dank horse, till a few months back, she has made a great spurt and rounded Tattenham Corner in good style. She has given birth to six-children at a 'sitting' and is likely to follow it up with a break of an equally big size.

If there is any mother in South India, who has a better record,—and there must be a myriad—I would recommend her to get in touch with the Toronto authorities without delay, for 1936 is close upon us and there is £ 100,000 to be won for the country. If any of the authorities of the Indian Wireless Department happens to read this, I would request him to put this item of news 'on the air,' for I am sure, that when once India enters the lists, good-bye, Mrs. Rest-of-the-world!

The 'University Correspondent' of Cambridge publishes every year a series of 'Howlers.' Here are some from the collection:—

"What is a maiden speech?" "A pathetic speech."

"A mother is a female moth."

"A contour is a man that tours round the continent."

"A tumbler is a small glass bucket or vessel from which beer tumbles down the throat."

"The Little Entente is a small province in France which remained neutral throughout the Great War. It is now called Belgium."

"Skyscrapers are men who study the stars."



Have you heard of this one?

"A new play is called the *Leveller*. We hope it doesn't bring down the house."

Force of Habit:

And then there was the sick clerk who went to a doctor, and upon being given the thermometer put it behind his ear.

Misunderstood:

"You would hardly believe it," said the local Don Juan, "but I have never kissed a single woman in my life."

"But then, didn't any of the husbands object?" asked a cynical listener.

Wisdom:

And talking of proposing, do you know of the man who bought his girl's father the latest copy of the *Merry Magazine* before asking his permission for his daughter's hand?

New Angle on Love:

I fell in love with my husband, says a famous boxer's wife, as soon as I saw his first fight. Love at first fight.

Yes, Why can't They?

A river in North Bihar has flooded a village so often that the inhabitants can think of doing nothing but curse it. Well, why can't they dam it?

Devilish Pun:

More than a hundred unemployed men were recently set to work in a silk factory near Canton. Satin will find work for idle hands to do.

A juggler has taken up cricket and so far he has shone as a bowler. We are not surprised; hat-tricks have always been his speciality.

Confessions of a latter-day Don Juan:

She was a tawny gypsy girl,
Her eyes were flaming black, oh yers;
I asked her if she would come with me—
And now my eye's BLACKER than hers.

Oh she was a tawny gypsy girl
Her hair was thick and raven-rare:
I asked her if I might hold her hand—
Now my ear's thicker than her hair.

Oh lovely was this gypsy girl!
Her hands were soft like nap:
But when I tried to snatch a kiss,
My god; how she could slap;

Breezy Bridge:

"Can we really tell whether a man is fortunate merely by a look at his hand?" asks a correspondent. Of course; you have only to make sure if there are four aces in it.

Yes:

How many hours should a man sleep? asks a correspondent. Well, it all depends on how old his baby is.

Truth:

"People with sour tempers generally suffer from insomnia," a doctor tells us. Uneasy lies the head that wears a scowl.

THE EDITOR'S COLUMN

I am glad to announce that 'Jippy' will be among us soon—in fact, next week. Ever since 'Laughing Leela', 'Light-house Laxman' and 'The Big Adventure', he has been hibernating, heartlessly ignoring our importunities for more. From his sojourn in the country during which time he lived among daffodils and cows—I am not sure he left the city at all, but, all the same, I like to pretend he lived in the midst of flowers and cows for the sake of the pastoral effect—I say after this temporary retirement he has emerged, his creative powers not impaired but accentuated. His latest is entitled 'Subbu, the splendid Salesman,' a story, as I have announced elsewhere, which deals with stream-lined bodies and sex-appeal in mechanical engineering. I am sure readers would like 'Jippy's' story.

This week I have an entirely original, at the same time amusing, puzzle for you. It is called 'Zeugma' puzzle. Zeugma as you know, is a figure of speech in which a verb or adjective does duty with two nouns. An example is 'To cultivate the estate and matrimony', cf Goldsmith's *Citizen of the World*. The details of the puzzle will be found on page 41.

Another example of zeugma is myself. I am the poor verb or adjective (not the first time someone has called me an adjective) and I have to do duty with two nouns, one the many-headed and the manier-moneyed multitude; i.e. yourselves, dear readers, and the other an inveterate pest, the staff poet. I don't know whether I can reconcile the two nouns. Well if you like you can skip this effusion of the staff poet:—

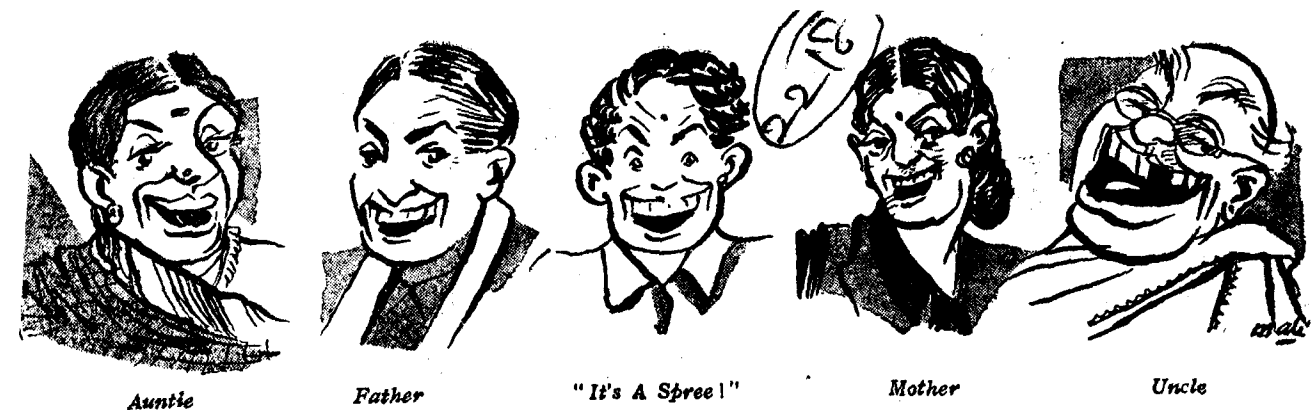
A buffoon bemoans:—

I wandered lonely as a clown,
To destroy all worry and misery;
But nowhere found I a single frown:
For all had a copy of the Merry.

—Editor.

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FUN FOR ALL THE FAMILY

Rhymers.

"Hey diddle diddle, the stamp's in the middle," wrote a wit below the postage stamp which he placed on the flap of the envelope.

"Diddle dum dey, there's 3d. to pay," added a facetious postal clerk as he surcharged the letter.

Every Little Helps.

Boy: (to porter lifting heavy trunk): "Can I help you?"

Porter: "What could you do?"

Boy: "I could grunt, while you lift."

Once Bitten.

Smythe, on arriving at the lodgings he had engaged by post, surveyed the bedroom and noted the absence of a wash-stand.

"And where," he asked in dignified tones, "do I perform my ablutions?"

"If it's a new trick," replied the landlady sharply, "you'll not do it in these rooms. I had two chairs busted by a bloomin' acrobat last week."

Obvious.

First Man: "If I were you, I should have more sense!"

Second Man: "Of course you would!"

Epitaph.

On a moss-grown tombstone was found the following:

"Here lies my wife, Samantha Proctor,
Who ketched a cold and wouldn't doctor.
She couldn't stay, she had to go—
Praise God from whom all blessings flow."

A Chip of the Old Block!

The teacher was having her trials, and finally wrote to the mother: "Your son is the brightest boy in my class, but is also the most mischievous. What shall I do?"

The reply came in due course: "Do as you please. I am having my troubles with his father."

You can have it!

The time had come to dish up the rations, and in an Irish regiment the quartermaster and his assistant had been portioning them out in preparation for distribution.

The assistant turned to the quartermaster and with a twinkle in his eye said: "Av ye plaze, sorr, there's a loaf short. Who'll I give it to?"

"Keep it yourself, Mike," replied the quartermaster.

Proof.

Postman: "Here's a letter for you, Mick; with a black border, too!"

Mick: "Alas, my poor brother is dead!"

"How do you know? You haven't read it yet."

"No, but I know his hand-writing."

Heard in Court.

Counsel: My second point is—

Judge:—I hope your second point will be better than the first.

Counsel:—At any rate, my lord, I hope your lordship will decide it better.

Big Business.

"Busy? I should think we are—why, our office spends forty pounds a year on ink alone."

"Pshaw! That's a trifle! We save that sum each year by omitting the crosses to the t's and the dots to the i's!"



THE CONTROL OF CROSS-WORDS

By H. C. Stochie

I AM not referring to those types of 'Cross Words', second cousins to 'Cuss Words', which are the common heritage of humanity from babbling boyhood to second childhood. Those have been dealt out to us in such wasteful, wilful and sinful prodigality, mainly by the Croesus owners of the commodity,—the Shift bosses, Regimental Sergeant-majors, untipped Cabbies, retired Indian Army Colonels with curry-powdered livers,—that we have come to class them with the inevitables of life. Each of the millionaire-owners of this type of 'Cross Word' has immense reserve stocks of his own special brand of 'Cuss Words'; and, unlike the dollar variety of millionaire, they are always ready to share these out all too liberally.

The 'Cross Words' I refer to are those crazy-china curiosities, those mosaics in black and white, which hit us in the eye from every penny, two penny, six penny and twenty penny paper published in the

British Isles, Australia, India and as far as I know, Dahomey and Abyssinia.

It is surely time that the T. U. C., or Toc. H., or G. B. S. or D. O. R. A., or Tunney, or Dempsey and Carnera combined, compelled our legislators to appoint a Bolshie Commission to inquire into the financial, psychological, legal (and all the other 'al') aspects of this common craze of the century; and to make sure that those black and white squares do not hold more black than white, so far as the future of the British race is concerned.

They are supposed to teach our children general knowledge in such a pleasant and profitable manner,—Don't cher know!

Can anyone reasonably imagine, that the acquisition of general knowledge requires Jones Major to know, who Cai-rowed, Ne-rowed or Phai-rowed Anthony down

the Nile. Nor is it essential for his future welfare, that Jones Minor should discover that dumb-bells are rung for dinner by dumb waiters; and surely Jones Minimus would in the ordinary course of events have come to know, that pay-bills have no connection with pebbles, the latter being as common as Shes, Sheiks and Sharks on the sea-shore at Brighton, Margate or Bournemouth, while the former can only be procured with the greatest difficulty once a week and no more; and that even then a whole, intact specimen is a rarity, because of a loathsome boring insect, the In-cum-tacks-kol-lector, which has a nasty habit of devouring a large portion of it, before it reaches one.

Acquisition of general knowledge! Forsooth! The amount, which long-suffering British parents spend annually on the acquisition of general knowledge by the rising aspirants to 'Cross Word' fame (and prizes), is out of all proportion to the wisdom gained.

Is it fair of Government to allow the hard-earned wages of the British working man to be frittered away on 'Saxford Pronouncing Dictionaries' (one for each child in the house, to keep the darlings from scrapping), 'Thompson and Puffman's Atlases' (one for each hopeful, for the same reason), 'Look inside for nothing' by Chappie Charlin in twenty-nine and a half volumes and bought on the weekly instalment system, 'Difficult English and Yiddish words, spelt backwards' by Jen Bhonson, Mythologies of ancient countries, including Hudibras, Confusion-on-us, Tarzan, etc?

Acquisition of general knowledge! Forsooth! At the expense of the vitality and virility of the British Bull-dog breed! Take a concrete and pathetic example—A father returns home to a frugal supper of roast-beef, kippers, bread, cheese and a full quart of beer after a hard day's labour, trying to dodge the eye of the boss for four long hours; and no sooner does he sit down to his meal with his pet political paper, *The News of the Universe*, conveniently propped up in front by the all-too-quickly depleted quart bottle, than Sam wants to know, 'Who first painted Greenland green?'

"How many letters?" snaps the victimised parent viciously.

"Twelve," replies his son and heir.

"What are the first and last letters?" inquires the patient British *pater-familias*.

"P and L," replies Sam.

"Popocatapetal," ventures the fond father, sighing with relief for he knows that he is free of Sam for at least half-an-hour, while that worthy youth is trying desperately to mosaic Popocatapetal in somehow. Half an hour's respite? Tell it to the Horse-marines! Blasted are his hopes! Shattered are his dreams! Dick is waiting to be told the exact and correct meaning of the weird word 'Mandrake'! Somewhere from the recesses of that flagellated brain comes the recollection of a *Man-Drake*, who fought somebody, somewhere, at some old time in the world's history; so with a mighty wave of the over-tried brain, he suggests 'Admiral'. Dick, thinking it admirable, is content to spend a valuable thirty minutes trying to manipulate it.

No sooner is he deeply engrossed in a rather gross, sensational and (un)illuminating article than he

is brought down to earth by Polly megaphoning into his bad ear, (the one the Shift boss smacked the day previous), and demanding an instant reply, as to which king had died of indigestion after swallowing some germs named 'lampreys'. It is useless shouting back 'Honolulu' in that decisive, incisive, cutting, final manner; for 'Honolulu' does not fit in with 'White Elephant', which cuts vertically across it, and also because the fifth letter should be an 'E'. Eventually, it is only by a mighty appeal to his paternal sense of forbearance and with a serious consumption of valuable grey matter that he managed to wriggle out of the difficulty by suggesting 'Kaiser Bill'.

Shall I go on? There is surely no need to. Now tell me all ye Prime Ministers, Home Secretaries and (large) belted and (round) waisted Aldermen, are our natural resources to be wasted on dictionaries and other musty tomes, which the cockchafters, silver-fishes, mildew and crickets devour so greedily? Tell me, is the great mass of England's fatherhood to have their hard-earned rest denied them? (If anyone is inclined to doubt the 'Hard-earned' part of it, just let him try dodging the eye of the day- (leave alone the night-) boss for an hour's nap). Is the very limited stock of grey matter of the British Democracy to be reduced to a minus quantity by a never-ceasing deluge of useless questions from six to eight P. M. for six evenings in the week, simply because Sammy and Polly and Jammy and Dolly have set their little hearts on winning a wretched Guinea, which the other half million readers of the *Midnight Illustrated* are also possibly after? Is the normal average span of an Englishman's life to be reduced, because the *Evening Mystic* or the "Under the waves Cross-word Syndicate" wish to play the 'Get-rich-quick' game by giving a guinea prize from the quarter million shillings they scoop in?

This brings us to another aspect of the 'Cross Word' business, which is sorely in need of efficient control. Many of these 'Cross Word' companies and syndicates seem to be working on nothing more than a 'Set a rat to catch a cat' basis; and some of them at least seem to be organised by sharpers, who have learnt their trade among the 'Tap-your-pockets-anyhow' fraternity of Chicago. I know a case in which the Board of Directors got away with quite a decent sum. I have good reason to remember it, for I was one of those, who played the part of worm to that special coterie of early birds. The organiser of that particular brood had received the 'Order of the boot' from a certain firm. He and another kindred spirit,—an evil one evidently,—fell back on the Cross-Word stunt as a means of livelihood. They had no address, but a post-box number was quoted. A few respectable firms were cajoled into allowing collecting boxes, into which you dropped your solution and your fee, to be placed in a prominent position in their premises, and this fact was largely advertised. It was a cunning trap, for even an Aberdeen pawn-broker might have been tempted to risk a bawbee or two, in order to win five or six hundred times as much, when firms of repute like Butter Scott & Co. and Granite Bros. Ltd., were in some way connected with it. Not till the prize list failed to materialise, did we materially realise that our precious bawbees had disappeared with the directors! Butter Scott & Co., and Granite Bros. Ltd. were of course horrified, that they

had been induced to take a hand in the mulcting of their own clients, and—Oh, bitter thought—had done it without re-couping a penny of profit themselves.

We may control Cross-words,—please note that I am careful enough to use the word 'may',—but we can never now hope to suppress or eradicate them entirely. The budding M.P., who attempted to introduce the abolition of this craze into his campaign programme, would have a rotten (egg) time of it, and perhaps find himself unseated by a red-haired, red-shirted, red-hearted Cave-man or Bolshie. (Pardon my ignorance, if there does happen to be a shade of difference between these two).

These magic squares are exercising their hypnotic power over all countries, colours, creeds and castes. I remember, once travelling in an out-of-the-way district in India, noted more for its excellent brand of man-eating tigers than anything else. In the same motor bus was an official of the H..... State. Suddenly from the capacious pockets of his long, home-spun Swadeshi coat he produced a ragged piece of paper, which had probably served as a wrapping for rice or lentils in a village grocery. Layers of grease and yellow curry-stains did not however conceal the fact that it was a fragment from a famous English news-paper, about six months old; but the one and only thing, which counted with my newly-found acquaintance, was the fact that it contained, concealed beneath the curry stains and greasy thumb-impressions, a CROSS-WORD PUZZLE! It was astonishing to see him—a University man with a string of degrees and diplomas tacked on to his name—spreading that scrap of dirty paper lovingly on his knee and smoothing out the creases tenderly, just as if it had been a ten-pound note or a personal letter from Gandhiji himself. He very kindly invited me to join him in an attempt at deciphering those ancient 'Clues Across' and 'Clues Down', though the time-limit for prizes had expired aeons ago.

There indeed, in those wilds, was a genuine lover. To him that modern, if not merry, pastime which is ousting Draughts, Halmas, Patience and Charades from our homes, was more absorbing than the bumps of the lorry on that crude unmetalled road, the lurking man-eaters and even the flies and filth of the villages, which we passed through. Not for a prize, not for the honour and glory of seeing his name in the also-ran list

of the *Spittlewood* and *Spitfire Mag.* was that man devoting his B.A., B.Sc., B.E. talents. To him the only thing that mattered in life was the filling up of those one hundred and forty-four black and white squares on a pre-historic scrap of paper; and I—so great is the hypnotic power of the magic mosaic—joined in. A feeling of mosaic-masonic brotherhood seemed to steal over us, and had not fate willed otherwise, I might have been today a prosperous contractor with constructional contracts being poured into my lap by my grateful engineer acquaintance of that tiger-infested country road.

The control of 'Cross Words' will soon be too large a problem for individual governments to tackle. If anything is to be done, let the League of Nations try its 'prentice hand at it. If they are to be controlled, the job must be thoroughly and systematically carried out. In order to shield, conserve and preserve the nerves of the various races of the earth, no children under thirty should be allowed to indulge in them. National and International Boards of Control would have to be established. Universities with specialist professors in carpet-slippers, would set all puzzles for the local rags (black, red or yellow) in Esperanto; learned and honest synods with De Valera & Co., should examine the solutions, and possibly Carnera or Sharkey might consent to distribute the prizes.

Correspondence Schools would specialise in them, and 'Cross Word' degrees would by Royal Letters Patent be tacked on to our names. Fat appointments in the Educational Department and in the Civil Service could be reserved for 'Cross-Word' wranglers.

The winners of International competitions would be feted and feasted at the Guildhall, and cuts in the salaries of Members of Parliament could be introduced in order that these stars should be suitably, if not remuneratively, rewarded with free board and residence at Dartmoor or Ellis (commonly known as Devil's) Island. All money prizes would have to be guaranteed and fully covered by deposits in the Soviet banks and would have to be specially insured against the inroads of that awful, all-devouring varmint, the In-cum-tacks-collector. A superior super-tax could be utilized to introduce 'Cross Word' puzzles among the primitive races inhabiting the Takla-Makan Desert, the Beriberi Mountains, Dublin on the Liffey and Berlin on the Spree.

Keep this copy of The Merry Magazine.

It may bring you a Prize.

Lecture-Hall Geometry

FOR months and months it was freely rumoured that the world-famous mathematician, Prof. Unamu Squirrell, Head of the Mathematical Department of the Cowline University, was at work on a new geometry, that might well revolutionise our very basic conceptions of life and throw over-board the primitive geometries of Euclid, Riemann and Labatchevsky. But even the wildest speculators never bargained for so stupendously original—and yet, strangely enough, human—a scientific document as that, which, Prof. Squirrell read before the World Mathematicians in Confederation at Geneva on July 12th, 1977.

We cannot say that the world yet realises the great service Prof. Squirrell has done to humanity by clarifying the intricacies of 'Lecture Hall Geometry'. The thesis is no doubt highly abstruse and any popular exposition cannot adequately give an idea of the immensity of the Professor's achievement. Yet we might try—and if we should fail, what then? Better succumb in grappling with a noble cause than lead a life of unworthy indolence!

What is 'Lecture-Hall Geometry'? It is the geometry of the lecture-hall—of the lecture, the lecturer, and of the hall itself.

Definitions: A lecture-hall is a place where a lecture is delivered.

A lecture is an attempt at giving expression to one's ideas: it is positive or negative according as it is articulate or otherwise.

A lecturer is a being, who attempts a lecture.

The audience is the resistance to a lecture: and the resistance of a particular audience varies directly as the number of individuals present, inversely as the integral of the ages of all the individuals present, and neutrally as regards the dimensions of the hall.

Other definitions will be explained as we proceed in our studies. Prof. Squirrell divides his geometry into two stages: the *restricted*, where all facts and figures are taken from college life, and the *universal*, where no such limitations to the study are imposed. The restricted geometry will therefore be taken up first here.

Professor Squirrell's first theorem in the restricted geometry is the now famous Cyclic Triangle Theorem.

"The entities,—lecturer, male students and female students,—arrange themselves into cyclic triangle sight patterns." Of course the theorem is tersely worded. But we might explain it as follows:

"In any lecture-hall, there are three entities—the lecturer, (of either sex, but mostly male), the boys and the girls. When the lecture is going on, who is looking at whom and how and why? This problem is clarified in the theorem under consideration. What happens is that a triangle sight pattern is formed, having the three

entities for vertices. More: the triangle is cyclic, i.e. (say) lecturer is looking at the boys, boys at the girls, and the girls at the lecturer."

I shall summarise Prof. Squirrell's proof of this elemental theorem, shorn of all equations in the Calculus of Tensors:—

"The theorem can be almost called the Pythagoras theorem of the new geometry. Well, can the lecturer look at the girls and lecture? The thing is not possible and hence he should look at the boys and lecture. The boys naturally do not wish to meet the stare of the lecturer and to evade it, look in the direction of the girls; and the latter, similarly, to evade the stare of the boys, are compelled to look at the lecturer. Thus the formation of the cyclic triangle sight patterns is due to the sheer gravitation of human understanding. Q.E.D."

Under this major theorem there are a number of corollaries:

1. In a class composed of equal number of boy and girl students, the triangle sight pattern will be isosceles.

This is clearly self-evident.

2. In a class composed of unequal number of boy and girl students, the greater number contains a greater angle: and conversely.

This follows more or less from the above.

3. The vertex containing the greater angle, constitutes the major resistance to the lecture.

Proof:—Resistance varies directly as the number of individuals present; and by converse of cor. above, we know that the greater angle must constitute the greater number; and certainly the greater number should give rise to the major resistance. Q.E.D.

4. The lecturer must ever occupy the acute angled vertex.

It must not be supposed that Prof. Squirrell's epoch-making thesis is purely geometrical in scope. Nothing can be further from the truth. For instance, I give below for my reader's immediate edification the Squirrell Laws of College Thermodynamics:—

1. Every lecture continues to be delivered or be interrupted by the 'stamping' resistance of students, unless compelled to change that state by the termination of the period or the appearance of a distinguished visitor.

(N.B. 'Stamping' is the phenomenon of the resistance put up by the audience in the College Lecture Halls.)

2. The thermic equilibrium in a lecture is maintained by the positive aspect of the lecturer and the negative aspect of the audience's resistance.

This is an intricately annoying law and Prof. Squirrell is obliged to use Maxwell's electro-magnetic



equations, slightly modified, to explain the processes under this law. The meaning, however, can be explained thus: if a lecture should be successful, as we vulgarly say, it depends on two factors—the articulateness of the lecturer (positive aspect, the Law says) and the audience's willingness to think of other things, to look out of the window, even to sleep, rather than to stamp and disturb the lecture.

3. To every lecture there is always an equal and opposite resistance; and thus is the thermal equilibrium maintained.

This Law needs no less than 189 equations to be fully mathematically elaborated. The ignorant may think that this law goes against law 2; not at all. What it means is that the lecturer at his most positive will just neutralise the audience at their most negative. What if the lecturer be negative, *i.e.* if he be inarticulate? The thermal equilibrium is not disturbed at all—so perfect is His Divine System. Some of the audience begin to speak and become lecturers in fact, and inner cross-currents of positive and negative elements of forces are produced and they finally harmonise in a superior thermal equilibrium.

The Wrong Number

By Leslie Latter

IT was all Raji's fault. At least mostly her fault. Personally I dislike Table-Tennis, but since she heard it was good for slimming I have had to play every night during the hot weather.

Apparently, however, my form—at the game, I mean—was not good enough for promoting rapid attrition of adipose tissue, so she found a club and sent me off to see the secretary.

"Don't forget," she called down from the verandah. "It is No. 1. The Avenue."

The Avenue was jolly dark, but I saw that the first bungalow on the right was No. 2. So I turned in at the first gate on the left up a long drive. The place seemed rather swanky.

A servant opened the door, and on my asking for the secretary, ushered me into a cosy room, provided with a most sumptuous buffet.

I was examining the labels on the champagne, when a most distinguished chappie in full evening kit rolled in.

"Good evening, Mr.—er—," he said.

"Mudaliar," said I. "You got my wife's telephone message, I presume."

"No. As a matter of fact I have only just got up," he replied.

Shades of Bohemia! I thought. A man gets up at 8-30 p.m. and puts on his tails to play ping-pong.

"I suppose," he went on, "you want me to fix you up with a good game now and then."

"That's the great idea," I replied, "and if I could be allowed in here occasionally, I should be grateful."

He caught my eye on the buffet, and right jovially responded, "my dear fellow, that's just what we want. Every one jolly is our motto."

"And the subscription?" I queried wonderingly.

"Oh, nothing like that, my dear sir. We are only too glad to get the right people together for a game. When you win, you can leave a little *douceur* for the servants, if you like."

In an addenda to his thesis, Prof. Squirrell posited the question: "What light the 'Lecture Hall Geometry' throws on the constitution of the Universe?" The celebrated mathematician attempted an answer in the following terms: "It is too early to say one way or the other. Much more research work—particularly in the field of the inverted theory of contrapositive functions of the seventh thermal power—has to be done before we can come within measurable distance of the mysteries of the Macracosm. But even at this early stage we can hazard a guess. What if the vast Universe itself were a Lecture Hall—and the Absolute, the cosmically evolved lecturer, and the planets and the suns and stars and the nebulae but so many items in the audience? It seems not very improbable. Already we have found many of our thermic equations applicable to the motions of the heavenly bodies. We have heard from our distant forefathers of a phenomenon called the Music of the Spheres. Can we not say that the music is no figment of the imagination but only the cosmic lecture delivered by the ultimate cosmic dictator in the cosmic lecture hall? The universe is a cosmic Talkie House: that may very well be the final conclusion of Science."

I thought there must be a catch somewhere. Still the chances of my ever winning were very remote.

"I suppose your tables are pretty good," I suggested with all the superiority I could summon.

"We get the regulation ones straight from France," he replied condescendingly. "You need have no fear, they are exact to a thousandth's of an inch. We have plenty of chips too."

"I expect you have," I said sympathetically, thinking of the one Raji had knocked out of the side-board on Saturday.

"And once the ball goes on the floor we never use it again," he added.

Well, I mean to say, that decided it. No subscription. Superb refreshments. No hunting for balls on the floor. No wonder the game was getting popular.

"By the way, Mudaliar, where have you been playing lately?"

"Oh, we have got a small table at home, and we get a lot of games at the Y.M.C.A."

"Your secretary must be a very broad-minded man."

"Oh," said I, "he allows whist drives and dancing also."

"Well, you come along about 9.30. to-morrow evening, and I'll see that you both get a better game than at the Y.M.C.A."

"What about dress?"

"Well, most people turn up in evening dress, but come just as you like for your first night."

Raji said I had been drinking at the club. It all sounded so unreal when I related my experiences to her. Anyhow, we decided to go in our best tennis togs, just to be out of the common.

We were.

We arrived to be ushered into the midst of a select circle round a roulette table.

EXAMINATION TIPS

BY "TIRUMALAI NALLAN"

Letter to me from my nephew.

MY DEAR UNCLE,

MY examination is next week. I am told by my mother that you passed every one of your examinations in your second attempt. I want you to tell me how you did that. Perhaps you are clever; in that case, your advice to me will not be useful, because you can't make a dull boy like me pass the examination by asking me to do this and that. Examination passers are born and not made, I suppose.

Yours affectionately,
KUNJAN.

My reply to the Letter.

MY DEAR KUNJAN,

I received your letter. You are quite right in saying I am clever; that is what I have always thought myself, though those envious mothers of 'third-attempt-passers' used to say disparaging things about my mental powers.

Yes, I will give you advice. The main thing about the examination is how you answer the questions. Be quite clear about that. Handwriting counts for seventy-five per cent of the success. You know what a beautiful hand I write; well, really it isn't so good as it used to be; since I had those itches in the palm, my handwriting has not been what it was.

Let me advise you point by point.

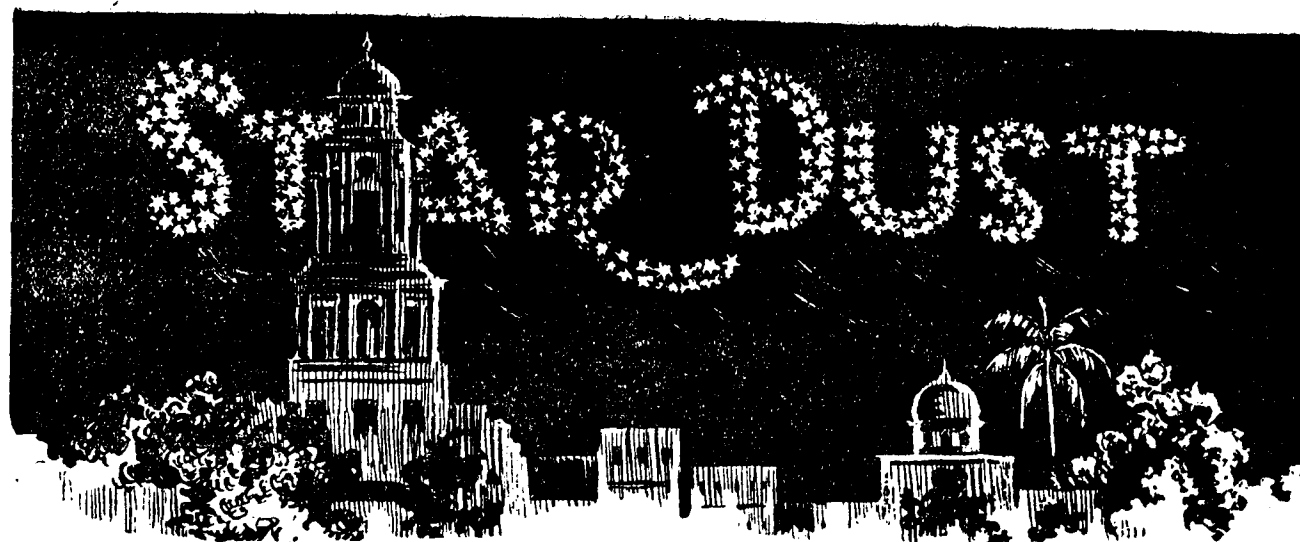
When you enter the Examination Hall, chant *Sri Rama Jayam*; say it at least a hundred times before you look at the question paper. In these cursed modern times the power of prayer is not properly understood. In fact I got 42% in Logic, that is, two marks more than in the other subjects in my Inter-exam., only because I did 150 instead of the usual 100 *Sri Rama Jaya-mantras*. Observe a respectful attitude towards the hall supervisors. You may think they have nothing to do with the correction of the answer papers; but you don't know. The University, I hear confidentially, sends one or two examiners as supervisors to make note of the demeanour of the candidates. Even if the University doesn't do it, how do you know if a supervisor may not be a relation of the examiner? So, say 'Good morning' to any supervisor who may be near you. Take your seat and don't talk with the other candidates. The mind is distracted by conversation with people. You must conserve all your mental powers for the grand effort. As soon as you are given the question paper, say *Sarvam Jayam* and *Appane! ellam oon thiru vilaiyadal* (O Lord! all are Thy deeds). After that, go through the paper very carefully; do it twice; next, go through it again word by word and finally start from the last question and go upwards—10, 9, 8, 7, and so on. You see, this procedure eliminates the possibility of any omission.

Then put the holy mark of *Vinayaka (Pilliar Sushi)* at the top of the first page of your answer paper and begin to write your answers. You must be careful as to the questions you answer first. Don't try to answer questions which strike you as easy. There is always a catch in such questions. So leave them alone and concentrate on questions which are obviously very hard. I would even go to the length of saying: "Attempt to answer questions which you don't understand at all." It is usually said that you should try first, questions which you are well equipped to answer. This is a fallacy. Don't you fall a prey to it. Nowadays, the paper is valued as a whole. At the time the mark is given, the answer the examiner will have just finished reading, will decide your fate; also, a tame ending is worse than a tame beginning for, in the former case the examiner will be disappointed. Disappointment is one of the most powerful feelings in psychology; so, start with your bad answers and finish with your best answers. The examiner may begin languidly but he will be interested as he goes on reading. Instead of the dullard which your initial answers suggest, he knows you are a bright fellow—as the later answers show. The zeal of a convert, you know, is proverbial.

The next point: when anybody asks you how you did, don't say, "Oh, pretty well", say, "Splendid, I never expected I could do so well; a sort of inspiration, I suppose." You see that is a kind of auto-suggestion. Who knows that this auto-suggestion may not be communicated to the examiner—by telepathy?

With best wishes for your success,

Yours very affectionately, (Sd.) TIRUMALAI NALLAN.



Screen Kisses and The Stars

A screen love scene is constructed with but one idea in mind: To give the audience, pining for the synthetic intoxication, a real good thrill.

Rudolph Valentino, for instance, brings Vilma Banky, his screen sweetheart, to a cafe.

A cocktail or two, a dash of Tango, and Valentino wheels his girl to a shady bower.

There, beneath a smiling Moon, the lovers disport themselves, leaving the emotionally excited section of the audience 'a-tear' and the more subdued section 'a-sigh'. There is yet another section which reacts with resounding echoes to the lovers' kisses.

But how do the actors themselves feel about it? Pretty embarrassed, naturally; especially considering that a dozen pairs of eyes are intently watching the lovers in embrace. Even the most seasoned actors are visibly embarrassed when they have to do a 'sizzling' love scene. As for those who are new to the picture-game, their feelings would fill a book.

Franchot Tone's first love scene with Joan Crawford took place under a bed; they were supposed to be chasing a cockroach. This was enough to make it a trial to Franchot; the wise-cracking comments of those on the set didn't serve to put him at ease. He fled at the end of the scene, sweating all over.

Sometimes it happens that players who have never met before, find themselves thrust into a love scene without even the formality of an introduction. Lew Ayres' first love scene was with Garbo, in his first picture. He was not important enough to be introduced to her. He was merely told to wait on a dark balcony and, when he saw her enter the room, to rush in, grab her in his arms and kiss her. Well, Lew managed somehow to get his arms about her, but he couldn't summon courage enough to kiss her. Finally, Garbo took him by the hand and led him across the set where the director was standing. "Please..... will you introduce me to this boy," she said, "so he won't feel strange about kissing me?"

Suppose, when Clark Gable bent over to kiss a Star, he laughed in her face!

That's what he did to Helen Hayes when she played with him in *The White Sister*. Helen imagined that it had suddenly struck him as amusing to have to kiss a face like hers. She was feeling so humiliated that it was all she could do to go on with the scene.

When she left the set that night she was determined to bow out of the picture. But a very penitent Gable broke down next morning and admitted it was a case of stage-fright, playing a love scene with such an accomplished actress.

Lupe Velez and Ramon Novarro were making *The Laughing Boy*. There were about two thousand Navajo Indians on the set. The Navajo love technique does not include kissing. When Ramon took Lupe in his arms and gave her a passionate kiss, the Navajo Indians were greatly puzzled.

"Why is he biting the girl?" they asked in consternation. No explanation would placate them. "Good Navajo does not bite the girl he loves!" the chief insisted and quite obviously disapproved of the kiss idea. The rest of the crowd shook their heads indignantly. That spelt danger. The director said 'CUT' and that was the one love scene where there were no re-takes.

Love scenes *a la* Lubitsch are always gay and amusing.

He would say to Maurice Chevalier and Jeanette MacDonald: "Now I want you to make this scene very, very hot!" Whereupon they start clowning and give him a strangle-hold that would convulse everybody with laughter.

"Ugh! That sizzles!" says Lubitsch, pretending to be greatly shocked, "chill it a bit." The funny thing about Jeanette is that she has a sensitive nose: she sneezes when it is cold; she sneezes when it is hot. It invariably happens that when everything is set for the love scene and the order has been given to "turn'em over," she starts sneezing.

"How can I be ro-o-man-thic when you are constantly sneezing in my face?" Maurice complains.

But, do the two people playing a love scene let their emotions run riot and feel the scene too deeply themselves? Most certainly not. If they did, they would get the thrill and the audience would get cheated. In short, they look hot, you keep cool!

LITERATOR IN EXCELSIS

By 'Pandit Vittalbai Puri'



II. Alma Mater

It is really very needless to dwell and soujourn on the initial quinquinum of my self auto biography for who knows not babies? as Mr. Carl Laemelle Jr. says. Therefore more than amply suffice when I say that what with my aunties croonings and kissings and pets and sweetmeats such as synonymous with *laddu filebi* chocolate and etc. etc. and my own fathers belly rides and junketings and jamboories I got damned fat as Dickens as the students of Cambridshire are enamoured of saying.

At last long trumpets yelling drums blaring *pan-supari* (as is very well understood equal to areca-nuts and betel-leaf) chewing and a grand multitudinous legion of childish boys and girl children screaming I was duly and formally merged into school which in Hindu Esoterics is

universally called The Goddess of Learning.

Reminiscing along the glorious vista of my childish days at the seat of learning I cannot but bring myself to eject a heavy piercing sigh of sorrow for those beatific larking days alas gone indeed irrevocably and incorrigibly!

On the first day being novel to scholastic environments and awfully frightened at the maniacal face of the school-master I inadvertently otherwise unwittingly wet my pajamas whereon the master got so uncontrollable that he smacked my poor buttocks ten times with great virulence at which excruciating pain I howled and disappeared into my parental house. My father cognising at a glance my mis-fortunate situation swore in Tamil and Hindustani and Telugu and Bengali and knocked my unfortunate preceptors cranium with such a great bang against the wall the beautiful consequence of which was I was never never again smacked on the buttocks by any body whatsoever.

Let me sprint or rather I should say flounder across a few years of this my eventful auto story when I am duly qualified to have and to hold Mans estate meaning majority attainment by influx of time and find myself in the B.A. class final year.

Libellous mongering slanderous human beings there are who say that my presence in the B.A. class beats the Seven Wonders of the Universe into a half consumed extinguished *beedi*! Our Vedas (which is equivalent to Holy Bible or Zend Avesta or Holy Koran or Confucius) say O Man forget and forgive for yours is the Kingdom of Heaven. So I don't absolutely malign or libel or otherwise grieve my bad wishers but violently curse them heartily just before I retire to my sleep privately. Let barking dogs bark but my Elephantine Caravan passes on obliviously say I as Satyamurthy said to Hoare Belisha the other day.

All my tutors and professors in the post metric classes extolled and exacerbated my horrific hunger for Occidental and Oriental knowledge and went into ecstasies and fits over my decidedly individualistic style of

(Continued on page 22)

DO YOU KNOW?



1. What is 'Cryptesthesia'?
2. At what rate does the Sun cool?
3. Who named Australia?
4. What are 'bulls' and 'bears' on the money market?
5. When were Christmas cards first used?
6. What is Ku-Klux-Klan?

Please see answers on page 22

9th March, 1935.

DEAR MOTHER,

EVERY year in barracks we have a festival. All the buildings are white-washed inside, and colour-washed outside. This is known as the Annual White-washing.

Domestic white-washing is a favourite pastime in England. Every suburban householder likes to spend an occasional Saturday afternoon with a bucket and a brush, distributing white-wash in equal portions over himself and his surroundings. He does the back-yard, the fruit trees, the chicken-house, the tool-shed, the garage, and other out-houses unnecessary to mention. As soon as he has completed it all, it is time to begin again.

You seldom see an Indian householder pottering around with a white-wash brush. When a house is first built, the coolies slap some lime on the walls, and it has to last.

If you are archaeologically-minded, it is quite interesting to trace the various strata on the walls of buildings out here. The pillars and the passages have a smooth dark polish, shoulder-high, and extending down to elbow-level. If it is a public building, the next stratum consists of stars and splashes of a brick-red colour. These stars and splashes are derived from a substance called *pan*, with which the inhabitants love to decorate public places. They chew it in their mouths, and eject it on to the walls and pavements, making pretty patterns.

...eventually sit down in a close circle

You would wonder at the prevalence of such a practice among a scrupulous nation; and it is my opinion that an



THE LETTERS OF PRIVATE JOYFULL

39. The Annual White-washing

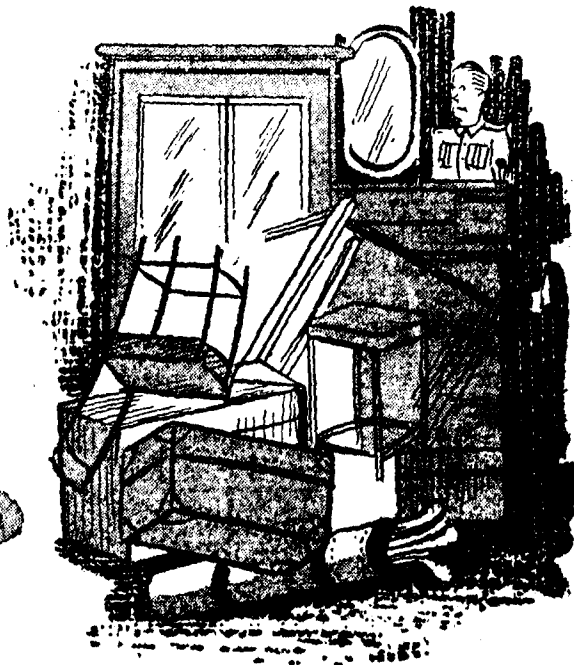
artistic love of decoration has over-riden other considerations. The inhabitants do not care for the staring crudity of virgin white-wash. A blank wall offers an irresistible temptation, and they start to decorate it immediately.

Below the *pan*-decorations, there is a stratum of finger-prints left by the children. Indians are very fond of children, and love to have their finger-prints everywhere. Where other people would get a bucket and some white-wash, and obliterate these interesting mementoes, out here they like to have the pretty prints of baby fingers about the place.

Lower still are the relics of infants in the crawling stage. In public buildings these relics are replaced by evidences of other ground-level passengers who have passed that way. So you can see how interesting even a white-washed wall can be to an observant and reflective mind.

We are not allowed to have wall-decorations in our barrack-rooms, and every Saturday we lime-wash the walls from shoulder-level to the ground. We would much prefer to do the Annual White-washing ourselves, too; but they have trade-unions out here, the same as we have at home. The idea of a trade-union is to make you employ men to do something which you could do much better and quicker yourself.

The professional white-washers here are a remarkable lot. Their uniform consists of a coat of white-wash, finished off by a piece of red rag around their loins. They talk to one another in hoarse shouts in their own special language. The only words in the language are



"Wah, wah, wah," uttered resonantly in various intonations. Every kind of sustained conversation may be conducted by the use of these remarkable words. This ought to be brought to the notice of those scientists who are always searching for a simple universal language.

When it is our turn for the Annual White-washing, we get up very early in the morning, and pile all the furniture in the middle of the room. By 6 a.m. we are ready for the white-washers, and start congratulating ourselves that by mid-day we will have a nice clean place. We sit rather uncomfortably on the piled-up furniture, and wait for the workmen to begin.

At 9 a.m. a stray white-washer puts in an appearance, and we all rush eagerly towards him, to ask when he is going to start. He immediately runs away. At 9-30, other white-washers begin to creep into the room from various directions. They stand about in a helpless manner, and eventually sit down in a close circle, looking at the walls and saying "Wah, wah, wah." We all point to the walls with energetic gestures, and the men make signs of assent, and reassure us with cries of "Wah, wah, wah!"

At 10-30 the overseer comes striding in. The workmen begin to run about like a disturbed colony of ants. With threatening gestures they surround two small boys, with indignant cries of "Wah, wah, wah!" The boys go outside, and begin to collect little trays-ful of dirt. They throw the dirt on the floor, covering all our belongings with dust. Then the overseer goes away, and the workmen go outside for a smoke, and do not come back any more.

We sit hopefully in the dirt for the rest of the day. Next morning, after waiting for hours, we find that the white-washers are not coming at all, because it is a holy day, and they are all saying their prayers, and throwing coloured water at each other. The next day they do not come either, because they are all sick.

Meanwhile we have got tired of living in the dirt, and we clean it up. When the workmen return on the fourth day, they see that the dirt has gone, and they point to the floor and say "Wah, wah, wah!" with the utmost indignation. They fetch the overseer, and he lectures us severely, and threatens to report us for obstructing his workmen.

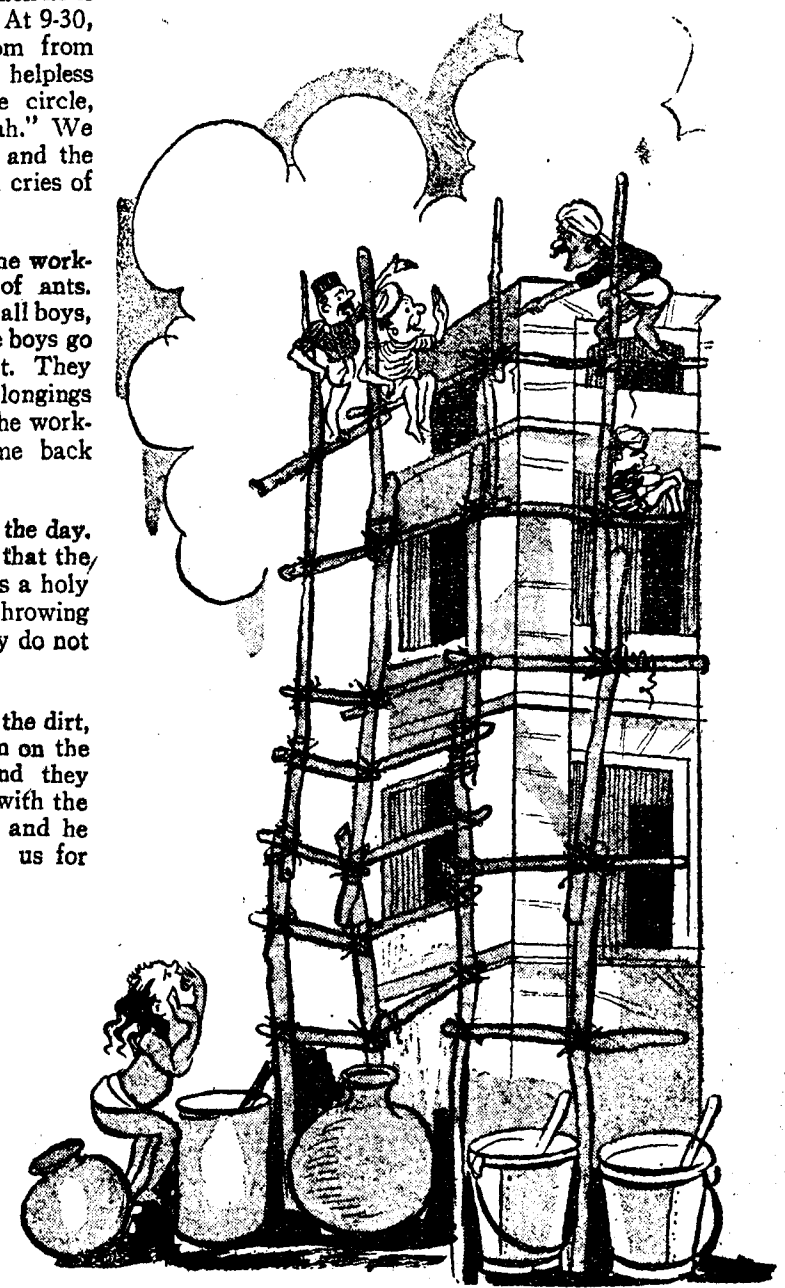
In time, the dirt is spread again, and the workmen sit down to make their brushes, but make a rough sort of article for each job. It takes a whole day to make it, and when it is made they do not use it. They just show it to the overseer, and then employ handfuls of grass instead.

On the fifth day, we are sure that our troubles are over, and that the work will actually commence. But we have not taken the ladders into account. White-washers do not have ladders, but make rickety scaffoldings for each job. The fifth day passes in making

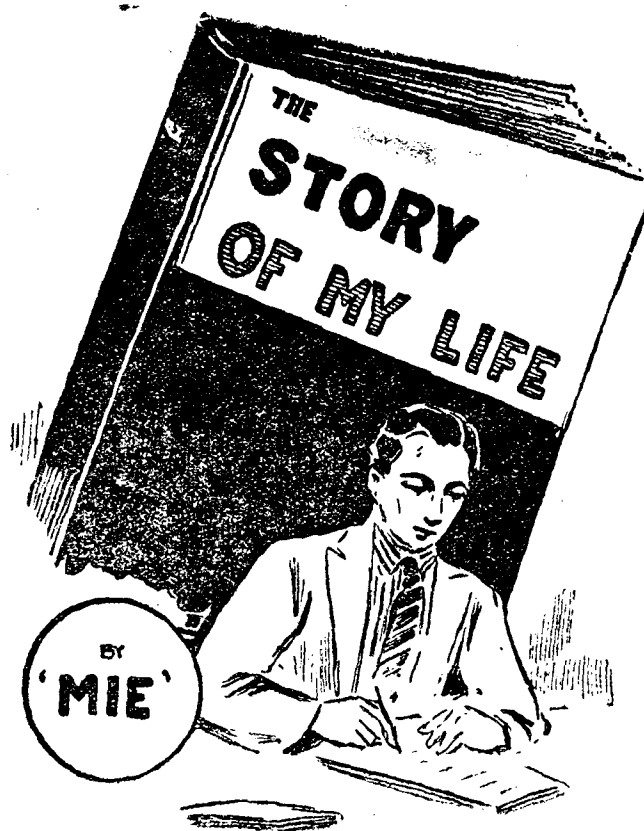
scaffoldings from sticks of bamboo and pieces of old rope. You would think that anyone could make a strong ladder in an hour or two, and have it for use once and for all; but then you don't know Indian white-washers. They build a thing like the skeleton of a Dravidian temple, and perch precariously on the top, like devotees in a car-procession, while the whole structure sways gently, and threatens to collapse at any moment.

So it is not until the sixth day that the white-washing actually commences. When I say commences, I mean they begin to mix the white-wash. They cannot start this very early in the day, because, now they have assembled all their implements on the site of the job, it takes a long time to store away these things at night, and bring them back in the morning. You would not

(Continued on page 21)



So they perch on their swaying eyrie, and blame one another.....



'How so small a head could contain all he knew!'
—Hore-Belisha?

I finished my Elementary School and went up for the High School classes. I was admitted in the First Form after an elaborate test in the course of which I was asked how many horns a cow had and what the colour of gold was. My cousin Kuttan was in the same class. He was an extraordinary fellow. When other boys of his age were planning a raid on the larder, the neighbour's mango-tree or a bird-nest, he contentedly pored over a volume of Sir Thomas Browne. While the others were at fisticuffs or sleeping, he addressed imaginary audiences with full-throated abandon. The only game he was interested in was—but of this later.

Our English master was a good fellow. He had a habit of squeezing his nose, sniffing and pointing his fingers like Lord Buddha and Sri Rama in paintings. His interpretation of the poets was original. One day he was explaining a passage in Shakespeare and he came to the line: 'In a cowslip's bell I lie'.

"In your villages," he began, sniffed, squeezed his nose and went on, "doubtless there are many cows. You tie bells on their necks as an ornament. The poet says that Ariel sometimes sleeps inside such a bell."

Kuttan, my cousin, could not allow this interpretation to pass unchallenged. He got up and said that 'cowslip' was the name of a flower.

"Kuttan," the Master began, "you are a very impertinent boy. You think you know better than your master. Sit down! (sniff, sniff) Do you hear me? You boys may take down what I said."

Another time when doing Longfellow's 'The Psalm of Life'.

Tell me not in mournful numbers.....

"The poet means (sniff), tell me not mournfully i.e. sorrowfully and in numbers i.e. in a sort of deputation—that Life is but an empty drum—that Life is like the vacuumised inside of a drum—"

"It is 'dream', sir, not 'drum'," interrupted Kuttan.

"Kuttan, how many times am I to tell you not to interrupt me? (sniff) You are excessively impertinent (sniff). How can a dream be empty? Dream is not a vessel. It is obviously a misprint."

This Master's peculiarity was that he was never sure of anything. He would post a letter and put his hand inside the letter-box as far as it could go. He would walk off and then return to bang the letter-box to be sure that the letter hadn't stuck on to the sides.

One inspection day, when the Inspector entered our class, the Master saluted the Inspector, the Head Master and the Assistant Head Master in turn. After they had left, the Master suddenly imagined that he had forgotten to salute one of them. He asked us whether he had wished all the three of them.

"Yes, sir," said we in chorus.

"Don't tell me that to reassure me, but (sniff) did I wish the Inspector, then the Head Master and lastly the Assistant Headmaster?"

"Yes, sir."

"One of you; (sniff) now Venkataraman, did I...?"

If our English Master was slow and heavy, our Maths. Master made up for it. Dealing with problems in Proportion, he would begin, "If ten men can do a piece of work in 40 days at the rate of 8 hours a day, how many men can do it in 20 days at 10 hours a day? 40 days and 20 days. 40 is larger, so larger by smaller i.e. 40/20; 8 hours and 10 hours; 10 is larger; smaller by larger, i.e. 8. 10.. INTO 10. Do you understand? No? Why, what is the matter? It is perfectly simple!"

The Drill Master was an old chap with thick and bristling mustachios which made him look fierce. In his spare time, he sold stationery to students, which he kept in a table in his room. One day, thoughtlessly, I made some derogatory remarks about the quality of his wares in the presence of others. He gave me a long stare. I dismissed the incident from my mind, but not so he. That evening, at drill, he made me jump and frisk and bend and bow and kneel and lie as never before I had done. When I paused for breath, he encouraged me with a few cuts from his cane on the susceptible parts of my anatomy. I was puzzled. Why this sudden desire on his part to improve my physique? At the end of the hour I was enlightened. The Master had had his revenge and said to me, "Talk rot about my pencils, will you? I'll teach you." I apologised, and the next day bought a dozen pencils, a few note-books, erasers and ink-tablets from him. Thenceforward he always left my body severely alone. I could attend his classes if I liked, or go home, if that suited me.

Kuttan and I had taken up Sanskrit as our vernacular. With great enthusiasm we bought our new books, wrote our names beautifully on them, and eagerly went to the class. I could see my cousin's enthusiasm definitely oozing after the first class. Gutturals, *Parasnipada* and conjugations proved too much for him. In one examination he managed to get 15%. On enquiry it was learnt that he had written the gutturals, but had come to dead ends with the rest of the questions. His master out of pity had given him 12 'grace marks'.

We were all astounded when we heard that Vijiam had passed. Vijiam had been in the class for 4 years and he had come to love the class. It was with a wrench that he consented to go up to the higher class. The examiner had not the heart to fail him again. The examiner asked him, "What are palatals?" He replied, that they were some palatable food-stuffs. The next question was, "Decline 'Rama'", but Vijiam said that 'he did not know' how to. He was right in this case and the examiner gave him 50% for correctly answering one of the two questions put to him.

To celebrate this success, Vijiam invited us to a picnic. The spot selected was a beautiful one, about four miles away from the school. In order to escape detection, we decided to go each by different routes. It was to begin at 2 p.m. Tramping five miles on a mid-summer day on a hungry stomach, I found the journey very arduous. When I reached the spot I discovered that I was alone. There was no trace of

anybody. I waited for an hour and then it struck me that Vijiam the blackguard had played a practical joke on me. I started on my return journey, a hungrier and thirstier lad. My path lay through an arid waste. The brooks that flowed in the rainy season had dried up. I felt awfully thirsty. Not a drop of water for two miles yet. Too tired and thirsty to walk, I sat down under a date palm. Casually I looked up and saw something which made my heart miss a beat. There it was—a small pot dangling to a spathe. An anti-Temperance feeling suddenly took possession of me. I took up a stone and threw it straight at the pot. A dull-white liquid trickled down. I stood underneath with my face up and my mouth open.

When I had had enough I smacked my lips. I felt decidedly better. In the place of my tiredness were new courage, determination and entire disregard of the hitherto intolerable heat. I felt exhilarated. My legs seemed scarcely to touch the ground; something sang in my head. There was of course some difficulty about my steps and I couldn't manage to keep on a straight course. But I reached home safe enough.

I narrated my experience to Kuttan who wished he were there and to Kandam who complimented me on my presence of mind, but cursed me for wasting part of my drink. He could not bear to think that I had allowed half of it to fall to the ground.

Kandam—but that is another story.

THE LETTERS OF PRIVATE JOYFULL—(Continued from page 19)

imagine that anyone would steal a lot of rotten old bamboo, grass rope, and home-made brushes; nevertheless all this rubbish is carefully removed to a shed each evening, and guarded by a watchman. The back of the shed has gaps in it, so that anyone could break in; nevertheless the front door is secured by an immense padlock.

Mixing the white-wash takes a long time, because the stuff must be obtained from another carefully-locked store. In addition, operations are held up for a long while, because there is no water-carrier to bring the water from the hydrant. The hydrant is ten yards away. At last, one of the small boys is cuffed and made to bring the water, and the mixing commences.

By the afternoon of the sixth day, the great moment arrived when the white-washers clamber up their Dravidian temple, bent on white-washing. It is a false alarm, however, because when the men get to the top they find they have forgotten to take up any white-wash. So they perch on their swaying cyrie, and blame one another, crying "Wah, wah, wah!" most vehemently. At last they decide it is too late to start white-washing that day.

Being now chastened by experience, we hardly expect any progress on the seventh day; but to our astonishment the white-washing-circus arrives betimes, the devotees clamber up to their position of eminence, and operations actually commence. The high priest and all his acolytes take great gouts of white-wash on their bundles of grass, and slap them on the wall with a

resounding 'plop!' Three-quarters of the white-wash descends to the floor in a bounteous shower; and we begin to see the purpose of the dirt. It is to soak up the surplus liquid, and to avoid spoiling the floor. However, the dirt has been down so long that pathways have been trodden through it, and the floor gets spoiled all the same.

For the next hour or two, we live in a monsoon of white-wash. Then suddenly the showers cease, and with many 'Wahs!' the officiants descend. It turns out that there is no more white-wash, and the walls are only half-done. The overseer has calculated for only one coat on the walls, and has not allowed for the six coats which now decorate the floor.

The rest of the day passes in obtaining further supplies, and the next morning the walls are finished. Now comes the grand cleaning-up process. The white-washers appear with bundles of rag and tins of oil, and they begin to daub all the furniture and wood-work with a brown sticky substance. As they do not first remove the caked white-wash, the wood-work takes on a leprous yellow appearance. Finally, they bring many gallons of water, and mix it with the mud on the floor, and swill it about energetically, making great dirty splashes all up the white-washed wall. However, this is the very end of the visitation, and the ninth or tenth day sees the final departure of our tormentors.

Your Loving Son,
OBEAH JOYFULL.

Literator in Excelsis—(Continued from page 17)

English composing. There was one professor of Phylo-logy who used to implore me like a son with great emo-tionalism that if only I brought to bear a little more per-severing on my literary prosecutions I was dead certain to pocket the Nobel Prize for transcendental literature. Perhaps it is not a remote impossibility. Time alone will unravel. Let us hope so for where are you without hope as Beelzebub said to the Tower of Babel?

Tragically enough the examiners in the B.A. class were so diabolically envious of my literary prowess in regard to English that they failed me no more or no less than hexagonal times. At last disgusted with their all pervading meanness I reluctantly lowered myself to stark subterfuge. Mis-fortune being unavoidably the parent of inventive genius I got hold of (metaphorically mind you Editor Saheb) of my Examiners wife and wooed and weaned her to my laudable ends in such an extraordinarily productive fashion that Presto! Eureka!.....But I am digressing *alias* anticipating.

Well as I ejaculated just prior to now I sought favours from my examiners worthy Lady Wife by sun-dry artifices viz wiping her babys nose buying undies for herself (latest of New York fashions) bringing her gratis brinjals and drumsticks and cucumbers and turnips (all native swadeshi vegetables) I obtained her gracious promise to befriend me and coax the necessitous marks from the unwilling albeit abortive fingers of her Husband Lord so that consequently I may pass the impregnated portals of my *Alma Mater*!

So next days rising Orb of Day found me transport-ed to the facade of my Professor's Wife's back door when she told me tearfully and with hiccups that her worse half raved and swore and nearly made himself into a gore congealing cannibal at the mention of my cogno-men. So Vittal what in-deed any more can I do for you? she asked. To which I replied Lady you do a small trick and as sure as the sea during a maelstrom we will emerge victorious like The Charge of The Light Brigade commanded by Lord Tennyson. Tonight after you scrub and clean up your culinary room and go up to bedchamber Dont for Heavens sake lie on your bed but sit on the Professor Sahebs lap and introduce *pansupari* into his oral

cavity bit by bit and leaf by leaf by your ow transparent hand. He will be tickled with tremendous love that indeed his right hand must necessarily needa pass round your enchanting waist line. And by and by he would want a kiss maybe. You just say No not at all and giggle coquettishly and cover your coral virmlions with your palm. A sort of cupid struggle will indubitably ensue but Lady you go on saying firmly No. At last Professor Saheb will say why Uma (by the way paren-thetically her name is Uma which is another *alias* for Parvathi) my unadulterated sweet! What is my crime? Then and then only you say sorrowfully What about Vittal the poor boy who is languishing for marks? He will answer O gosh O hell is that all? Bring the blight-ers answer papers and I will place him atop of the presidency. Whereat you introduce my papers into his upper limbs and get marks marked there and then. And then Lady let him kiss you through out the whole of the lifelong night!

On hearing which she was at first astonished like a Nudist Colony with a lunatic mad man run amuck them and then laughed a reverberating pearly laugh and very nearly almost hugged me believe Me.

Well Editor Saheb that way I was possessed with my B.A. Degree. Where spontaneously I should certain-ly have got my true deserts I had perforce to generate into being a strategic conjugal plot to gain my meed. Here I am a man of prodigal literature characteristics and parts but could not legitimately get such a punny entity as a negligible B.A. Degree! What a staggering ironical sarcasm on the indigenous Universities of my beloved Bharth Matha!

Verily true it is in my case the old old saw viz proverb The higher they go the harder they fall as the foreign Himalayan Everestian Expeditionists will certainly aver!

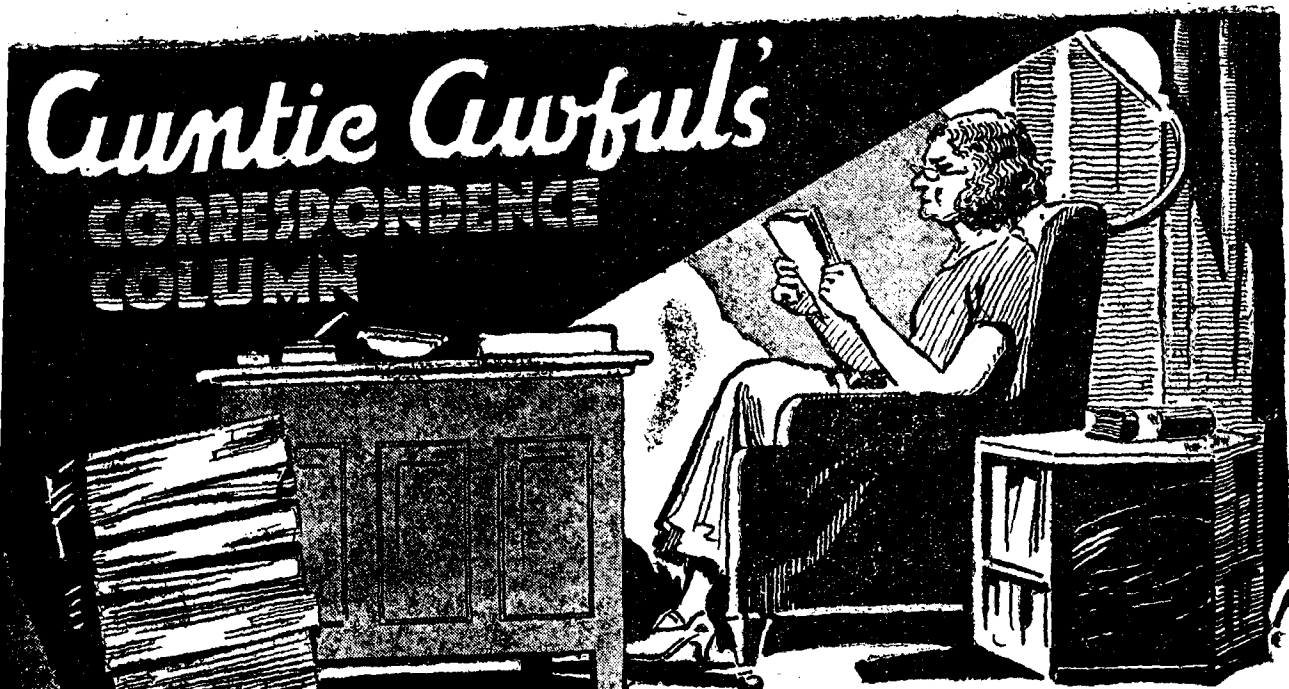
YES! I KNOW!



1. It refers to super-normal phenomena like tele-pathy, clairvoyance, psychometry, water-divining and other forms of abnormal percep-tion not passing thro' the ordinary channels of the senses.
2. Every second the Sun loses 4 million tons of its mass, and at this rate, it is calculated to lose 7% of its mass in one billion (million x million) years.
3. Captain Matthew Flinders who discovered its southern coast in 1802, and circum-navigated Australia in 1803.
4. The tendency of prices of bills and securities to rise is called a "bull", and a falling trend a "bear" on the money market.
5. They were designed in England in 1846 by I. C. Horselbey.
6. It was a secret society, hostile to negroes and alien influences, formed at Tennessee in the southern states of America in 1865.

Answers to questions on page 17.

Auntie Awful's CORRESPONDENCE COLUMN



XIX

THIS week, dear boys and girls, Auntie's civic consciousness has been aroused by the pressing problem of post-graduate employ-ment. Scarcely a day passes unmarked by the receipt of long letters from Masters of Arts and Bachelors of Science, all anxious to become Auntie's office-boy, or to maintain the supply of paste and blue-pencils for the editorial sanctum. Poor Auntie, being unable to assist these worthy gentlemen by providing direct employment, feels that she must at least place her well-known mental powers and general in-genuity at their service. After considering the matter, Auntie has produced a scheme for the starting of a profitable business, and Uncle Ghastly assures her that (unlike some of her schemes) it does not transgress any of the numerous sections of the Penal Code, or the even more numerous sections of the various Ordinances.

Well, my dears, practically all the furs sold in Europe, such as sealskin, silver-fox, ermine, musk-rat, and so on, are really manufactured from the pelt of the domestic pussy. So the thing to do is to start a cat-ranch. To begin with, all you have to do is to collect 1,00,000 skins a year, selling at four annas each. The gross income is therefore Rs. 4 lakhs.

You will have to skin 4,000 cats a day. One man can skin about 80 cats per diem, so you will be finding permanent jobs for 50 un-employed fellow-graduates on Rs. 50 a month. Your labour-bill is thus Rs. 30,000 per annum, and with a little organisation all the rest of the proceeds will be profit.

To dispense with practically all overhead charges, it is only necessary to establish a rat-farm in association with your cat-ranch. The rats multiply four times as the cats. So if you start with 2,00,000 rats, you will have four rats per cat per day. After the cats have been skinned, you can feed the rats on the carcasses of the cats, giving each rat a quarter of a cat. The cats will eat the rats, and the rats will eat the cats, and you will get the skins. Don't you think it is a good idea?

Grateful (Triplicane). "Thank you so much for your advice. How can I ever repay you for your kindness?" You can write a cheque, my dear, or even send a money-order.

Uncertain (Sivakasi). "Can you tell me, Auntie, what the people in England really think about the J.P.C. Report?" They seldom think about it, dear boy, because they do not know what it means. They can only listen to people who pretend they do know. Some of these people cry, "Go on! One step more, and India will be on firm ground!" The others cry, "Go back! One step more, and India will be over the precipice!" So the good British public, like the barber's donkey, feels inclined to stay just where it is.

Mystic (Kuttalam). "What is it a sign of, when a clock stops before it is run down?" According to Auntie's tame astrologer, it is a sign of some domestic trouble in the house, my dear Mystic. But according to Auntie's watchmaker, it is a sign of some mechanical trouble in the works. You can pay your money and take your choice.

Funny Fellow (P. Koil St.). "People do not seem to appreciate me when I play the fool." Well, dear boy, when some people act the fool, they are not acting.

Form IV (Royapuram). A hypochondriac, my dear, is a person who feels better when he feels worse.

Unfortunate (Karur). Auntie is sorry to hear that you are having trouble with your car and your wife. You say the car has a changeable performance, and the wife a changeable temper. Isn't it peculiar how these troubles develop on parallel lines, dear boy? The car has two changes—dead slow, and stop; while the wife's temper also has two changes—bad and worse.

Sleep-walker (Trichinopoly). "I dream every night that I am visited by a beautiful girl, and it is driving me crazy." I suppose it drives you crazy because it is only a dream?

Swollen Head (Sowcarpet). "Do you think I ought to marry a girl who is intellectually my inferior?" Yes, dear boy; if possible.

Palmist (Mudaliar St.). "I went to a fortune-teller, and he told me there was something worth-while about my face." Doubtless you wear gold teeth?

Susa (Cuddalore). Yes, my dear, all the nursery-rhymes have been brought up-to-date. Here is Mary and her little lamb, adapted to warn our children of the dangers of modern household appliances:

"Mary had a little lamp
She filled it with kerosene,
She tried to light it at the fire,
And has not since been seen."

Romeo (Bangalore). "I am deeply in love with a young lady, and she reciprocates my feelings. But when I visit her house, her mother and brother sit in the room all the time. How can I get a few hours alone with my sweetheart?" Buy a couple of tickets for the cinema, dear boy—and give them to the mother and brother.

Nature Lover (Middlesex). "Now that warmer weather has come, the changing tints in the lonely woods are lovely." I suppose the nudists who were blue with cold have now become red with sun-burn?

Seat of Learning (Benares). "I was sitting some distance from the professor, and when he asked if I understood the quantum theory, I shook my head. He was very sharp with me, and said I must speak up. Why should not a shake of my head be sufficient?"

Because, dear boy, you can hardly expect the professor to hear your head rattle from the other side of the room.

Cinema Lover (Malleswaram). "I would like to see more of Mae West." Impossible, dear sir.

Inebriated (Tripunithura). "When I came out of the liquor-shop, the sergeant spoke to me in a very insulting manner. I had a good mind to tell him off, but I lost my courage." What, did the bottle drop out of your pocket?

Kuppu (Kallakurichi). Here is another good way of starting a profitable business. Persuade your father to buy some pedigree hens. Your father pays for their up-keep. You sell the eggs to him, and eat them yourself.

Ardent (Pondicherry). "My young man is a grand lover. Every time he kisses me, I feel a better girl." That is all right, my dear, but don't forget that you need not try to get to Heaven in one evening.

Scornful (Alleppey). "My neighbour is always boasting that he is a Scotchman, but I happen to know that he was born out here." He can still be a Scotchman, dear boy. Perhaps he got born out here to save the fare.

Courtship (Ahmedabad). "Do you think that a girl can learn to love before fifteen?" I don't think so, dear boy. It is too large an audience.

Indignant (Bombay). Auntie cannot see why you were disappointed at your visit to the cinema. Even if the film was rotten, there was a good interval, wasn't there?

General Dealer (Poona). "The firm went bankrupt, and left me with a steam-roller on my hands. What on earth can I do with a steam-roller?" Auntie thinks you might use it for pressing your trousers.

Downcast (Ganjam). "My parents want me to marry a rich girl, and I am afraid she will always be throwing her money in my face." I shouldn't worry about that, dear boy, as long as she does throw it.

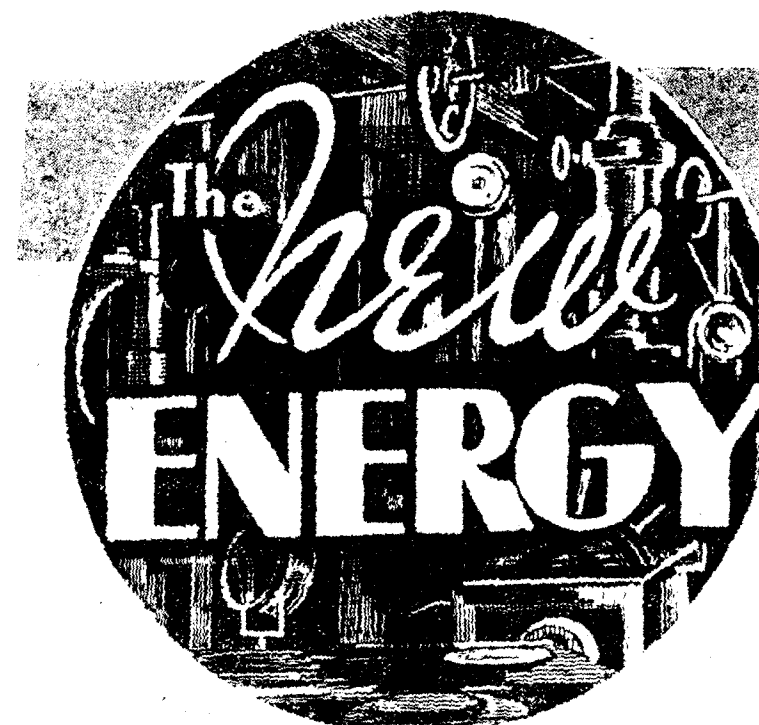
Ambitious (Barili). Auntie does not think it is really necessary to have a car in which to drive to the office, simply to impress the other fellows. Why not be content with the splendid carriage nature gave you?

Converted (Multan). "I went to a spiritualist meeting, and was overjoyed to get into contact with my late husband. He told me he was very happy—far happier than he had been on earth." Auntie is glad to hear this, dear Madam. But where was he speaking from?

Fair Dealing (Nagpur). "I am the oldest and largest ghee-merchant in the town." Blessings on your grey head, dear sir. Ghee-merchants are apt to put on weight, aren't they?

Fashion Plate (George Town). "I saw you in the street the other day, Auntie. I do not think you dress very well. I believe in a girl looking smart. I was surprised to see that you were wearing odd stockings." Auntie understands your surprise, dear girl; but the fact is, the mistake often occurs to girls who have more than one pair of stockings.

Coffee Hotel (Mailura). "The customer made a disturbance, and said there were two flies in his cup. Why should he object to a few flies?" Perhaps, dear sir, he is a strong opponent of mixed bathing.



PART II

The Earl of Bareedo could not sleep; his mind was uneasy—this, despite his seemingly optimistic attitude. Suddenly, he sat bolt upright in his bed. A tinkling sound, as of a tin being knocked over, had reached his ears. It was a sound from a distance—sharp and clear. He slipped quietly out of bed, pocketed the electric torch, and stole out into the corridor.

From the foot of the staircase he glimpsed a flitting, faint glimmer of light. To his astonishment, a man was in the pantry, calmly helping himself to provisions, stowing them away in a haversack which was slung over his shoulder. A big rough-looking person with matted hair and a bushy black beard.

Presently, apparently satisfied with his 'pickings', the man came out into the hall, a bull's eye lantern in his hand. Bareedo crouched behind a hat-stand.

The present intruder paused before the carved wainscoting which lined the walls of the hall. A twist to one of the carvings operated a secret panel. The man vanished through the opening now revealed.

It didn't take Bareedo long to discover the secret. Then—he hesitated. Should he follow alone? Or, should he call the others? No.....

His torch disclosed a low passage about two feet wide; he stepped inside, but could find no means of closing the panel!

A few paces forward—a stone vibrated under his feet. He looked round, the panel had closed. "Solved that point," he thought. "But how to get out again? Hammer on the panel if necessary. Yes! he could do that, no need to worry."

4-2-3-35



By 'JASON'

The story so far:—

Professor Sandcroft discovers a process by which energy 'filched' from the sun could be turned into terrific heat and light, at a cost low enough to beat electricity to the wall.

Mr. Pym, the Professor's assistant is found murdered in his laboratory by unknown hands.

Sir Oswald Calverly, the Earl of Bareedo and Isaac Zepler, millionaires controlling electricity interests the world over, come to Professor Sandcroft's house disguised as common labourers at the latter's desire, to negotiate the purchase of the discovery.

The same night an attempt is made on Barlow's (the Professor's butler) life. But Barlow escapes unhurt by a clever ruse and secures the would-be murderer, one of a gang of foreign crooks. The captive, however, keeps mum when questioned as to the *raison d'être* of his exploit. Professor Sandcroft decides to apply Star-Chamber methods to make him speak. These third degree methods of the Professor are a painful revelation to Isaac Zepler and his two friends, who begin to have a hazy idea that they are trapped and more or less at the mercy of Professor Sandcroft.

He reached a flight of stairs leading downwards, and counted them as he proceeded. Thirty feet, top to bottom, he calculated. At the foot of the steps the tunnel widened out gradually and then continued straight.

The floor under his feet suddenly sank with a jolt, the torch was jerked from his grip, he was flung down on his hands and knees; three more jolts followed, then the floor became stationary. The Earl of Bareedo sat still for a moment or two, thinking rapidly.

Bareedo got to his feet, lit a cigarette, and holding the match above his head, looked up. Another slab had replaced the one which had sunk with him! The match flickered and went out. He felt around the walls and found an opening, risked using another match and peered into the passage which the dim light disclosed. He decided to go forward. It was infernally dark; he proceeded cautiously, pausing every three or four steps to listen.

Abruptly he came to a standstill and peered ahead; a faint luminous glow had suddenly appeared—thirty paces or so distant. Out of the blackness beyond, a figure gradually took shape. It was draped in white and advanced slowly until it came within the ambit of the dim light. Bareedo gaped with something akin to fear mingled with astonishment. The apparition seemed to be floating in the air, it had no feet, it was headless!

The thing paused and raised a hand above its head as if forbidding him to advance further. The glow faded away, utter darkness again prevailed and the Earl rubbed his eyes.

He listened with an ear to the ground—not a sound!

At that moment, a sound came to his ears. He stopped and listened. It was almost inaudible—caused by an odd shuffling movement which he couldn't quite analyse. He backed a pace or two and then paused and sniffed the air; there was a faint but pungent odour. He sniffed again. It was getting stronger; it reminded him of the stench of an animal. His imagination ran riot; he fancied he could feel its fetid breath upon his cheeks.

He retreated rapidly. At the entrance to the chamber he stopped. The shuffling movement seemed to have ceased.

For a time he stood to one side of the opening leading to the passage. Fifteen minutes passed; all was quiet and still. He sat down feeling drowsy; his head nodded. With an effort he roused himself.

"This won't do," he muttered.

He tried to rise but his limbs refused to act. The truth dawned upon him: sleeping gas! Someone was pumping it into the chamber. He was powerless—trapped! For this they had scared him, just to get him back in the room. His eyes closed, he slid to the floor; the gas had done its work.

Many theories were advanced to account for the Earl's disappearance, but it was a telephone message received by Professor Sandcroft which revealed the fact.

"Bareedo," he informed Calverley and Zepler, "has been captured by Alphonso's confederates. They've given me an ultimatum. I am to hand over Alphonso together with details of my discovery, in exchange for your companion. At midday they will ring up for my decision."

"What the devil's to be done now?" ejaculated Calverley.

"I don't exactly know," Sandcroft replied. "But, I'm inclined to have a try at locating the enemy. We've a few hours to spare in which to act."

"Going to torture Alphonso?" Zepler queried.

"Precisely! It's the only hope I see, and—I'm looking forward to the pleasure of extracting his toenails."

"It's inhuman, it's——"

"Mr. Zepler," the Professor interrupted, speaking acidly, "I'm not disposed to argue ethical points at this juncture. They're trying to steal my invention, using Bareedo as barter; it's blackmail—nothing more or less. In their hands my discovery would be developed, used for purposes of war and destruction. That's a contingency I don't like to think about and don't forget I've got two millions at stake! They shall not beat me—we'll find Bareedo by hook or by crook."



"Maybe you are right, Professor, in some respects," commented Zepler thoughtfully. "It's a dirty business; so let's get it over as quickly as possible, and," he added, "if there's no objection, I'm coming along to see you. Don't go too far; if you do, I'll report you to the S. P. C. A."

Down in the cellars, Calverley and Zepler got their first sight of the 'estimable' Abraham. A huge negro, of extraordinary breadth, almost as black as the ace of spades.

In an aside Calverley put the Professor a question. "Where did you pick up your black beauty?"

Sandcroft smiled. "Thought he would interest you," he said. "He's the ugliest man in the world and easily the strongest."

"Well, I found Abraham in Sumatra—young and wild. He's peaceful and tractable, unless roused. But I don't think any further search could provide a nearer approach to Darwin's missing link."

In the meantime, Abraham had been busy. Alphonso, arms trussed to his sides and legs bound, he had brought out of an inner room and dumped on the ground. A poker was already nesting in a brazier of glowing coke. He lugged off the prisoner's boots and socks.

"Ready, sir," he informed the Professor.

Alphonso's courage evaporated when the red-hot poker was a few inches away from the soles of his feet.

"Stop!" he yelled. "I'll speak—I'll tell you everything."

As a taste, Sandcroft gave him a feathery touch with the poker. "Any lies, mind you," he advised, "and you'll be for it later."

The captive disclosed the secret passage and showed them how to open and close it; gave them particulars as to the number of foreigners, and was taken back to the cellars.

"If things go well," Sandcroft told him as he was being led away, you may get an extra bone in your broth to-night."



or more went off in a motor launch, first telling the guard what time to expect them back. That's about all, now it's your turn to explain how you came to the rescue."

Professor Sandcroft gave the Earl succinct details. "I suppose," he opined in conclusion, "the gang have been trying to get me on the phone since midday—but the answer to their ultimatum awaits them here. They'll get a proper surprise when they return. It's my suggestion now, Bareedo, you and your friends return to the house—you must be both tired and hungry. Barlow will also go. You can safely leave me to handle things here. I shall tell you afterwards what transpires." He paused. "And," he added, "do not forget your decision on my offer."

It was evening. The Professor was seated in his study. By the side of the table, stood the butler.

"As you are aware, Barlow," remarked Sandcroft, "it's to be decided to-night. I do not anticipate complete rejection of my offer, but I am going to be prepared for the eventuality of no agreement being reached."

"Calverley and Bareedo seem decent fellows; Zepler I certainly do not like: moreover, he is a Jew. If they prove obdurate, means to persuade them will be adopted. Until they agree we shall keep them as our guests—in the cellars. A little of what Alphonso escaped—Zepler first—in front of the others, ought to prove effective. Don't you think so?"

Alphonso's courage evaporated when the red-hot poker was a few inches away from the soles of his feet.

Along with the investigating party, the Professor included Barlow, Abraham and two others, the latter equipped with a machine gun. In the main tunnel they had to use caution and proceed in darkness.

The black dealt with the sentry so noiselessly that only the silhouette, visible from inside the tunnel, betrayed his coming into action.

Professor Sandcroft went forward to reconnoitre.

"Luck," he remarked on rejoining the party, "is certainly with us. Except for Bareedo lying in a corner of the cave with one man guarding him, the place is deserted. We've only to do a hold-up, release the Earl and prepare for the return of the others."

"Hands up! and be quick about it." The sentry spun round.

Abraham took him away. Meanwhile, Calverley had freed Bareedo.

It took the Earl a few minutes to get his cramped limbs to function.

Bareedo wasted no words and soon came to the sleeping gas episode.

"I woke up," he continued, "to find myself a prisoner. I looked round; was surprised to see the sea and the miniature quay here. A gang of about a dozen

"Perfectly, sir, I shall make all necessary arrangements."

As the clock chimed the awaited hour of nine o'clock, Professor Sandcroft walked into the Drawing room. The three millionaires were already assembled there.

"Your little exploration last night," the professor commented, "nearly cost me two million pounds; fortunately luck was on our side. Apart from the concern you cause us, you, however, did good in one respect. I've been working out an hypothesis. A gentleman came and plundered my pantry, not I may mention for

(Continued on page 29)

DIMINUTIVENESS

A MODERN SPIRIT

BY 'R. P.'

"AFTER us the deluge"—was rather a bad way of expressing things. If Louis had said: "After the great, the small," he would have hit the bull's eye. But then, he was only a king and not a great thinker.

To-day, greatness has gone out of fashion, only littleness prevails. Contemporaries of Charlemagne and Alexander named them 'Great'. Napoleon III even with his greatest *coup-d'état* could get only 'Little' added after his name. Even the memory of the man of to-day for kindness done him, is short. Railway officials show scant courtesy to the third-class passengers, because the latter violate the modern spirit by travelling in large numbers. The inter-class passengers are neither here nor there. The first and the second-class passengers receive the greatest attention and respect, because they are so few. The slogan of the modern business-man is 'small profits and quick returns', and the mill-hand cries and fights for shorter hours and quicker payments. Oratory is at discount now that the age does not encourage tall-talks. Large scale productions and factories are anachronisms. Gandhi advocates cottage industries and hand (loom) machines to fight British capital and assures you of success. Methuselah lived 969 years; the average life of a modern man is short as is the duration of married life, the distance from the Registry office to the Divorce Court being all too short.

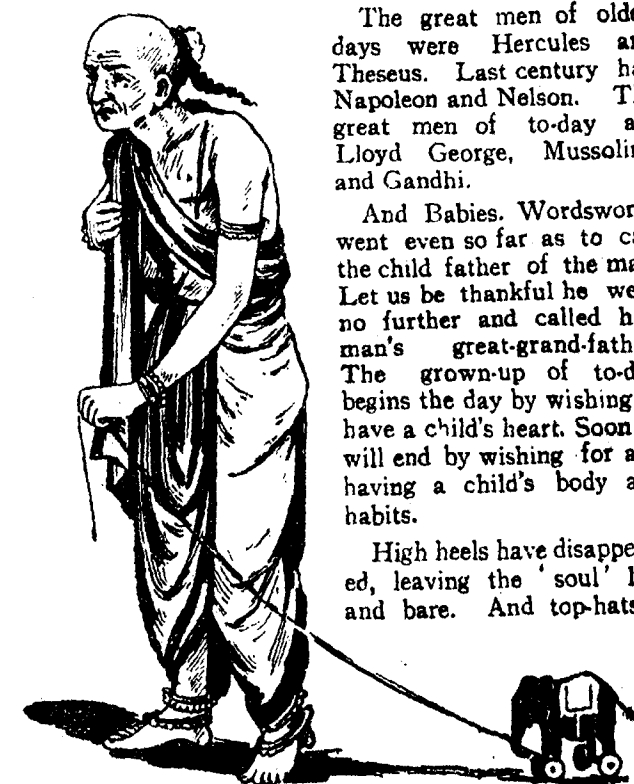
Thus, the modern spirit is the most diminutive. Times were when people used to wear coats so long that they reached their ankles. But now you have a jacket that cuts your hips in twain. Your trousers are wide, only to deceive an onlooker and to give him a false idea of your really very thin calves. Lewis Carroll was unconsciously a very wise man when he persuaded Alice to drink up the bottle that made her grow smaller and shorter. He put the antidote in Alice's way and thus spoilt all for her and us. If Alice had remained very short, we could have set ourselves to think of things as they are, but then:

Things well begun
Are only half-done.

Such is the tragedy of human endeavour!



.....a jacket that cuts your hips in twain.



Wishing for and having a child's.....habits.

This spirit of diminutiveness, to-day, is spreading like an epidemic in spring when the preceding winter has been an exceptionally cold and damp one. A dear is no more a dear, it is a darling. A home is only a hamlet—with *Hamlet* enacted every other day in it. A sixty-year old wife is only a girl to her (old) boy of eighty! I wonder if things will ever stop telescoping!

There were times when people believed in doing things thoroughly. Unless a novel was a five-volume one, it was not worth the trouble of being published and read. Richardson and Fielding, poor fellows, had to drink huge quantities of beer and 'tay' to keep them awake at night to write scores of unnecessary and useless pages. Scott had to be very descriptive when there was so little to narrate. So also poor Dickens.

Time was when a majestic woman—an Amazon, a splendid one, six feet high with a forty-two inch bust and proportionate body was a thing of universal desire and admiration. But the spirit is the other way now. The modern craze is for 'shorts' in stories and the 'baby' in things. People want Baby Clocks and Baby cars, a wee bit of a garden before a tiny, cosy cottage with a pretty little chit of a wife—if ever they have one—in it: a delicate, smart little wifey, as the fond husband calls her—and the girl wants a handsome boy whom she can mother and nurse.

Alexander, we are told, loved a very big horse without which he never went about and his vassal Porus of the Punjab had the most majestic of elephants to ride upon, but to-day's pets are the Pekingese and the guinea-pigs and the cats kept by the old maid.

The great men of olden days were Hercules and Theseus. Last century had Napoleon and Nelson. The great men of to-day are Lloyd George, Mussolini, and Gandhi.

And Babies. Wordsworth went even so far as to call the child father of the man. Let us be thankful he went no further and called him man's great-grand-father. The grown-up of to-day begins the day by wishing to have a child's heart. Soon he will end by wishing for and having a child's body and habits.

High heels have disappeared, leaving the 'soul' low and bare. And top-hats—

symbolic of the height to which the heads of men could aspire and reach—have gone the way of all good things dead. The receptivity of the modern man is small, and unlike Dr. Johnson, he uses short words, abbreviations and formulae. The ultra modern have invented the short-hand and the girl private secretary.

The modern girl has short skirts and shows to the man most of his foolishness. The greater part of her legs she would bare, to the world, only the still persisting old convention, going under the ill-assumed name of modesty, does not allow her to carry out her intentions. The Nudist Colonies have come to stay.

People prefer to keep a *gutha* or a duodecimo edition of a work with them rather than a volume of *Encyclopaedia Britannica* or *Webster's International*. They like the *Pocket Gem* or the *Vest Pocket Oxford*. Watches that can be worn as buttons are the things—and not the honest timepieces with dials of four inches. We



...lodge in a resurrected shoe...

used big muzzle-loading guns with barrel six-feet long and proportionate butts but now we have automatics and 'pit-pits' that would sooner scare away an honest burglar than kill a dishonest business man.

I am well persuaded to believe that Aesop's frog which grew bigger and bigger (and appeared amongst Shakespeare's plays), would, in keeping with the tendency of the modern spirit, dwindle till it disappears into the laboratories and then into the bottles of the scientists!

The people of the Twentieth Century may safely presume that at this rate of progress a couple in the Fortieth Century will lodge in a resurrected shoe of our times and in the Eightieth Century inside a thimble. Grimm's Fairy Tales will no more be tales then.

Glorious Prospect this, isn't it?

(Applying Darwin's theory to literature, are you?—Ed.)

THE NEW ENERGY—(Continued from page 27)

the first time. Barlow has persistently defamed the cat and tarnished the pantry-boy's reputation. You have, at any rate, cleared the blots off their escutcheons. So far, so good.

"The conclusion I have reached—after pumping Alphonso—is that this man had nothing to do with the gang. What labyrinth exists underneath the house we can only surmise; the man you saw must be living there. Probably due to some faulty mechanism, you were accidentally introduced to his quarters. He gave you some free entertainment, gassed you and was surprised to find you were from this house.

"He placed you in the top tunnel, thinking you would recover and find your way back here. Some of the foreigners happened along—the rest is obvious."

"Sounds feasible," the Earl observed, "and explains a few points I was puzzled about."

"Good! I'll now deal with the gang. They came to the cave after you left to-day—there's not much to tell. A few rounds from the machine gun—a white handkerchief as a flag of truce, and au-revoir—that about sums things up. Tomorrow morning I am having the tunnel entrance blocked up. And now, gentlemen, to the business of the day. Your decision please?"

It was Calverley who replied to the question.

"You shall have your two millions—subject to certain conditions."

Momentarily Sandcroft was speechless with surprise. It seemed too easy! He had at least expected acrimony.

ous discussion and hard bargaining; instead his offer was calmly accepted without argument. It was almost unbelievable. With an effort he recovered his usual sang-froid.

"The conditions?" he queried.

"I will come to those," replied Calverley. "Earlier to-day you touched on the point of your discovery being used for base purposes—such as war. Is not that what you yourself have pictured?"

"That is so."

"It supplies the reason for our acceptance of your offer. No foreign nation shall have control of such power. The conditions are simple; first, the sale to us is outright and unconditional; second, you shall never concern yourself again with any similar or competitive invention."

"Accepted gladly. I am pleased to be freed from responsibility."

"Very well, we shall give you a certified cheque."

Half an hour sufficed to complete the business.

"And now, Professor," Calverley asked, "have you a sledge hammer?"

"A sledge hammer?" Sandcroft repeated. "Certainly we have, but what on earth do you want one for?"

"We are going to smash up your infernal invention."

RHEUMATISM - CURE

BY N. NARAYANAN

IT was a pleasant Sunday afternoon. Mr. Naidu was found deeply immersed in his favourite *Daily Lie* wherein he read a paragraph stating that the sting of a bee was a sure cure for rheumatism. There were cited several remarkable instances (all of them imaginary, of course) in which people had been perfectly cured by this abrupt remedy. Mr. Naidu thought of the rheumatic twinges that grappled his knees once in a while and made his life a burden to him.

He read the article a dozen times over and pondered over it. He understood that the stinging must be done scientifically and thoroughly. The bee was to be gripped by the ears and set down upon the rheumatic joint and held there until it stung itself sting-less. But he had some misgivings about the matter; he knew and feared it would hurt. But desperate diseases require desperate remedies and Mr. Naidu made up his mind to undergo any amount of suffering if it would only cure his disease.

Accordingly, Mr. Naidu contracted with Master Dinker—his eldest son—for a limited supply of bees. He felt he could safely depend upon the instincts and methods of boyhood. He also knew that if there was any way in heaven whereby the shyest bee that ever lifted a two-hundred-pound man off the clover could be induced to enter a wide-mouthed glass bottle, his son knew that way.

For the small sum of a rupee, Dinker agreed to procure several bees, sex and age not specified; but as Mr. Naidu was left in uncertainty as to the race, it was made obligatory upon the contractor to have three of them honey, and three bumble. Master Dinker went off on his mission with his head so full of astonishment that it fairly whirled. That evening found Master Dinker with a short, wide-mouthed bottle comfortably populated with hot ill-natured bees, and Mr. Naidu with a rupee concealed in the palm of his hand. Soon, the rupee and the bottle changed hands. Mr. Naidu put the bottle inside his coat-pocket and went into the house eyeing everybody he met suspiciously as though he had made up his mind to sting to death the first person who said 'bee' to him. He confided his (guilty) secret to none of his family—not even to his wife. He hid the bottle in his bed-room, and with exquisite care submerged it in a basin of water to cool the heated inmates off.

Bed-time came at last. Under various false pretences Mr. Naidu strolled about the house until everybody else was in bed and then he sought his room. He

turned the lamp down until its feeble ray shone dimly as a death-light.

Mr. Naidu heaved a profound sigh, so full of apprehension and grief that Mrs. Naidu, who was awakened by it, asked him if it gave him so much pain to come to bed. Mr. Naidu choked another sigh but said nothing, and crept into bed. After lying still a few moments he reached out and got his bottle of bees.

It was not an easy thing to pick one bee out of the bottleful and not get into trouble. The first bee Mr. Naidu got was a little, brown honey-bee, that wouldn't weigh half an ounce if you picked him up by the ears, but if you lifted him by his hind leg, would weigh as much as the last end of a bay mule. Mr. Naidu could not repress a groan.

"What's the matter with you?" sleepily asked his wife.

It was very hard for Mr. Naidu to say he only felt hot, but he did it. He didn't have to lie about it, either. He did feel very hot indeed, about eighty-six all over, and one hundred and ninety-seven at the end of his thumb. He reversed the bee, and pressed the war-like terminus of it firmly against the rheumatic knee.

It didn't hurt so badly as he thought it would.

It didn't hurt at all.

Then Mr. Naidu slowly reached his arm out from under the sheets and dropped this disabled atom of rheumatism liniment on the carpet. Then, after a second of blank wonder, he began to feel round for the bottle, and wished he knew what he had done with it.

In the meantime, strange things had been going on. When he caught hold of the first bee, Mr. Naidu, drew it out in such haste that for the time he forgot all about the bottle and its remedial contents, and left it lying uncorked in the bed, between himself and his innocent wife. In the darkness there had been a quiet but general emigration from that bottle. The bees, their wings clogged with the water Mr. Naidu had poured upon them to cool and tranquillize them, were crawling aimlessly about over the sheet. While Mr. Naidu was feeling around for it, his ears were suddenly thrilled and his heart frozen by a wild, piercing scream from his wife,

"Murder!" she screamed, "murder! Oh, help me! Help!"

Mr. Naidu sat bolt upright in bed. His hair stood on end. The night was warm, but he turned to ice in a minute.

(Continued on page 32)

On Pillars and their significance

THE other day I went to the Qutab Minar for the (n+1)th time. Not that I intended to go there; but had to. It was my uncle who was pilgri-maging in the North to whom I was playing the host, guide, friend etc. He had done enough religion, he said, at Gaya, Benares, Prayag and Hardwar, and very much wanted to see History, which means ruins.

There is something characteristic about one's uncle. What sort of uncle do you think I am referring to? I presume every one has tons of them; but I am referring to the one and only species, the maternal uncle. One's maternal uncle is always a dear; generally, it is he who foots the bill for your birth, and lends colour to the successive festive events of your life. In a sense, I may say he is one better than the father himself. One's father is quite good as far as the mother is concerned, but he is a highbrow so far as the son goes. You can't take liberties with him. Whereas the uncle is an open book, any page of which you can turn and read. That's why I escorted him in person. Otherwise, I would have switched him on to someone else and remained where I was, with three no trumps to make, redoubled.

It was a warm April afternoon. The tarred road lay before us clean and bare. The rows of trees on either side dappled the sunlight. To our left lay corn fields stretching till the Jumna. On the right, were barren and undulating plains; and the Qutab was beckoning to us from a distance. We passed by many a



QUTAB MINAR

By
R Jagannathan

small tomb and ruin and many a neglected *serai* on the road-side.

We arrived at the place and I began strutting about with my uncle. The surroundings being familiar to me, I rattled out the details with the ease with which a schoolboy does, or is supposed to do, his multiplication table. We came to the base of the great *minar*. I asked my uncle:

"Shall we shoot up, uncle? We could get the finest view of all the fabled cities of Delhi, dead, living and unborn."

"Do you think I will be equal to the task at my age?"

"I have no doubts at all, uncle. If you have, just see the women-folk here, climbing up with their kiddies. Aren't you ashamed, uncle? The people of the North are a strong....."

"Shut up. I shall climb."

We slowly ascended the great monument,

while, to soften the rigour of his climb, I was narrating the history of the early Muhammadan inroads into India. At last, we reached the summit and were able to survey the vast horizon around, and the tiny things underneath.

My uncle was panting hard, and when the panting ceased, he asked me:

"What did he die of?"

"What did who die of, uncle?"

"Whom else could I mean? The bloke who did this column? Did he die a natural death or did he commit suicide?"

"I don't know, uncle. What I do know is, that after his death, his slave Altamish succeeded him as king."

"That's not my point, boy. Can you tell me the significance of this *minar*?"

"Significance, uncle? Well, you should know that it is one of the world's greatest pillars. It is over 200 ft. high; but that is not its only merit. It is nearly a thousand years old and has faced the rigour of many storms, earthquakes, dynastic upheavals, fall of empires....."

"Stop. You don't understand me. What's this column supposed to represent? What's the idea behind it?"

"I don't know what you have in mind, uncle. Qutab Minar is not an idea. It is a fact."

"I know it is a fact. But what I want to know is why did Qutab Ud-din erect a tower and not a mosque, a mausoleum, tank, palace, or a model city?"

"I see your point, uncle. Perhaps, the idea did not strike him; or perhaps, he thought that a tower was unique and more imposing; or perhaps, it was intended to enable the Muzzein to call the Faithful to pray; or perhaps, some blue-eyed daughter of the King wanted to have fresh air and sun-bath, and being a *purdahnashin*, could not have it elsewhere."

"You lack seriousness, boy; and lacking seriousness, you lack grit and purpose; whereas we in our days....."

"These steps are not lighted, uncle. Have a care while coming down. In another place, and at another period of our country's chequered history, there was an emperor called Humayun, who slipped down the stairs and died."

We came down without any such casualty and proceeded to inspect the ruins.

"Uncle, this hall was erected by Allauddin Khilji. Look at the wonderful lattice work. It is done entirely in sandstone. Isn't it a marvel?"

Then I took him to the temple of Prithivi Raj, and we saw what remained of its far-famed pillars. Qutab Mosque we saw next and lastly we saw the famous Iron Pillar attributed to Chandragupta. Here I waxed more eloquent than the professional guide and told him that this iron pillar was Man's challenge to Time, the challenge of the past to the present civilization. For, that wonderful alloy of which the pillar was made and which was compounded centuries ago, had not a single corrosion nor developed a single blemish all these ages.

The uncle was lost in admiration and scanned the inscription that adorned the pillar and read out aloud and sonorously the Sanskrit translation which was rendered on a slab of marble nearby.

Then he pondered for a moment, smiled and said:

"Boy, I have discovered the significance of Qutab Minar. It is a pillar quite in keeping with the old Hindu traditions. You know that the ancient Hindu kings were fond of pillars. Asoka's pillars are world-famous. Samudragupta's pillar at Allahabad, Rudradaman's pillar and this Chandragupta's pillar are all proofs. Don't you know that every temple has a *dwajasthambam*? You have heard also of thousand pillared *mandapams* in temples and palaces. So, the first Muhammadan king followed their example and added a column in stone."

It was now time for returning. After seeing sundry other things, we returned. On reaching New Delhi, we happened to sight a small concrete pillar, finely shaped, standing a little away from the main road.

I showed it to uncle and asked him:

"See this pillar here, uncle; what do you think it is?"

"One of New Delhi's architectural wonders?"

"You may choose to regard it so, if you want to. But the fact is, it is a drainage pillar."

RHEUMATISM-CURE--(Continued from page 30)

"Where in thunder," he said, with pallid lips, as he felt all over the bed in frenzied haste—"where in thunder are them infernal bees?"

And a large 'bumble', with a sting as pitiless as the finger of scorn, just then climbed up the inside of Mr. Naidu's night-shirt, until it got squarely between his shoulders, and then it felt for his marrow, and he said, calmly:

"Here is one of them."

And Mrs. Naidu felt ashamed of her feeble screams when Mr. Naidu threw up both arms, and, with a howl that made the windows rattle, roared:

"Take him off! Oh, for heaven's sake, somebody take him off!"

And when a little honey-bee began tickling the sole of Mrs. Naidu's foot, she shrieked that the house was bewitched, and immediately went into spasms.

The household was aroused by this time. The children and servants were pouring into the room, adding

to the general confusion by howling at random and asking irrelevant questions, while they gazed at the figure of a man, a little on in years, arrayed in a long night-shirt, pawing fiercely at the unattainable spot in the middle of his back, while he danced an unnatural, weird, wicked-looking jig, by the dim, religious light of the night-lamp. And while he danced and howled, and while they gazed and shouted, a navy-blue wasp, that Master Dinker had put in the bottle for good measure and variety and to keep the menagerie, stirred up, and dried his legs and wings with a corner of the sheet, and, after a preliminary circle or two around the bed to get up his motion and settle down to a working gait, he fired himself across the room, and to his dying day Mr. Naidu will always believe that one of his servants mistook him for a burglar and shot him.

No one, not even Mr. Naidu himself, could doubt that he was, at least for the time, most thoroughly cured of rheumatism. His own boy could not have carried himself more lightly or with greater agility. But the cure was not permanent, and Mr. Naidu does not like to talk about it now.

MAJOR MANCHU'S MARCH PAST

By 'BOBBY'

MAJOR Manchu had left Nature to look after his physical growth, and as She had neither been liberal nor given him a good physique at birth, nor proved a trustworthy ward of his future muscular development. Major Manchu was, in the prime of his life, a sickly man with a triangular chest. He had tried Sandow's dumb-bells in every conceivable form of activity to develop his chest: instead he had developed—a violent whooping cough!

The Major had nonetheless shown his warlike inclinations from his boyhood days by joining the Boy-Scout Movement. He knew everything about the mysteries of the boy scout knots, and had once won a mouth-organ direct from the dainty but fatty hands of the Dowager Lady Timbitim for performing before her Ladyship the imitation of an Irish jig.

Later in life, Major Manchu joined a battalion in Bombay and rose to a Senior Major's rank.

Within six months, he was awarded the coveted medals of V. C., D. S. O., (Victual Carriers' Disbanded Services Officer).

But Bombay, except for several *badmashes* at Bhendy Bazaar who do a bit of fighting occasionally, is a dull place for a military genius, and Manchu began to get tired of the safety and security of civilised life. Opportunity, however, soon presented itself.

"Major Manchu," said his Commander, "you are always keen to be in the thick of a fight, eh?"

Major Manchu was paralysed. The 'opportunity' had come his way with a rapidity he had never anticipated. He stood speechless.

"Speak up, Major!" urged the Commander.

"Yes-sir—that is no rifles-no-I mean—that is-I'm only a swordsman-no daggers—that is" said the Major, beginning to shake.

"Alright, alright," said the other. "Be ready to start to-night for the North West Frontier. The Afridis under Dilawar Khan are troubling our outposts again. Have you heard of Dilwar Khan?"

Heard of Dilawar Khan! The name sent a shiver down the Major's spine, and he shook in every limb. For he *had* heard too much and too many times and too many exploits of the redoubtable Afridi fighter.



Heard of Dilawar Khan! The name sent a shiver down the Major's spine.

"I've heard of him," replied Manchu, meekly.

"Dilawar Khan is a swordsman—" commenced the Commander.

"Swordsman?" gasped the Major, pale with terror.

"Yes, a swordsman. He uses two swords at a time, and—hallo, what is the matter?"

The Major had almost collapsed into a nearby chair.

"What's the matter?" repeated the Commander, anxiously.

"N-n-nothing-nothing," replied the Major, faintly. "You say Dilawar Khan uses two swords at a time?" he asked.

"Yes," said the other, "but *you* are an expert swordsman?"

Major Manchu had always prided himself on his skill as a swordsman. To deny it now would be to lower his colours irretrievably. He stuck fast to his guns. "I'm a swordsman," he said, desperately.

"An expert swordsman?" asked the Commander with a searching glance.

"An expert swordsman," repeated Manchu, automatically.

"Then that settles it," said the Commander, cheerfully.

"Dilawar Khan," continued he, "always attacks by night. He is extremely aggressive and carries the fight right into the heart of the enemy's camp. And always at the head of his fierce followers, he carries his two swords and makes for the leader of the opposing force."

The Major began to quiver.
"Who will be our leader, Commander?" he asked tremulously.

"You, of course!" replied the Commander.

"I???" shrieked Manchu, desperately.

"Of course," replied the other. "In Dilawar Khan you will meet a foeman worthy of your steel—"

"Look here," said Manchu. "I'm out of practice, because I have broken my sword—"

"I shall give you a dozen swords," said the Commander, generously. "For you are worthy of the honour of being the leader of the platoon."

"N-no, nn-nn-No. No!" pleaded the Major. "Please appoint somebody else."

"Major Manchu," said the Commander, "I am charmed at your modesty. But, no. You alone are worthy of the honour!"

"I'm not," said the Major.

"SHUT UP!!" thundered the Commander, exploding with wrath. "How dare you say NO when I say YES?"

Major Manchu became as silent as a war memorial.

"Be ready to start to-night. Good morning!" said the Commander, walking away.

Two days later, out of the half-open window of the Frontier Mail, Major Manchu—all huddled up and shivering with cold—saw for the first time the gaunt and inhospitable aspect of the country in which he was to lead his men against the mighty Dilawar Khan.

"Damn the Commander!" said the Major, as his train steamed up into the station of Landi Kotal. "This station looks more like a miniature fort than a railway station. And if this is the railway station, heaven knows what kind of a hell the battle-field is going to be!"

He got out of the train and was being driven straight to Colonel Clifton Bloody's residence. All around he saw high mountains, deep ravines and a landscape dotted with forts.



Suddenly a sharp volley was heard and the Major winced.

"What—what are they doing now?" he asked.

"Only practising, sir," said the Pathan chauffeur, with the utmost coolness.

"Blank cartridges, I hope?" enquired Manchu.

"No. The Afridis *never* use blank cartridges. They *always* use real, live, deadly cartridges, even for practice," the other assured him.

Colonel Clifton Bloody was an old, war-hardened veteran. He was all courtesy and charm.

"And when does the attack come off?" asked the Major.

"That depends upon Dilawar Khan; but he is not given to delay."

This bit of information was hardly re-assuring.

"Anyway, the Military authorities in Simla are keenly watching the situation," continued the Colonel. "You see that bungalow there about a mile away?"

The Major put his binoculars to his eyes.

"It has no roof," he said.

"It has no roof!" said the Colonel, "but you and your platoon shall take up position in it immediately after dusk."

"But it has no roof?" said the Major again, almost tearfully.

"So much the better," said the other. "That will keep you cool and comfortable."

There is a limit to human courage, even to the courage of a Major. "S-suppose the Afridis kill us all?" he asked.

"My dear boy," said the other, "the Afridis *always* do that! And if you are killed, I promise to bury you with full Military Honours."

"H'm" said the Major pathetically.

"Well, we will talk of something else. Do you know I am a bachelor?" asked Colonel Bloody.

Major Manchu was beginning to lose patience with the old Colonel. What did it matter to him whether the Colonel was a bachelor or bigamist?

"Thirty years ago I fell in love with a girl. She gave me a silk shirt for a Christmas present—a shirt I value more than my life. That shirt has a charmed life. Whoever fights under its shadow is ever the victor. That shirt still hangs in the bungalow in which you are to fight Dilawar Khan to-night. I remember....."

His voice trailed on but the Major was not listening.

At 7 p.m. that evening the Major entered the roof-less bungalow. The

Colonel's silk shirt—30 years old and tattered, hung on a high chair, spread out.

His platoon encamped outside.

The night was cold and dreary. A shrill cold wind began to blow. Manchu cursed everything. He lay on the ground with two swords beside him.

He began to wonder how Dilawar Khan would attack. Suppose he came all of a sudden and took them unawares? Or suppose he evaded the platoon outside and came right into the hall where Major Manchu lay? What then? And the great Afridi leader always fought with two swords at a time!! "Dear me!" thought Major Manchu; and he closed his eyes tight at the terrible thought. Suppose Dilawar Khan were even *now* creeping—quietly, silently, stealthily, noiselessly.....!!!

He fell asleep and dreamt.

A few minutes later, the door of his room opened—gently, quietly, noiselessly. The intruder, without disturbing the Major, crept into a corner of the room.

Manchu dreamt about Dilawar Khan and his attack. In his dream he engaged the mighty Afridis and Dilawar Khan was leading the attack with two swords!

Suddenly the Major woke up. There was a sharp sound. The Major rubbed his eyes, and looked around.

"Goodness Gracious!" gasped he, as his eyes fell on a huge figure in the middle of the room—Dilawar Khan!!!

The wily Afridi had evidently evaded the platoon outside and was now face to face with the Major. He stood like a statue, his mighty arms hanging by his sides.

Major Manchu jumped to his feet, sword in hand. He went through all the exercises of fencing. And then, with a yell and a cry which startled the whole neighbourhood, he charged, and charged, and charged yet again at the foe.

The platoon, thoroughly alarmed, fired wildly into the impenetrable darkness. The pickets for miles around took up the signal and in a short while, volley after volley of sharp musketry-fire sounded and resounded through the valleys and mountains of the rugged Frontier.

"I've got Dilawar Khan!" shouted the Major. "Cover all exits."

All possible avenues of escape were closed.

But Dilawar Khan fought with a courage worthy of a Roman General—much to the discomfort of the Major. For Major Manchu, with all his expert swordsmanship, was getting the worst of the fight. The mighty Khan charged again and again with his two swords! His attack was unscientific, but it was ferocious and aggressive.

The Afridis from afar sniped

continuously with unerring aim, and in the midst of his fight, Manchu heard the groans of the soldiers, as bullet after bullet laid them low.

Science triumphed over brute strength. And after an hour's hard fighting, the honours of the duel between Major Manchu and the Khan distinctly lay with the former. Gradually, the Afridi's attack weakened till it ceased altogether, and he lay in a heap in a corner of the room, helpless and groaning. A few minutes later he gave up his ghost.

Two hours later, the Major entrained for Bombay. His fame had preceded him and people mustered strong at Bombay to welcome their hero. The Major alighted from the train, and the band struck up:

Behold the Conquering Hero Comes!

The fairest of the fair garlanded him; while the bravest of the brave envied him in silence. Surrounded by journalists, he told his tale of valour again and again, to a crowd of admiring hero-worshippers.

Then, Field Marshal Sir Blasted Plaster-Hornpipe, V. C., B. C., D. S. O., the hero of a hundred fights, made his way to the great Major and invited him to lunch at his hotel with the *elite* of Bombay society.

He lunched at the hotel; he was lionised; some compared him to Napoleon; and sentimental girls composed poetry in his praise.

Telegram after telegram of congratulations poured in. And it was late in the night when the gallant Major retired to bed.

He rose up early next morning to draft an article on 'How to become a Hero' and 'How I fought Dilawar Khan' for the newspapers.

When he was in the midst of these labours, a bunch of telegrams arrived.

"Damn these congratulations!" said the Major. "Can't they leave me alone?"

He opened the first that came to his hand. It was from Military Headquarters, Simla! The Major's eyes glistened with joy. Perhaps a V. C., perhaps a D. S. O., or even the offer of a Generalship on the Frontier! He rubbed his eyes again to make sure it was from the Military Headquarters. It was; and it read:—

"Major Manchu will be court-martialled for giving a false alarm when on duty near Landi Kotal, and thereby causing two units to fire into each other."

The major gasped and nearly fainted.

"He has displayed," the telegram continued, "utter inefficiency by mistaking Colonel Clifton Bloody's shirt which hung on a chair for Dilawar Khan. He has shown the greatest stupidity in engaging himself not with Dilawar Khan, but with a wild goat with big, sharp horns, which during the night, chanced to enter the building in which Major Manchu had taken shelter with his platoon."

"The court-martial will take place at Delhi on February 15th."



The poet Keats sang about the 'blushful Hippocrene'; 'Recipe' gushes over—

Recipe!



Hail, Castor Oil, hail to thee!
O, thou Saviour of the world,
For Hitler and the like, all hail!



FAR removed from the humble sphere of domestic medicine and 'household hints for health', now hast thou risen into the domain of downright diplomacy and palpitating politics. Manifold and varied are thy uses, O thou oil, now that thou movest in the exalted company of haughty Hitlers, gruesome Goerings and mighty Mussolinis!

By 'Recipe'

Wherefore do I sing of thee, O Oil of the Golden Hue and Nauseous Taste!

In days gone by, when I was woefully young and green, (or rather, sallow and livid, of a hue that mother at once labelled, with the inborn sagacity of the expert diagnostician, as 'livery'), I had frequent occasion to regret most profoundly the existence and unlimited supply of this notorious oil. Well do I remember how very often, to the accompaniment of my melodious but smothered curses and howls of anguish, was an enormous quantity (or so it seemed) of this foul and nauseating oleaginous liquid forced down my protesting throat, my mouth snapped shut and held tightly, thus eliminating all hope or chance of regurgitation or ejection! What frantic but thoroughly futile struggles I made to escape this unwelcome ingestion! Even the proffered peppermint failed to assuage the nausea that then supervened, let alone the throes of the internal revolution that soon followed, and the wild rumblings as of an earthquake within me!

The numerous repetitions of these 'seismic upheavals' nearly made me a wreck. I am indeed amazed that I managed to survive the onslaught and attain adult age. However, it takes a lot to beat me, I am so tough.

It is a matter of great wonderment that this beastly stuff has survived for centuries—nay, even grown from power to power, blissfully unmindful of and unharmed by the countless curses and billions of blasphemies showered so regularly upon it by infants, juveniles and youngsters of all climes and nations, who have, doubtless, not once, but hundreds of times, consigned it to the nethermost depths of a place reputed to be extremely hot—blazing, in fact.

True, it has often been treated with scant respect and has been made to suffer untold indignity. It has been disguised and distorted beyond recognition. 'Tasteless, odourless' forms—mostly so in the imagination of their inventors—have appeared and unsuspecting humans have been deluded into swallowing these poor substitutes. Others have made it an excuse to partake of 'stronger stuff', added to it under the guise of 'flavouring' it or of masking its taste.

Once upon a time, though not so long ago, it was the first line of attack by many of the drug distributing fraternity (otherwise known as doctors) against the poor, unresisting patients who happened to seek their advice, for a consideration. (Whether they got their money's worth was, of course, of no matter to the learned physicians.) When, following the shining example of His Late Lamented Majesty, King Edward VII, it became the fashion to suffer from appendicitis, first among the *elite*, and then also among the less and less appendix and flooded the patient's interior with the infective contents, ending in his quick despatch to regions unknown. The wise doctors wondered at the patient's abrupt and unceremonial departure and at his rapid release from suffering, entailing serious drops in the revenue side of their budgetary estimates. At length, perhaps even belatedly, they realised the cause and laid the culprit by the heels. Castor Oil, alas! then fell from grace, a far bigger fall than even Humpty Dumpty's, and was banished, at least by the pick of the

profession. The tail, of course, soon followed the top.

But recently, it has become a political weapon, a means of knocking sense into the heads of inconvenient or truculent antagonists professing old, antiquated or Utopian ideas and of 'correcting' their minds through their bellies. Hitler (of the 'Heil' fame), meekly meandering in the footsteps of Mussolini, has rediscovered the wonderful potentialities of this oil for converting to 'sweet reasonableness' persons who did not believe in brown as an elegant colour for shirts or shorts, or who had the temerity to doubt the efficacy of his methods for the unification of Germany (and, only incidentally, of course, for the assumption of power by himself). But with its aid, he has succeeded beyond measure and rid the country of all, (according to him) undesirable elements.

So now you see:

"How high his haughty Highness Hitler holds his head!" And the reason?

Castor Oil!

Heil Hitler! (*Aside*, Heil Castor Oil!)

In the dim and distant past, I remember my most worthy Professor of Physics trying desperately to penetrate through my extremely thick skull into the fastnesses of whatever it was that I had therein enclosed in lieu of brains and to impress upon me some home-truths regarding the laws of Nature. Alas! he failed most miserably, for I retain but the most vague memories of what he dinned into my ears for two interminable terms. It all ever came out again by the opposite door as in it went, to modify slightly the hackneyed words of old Omar Khayyam.

Yet, one thing he did teach me to remember, and that was, that all light things come to the top or rise to the surface. Recollecting this, rather opportunely, I am inclined to insert the word 'hollow', between the words 'his' and 'Head' in the above alliteration.

But let us return to our *moutons* from this digression. Other people, seeing Hitler's success and perhaps envying it, with the use only of such an old-fashioned remedy, were not slow to seize upon it for various purposes. Sir O—M—, our most modern and up-to-date political 'spineless wonder', proffered pints of it to people who failed to prefer black in choosing shirts. (Rather mournful, don't you think?) Doubtless, the professors of the other hues in shirts (red, blue, yellow, green, navy, mauve, pink, cherry, bizarre, *terra cotta*, and all the primary, secondary, tertiary, quarternary and *ad infinitum* colours of the spectrum, known or unknown) will also fall into line. So that 'Castor Oil for Coercion' may very soon become a world-famous and universally employed slogan. (Not that, in its action, it may be termed a 'slow gun'.)

Apart, however, from its value for political purposes, there are a thousand-and-one other uses to which Castor Oil may be very successfully put. I will give you a few examples only, but just let your imagination run riot and you will readily observe that the administration of this very potent oil *ad lib*, will at once bring round the other fellow to your point of view, however quixotic that may happen to be.

Take, for instance, your inveterate enemy, the Competition Editor. How cruelly he has treated you time and again! Offering immense prizes, as if they were only waiting to be given away to you merely for the asking, just for gazing at some fanciful pictures or painful puzzles and for filling in a few simple words on the dotted line! And then, when the so-called solutions are printed! Did you ever think of them? I bet you did not!

Well, try what a few gallons of Castor Oil will do to make the devil look at the solutions as you look at them!

Or the mere Editor.

How often, with the utmost apparent courtesy and consideration, and mock expressions of the greatest possible 'regret', he has ruthlessly blue-pencilled your most cherished effusions, the spontaneous outpouring on paper (reams of it!) or your unbounded (and uncontrolled, too) literary genius, and blasted all your hopes of blossoming forth into a great 'literary gent'?

But next time, give him Castor Oil first—tons of it—and follow it up with all your contributions. Take them all out, the rejected ones of the past from the recesses of your cupboard, the present ones from their hiding-places in the drawers of your study-table and the prospective and 'yet unborn' from your cerebral hemispheres (if any), and send the lot to him. Lo and behold! he will be all smiles; and thanks and acceptance-slips and bumper cheques galore will flow like milk and honey quickly towards you. Your bank account will swell. (*N.B.*—Don't forget to earmark a portion of this for laying down fresh stocks of the most potent and best available variety of the oil.)

In the field of cricket too, 'Leg Theory' and 'Body-line Bowling' need no longer terrify you. If Cark cracked your confounded cranium or Nickolky knocked you nutty, do not lose heart. Give them casks of castor oil, and watch them send down to you like dutiful little lambs, easy lobs that you slog every time to the weathercock on the pavilion-top amidst the worshipping cheers of 'fans' in the tents. Similarly, should Broadwoman bat for days or Cakewell collect a crop of centuries, you will know what to do, and as sure as you are there, they will obediently lay 'duck's eggs', and fade away.

What wonders may be worked with its aid, in the case, say, of an inconvenient and obtrusive rival for honours in office or in your sweetheart's affections! If you find your boss giving you the lowdown and always casting your rival in your teeth or you discover 'ever yours, with love and kisses' give your competitor the glad eye (though, may be it is only with a view to keeping you up to scratch and preventing you from turning 'cold') just fly to our old friend and ally, Castor Oil, and watch with glee your erstwhile rival slinking away into the distance, dejected and crestfallen, never again to raise his noodle before such a mighty Conquering Hero as you are! Only, act, act in the living present, for two can play at that game, and be the first to employ this tried and proven method, otherwise woe be unto you! Remember that he who hesitates is lost—for ever and for aye!

Oleum Ricini Heil!



ness Monster'.

"Here's your child, sir," she squeaked with menial insolence and, thrusting the child into my arms, ran away out of my bungalow, as if fleeing from a ghost.

The infant struggled in my arms and howled with great gusto and vim. A combination of two jazz-bands, half-a-dozen motor-hooters and five gramophones all working together overtime was nothing compared to the lusty neighing of this unwelcome waif. I blinked. I gulped. I nearly wrung its neck.

My usually clear brains either did not work well or were unable to find an explanation. I walked back to my house as one in a dream with a mass of kicking infancy in my arms. I dropped the child on my bed and turned round to take in the situation. Just then, I saw two letters on the dressing-table. One was addressed to me in Pamela's hand ; the other was

an unaddressed scrap of paper written by some unknown female.

I fairly swooned when I read my wife's note.
It read:—
You Cruel Man,

Heart-broken
P.

Not even the servants were to be seen. Depressing quietness prevailed. But from the out-house I heard a baby's wail. I had no baby!

Baby's cry again. I traced it to the hands of Pam's maid who was in the servants' quarters, helplessly trying to smother a struggling infant from terrific howling.

The maid looked at me with bewildered eyes, as if I were the 'Loch-

Here's your baby as promised. I am leaving for Vizag to-night.

Clementina was the female Jampott. That cat, after wrecking her own home, had thoughtlessly wrecked mine too. To avoid having anything to do with her divorced husband, she had sent the baby on to me, and poor Pam had misunderstood the situation.

"All right," she condescended, "but I shall never believe you."

The preliminary barrage was successfully negotiated. Hope was shining out of the dark sky. "Thank you," I said. "I shall establish my innocence to the very hilt."

I took out from my brief-bag all the recotds in Jam-pott vs. Jampott and argued before my wife as I had never before done in court, proving every statement of mine by reading out exhibits A, B, C & D. I established beyond any doubt that the offending Clementina was not only a stranger to me but was also the despicable wench against whom I had taken up my cudgels professionally.

"Therefore," I concluded, "it follows My lord..... I mean, Pamela dear, that the Jampott bunch was as much away from me as they were away from a real Jampott."

The iceberg thawed. I could notice a repentant look dawning on my wife's face. She had noted the pros and cons and the scenario was clear to her now. Her eyes dimmed with rushing tears. Justice Pamela delivered judgement:—

"Not guilty and well argued too," she whispered, falling into my arms.

My reply was a resounding kiss.

"But," she asked, "why should that vixen say in her letter that the kid was yours?"

"Oh!" I replied. "That love-lorn looney had misunderstood me. When I said in court that I was prepared to take charge of the child, she thought that I was personally interested in the brat. That is the evil of using the word 'I' when we argue cases for others."

Peace again. But no more divorce cases for me !

My usually clear brains either did not work well or were unable to find an explanation. I walked back to my house as one in a dream with a mass of kicking infancy in my arms. I dropped the child on my bed and turned round to take in the situation. Just then, I saw two letters on the dressing-table. One was addressed to me in Pamela's hand; the other was

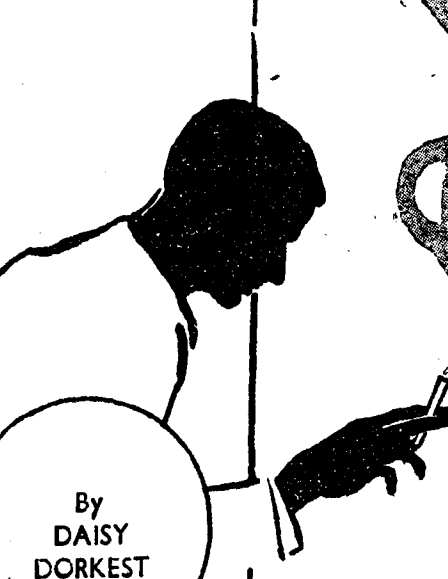
an unaddressed scrap of paper written by some unknown female.

I fairly swooned when I read my wife's note.

It read :—
Cruel Man,

You have broken my heart. While you were pretending to be a good husband to me, you were heartless enough to carry on with a hoyden. That Jezebel has sent the baby to you to insult me. You and your baby can live here. Get your woman too I am going back home.

Heart-broken
P.



As pure as flame and passionate as fire
Outwardly cold, though ardent with desire,
As Etna, when her heart is all aglow
So often camouflages it with snow ;
Beneath apparent calm and deep content ;
You are of Love's own self th' embodiment ;
A God Prometheus, with a spark divine
Stolen from stars to light an earthly shrine.

While I—

Soft lips on mine, I can but sigh
In all-consuming ecstasy!

Just as the smoke is ravished by the flame,

Unable to resist it—do not blame

My languorous self—surrender—so do I

With your own ardour glow, and live, and die—

My evanescent life scarcely a breath—

In your embrace ! claimed by the hand of death,

Absorbed by you until my very heart

And soul of you, dear man, become a part,

And yet—

There's not one moment of regret,
Since I am your favourite *cigarette*!

wouldn't sell my ticket in the Irish Sweepstake for £29,000 if Marjorie had anything to do with the drawing of it. I will back her against all comers after last night.

As I was dashing off for the office yesterday, she intercepted me with a letter to post.

"Don't forget to post it, Peter," she called after me. I discovered it in my pocket later on and was just telling the peon to run out and post it, when I noticed that it was addressed to her sister Elsie at Mussoorie. That reminded me of our holidays. I have always wanted to go to Mussoorie and I am rather partial to Elsie. With the cunning of a high financier I worked out my plans.

"I suppose that as usual you forgot all about my letter," said Marjorie, when we had settled down after dinner.

"I expect that it is well on the way to Mussoorie by this time, if the G.P.O. have done their part as efficiently as I did mine," I replied airily.

I allowed a decent interval to elapse before I carried on with my campaign.

"Talking of Mussoorie, reminds me of our holidays, darling. Couldn't we go there for a change this year?" I ventured boldly.

"We shall go to Nainital as usual," replied Marjorie firmly.

"But we have been to Naini twelve years running. Won't it be unlucky this time?" I put in, playing one of my trumps.

"It would be unlucky to break the sequence," she asserted; but I detected a hint of apprehension in her eyes.

"Supposing," I murmured, stroking her hair in the way she loves, "we were to draw lots for it. If it came to Mussoorie that would be alright. It would be the hand of fate showing the way."

Marjorie was visibly impressed, but she started, as usual to put up a good fight. It was evident she would go down with all flags flying.

"And how do you propose to work such a ridiculous scheme?" she challenged me.

"Quite simple, darling. We will go through the alphabet and put down one place for every letter. That will be fair to both of us."

After a well-simulated show of indecision she gave way, and we got to work. I called out the names from the arm-chair and Marjorie wrote them on slips of her green note-paper, which I had thoughtfully prepared for her. They were then transferred to my *topee*.

"Alwaye, Bangalore....., Coonoor, Darjeeling," I called out and went on swimmingly to X. I was inclin-

ed to be generous about this and let her put in another Nainital. The odds would still be 12 to 1, but she generously refused.

At Z I stuck, but Marjorie very sportingly offering me another Mussoorie, I racked my brains and we compromised on Ashby-de-la-zouch. We were neither of us quite certain if it was in India, but it sounded ozony, so we let it go.

She shook up the *topee* and I drew. "What is it darling, I'm so excited?" said Marjorie in her sweetest tones.

"Mussoorie," I said offhandedly.

"Let me see," she said suspiciously.

"There you are, your own writing and your own awful green paper," I replied loftily.

"I demand a recount," she said at once, and triumphantly proceeded to produce 26 slips from the hat.

"We must do it again," she said, throwing her slips into the waste-paper basket. You write them this time, Peter. It is your turn and we must be scrupulously fair."

I set to work and when I arrived at 'N' I unblushingly put another Mussoorie on the slip and folded it. I finished, held out the hat to her and she drew without any fuss.

"Nainital," she announced triumphantly....

phantly, using the slip as a spill to light a cigarette.

"You have deliberately destroyed the evidence," was all I could manage to say. I was staggered.

"Sorry, old boy, so I have. How careless of me. Still, there is always the process of elimination."

"Exactly what do you mean by that?"

"Well," she replied, picking up the *topee*, "we will look and see whether Nainital is still there. That ought to be conclusive."

"I couldn't doubt your word, darling," I responded as resignedly as possible.

"After all," cooed Marjorie, as she went off to bed, "it might have been Ashby-de-la-zouch."

I picked up a slip of green paper from the basket to light a cigarette. Idly unfolding it, I read Nainital. I picked up another. It was inscribed Nainital. There were 25 Nainitals in all. I collected the evidence and marched upstairs.

"Hullo darling," she greeted me, "I do hope that letter reaches Elsie alright. After you had gone this morning I remembered I had spelt Mussoorie without the 'e'."

A CLEAN SWEEP

By LESLIE LATTER



"Nainital," she announced triumphantly....

AMUSING 'ZEUGMA' CONTEST



NO ENTRANCE FEE—THIS ONE SET ONLY

CLOSING DATE 27-3-35

Zeugma, is a figure of speech in which a verb does duty with two nouns.

A classic example is "To cultivate the Estate and Matrimony" cf. Goldsmith's *Citizen of the World*.

Here, the verb *cultivate*, does duty with the nouns, *Estate* and *Matrimony*.

In the eight sentences given, you have to find the second noun to suit the verb and fill it in the space left blank. A clue is also given.

In sentence No. 1, for instance, the clue is 'Discreet persons keep a civil one.' The noun is TONGUE. Find similarly the other seven.

RULES AND CONDITIONS

Solutions must be written *only on the coupon* portion. All entries must be received by last post on 27-3-35. Any received after this date will be disqualified. Entries from local competitors can be delivered at our office till 6 P. M. on that date. The first prize of Rs. 100 will be awarded to an all-correct solution and the second prize of Rs. 50 to the solution with one error. 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 and second prize-amounts and distributing them among the competitors according to the number of all-correct solutions received. 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. *No entry will be considered unless it is on the Entry Form.* Intending competitors who are unable to secure copies of this Magazine from the agents in their area can address our Subscription Manager for the required number of copies either by sending stamps or Money Order to cover the cost of the copies or order them by V. P. P. COUPONS MUST BE FILLED IN LEGIBLY and sent intact. This office will not be responsible for entries lost or delayed in transit. **CUT OUT THE COUPON-PORTION** and post to:—

CLUES.—(1) Discreet persons keep a civil one. (2) Used for keeping flowers. (3) Those who look on. (4) Exit. (5) Way for traffic. (6) A vessel for drawing water. (7) Part of the body. (8) Shackles for a prisoner's wrist.

'ZEUGMA' ENTRY FORM

CLOSES ON 27-3-35.

1. The Mother-in-law paid her son-in-law a visit and her TONGUE
2. The jester cracked a few jokes and a flower-.....
3. The juggler charmed the snake and the
4. The disgruntled visitor took his hat and his
5. On seeing the funeral bier Jacob crossed himself and the
6. The absent-minded scientist kicked the dynamite and the
7. The erratic skater broke the ice and his
8. The pick-pocket put his hand-into the plain-clothes man's pockets and the

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

Signature.....

Address.....

EDITOR, "ZEUGMA" Competition, The Merry Magazine, 1.2/140, Broadway, Madras.

Results of Rs. 2000 'Singles' Competition

The Correct Solution is:

- | | | |
|---------|------------|---------|
| 1. CALL | 4. WHIMPER | 7. NUMB |
| 2. SEED | 5. BLANCH | 8. RAM |
| 3. LIP | 6. PULSE | 9. SLAB |

The following Nine Readers who submitted All-correct solutions share the First Prize of Rs. 1000, each getting Rs. 111-2-0

1. ABDUR RAHIMAN, Meteorological Office, Poona 5.
2. N. M. BANAWADIKAR, Sub-Post Master, Dewas—Senior.
3. Y. S. RAMAMURTHY, Yedavalli Bros., Ellore.
4. BALASUNDARAM, Bazaar Street, Tirupapuliur.
5. R. T. VELU, Vandipalayam, Tirupapuliur.
6. K. R. SUNDARARAJAN, Pleader, Gobichettipalayam.
7. R. DHARMARAJA Iyer, Clerk, Post Office, Madura.
- 8-9. N. R. SUBRAMANYAM, B.A., L.T., Head Master, Nannilam.

The prize amounts will be sent by M. O. on 12-3-'35

(The names of Second and Third Prize Winners in this Competition will be announced in the next issue.)

ANNOUNCEMENT

Another interesting, 'No Entrance Fee'
Competition will appear in the next issue

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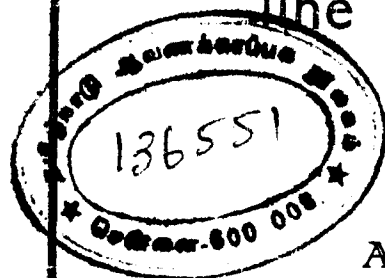
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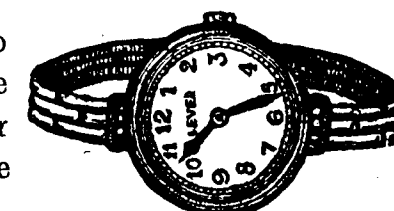
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