

★ ROMANCE ★

THE
MERRY

MAGAZINE

Vol. III

MADRAS, 30th MARCH, 1935

No. 13

A Little Knowledge

HEARD AT A PARTY
"Don't you know me?"
"I know you a long time."



THE MERRY MAGAZINE

(PUBLISHED EVERY SATURDAY)

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THE MERRY MAGAZINE

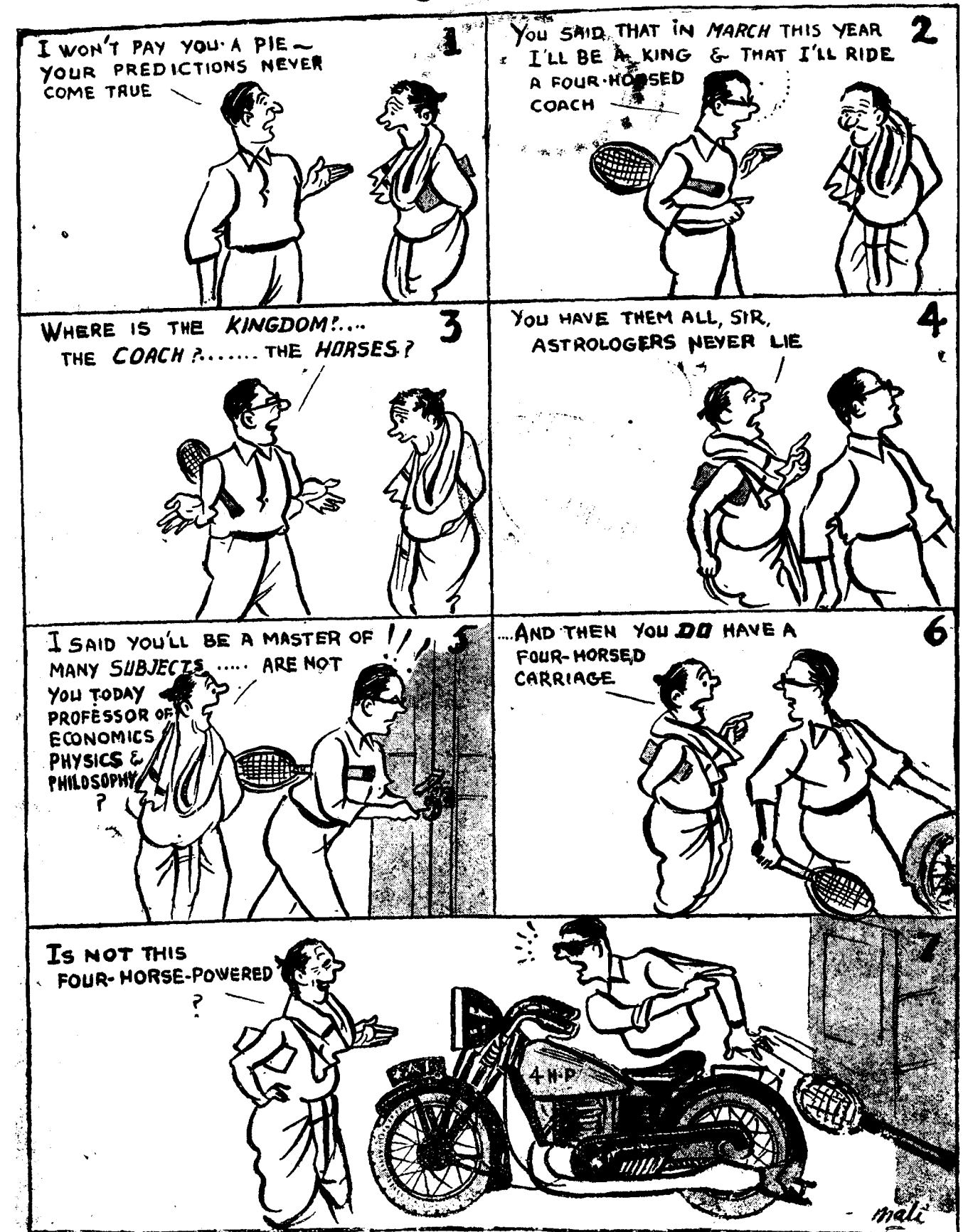
Vol. III

MADRAS, 30th MARCH, 1935.

No. 13

Astrologers Never Lie

—By 'MALI'





Mr. THOMAS consumed his breakfast in the customary atmosphere of gloom. Lily, his wife, sat opposite. She was getting old now. She still had a fine figure and something of good looks, but there was no brightness about her. Looking at her, Mr. Thomas told himself that she had grown middle-aged and indifferent. She did nothing to cheer a man up. It made him feel he was a back number. But he wasn't a back number. There were years of life before him yet. His heart still yearned for romance, while his wife sat there, meek and speechless and dutiful. All the romance had been drained from his life. Romance: that was what a man wanted.

Then there was his daughter, his little Dolly. Damn the girl, she sat there as mumchance as her mother. What was the matter with the chit? She was always resentful, rebellious and pert. Secretive, too. Always dissatisfied. What had she to be dissatisfied about? He

provided her with a good home, and everything that a girl needed. Of course, he kept a tight rein on her, as he did on his wife; but then it was a man's duty to keep his women-folk in their place. If he didn't, they'd be hankering after all sorts of things. But anyhow, they needn't sit there like a couple of mutes at a funeral.

Mr. Thomas returned resentfully to his newspaper. He travelled down the personal column. If'n, the usual grade-stuff. Fake messages, 'Romeo' telling 'Juliet' to try 'Doggo' soap. Even the romance of the personal column was commercialised. Then his eye lit upon a small paragraph:

"Refined lady wishes to correspond with an honourable, generous and affectionate gentleman, with a view to romance. Please reply to Box 83, care of this paper."

Romance, thought Mr. Thomas. An honourable, generous and affectionate gentleman. Nothing to say that the gentleman must be young. Romance. Mr. Thomas read the announcement again, folded the paper carefully, and put it in his pocket.

"Please, daddy, may I see the paper after you have gone?" asked his daughter.

"I shall need to consult it in the office," growled Mr. Thomas.

"He's gone," said Dolly, "old pig!"

"My dear!" protested her mother, "you must not speak of your father like that."

"I don't care!" stormed Dolly. "I hate this house, with his heavy hand over everything. It's gloomy. If I could find a man to run away with, I would, so there!"

"You must not dream of such horrid things, my dear," said Lily. "No doubt your father will find you a nice husband."

"What sort of a man do you think dad will choose?" cried Dolly. "He never lets me meet any young man on my own account. I don't want any of dad's choosings. What a girl needs is romance."

"Romance!" sighed her mother. "Some older people would like to have a little, too."

Mr. Thomas sat in his office, struggling with his conscience. He had always been a faithful husband. But the advertisement lured him. He studied it again. A generous gentleman. That ruled out all the young whipper-snappers. They never had anything to be generous with. Honourable, too. That suggested an unconventional arrangement, in which the lady trusted to the gentleman's good faith. The announcement was worded either by a very naive girl, or by a gentle-woman with a sad past. Probably the latter. Anyhow, he filled the bill. After all, what harm would there be in replying? Even supposing it led to a little romance, it would not hurt Lily. He would be discreet. He would still be a good husband. He drew a piece of paper towards him.

He was a good writer; it was an admirable letter. It expressed tender sympathy for the unknown advertiser, and visualised her loneliness. It pictured her as a member of a joyless household and despairingly reaching out for life and romance. It hinted at the writer's own unhappy surroundings and tenderly suggested that the unknown lady might permit him to offer her romantic solace.

But it was a cautious letter, too. He wrote it in a strange upright hand and gave an accommodation address. He signed the letter, 'Mickey'.

* * * *

Two days later, as soon as Mr. Thomas had departed for the office, his wife went to the bureau, and scribbled a hasty note. "It is the meeting of the Ladies' Guild on Thursday evening," she said to Dolly. "But perhaps it will not be convenient for your father to let me go. Will you take this note round to Mrs. Masters, in case it is something important?"

"Oh, all right," said Dolly, rather unwillingly. Her mother looked at her in surprise. Usually Dolly was glad of any brief outing. But the girl was dawdling about, as if loath to depart.

"Why are you waiting?" asked her mother, sharply.

"Oh, nothing," replied the girl, and slowly made for the street. At the door, she suddenly started, and ran out.

Her mother, noticing the strangeness of her demeanour, went outside. Dolly had stopped the postman and he was giving her a letter.

"Bring it here," said her mother, without premeditation.

The girl hesitated. "It is for me," she said reluctantly.

"For you?"

"Dash it, I suppose I'm caught," muttered the girl. "Here you are. I wish I hadn't sent the beastly advertisement. Anyhow, don't jaw me. It is all dad's fault." And she rushed off, suppressing the tears that started to her eyes.

Mrs. Thomas sat alone, reading a letter addressed to 'Box No. 83'. The envelope was in an outer cover from the newspaper-office.

It was a lovely letter, in a strange, vertical handwriting. It addressed itself to an unknown woman, who was lonely, oppressed and ignored. It offered sweet sympathy and romance, from one similarly unhappy. It begged, in the most delicate language, that the unknown woman should grant the favour of an interview with her unknown admirer. It was signed 'Mickey'.

How wicked of Dolly to invite such a letter from a stranger. The naughty girl had actually advertised for a lover. What an appalling notion in a child of sixteen. Really, she would have to be severely reprimanded. But one had better not tell her father.

Mrs. Thomas read the letter again. It was charmingly phrased. It was a letter such as she herself would love to receive. The writer was obviously such a good, honourable, romantic man. He offered Paradise to a lonely, disappointed woman. If only Mrs. Thomas knew such a man.

She started guiltily, for a monstrous idea had come into her mind. She *could* know such a man—this very man. He had written to an unknown advertiser. The letter had fallen into her hands. She could reply to it herself—granting a meeting.

Mrs. Thomas blushed at the thought, but a mood of reckless impetuosity overwhelmed her. She would seize this strangely-sent opportunity to satisfy the cravings of her heart. She crept into her husband's study, and began to tap laboriously on his typewriter.

Dolly was surprised and relieved at the mildness of her mother's rebukes regarding the dreadful advertisement.

* * * *

At breakfast on Thursday morning, the family was distinctly ill-at-ease. Apart from his usual gloom, Mr. Thomas seemed to have something on his mind. Mrs. Thomas was unaccountably nervous, while Dolly seemed to be on the point of an explosion.

The head of the household broke the silence. "What are you doing this evening?" he said to his wife.

Mrs. Thomas started. "It is the Ladies' Guild, if I may go," she said, fluttering.

"Oh," said Mr. Thomas, shifting his eyes uneasily. "Then I had better go to the Club."

Strangely enough, husband and wife heaved a simultaneous sigh of relief.

"And what am I going to do?" suddenly said Dolly.

"What do you mean?" asked Mr. Thomas, taken aback.

"I want to join the Youth League," cried Dolly. "Why should I be tied to the house all the time? I want to meet people of my own age on equal terms. If you don't look out, I'll do something desperate."

"Er—I'll consider the matter," said her father, with unwonted mildness.

"Good gracious," remarked Dolly, after he had gone. "What's happened to him? That is the first time he's ever considered anything, or anybody."

All the afternoon, Mr. Thomas fingered the type-written letter. It was done by an amateur, on good paper—the sort of paper he used for his own private correspondence.

It was from his charmer. But such an elusive charmer! The letter was posted at the G. P. O., signature was typewritten: 'Minnie'.

It was a letter that could have been written only by a perfect lady. It was modest, yet unsparing and direct. It appealed to his manly feelings of protectiveness and romance. It said that wistful unhappiness impelled the lady to respond to his plea. At least, she would meet him this once. She begged him, as a gentleman, to follow her instructions, and not to seek to discover her identity.

Nightfall found Mr. Thomas groping his way along an unfrequented lane in one of the remoter suburbs. Yes, there were the out-buildings of the Women's College, now closed for the vacation. He did not know the place, but he rather thought his wife had a school-friend on the staff. This must be the postern-gate into the garden. Sure enough, it was ajar. He closed it behind him. There was a summer-house, in a corner of the garden.

He crept along the path, and stepped quietly into the little building. He stood in pitch darkness, his heart almost bursting.

"Mickey?" said a tiny voice.

"Minnie?" he whispered.

"You—you may come and sit by me," said the tiny voice.

Supper on Thursday evening was a strange affair. Mrs. Thomas was radiant. Mr. Thomas gazed at his wife with newly-opened eyes. Why, she was still very pretty, very desirable. She sparkled with animation. What made him think she was dull and unresponsive? She laughed merrily at his jokes. There was a lilt in her voice which he had not noticed before. He felt extraordinarily affectionate towards her.

Compunction smote him. Lily was a good wife. She served him untiringly and unfailingly. She was pretty and attractive, too. At the back of his mind was the dark memory of the unknown woman of the summer-house. He must have been mad. He, the ungrateful

possessor of the sweetest wife in the world. He must lock away in his heart the secret of that delirious hour in the summer house, and make reparation by devoting himself to dear Lily.

Meanwhile his wife was busy too with unaccustomed thoughts. She saw her husband in a new light. He was not the surly brute she had imagined. He was jolly and friendly, cracking quite good jokes. He was such a big, comforting husband, steady and reliable. She had never realised how fond of him she was.

She fought down the guilty memory of that mad hour in the summer-house. It had been delicious, but it was a wickedness she must never, never do again. She would give her dear husband all her love and devotion, now and always.

Dolly gazed from one to the other in bewilderment. "Look here, Daddy," she ventured at last. "Are you going to let me join the Youth League?"

"League? Youth League?—Well; yes, certainly, my dear." And he beamed from his wife to his daughter, and back again.

"Hooray!" shouted Dolly. "Do you know, parents," she continued, "I think I'm going to approve of this household after all. Believe it or not, I've got a feeling that we are going to live happy ever after."

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IT MAY BE YOUR TURN NEXT

SO, KEEP YOUR COPY

THE MIRROR OF LIFE



The Comedy of Likes and Dislikes

By Dewan Bahadur K. S. Ramaswami Sastri

SHALL I write about likes or dislikes? It cannot be about both, can it? Then likes and dislikes will cancel and destroy each other and we can be free and happy. It is these Kilkenny cats—likes and dislikes,—that murder each other and make our nights hideous. Have you a clear recollection of nocturnal caterwaulings? I have. One night I went to see a drama and returned full of the drama and repressed feelings of murderousness. K. B. Sundarambal was, of course, the star. Of all the stars, I like the Morning Star and the Evening Star. I am told that they are one and the same—one of those exasperating truths or myths of science. I must tell you about the drama some day. I must tell you also about the truths and myths and truthful myths and mythical truths of science. I am full of ideas and they are rushing along. I am being swirled along in that torrent. I wish the *Merry Magazine* were a daily paper so as to keep pace with this raging torrent. Then it will have to become an hourly paper. Eventually it will have to become a minutely paper and finally a secondly paper. But you see that it cannot be a second. It must be the first.

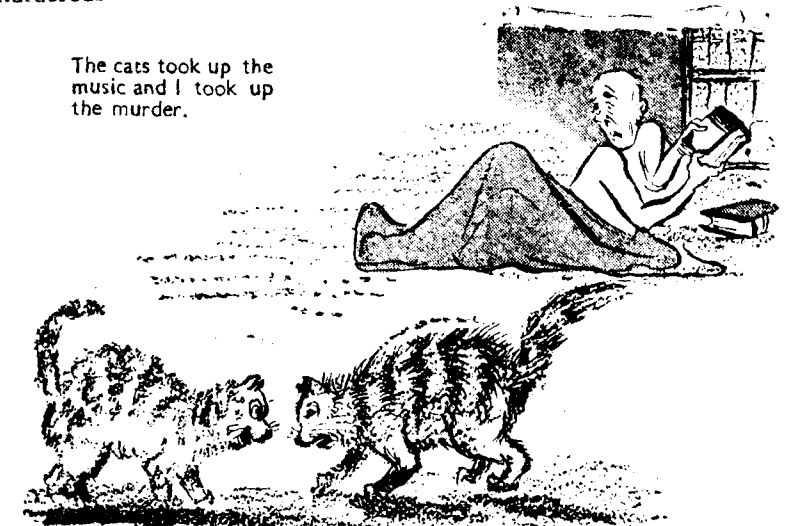
As usual with me, I have lost my thread rather than the needle. I have the needle always between the thumb and the fore-

finger. Where was I? I returned from K. B. Sundarambal's drama. I was observing that the Morning Star is loveable. But it will not be loveable if you are to keep awake the whole night to see it. If it were necessary to do so, I would hire an anarchist's bomb and bomb it to pieces. I wonder why the drama and film-stars become wet morning stars. But the music was super-stellar and I came home full of music and murder. At 3 a.m. I jumped into my bed and began to doze. Just as I was being hailed into dreamland, a caterwauling began. I heard a meow. Then there was a responsive counter-meow. The see-saw went on. I was pulled out of dreamland. I went into bed full of music and murder. When I got up they had parted company. The cats took up the music and I took up the murder. I took hold of whatever I could seize and hurled them at the musicians who were specialising in a duet. The missiles flew. They missed the mark. Eventually I tried the Civil Procedure Code. There was no effect. I tried the Criminal Procedure Code. You know that it is the *Brahmastram*. I took another copy of that Code and tore out Section 144 and hurled it. Even that failed. Then I thought that I must try the Humiliation Act—it might limit the bother by an unanswerable piece of logic. Even that failed. I sat down and wept. Meantime the Sun came up. I lost my sleep. I could not commit murder. I lost also my Codes and Acts and had to buy them new.

I set out to write about likes and dislikes and somehow got involved in a battle with Kilkenny cats. I here say that there is no accounting for likes and dislikes—as if there is or has been or will be accounting for anything else in the world. There could be counting out for accounting, it just does not exist. Science is good at counting but it imagines itself to be good at accounting. That is its vanity. I like the *Merry Magazine* and the *Merry Magazine* likes me. We know the reason why: both of us are merry. But why do I like Mr. Saddu and why does he like me? I do not know, nor does he. I'm the most loquacious man in the world. He hardly ever speaks at all.

I am tall and he is short, I am thin and he is fat. He and I put together form the long and the short of it. The other day I went to meet Mr. Jnani. He is a very clever man. Between you and me, I may tell you that

The cats took up the music and I took up the murder.



I am a very clever man, too. As soon as I went in he looked at me and I looked at him. That is in the usual course of things as both of us have got eyes. But he looked daggers at me. I had left my daggers at home. So I merely glared. I thought that being Jnani he would speak wisdom and that I would repay wisdom with mirth. But he would not speak a word and I beat a hasty retreat.

Such likes and dislikes exist among families as well as individuals. The Montagues and the Capulets are a notorious instance in point. Even their henchmen would not meet without biting their thumbs at each other. By the bye what is there wrong in thumb-biting? Thumbs are comparatively harmless things. It is much less crude to bite one's thumb than to bite another's thumb. But all the same, thumb-biting would lead to daggers drawn. Daggers drawn do not matter much. People may be at daggers drawn as much as they like. It is daggers used that cause all the trouble in the world. The result was that Romeo and Juliet lost their lives. I am sorry for them, poor souls! Theirs was a case of likes whereas their parents' case was a case of dislikes. It is all a hopeless tangle.

I am pestered by a candid friend of mine—Satyavageswaran—to shove in a few remarks about Hindus and Muslims and Brahmins and Non-Brahmins in this essay. I am sure he spoke with his tongue in his cheek. He has evidently some subterranean designs upon my life. God save us from all friends, and specially from candid friends. There are three grades of enemies *viz.* enemies, friends and candid friends. Enemies abuse you to your face. Friends abuse you behind your back. Candid friends abuse you to your face and behind your back. I do not believe that Hindus and Muslims or that Brahmins and Non-Brahmins dislike one another at all.

They like one another very much. They are friends. Nay, they are candid friends.

But what are all these likes and dislikes in the face of the great elemental likes and dislikes or the vast likes and dislikes of races. Chemistry tells us much about the former. But I have forgotten my chemistry to a large extent. What I remember I shall tell you another day. But usual likes and dislikes are like Vesuvius in perpetual eruption. How many varieties have there been of such eruptions of cultivation. The best authority about them is of course H. G. Wells who has written the wonderful *Outline of History*. H. G. Wells says in one of his works—I have lost count of his works and have been drowned by his vocabulary and so I cannot tell you in

which work—that there is no race so superior as to be trusted with human charges." He adds: "There is only one sane and logical thing to be done with a really inferior race, and that is to exterminate it." He adds: "Now, there are various ways of exterminating a race, and most of them are cruel. You may end it with fire and sword after the old Hebrew fashion; you may enslave it and work it to death, as the Spaniards did the Caribs; you may set it boundaries and then poison it slowly with deleterious commodities, as Americans do with most of their Indians; you may incite it to wear clothing to which it is not accustomed, and to live under new and strange conditions that will expose it to infectious diseases to which you yourselves are immune, as the missionaries do the Polynesians; you may resort to simple murder, as the English did with the Tasmanians; or you can maintain such conditions as conduce to race-suicide, as the British administration does in Fiji.....On the whole the Fijian device seems the least cruel." The Congress says that there is another method in India. But I am too much of a loyalist to say all that. Let it be the Fijian method—the least cruel method. All the same racial dislikes are the most obscure of human phenomena, but are all the same the high-water-mark of human civilisation.

In The Next Issue

SOPHIE DAW By 'Embusque'
(A humble fisher-girl; a cheap prostitute kicked from man to man; intrigues at the French Court.)

THE NIGHT HAWK By John R. Chapman
(Official and Big Business red-tape, a battered plane smashing long distance records, and a cargo of snakes delivered to where they belonged.)

MISS MANI THE CAT By 'Viloo'
(This is what happens to high-brow maids who turn up their noses at their boy friends.)

CONFOUND THOSE MONKEYS By J. H. Acott.
(They aren't monkeys: only married women's, ambiguity and impressionable idiot's folly.)

MATRIMONIAL OFFERS By 'Elmer Delville'
(But really offers for second-hand autos, pigs and an undertaker butting in to bury a live spinster.)

Also Our regular features—Joyfull, Auntie, Star Dust, Etc.



'KEBI'

FATHERS, with grown-up daughters on their hands have taken up the cudgels against the unmarried youth of Sind. A crusade against bachelors aged over 25, has been launched by the Hyderabad (Sind) Amil Panchayat, which has passed a resolution urging all offices in Hyderabad not to give any increment to bachelors in service aged over 25, drawing Rs. 50 and above. This crusade is stated to be in the cause of families with a large number of unmarried grown-up girls. Evidently, the Hyderabad fathers have caught the virus from that astute champion of matrimony, Signor Mussolini.

But our sisters in France do not need such thoughtful parents, because they are quite a host in themselves. In that advanced country, it is the poor male, who claims our sympathy first. The latest move in this persecution of French men is the formation of 'Vamping Club'. The 'Club' apparently has as its object the successful clinching of happy marriages—in the West they are as common as showers in May!—and its membership is exclusively feminine. It functions thus: No sooner a member gets engaged than about half a dozen others 'go into action'. They force their charms upon the hapless would-be husband and try their best to flirt with him. If he but succumbs to so much as a brotherly kiss, woe betide him! His fiancée is informed and she scratches the fixture. If, however, his love is so great as to resist the wiles of these Circes, then his betrothed marries him. It would be interesting to know what would happen if two or more members of the 'Club' are after the same fellow!

Lala Ganga Prasad, a Zamindar of Rewa State, has brought a stupendous claim on the coffers of that State. He has served a notice on the Ruler claiming Rs. 80,000 crores as principal and interest of a loan which his great-great-grand-father advanced to the great-great-grand-father of the present Maharaja of Rewa! The original amount is said to be a lakh and a half rupees and the then Maharaja executed a bond for that amount. The claimant argues that as the State does not observe the Law of Limitation in the matter of recovering arrears of State dues from subjects, his claim stands. Interest and compound interest has been added for a century and a half. In the notice, Ganga Prasad seeks the permission of the

Maharaja to bring a suit against him and also requests him to exempt him (the complainant) from court fees, as he is too poor to pay it now.

Ganga Prasad has also another grievance. The State has taken over the Kishangarh estate, which is managed by the Court of Wards. Prasad has requested the Maharaja to recognize him as the legitimate and rightful heir to the estate. He has given three months time for this and has threatened to seek the help of the law courts if his request is not conceded by that time.

Dr. W. Norwood East, an English Prison Commissioner, has analysed motives for murder in cases in his personal experience. His researches have led him to the conclusion that:

- 46 were the result of a quarrel;
- 46 were due to jealousy;
- 32 were for pecuniary gain;
- 31 for revenge;
- 15 to get rid of an inconvenient person;
- 8 to avoid arrest; and
- 10 the result of suicide pacts.

Often there was more than one factor. Some murderers appeared to commit crime largely to appear for a brief space of time in the spotlight of publicity—psychopaths with a craving for prestige, they are called.

Sir Bernard Spilsbury, the famous British Pathologist, agrees with Dr. East that murderers find the burden of secrecy too heavy to be borne.

And by the way, don't fail to pull your friend's leg the day after to-morrow. You know it is the April Fool's Day. The origin of this custom of playing practical jokes on April 1st, has been much disputed. It is perhaps a relic of the once universal festivities observed at the Vernal Equinox. In our own country, at the feast of Holi, that is, on March 31, the chief method of amusement is befooling friends by sending them on fruitless errands. In Scotland, the custom is known as 'hunting the gowk' *i.e.* the cuckoo, and all April Fools are 'April-gowks', the cuckoo being a term of contempt in the Land of the Heather. In France, the befooled person is called *poisson d'avril*.

If you have a free morning to-morrow, go to the Island Grounds and have a gala time. You will hear from me next week.

THE EDITOR'S COLUMN

SOME folks have all the luck. The Arctic weather (though tinged with a dash of tragedy) which the recent cold-wave had brought in its wake to Northern and Western India, has not even deigned to peep into our parlour. And all too soon we are on the threshold of Summer when days are long and tempers are short. Even such soulless entities as the tar-roads of the Metropolis are protesting in no uncertain manner, by bubbling all over under the mid-day sun, as if they have had the pox. What, then, about men? This, I take it, is the time when people effervesce and express themselves in picturesque terms about things in general.

That was precisely the reason why I have generously provided an outlet to your feelings and asked you to express yourself freely in the Merry Fans Open Forum which saw the light of day in the last issue. To-day I repeat that invitation with added cordiality. Over and above the themes on which you were invited to express opinions, namely, whether you want a 'Deisvi' serial, whether you have had enough of Joyfull, etc., there is no subject under the Summer Sun that you may not touch and adorn. Here are two full pages reserved for you. Come, therefore, one and all and disport yourselves therein to your heart's content and the other fellows' pleasure.

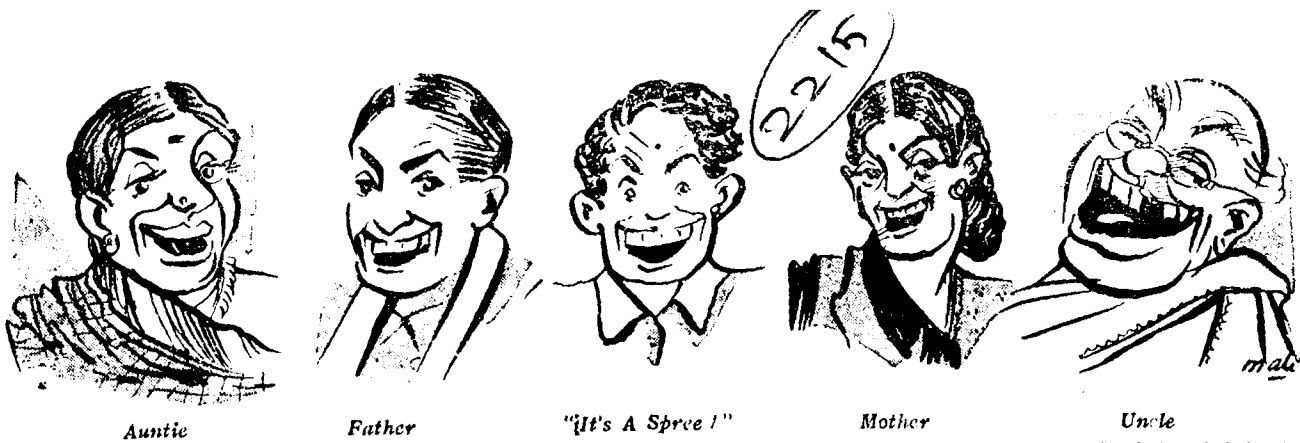
A word about Auntie. Auntie has been withholding from us, all these days, her delightful experiences as correspondent. I am now glad to announce at last that the dear old lady will be treating us to her experiences in that line next week. Again Summer has had its effect, and Auntie ladles out Hot-stuff.

Switching on to another topic, everyone of us has heard of the hackneyed saying about familiarity breeding contempt. Perhaps: in contemptible people. We are now familiar with the economic depression for well over five years; and even the mightiest Governments of the world haven't the nerve to brag that they view this depression with contempt. I am doing my little to mitigate the rigour by a weekly offer of prizes to readers who are competition-minded. There is absolutely no entrance fee. I don't care what Auntie calls me for this prodigality. There is a comfortable cheque waiting to be lifted and smaller prizes for the less lucky. Apart, however, from the money-motive back of these weekly competitions, they ought to prove a delightful diversion even to those *nishkama kurma yogins* who have imbibed the philosophy of Sabarmati and Wardha.

—Editor.

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FUN FOR ALL THE FAMILY

Service.

An income-tax collector died, and a subscription was raised in a city office for a wreath. The boss promised five shillings.

A few days later one of the clerks called to collect the money, and the chief handed him a ten-shilling note.

"You want five shillings change, sir," said the clerk.

"No," growled the other; "keep it and bury another."

Very Windy.

The batsman was making a dogged stand when things were going badly. At length the opposing fast bowler got him with a ball that just removed the bails. The batsman picked up the bails, replaced them, and, nodding to the umpire approaching the wicket, said: "Jolly windy to-day, isn't it?"

"Yes," replied the umpire. "Here's your cap. Mind it doesn't blow away as you return to the pavilion."

Equal Chances.

She had just accepted him, and they were discussing the might-have-beens.

"Darling," he inquired, "why didn't you accept that little donkey Smithers?"

"Because," she answered, dreamily, "I loved another."

Not Such a Fool

"That horse you sold me isn't all you cracked him up to be. He keeps stopping as if he were listening for something."

"Told you he was mighty careful, didn't I? He thinks you might have said 'Whoa', and he didn't hear you."

No Fear!

Mother: "You naughty girl, Betty, to pick up your food that way. I ought to send you away till you learn manners."

Betty: "Why, mummy—can't I learn them at home?"

Wait and See

They had new neighbours, and the wife was very interested in them. A few days after they arrived, she reported:—

"They seem to be a very devoted couple, John. He kisses her every time he goes out and when he comes in again, and waves kisses to her from down the street. Why don't you do that?"

"Hang it all," said John. "Give a man time. I don't know her yet, do I?"

Tickets, Please!

The inspector boarded the bus and an outside passenger started fumbling for his appropriate ticket. He produced specimens from his ticket-pocket, his waistcoat pockets, his coat pockets, and even from his trousers pockets—shoals of tickets, but not one to satisfy the inspector.

"Lumme!" commented a fellow passenger, "he ought to carry a album."

Not so Painless!

Mandy had been troubled with a toothache for some time before she got up sufficient courage to go to a dentist. The moment he touched the tooth she screamed.

"What are you making such a noise for?" he demanded. "Don't you know I'm a painless dentist?"

"Well, sah," retorted Mandy, "mebbe you is painless, but Ah isn't."

SCATTERED

SAM Winterbottom had lived for thirty years in India. He came with every intention of becoming a Nabob in six months in those days of Private Mulvaney, when a little bit of loot was not so hard for an honest man to come by. He based his faith on a fortune-teller's prediction—justifiably, because he had paid a shilling when shillings were infernally scarce and the whole Cockney soul of him expected a shilling's-worth. But six months, a year, ten years passed without his becoming a Nabob, without (let's face it) his even turning Deputy Nabob, and it became painfully evident that either the fortune-teller was a fraud or else the line of luck on which he based his prediction had been nothing occult. Besides, opportunities for achieving Nabobdom were few and, to Sam, very far between. He eventually concentrated his attention on three square meals a day and was surprised to find that after so many disappointments, he was not unsuccessful. He worked as little as possible, being a conscientious Labour Unionite; religiously spent part of his savings on a ticket in the Calcutta Sweepstake; and continued wearing glad-necks and braces for work although his colleagues pointed out to him the depravity of dressing unlike a *pukka Sahib* (which he, and they, took to mean a being with semi-stiff collars and poplin pants). So for thirty years. During which he got used to India; poor maligned India being already inured to some thousands of Winterbottoms.

One evening he was lounging in his long-sleever, pulling at a ripe old briar with a fortnight-old newspaper on his lap, striving to work out the sixth cross-word puzzle.

A telegraph peon disturbed him just as he was triumphing over a word of eight letters beginning with B and ending with RAT to represent a gold mining centre in Australia. He tore the cover open. And discovered that he had drawn the second favourite for the Derby. (Second favourites are notoriously more likely to win than first favourites. This from bitter experience.) If Mr. Winterbottom had been a pagan Greek he would have gone ten lines into an Alexandrine address to the fates or Jove or someone equally blameless. A Frenchman should have jumped on his chair, turned a somersault and shot his mother-in-law (getting drunk is permissible in the regrettable absence of a mother-in-law)—although it is an unfortunate fact that he would probably have given the messenger 4 As. and accepted the highest offer for his ticket. An aristocratic Britisher would have said "Bai Jove" and sent a cable to the lady of his heart "Wona pot of oof—How about it, old thing?"

Mr. Winterbottom was, as the reader probably suspects by now, neither a pagan Greek, a Frenchman, nor an aristocrat. We regret to report that his immediate reactions were painfully plebeian. He gave the peon all his loose change (happily on the wrong side of a

THE CALL OF THE EAST

which we take to mean not a physical deformity, but a spiritual (or spirituous) inspiration.

He hung with both hands to his ticket and defied the attempts of the sporting world to buy even a share in it. His mother's influence with the fates was evidently strong. He put his shirt on a certainty, and the certainty (contrary, to all laws of chance,) went ahead and won. To be exact, it was three lengths ahead when it won and the race-papers described the event as a procession.

"Hif," he said, with pardonable excitement, "I stay another week in this country may I be blasted for a (sauginary) idiot. Me fer good ole' Blighty."

The P. & O. boat had already sailed and Sam was nervous of the airways.

His mind (if, as Prof. Wright suggests, the Cockney has a mind) being made up to depart immediately, he bought a car and hired an English driver to take him home. The overland route was full of 'Rowmance' and Sam was an antique of Romanticism left over in an age where comfort is preferred to thrills. In the heart of him he acknowledged that it was really the call of the West which was dragging him back.

He painted glowing pictures of possible dangers in his mind and equipped himself with a passport, a revolver and a licence for the latter. His passage through Baluchistan was full of bumps, Baluchis and their attendant smells—but neither danger nor brigands. A tired Frontier officer smiled at his revolver and assured him that this particular part of Asia was considerably safer than Piccadilly Circus at the hour when Ladies of the Road set about their business.

Sam Winterbottom rattled and bumped his way through Baluchistan and Persia, hurt and disappointed at the unjust fates which were spoiling his Big Chance. For, let's face it, he had met no one more lawless than the toll-gatherers who fleeced him in the name of a compassionate and merciful Allah. He saw no slave girls in Ispahan and Baghdad's chief produce for sale seemed to be art-post-cards after French models.

But the farther he went, the more he began to feel conscious of having left something behind him. There was a decided sense of loss hanging on his soul—it was as if a part of him had been unaccountably detached. In Damascus he moped like a homesick child; in Dinar he

rupee) and fervently ejaculated to himself, "God damn my bies! S'elp me hit's true."

His mother had given him one gift in all her life—a piece of gratuitous advice. "Sam," she said, "never gamble, my lad—hexcept hon a certainty and then put your shirt on the 'oss." Regarding this second favourite he had what he described to his pals as a "unch"

By
'RAM'

(Continued on page 12)

THE average dog finds great consolation in the saying "Every dog has his day". Although it is not distinctly stated what the day will be for, a phenyle bath, getting a large marrow bone, making a search for fat lice and ticks, getting the master's stick on the back, successfully courting little Pixie, next door, or coming under the wheels of a car, the fact remains as solid as my head, that every dog has his day.

Very well, then. Why should not a clerk have his day, or for the matter of that, a typist, a despatcher, and even a salesman? According to somebody, 'even a worm will turn'; I should like to ask you why should not an author also turn or a librarian, or even one of our so many unemployed Honours-Graduates?

For a forty-five rupees vacancy now, there are four-fifty begging applications, and for a three-hundred-rupee job there are three thousand applicants, three-fourths of whom are prepared to work for three hundred rupees a month, less one zero.

We should not, however, feel disappointed, for in the very near future all of us are going to have our day, even if we are not dogs, and in the fullness of time, which is very near, all of us under-paid chaps are going to turn: and I bet you anything from a lollypop to a chewing gum, that when the time comes, I am going to *TURN*, and make straight for a few fellows' throats.

It will be a happy time for us, and instead of us poor people answering advertisements and sending begging applications, starting with "Sir", and ending with "Your most obedient servant," we shall advertise, and let him who calls the tune pay the fiddler, for the dog's day has come, and the worm has turned, and the old order has changed, to give place to new. In these happy times people will advertise on some such lines:

A Clerk.
"SEALED TENDERS are invited from firms of repute who have enough cash to engage a Clerk. Tenderers will be required to give assurance of good behaviour, and unblemished character. The Clerk will come to work at 11 a. m. and take an hour off at 2 p. m. and knock-off at 4 p. m.



Applications.....to look after a beautiful, young typist.

Holidays will be availed of on Sundays, last Saturday of the month and other festival days. Saturdays will be half holidays. Besides this the Clerk will avail three months' leave on full pay, not including other days when the weather will be foggy, wet, very cold, or awfully hot. Tender forms containing full particulars regarding pay, leave, allowance, and furlough, can be obtained on payment of Rs. 5 which will not be

refunded. Any tender not accompanied by two months' pay in advance, as earnest deposit, will be rejected. The Clerk does not bind himself to accept any, or the highest tender, or to give reasons for the rejection of any. Bank references should be stated. The last day of the receipt of the tender is Friday, the 20th June 1935.

The Lovely Steno-Girl.

"Applications are invited from unmarried gentlemen, who have a heart, and a purse large enough to look after a beautiful, young typist. The applicants should state, in correct figures, subject to audit by the Govern-

ment Examiner of Accounts, their bank balance, and other assets. The number of cars, (with their make and origin) that the applicant owns should also be stated. Applicants need not have any special qualifications, but they should be rich, and not suffer from halitosis, loss of memory, and temporary blindness. The Steno-girl will attend

office at noon, work till 1 p. m., when the employer will be required to take her for lunch, at any of the approved list of restaurants, which can be obtained for Rs. 2 cash down. From 2 to 3 p. m., the Steno-girl will attend to her toilet, and answer all her love-letters, on the boss's typewriter. She will not sit on the boss's lap, allow him to kiss her, or discuss any love affair with him, and references to matrimony should be strictly confined to the boss, as the Steno-girl herself will on no account whatsoever, advance her own views. A special allowance of Rs. 5 per day should be allowed for such expenses as the oiling, repairing, and overhauling of the typewriter, the cost of ribbons and carbon-papers. Applicants should note before applying that the Steno-girl uses only two-inch French ribbons, of the taffeta variety, especially in colours of mauve, blue, white, heliotrope and pink.

A Salesman.

"FIRMS who have got more money than brains, and do not know how to get their stuff off their hands will do well to send a half-anna stamp for prospectus, containing full particulars on how to engage Mr. Gill, super-salesman. Mr. Gill, sometimes a mining engineer, then a lorry-driver, bar-tenderer, professional pugilist, sword-swallower and fire-eater, famous for selling anybody a pup, pot, or a mongoose, is open for engagement, and will sell your goods to all and sundry, to every willing and unwilling purchaser (vide his qualifications as a pugilist). Firms not prepared to pay him at least



will be informed by post-card, and will have to effect the engagement within twenty-four hours of the notice of acceptance. Besides the salary of Rs. 700 a month the following allowances should be sanctioned, without which no applications will be considered.

Rs. 16/- per day for whisky.
Rs. 16/- per day for hotel expenses.
Rs. 1/2/- per mile railway fare.
Rs. 20/- per day for sundry expenses.

Applications should be neatly typed on one side of the paper only.

A Graduate.

"BUSINESS HOUSES who wish to feel the glow of having a Bachelor of Arts, on their staff, are hereby directed to send in their immediate indents, as the demand is likely to be very great. Only limited concerns with a capital of not less than ten lacs of rupees need apply. The employment will be taken up for a probationary period of two years, after which it is likely to be made permanent. The boss of the firm should have a beautiful daughter, of good behaviour, accomplished, fond of dancing and riding, so that the graduate can now and again take her out at her father's expense. The post should carry a pension equal to 9/10ths of a salary of Rs. 834/-, on which the graduate wishes to be started. The applicants should distinctly understand that the graduate will not do any

work, but has no objection to sign papers, the full responsibility for which should rest on a junior matric-failed clerk, drawing Rs. 45/- a month. A mahogany table, an electric fan (electric heater in winter) a press-bell, a uniformed peon, one typist, one private secretary and one car should be placed at the disposal of the graduate. Room should face East, with a Southern exposure, water h. and c. laid on, with lavatory attached.

And Authors.



Editors to call over on foot and to collect a few articles, skits,....etc.

"EDITORS are requested to call over, on foot if they can't afford conveyance, and collect a few articles, skits, short-stories, poems and cartoons. The articles etc, will be on display and should be paid for on the spot before removal. The prices are marked, and should be paid for at those rates. Editors who cannot call over, should send a written application, and enclose stamps, at the same time provide a written guarantee of honesty signed by their Marwari, Pathan, or other money-lender. All the literary work is hand-written on both sides of the paper, and the author takes no guarantee, whatsoever for illegibility, spelling, grammatical or other mistakes. Editors who come and haggle over the prices of articles will get their blocks knocked-off and their noses punched."

Don't you think, dear colleagues, it will serve all of them right?

THE CALL OF THE EAST—(Continued from page 10)

insulted his driver for disturbing his reflections; and only the purple of his nose prevented him from being certified sick of the plague at Smyrna. His journey had been desultory so far. He wanted to see the world and refused to follow any hard and fast track. At Smyrna he realised what was biting him. It was the call of the East luring him back! Sam Winterbottom was always a man of quick decisions. In ten minutes the car was turned and he was retracing his way. Smith who drove him, thought he was mad, but it never pays to cure a profitable madness (Smith was getting heavy wages, free life insurance, and a generous travelling allowance.). So he drove, in what approximated to silence.

Sam was riotously happy as far as Hamadan; in Ispahan he began to feel restless; at Yerd he was uncomfortable; and in Kerman the call of the West hit him a mighty kick in the slats. Back he turned as soon as he could fill up petrol, and set off on the Great West way again.

At Smyrna the call of the East caught him and he had to volte face once more.

The next three months he spent in journeying between Smyrna and Kerman. The farthest he reached was Shah Godar on the Eastern side; and once he fell asleep, so that the car overshot Smyrna by several miles, on the Western. But that was an accident.

It seemed at first that he was doomed to spend the rest of his life in answering calls. But the fates never overdo a good thing. On his forty-second trip, just as he was passing through Ispahan, he realised that he could feel no call at all (rhyme perfectly unintentional). With Sam to think was to act—in fact he usually acted first, because thinking was a long and weary process to him.

The car was stopped and he was enquiring the price of a house on the road.

Sam has now settled in Ispahan with a Circassian wife. He has lately become the proud father of twins and is the only specimen of perfect contentment in the two hemispheres. Mother and children doing well, thank you.

MRS. Gabriel answered the knock herself. She had to, since her maid had left her the day before.

"Mr. Gabriel home?" asked a large man who covered the doorway rather gruffly.

"No, but I expect him any moment," she answered. "Is it important? Perhaps if you were to tell me—"

The big man grinned.

"I'll wait," he said, pushing his way in. "I've come to arrest him."

"Arrest him!" shrieked Mrs. Gabriel, horror-stricken. "What has he done? Killed some one, or—or—"

"Nothing to be alarmed about," explained the big man, seating himself in a corner. "A charge of over-speeding."

"Oh!" Mrs. Gabriel was relieved. "He wouldn't stop, and you got his number? Where was it?"

"Right! He wouldn't stop. Yes, I got his number. It was on the Marina. He had a big, brown girl with him."

"On the Marina! A—a big, brown girl!" gasped Mrs. Gabriel.

The big man nodded and grinned. Mrs. Gabriel flushed, closed her lips tightly and sat down. Her knitting nearly struck fire, she plied the needles so vigorously.

Suddenly the door opened and Gabriel popped in, grinning. He didn't notice the visitor.

"Whoops, my dear!" he cried, attempting to kiss his wife. "You can't guess what I got!"

"A big brown girl!" snapped Mrs. Gabriel, dodging her head back to escape the kiss.

"Eh?" he stammered.

"And you've got something else you don't know about," she added grimly.

"Cut the puzzles," he laughed. "Look here, I don't know how you guessed the brown girl, but you ought to have come round with me. I was nearly pinched—"

"You mean on the Marina," his wife said, coldly, "and you didn't nearly get pinched, as you call it—you are pinched."

"What!" asked Gabriel in great surprise.

"Yes, sir, I have to arrest you, Mr. Gabriel," said the big man, getting up from his seat.

"Arrest me? For what?"

"Over-speedin'. And not stoppin' when I shouted and whistled. On the Marina."

"Who are you?" demanded Gabriel.

"Traffic Sergeant Bright."

PINCHED!

"I didn't see you or hear you, and I was not speeding on the Marina—"

Mrs. Gabriel could restrain herself no longer.

"Then you admit you were on the Marina?" she cried. "And with a brazen brown hussy? This is what comes of my marrying a man—a man—!"

Gabriel looked at her sharply, then turned to the big man.

"So you're the sort of a human hyena who goes around breaking up happy homes, eh? You didn't have to tell my wife I was riding with a brown—"

"You admit it!" shrieked Mrs. Gabriel. "Officer, summon her to court as a witness. I just want to get my hands on her—"

"You can do that, my dear, by stepping into the kitchen," said Gabriel softly. "Her name is Grace Annam, and she was recommended as an excellent maid by a friend. I intended her as a surprise for you, and sent her in by the side-door."

Mrs. Gabriel dashed for the kitchen. Gabriel turned to the man.

"How do I know you are an officer?"

The man showed his stripes and pass. Gabriel took a good look at them.

"All right," he snapped, "I shall attend the court."

The man looked surprised.

"Would you? Truth is I didn't bring along the forms and other things. Most men, you know, would rather—that is, wouldn't—if they can fix it up without its getting reported. It saves the second and third offence record."

"I see," said Gabriel. "How much will fix the thing up?"

"Oh, I guess about twenty will do the trick."

"Sit down. Have a cigar? I will get it for you," and Gabriel smiled at the big man, who grinned with satisfaction.

"You darling!" gushed Mrs. Gabriel as she met him near the kitchen. She rushed up to him and gave him a resounding kiss.

"That so? All right, never mind that now. Just go back and help my brownie get up a nice dinner. I am hungry."

Gabriel stepped into another room and reappeared with a cigar humidor, and four five-rupee notes in his hand. He handed the money to the big man.

"Have a drink," he suggested, pouring one from the decanter.

The big man lighted the cigar, took a drink, counted the money and got up.

"Just a minute, Mr. Plain-clothes," said Gabriel. "I think I can get a promotion for you. You are a clever, hard-working cop, and deserve it."

"Get a promotion? For me? What do you mean?" stammered the man.

Mrs. Gabriel came back and sat down. Gabriel took the telephone. "Hullo—traffic division? Is that Mr. Fisher?"

"Here, if you are going to speak to him, I'll have to report you," said the man, starting for the door.

"Out? Thanks," said Gabriel into the telephone. Then he turned to the man. "Be careful where you spend that money—I have their numbers," he said.

"Say, who are you?" snarled the man. "Do you—do you belong to the force yourself?"

"You *are* a good guesser," said Gabriel, smiling.

"Well, I—I didn't recognise you. Of course, I'd have—"

"You're a plain grafter. You're the sort of a crook who goes about impersonating officers and getting them a bad name. Plain-clothes man! You never were on

the force. Your feet aren't flat enough. Your head is too flat—and that pass and stripes are all phoney. If I send word, the real cops will come and jug you—"

"Is that so?" snarled the big man, making a leap at Gabriel.

"It is," smiled Gabriel, producing an automatic.

The big man jumped back.

"If—if I could square this little matter," he stammered.

"By giving me back my twenty and another twenty with it," suggested Gabriel softly.

The big man did so.

"You know what will happen if you talk?" threatened Gabriel.

"Not a word!" promised the man abjectly, and hurried out.

"But—but you don't belong to the police, Gabriel, dear," exclaimed Mrs. Gabriel.

Mr. Gabriel winked!

TO BELINDA

Now fades the glimmering landscape (as I think
Has been observed before), serene and clear
Shines forth the evening star; now poets drink
In inspiration, not unmixed with beer—
And punctually at this hour, I've heard
The moping owl does to the moon complain—
A silly thing to do; the wretched bird
Must be insane.

It is, in short, the time when the city youths
And maidens in the cinema rejoice;
Street speakers shout ineffable untruths
With fine abandon and stentorian voice;
But I retire sensibly to the cot
Scorning the garish pleasures of the town—
And woman, lovely woman, chains my thought;
In fact Miss Brown.

'Twas at a 'festive scene' that I first met
Belinda Brown; in fact, it was a dance.
She couldn't dance; no more could I; she let
Me lead her (which I did with elegance)

From out the dazzing throng: we both agreed
To sit upon a sofa (deep in shade);
And there I asked in thrilling tones: if she'd
Have lemonade.

Delectably we charmed the night away
With 'fair converse'; indeed, a perfect swarm
Of jokes flowed from my lips; for I must say
Without conceit, I seemed in top-hole form.
Ah, will I e'er forget, Belinda B.,
That evening's unallowed beatitude?
I don't expect I shall, my memory
Is pretty good.

Alas! what boots it with incessant care
(As Milton once remarked) to meditate
The thankless Muse? Why should I tear my hair
And bid the heavens note my dreadful state
In doleful (and perhaps inferior) verse?
I give it up; I'll tell you what I'll do:
I'll don my specs, and try to re-immense
Myself in Zoo.

'Mug

THE GOOD BOY AND THE BAD BOY

(With Acknowledgements to the Infant Standard Book).

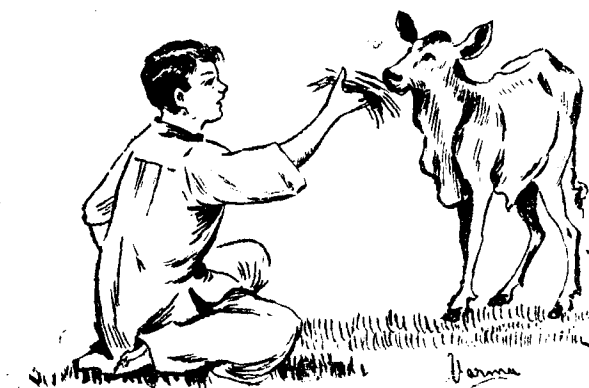
○ CHILDREN, listen to me attentively. I will tell you how to become good boys. Do you know Gopal? Perhaps you do not. I will tell you about him. If you follow his example all of you will become good boys.

Gopal gets up at 4 o'clock in the morning when all the other people are still sleeping: (he does not use an alarm clock.) He gets up and has a bath. Then he does some physical exercises. (He does not use dumb-bells, expanders and things like these.) He does not drink coffee or tea; he drinks only hot water. From 5 a. m. to 9 a. m. he reads his books. He reads a lesson twenty times. He works his sums carefully and revises them five times. (He has no private tutor.) Then he goes and washes his clothes. (He does not use soap.) Then he says his prayers and takes his morning meal.

He reaches the school half an hour before the bell goes. When the teacher comes in, he stands up and says, "Good morning, sir." He does not come home during the midday interval. He knows that if he does so, he will be late for the afternoon class. He has not a tiffin box; he brings his *mooruku* in a bundle made of leaves and eats it between 1 and 1-30 p. m. Between 1-30 and 2 p. m. he reads again.

As soon as the warning bell goes five minutes before 4. p. m., he ties up his books with a leather strap and makes ready to go home. (He does not, like the other boys, talk and waste time.) When he reaches home, he has a bath and then he falls at the feet of his parents to get their blessing. Then he begins to read. He reads till 8 P. M. He has his evening meal with his father. He goes to bed at 8-30 after praying to Sri Rama.

If anybody strikes Gopal, he runs away. If you give him a basket of fruits and ask him to take one he will take the smallest or the rottenest fruit. He always refers to the "writer" as "*avar*" (honorific third person singular).



He will not hurt an insect. He follows the rule of ahimsa. He does not say 'Gandhi'. He says Mahatma Gandhi.

He is fond of cows and calves and he gives them oil-cakes, grass and water. But he is not fond of dogs and horses.

Narayan is a bad boy. You should not follow his example. If you do, you will become bad boys yourselves. And bad boys are bad.

Narayan rises from his bed at 8 a. m. and drinks a cup of coffee in bed. He drinks his coffee without washing his face and cleansing his teeth. He uses soap when he washes himself at 9 o'clock. He reads novels of the celebrated Mudaliar. He rarely reads his books. When he reads his lessons at all, he reads only once. He has a private tutor who teaches him every morning. Narayan never washes his own clothes but sends them to the laundry. He reaches school just in time. He comes home during the midday interval. In the evenings he goes out and plays with other boys and wastes a good deal of time. He comes home tired and wants his meal before everybody else. After finishing his meal, he reads a novel. Then he gets into a nice bed and goes to sleep.

If anybody shows him a basket of fruits and asks him to take one he will take one of the biggest and the best. If one gives him a blow he will return it.

He refers to the "writer" as "*avan*" (third person singular masculine, used in reference to one's equal or inferior) and goes to the length of calling him "writer".

Narayan takes Fruit Salt every morning. He uses a fountain pen.

If he sees a scorpion he kills it; if a mosquito bites him he squashes it. He does not know the great rule of ahimsa.

He even went to a political meeting, and said: "Bandemataram" once or twice.



Fan Letters.

GINGER Rogers receives about 6,200 letters a month, thus heading Hollywood's present list of large fan mails. But it does not compare with Billie Dove's record of 32,000 a month a few years ago, Colleen Moore's 23,000 and Clara Bow's 22,000. The reason for the drop in fan mails in recent years is that, to cover costs and postage, the stars now charge a shilling for their signed photographs.

There are only six cinemas in Britain to-day which show silent films.

Douglas Fairbanks, Jr., practises sleight-of-hand tricks, and tries them on his friends.

The English language is being enriched by the Hollywood chorus girls who have a vocabulary of their own. The following are some of the interesting slang words in common use among them:

Microbe: an undersized dancer; Cream Puff: a chorus boy; Topsy: a toe dancer; Baggage Smasher: a girl with clumsy feet; Queen Bee: A girl who shows off when she dances.

A ballot taken is worth noting when all interested parties have taken part in it. In America, such a voting took place on the 10 best pictures of 1934, viewed from all angles: production; story interest; popular appeal; acting and direction. Those who engaged in this selection were drama-editors and critics of newspapers; motion picture trade-and-fan magazines and hundreds of theatre-exhibitors. This is naturally the most comprehensive and representative consensus of national critical opinion on the subject.

The order is:

1. "The Barrets of Wimpole Street" (M. G. M.).
2. "House of Rothschild" (20th Century).
3. "It Happened One Night" (Columbia).
4. "One Night of Love" (Columbia).
5. "Little Women" (R. K. O.).
6. "The Thin Man" (M. G. M.).
7. "Viva Villa!" (M. G. M.).
8. "Dinner At Eight" (M. G. M.).
9. "Count of Monte Cristo" (United Artists).
10. "Berkeley Square" (Fox).



STAR DUST

Of these, we in Madras, have not yet seen *The Thin Man*, *It Happened One Night* and *Count of Monte Cristo*.

If a ballot were taken here, the result will be somewhat in this wise:

1. The Barrets of Wimpole Street.
2. "Viva Villa"
3. "Berkeley Square"
4. "House of Rothschild"
5. "One Night of Love"
6. "Little Women"
7. "Dinner At Eight"

We might add, as No. 8 "Tarzan and His Mate" (9) "Queen Christina" and (10) "Bull-dog Drummond Strikes Back." In the case of No. 1, the picture is undisputedly the best of 1934. It is, besides, a personal triumph for the stars, Charles Laughton, Fredric March and Norma Shearer.

Charles Laughton does not touch any part to which he does not lend a new colour and flavour. He is easily the best of the three. There cannot be one fan who did not tremble when he, as the tyrant of the household, strikes terror, by just a look, a measured sentence or dignified reproach.

(2) Wallace Beery has given us Pancho Villa as no one else can.

(3) "Berkeley Square," if only for Leslie Howard's acting, deserves its place.

(4) Arliss, the father of the English Talkie, has, as in no other picture, made himself one with the part. For, he looks the Jew in this picture while in "The Iron Duke", he acts more and looks less like the Duke of Wellington.

(5) "One Night of Love" is a mixed affair.

(6) "Little Women" has brought out the best of two of the most recent acquisitions to the talkie-world, Katharine Hepburn and Jean Parker.

(7) "Dinner At Eight" has as many as eight stars and if only for this reason it can be No. 7.

(8) "Tarzan and His Mate" was the box-office attraction of the year—probably because of its novelty.

(9) "Queen Christina" features John Gilbert and Greta Garbo and it is the best yet seen of this love-team.

(10) In "Bull-dog Drummond Strikes Back," we see Ronald Colman, with his perfect intonation and the finest acting of the part of Bull-dog Drummond.

LITERATOR IN EXCELSIS

By

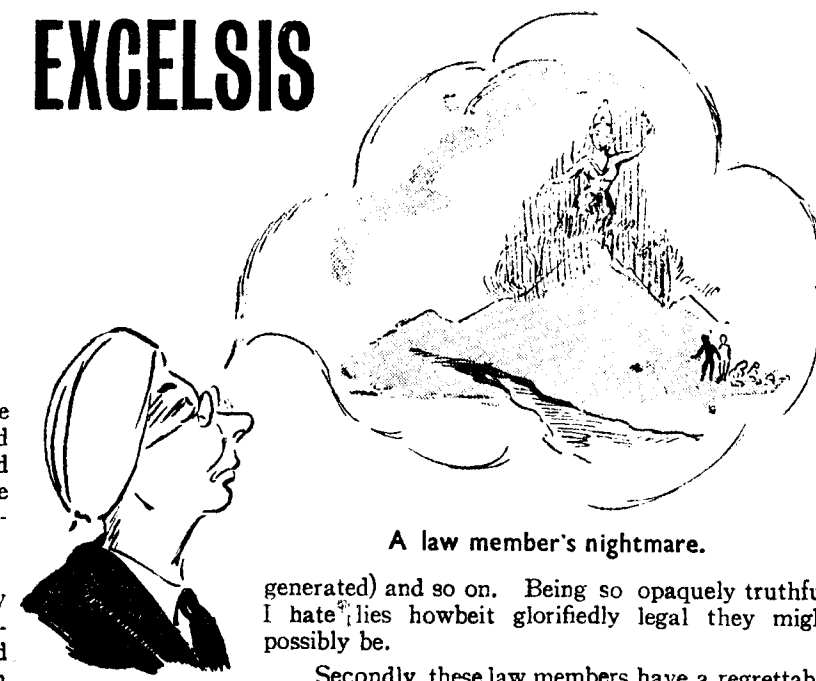
'Pandit Vittalbai Puri'

V. THE SOLUTION

BUT why? Why need I emulate Congress in re my healthy hatred of Bad Law, and all its implied implications? Because there are dual reasons, as you will presently comprehend.

One is I am a superardent votary consumming great quantities of frankinsence at the Holy Altar of Truth, and I dare claim equivalent honour with Harischandra, Dharmaraja (who shared one lady with four brothers), and Casa Bianca of the Burning Deck, and a lot more. Truth is God. So in fact indeed is Love. What a love-ly man I am you are already amply cognisant of, because as I remarked long ere this, I can love any lady so long as she is a woman. This cryptical epigram would no doubt tickle you into death.

So I say and reiterate, I am a love-ly man. And Love is Truth. In this process of deductive reasoning therefore, and shoving this line of argument to its logic terminalism I stand out as a Stark Truthful Man. Indeed I am so transparently Truthful in fact that anybody can visualise the physiological mysticisms hidden behind my Epidermis, to wit my stomach, my bile, my pancreas, my left ventricle, my right auricle, my vermiform appendix, (from which Gandhiji's appendicitis is



A law member's nightmare.

generated) and so on. Being so opaquely truthful, I hate howbeit glorifiedly legal they might possibly be.

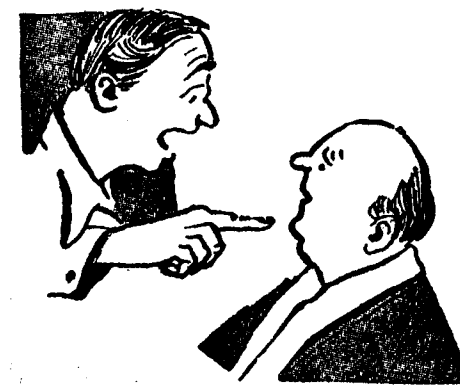
Secondly, these law members have a regrettable monopolistic proclivity of seeing or conjuring up horribly transcending nightmares. I perused the very other day only how a law member in South India or thereabouts saw a blood curdling night mare of titanic bonfires on the eternal, ice clad heads of sacred Himalayas, with hungry scantily dressed poor gentlemen warming themselves over them: of rushing waters of torrential dimensions, ineffably diluting the Indo Gangetic Plain, lending a phillipic to North Indian cereal crops; and somewhere in between Gauri the Wife of One Third of the Hindu Trinity dancing an entrancing Zulu dance with a golden key in her hands, like Anna Petrovna Slatschwizky or Mata Hari or even indeed as a Ziegfeld Follies girl! O Horror! Who ever even heard or conceived or dreamt of the Universal Mother dancing on bonfiric flames and rushing torrents like a naughty, oggling, dirty-fue smelling grass girl, so beautifully described by Henry Fielding or was it Tom Jones? Not I. Not at all you. Not even any anybody. Except law members.

If there is one thing in this world for which I have absolutely no buttery corner it is unquestionably a night mare. When I read of this particular night mare my white corpuscles very approximately ate up my red corpuscles, otherwise pathologically speaking I had nearly almost an appoplexy fit.

I said to them consequently, to my parents i.e. my father and auntie, "No! Mercilessly No! Principally No! Fundamentally No!" There being extant a great

(Continued on page 24)

DO YOU KNOW?



1. What is a spirometer?
2. What is bolide?
3. What city in the world has the largest number of telephones in proportion to the population?
4. Why are the letters in a language called the Alphabet?
5. Who first flew over the Atlantic?
6. What is Gotham?

Please see answers on page 20.

The Letters of Private Joyfull

42. ON SOCIAL DISCRIMINATION

Madras, 30th March, 1935.

DEAR MOTHER,

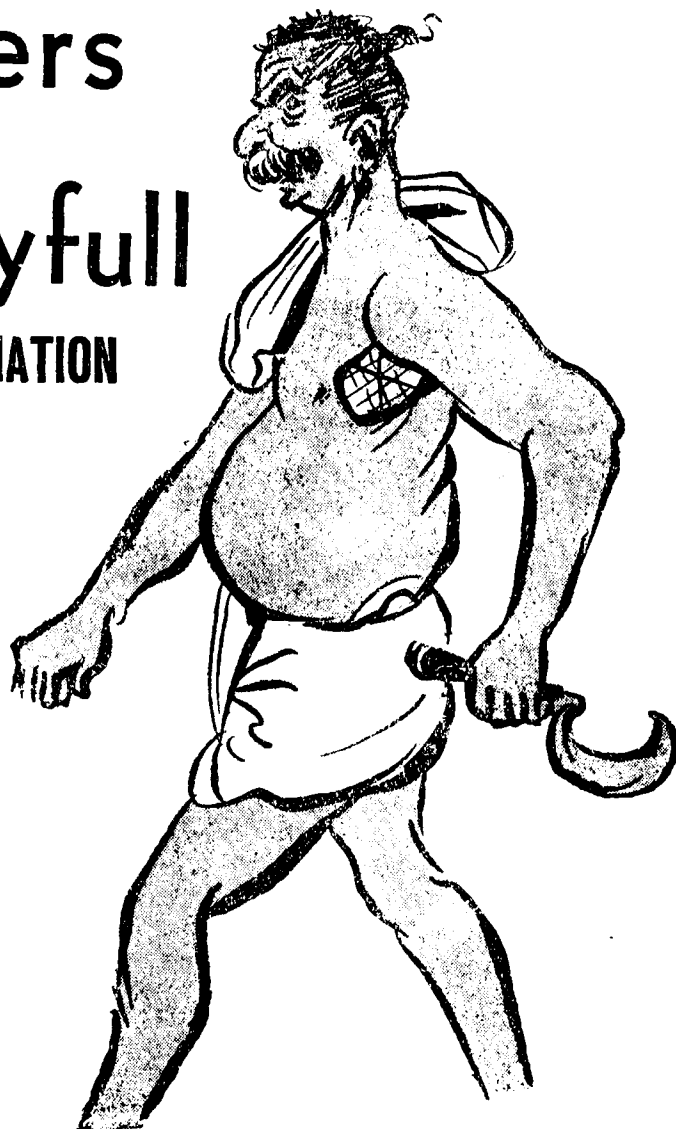
I am surprised that you should ask if I go to dances with the Indian women who work in barracks. Someone said the other day that I have an infinite capacity for surprise, but then India is such a surprising place, and the English people's ideas about it are even more surprising.

The only women we see in barracks are labouring-women, who do rough work for building-contractors and such-like. There are no women clerks, or waitresses, or even dress-makers. Would you believe it, all the workers in Indian tailors' shops are men!

The women labourers do not go to public dances or social events. They live in little huts, and when they are not walking behind the foreman with baskets of dirt on their heads, they are walking behind a big lazy husband with a baby on their hips. That is another surprising thing. Motherhood is not reckoned to be a vocation out here, and the poor women have babies in their spare time. They do not carry babies in their arms, but straddle-wise on their hips. I think this is because a woman with a baby has to have one arm free to do her work as usual. The management of a heavy troublesome baby is not thought to be a whole-time job for a woman.

Scornful people pretend that India is a thousand years behind the times, but really it is only thirty years behind the times, and is catching up rapidly. Scornful people are a curse to the country. It is a common pastime for people to go about being scornful to other people, in an attempt to make themselves big. It is a foolish habit that does great harm. Sandy McNab, who is a Scotchman in our platoon, is always complaining about it. Whenever he sees someone being treated despicably, he mutters a poem by his national poet, Robbie Burns. It is something about 'A man's a man for all that'.

Only thirty years ago, our working-women in England were much like the working-women out here. A girl had only two outfits of clothes—her working-dress, and her Sunday-best. These clothes were made to last for years, and were of a pattern 'suitable for the lower classes'; so whether a girl was in work-a-day attire, or in her finery, everyone could see that she belonged to the lower classes.



Nowadays we have no distinctions for the lower classes. I think this is mostly due to the invention of artificial silk, and other good, cheap fabrics. Once upon a time, only a rich woman could afford to follow every change of fashion, because dresses were expensive and elaborate. But now, if a princess appears in a wonderful new dress on Monday, all the factories go on overtime, and by Saturday all the office-girls, mill-girls and domestic servants, are walking about in lovely copies of the marvellous new dress. The result is that you do not know if a shop-girl is a princess until you start talking to her.

Even when you talk to her, you cannot be sure, because in the last few years every girl has a wireless-set in her room, and she copies the refined and educated accents of the wireless-announcers. As it is no longer our custom to ask anyone who they are and how they get their living, we may go on for months wondering if a shop-girl is a member of the aristocracy. She might be, because the aristocracy's days are over, and they have to work as shop-girls and newspaper-reporters and all sorts of things.

.....walking with a
baby behind a big, lazy
husband.



Although you never see it in the papers, the argument that makes good English people most dubious about Indian aspirations is the charge of sectional self-interest. It is said that high-class Indians want Dominion Status only for themselves, and that they intend to keep the ignorant low-class people in subjection. I cannot say that this is true, because high-class Indians do not confide in private soldiers; but even a very friendly and humble tommy cannot help having his suspicions, when he sees the everyday life of the people.

There are forty million common people in England, with forty million votes, and there are only a few aristocrats and diehards. These forty millions suppose that when India gains full privileges, the privileges will be extended to all classes and both sexes. If these British people thought that Dominion Status meant dominion only by Hindus, or by Mohammedans, or by lawyers, or by high-class people, they would oppose it tooth and nail. These common English people are very terrible when their deep convictions are upset.

The British people are very puzzled, because the speeches of Indian politicians never seem to have any relation to the facts. It is a fault of politicians that they utter thousands of words, and never say anything. The few statements that do emerge, do not seem to bear on the ordinary facts of life and human nature, as understood by everyone. An Indian leader who took steps to ensure that coolie-women could walk about like princesses, and that sweepers had as much say in the government as noblemen, and who showed his sincerity by entrusting his family interests to a Mohammedan (he being a Hindu), would win the whole-hearted support of all the common English people. Otherwise, they just shrug their shoulders, and say, "talk is cheap".

The system which obtains at present is one by which Hindus elect only Hindu representatives, and other communities do likewise. As it is, an election becomes an auction of communalism, and the fanatic who says he is going to do the dirtiest work on behalf of his own community, is the one who gets elected.

If for the present communalism must be accepted, my idea is that the Hindus should elect the Mohammedan representatives, and the Mohammedans would have to select the Christian candidates, and so on. In that way, although a Mohammedan member would still consider his own community, he would have to take Hindu opinion into account. There would be a premium on tolerance, and not a premium on communal hatred.

Reverting to the question of coolie-women: the adoption of royal sarees by everyone would not remove the only social distinction. You will be astonished to hear that a lot of Indian people are very colour-conscious. This is another thing that is ever mentioned in the newspapers, but you cannot help noticing how Indians like to have fair-coloured wives, and that a very dark girl has to have a big dowry to compensate for her complexion. In this respect India is very like other countries. Money is a sovereign balm the world over. Also you notice that

Therefore, although it is very laughable to imagine British Tommies going to dances with coolie-women, it may come to pass in a few years. The chief outward mark of social position—a woman's dress—is already easily adaptable to the new standards. All Indian women wear a lovely dress called a saree, which looks never worn by a princess or a peasant. When women adopt sarees of a good, cheap, pattern, it will be quite easy for coolie women to start wearing princesses' sarees.

I think that some high-class Indians will be very shocked at the idea of coolie-women setting themselves up as princesses; but even high-class Indians cannot put their heads back. They are getting Dominion Status and other democratic ideals, and they will have to accept the things that go with such freedom. They cannot hold themselves above the work of their own hands. The Indian people are rushing forward to nationhood, and the high-class people must inevitably get swallowed up in the rush.

one Indian sometimes calls another a 'black man', in a nasty tone of voice.

Yet, funnily enough, I do not think that colour-consciousness is natural either to ourselves or to Indians. It is a very uncivilised prejudice. Only savages say, "Here comes a man different to ourselves. Let's throw a brick at him."

Neither race naturally has this prejudice. Both races are innately hospitable. There are plenty of swarthy Englishmen, especially from parts of England where the inhabitants have Iberian ancestors. There are several men in the regiment whom we call 'Nigger', and it is a nickname of friendship and respect. George White, the centre-half of our football-team, is called 'Nigger' White, and he is one of the most popular men in the regiment. At football-matches, there are constant cries of "Come on, Nigger!" and "Good old Nigger!" The Indian spectators look quite puzzled, and wonder whom we are cheering.

Indian people are really the same. If you talk to simple people, such as the inhabitants of Appu's village, they say, "We black people," and "You pink people," with perfect self-respect.

As a rule, when people out here get insulted on account of their complexion, it is because they ask for it. It is our instinct to take people as we find them, and to respect them until they give cause otherwise. We don't search everyone's face, trying to discover their exact antecedents. It is the people themselves who draw attention to the subject. Some time ago I went to a dance, and got into conversation with an Anglo-Indian girl. She was very well-educated, and I thought at first how pleasant she was. It would not have worried anyone whether she came from Bermondsey or Bangalore. The subject did not enter my head until she kept on insisting on it. She kept on telling me about all the English people she knew, and how her family had high connections in England, and how she never mixed with Anglo-Indians. I kept on making polite noises, and hoping she would stop. I wanted to say that I liked her very much, whoever she was, but I could not do so, because any reference to the obvious facts would have made her feel insulted. It got quite agonising when she kept on describing London to me, and I had to pretend that she had been there, and I had not. I was very sorry, because she was a girl who would be welcomed anywhere on her own merits; and she was inviting an affront absolutely without cause.

On the other hand, I once met a very fine young man in connection with a

hockey-match, and I casually asked him if he had played for any teams at home. "Oh, no," he said, "I am an Anglo-Indian, and so is my wife. I simply happen to be fairer than the rest of the family." Everyone is bound to respect a self-respecting young man like that.

The trouble in India is that for thousands of years there have been different fair complexioned races coming into the country and putting on airs, and the more servile of the inhabitants have played up to the notion of the superiority of a fair skin, and adopted the notion among themselves. For the first hundred years in India, the English ignored colour-distinctions, and lived among Indians and followed Indian customs. But, in later days, we have been infected by the curse of colour-consciousness, and nowadays many Europeans are worse in that respect than any Indian, especially if there is any dubiety about their blessed 'colour'.

It seems almost incredible, but at present there is an argument going on about the exact status of people with various ancestries. They want to make a law that a man with an Indian father and an English mother shall be called an Indian; while a man with an Indian mother, and a father one-sixty-fourth European, shall be called a European. You would think that such hair-splitting would be possible only in Bedlam, but it is a serious proposition, and, strangely enough, there appear to be good and important reasons for such strange proposals.

I think that India's salvation lies in its future capacity to overcome these wretched distinctions of class, race, creed and colour. Of course, Indians have every right to tell me to mind my own business and keep my opinions to myself, but on the other hand, the on-looker sometimes sees most of the game.

Your Loving Son,
OBEAH JOYFULL

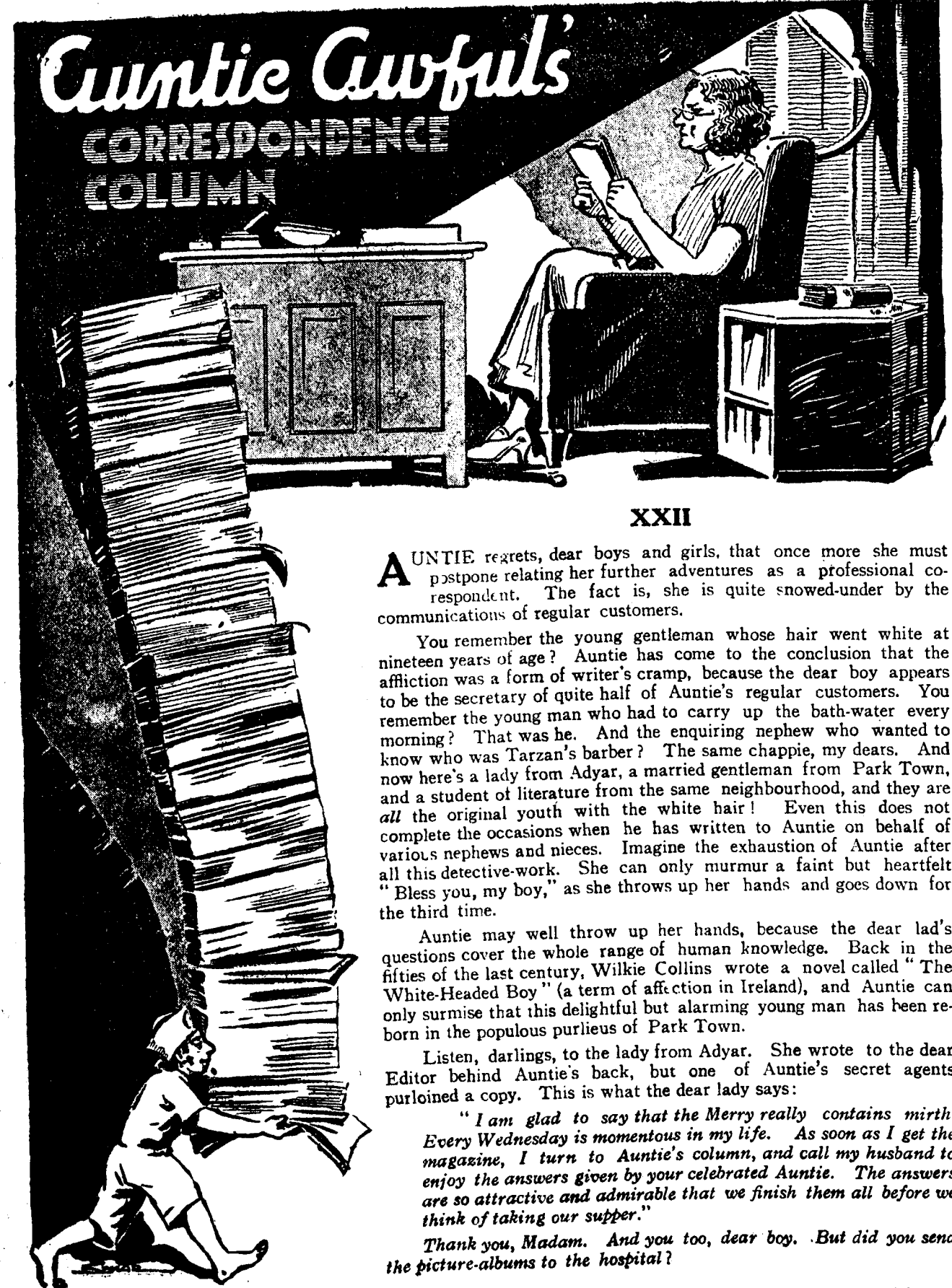
(Next Week:—Joyfull describes the village carrier)

YES! I KNOW!



1. An instrument for measuring the vital capacity of the lungs.
2. A brilliant meteor with a train of light or sparks; especially one that explodes.
3. San Francisco.
4. Just as we say A. B. C. to denote the letters, the Greeks used to call it *Alpha Beta*, and 'alphabet' is thereby derived.
5. Alcock and Brown crossed the Atlantic for the first time by air in 1919.
6. A typically foolish town is so called. Hence, 'a wise man of Gotham' means a fool.

Answers to questions on page 17.



Auntie Cawful's CORRESPONDENCE COLUMN

XXII

AUNTIE regrets, dear boys and girls, that once more she must postpone relating her further adventures as a professional correspondent. The fact is, she is quite snowed-under by the communications of regular customers.

You remember the young gentleman whose hair went white at nineteen years of age? Auntie has come to the conclusion that the affliction was a form of writer's cramp, because the dear boy appears to be the secretary of quite half of Auntie's regular customers. You remember the young man who had to carry up the bath-water every morning? That was he. And the enquiring nephew who wanted to know who was Tarzan's barber? The same chappie, my dears. And now here's a lady from Adyar, a married gentleman from Park Town, and a student of literature from the same neighbourhood, and they are all the original youth with the white hair! Even this does not complete the occasions when he has written to Auntie on behalf of various nephews and nieces. Imagine the exhaustion of Auntie after all this detective-work. She can only murmur a faint but heartfelt "Bless you, my boy," as she throws up her hands and goes down for the third time.

Auntie may well throw up her hands, because the dear lad's questions cover the whole range of human knowledge. Back in the fifties of the last century, Wilkie Collins wrote a novel called "The White-Headed Boy" (a term of affection in Ireland), and Auntie can only surmise that this delightful but alarming young man has been re-born in the populous purlieus of Park Town.

Listen, darlings, to the lady from Adyar. She wrote to the dear Editor behind Auntie's back, but one of Auntie's secret agents purloined a copy. This is what the dear lady says:

"I am glad to say that the Merry really contains mirth. Every Wednesday is momentous in my life. As soon as I get the magazine, I turn to Auntie's column, and call my husband to enjoy the answers given by your celebrated Auntie. The answers are so attractive and admirable that we finish them all before we think of taking our supper."

Thank you, Madam. And you too, dear boy. But did you send the picture-albums to the hospital?

21

Junno Jahnni (Park Town). "The other day I took my wife to see 'Chu Chin Chow.' Now she is always dreaming of the gang of thieves in the film. Every night she wakes me up and alarms me that there are robbers at our door with torches. My relatives will not let me consult a doctor as they say nothing can be done for such a purely mental disturbance. I have moved to another house but my wife still has this hallucination about the robbers. I am a jolly fellow and my only trouble is this fear which is nursed by my partner." Some people would advise leaving the door open at night, dear boy, with a strong light burning outside. Others would say that the lady needs to be psycho-analysed. But Auntie imagines that the best remedy would be to chain up a certain white-headed nephew, so that he cannot go to the cinema and think of awkward problems for Auntie.

Vartha (V. Maistry Street). So you like books of travel, and short, inspiring biographies. Auntie can hardly fill up her column with lists of such works. The best thing to do is to consult the list of Dent's "Everyman's Library". The list is obtainable from the local agent, and will be found to be classified under both biography and travel. The books are cheap and uniform, and there is a large selection of the world's best books, which is constantly added to. You can choose one or two at a time, and gradually build up a uniform library of your favourite literature. Regarding French novels, your best course is to obtain the list of the Librairie Hachette, Paris. Auntie is pleased to hear that you know French so well. Would you like to translate the following for her: "Tante, ton the, t'a-ti tonte ta toux?"

Peecy (Mulund). "I am just thirty years of age, and have fallen in love head-and-shoulders with a young lady of fifty-eight summers. She once reciprocated my love, and told me that she could not live a day without me. She also said, like the demented sister of a certain monarch, that her amorous feelings were those of a girl of sixteen, and therefore I need not mind the disparity in age. But alas! With all this avowal of love towards me, she has recently jilted me. Is it because she now feels that she is too old?" Of course not, dear boy. It is because she feels she is getting younger every day. In fact, she is approaching her second childhood.

Artless Annie (Allahabad). "My young man is a paragon. I often wonder how he learned to kiss so divinely." Perhaps, my dear, he used to blow the bugle in the Boy Scouts.

Kismet (Arangabad). "Should a father place any reliance on fortune-tellers? One came to my bungalow the other day, and said that my son would go down in history." Never mind, dear sir. Perhaps the boy will do better in geography and other subjects.

Hangitall (Poona). "I went into a restaurant the other day, and there was nothing on the menu to please me. At last I told the waiter to bring me the manager. Presently the fool came back with a piece of paper, and asked me to write down my order." You can hardly blame the waiter, dear boy. You should have told him in the first place whether you wanted the manager boiled or fried.

Reckless (Cuttack). "Please, Auntie, advise me what to do. Last night I was inveigled into a heated argument about the simple living, and in a rash moment I

bet five hundred rupees that for a year I would neither smoke nor indulge in any other vice, and that I would live on a diet providing bare subsistence. I cannot get out of the bet, because I gave the stake-holder a promissory note." In the circumstances, dear boy, you had better go and commit a crime immediately, and ask the magistrate to award you a year's rigorous imprisonment.

Gastronome (Maymyo). "How can I eat onions without their affecting my breath?" Feel carefully, slice with perfect precision with a silver-bladed knife, pepper and salt sufficiently, add a little olive-oil and a few drops of vinegar, and then throw away.

Addie (Powder Factory Road). "I love your definitions. Please tell me the difference between an optimist and a pessimist." An optimist, my dear, expects to find a needle in a haystack. A pessimist expects to sit on the needle if he sits on the haystack.

Householder (Madras). "We have to put up with all kinds of interference nowadays. The other morning I was called to the door, and it was a man who said he was the Inspector of Nuisances. What should such a man want at my house?" I expect he wanted to see your mother-in-law, dear sir.

Piscator (Sat Tal). "Do fish grow very fast?" Exceedingly fast, good sir. Uncle Ghastly caught a masheer in Kashmir last year, and every time he mentions it, it grows another six inches.

Very Funny (L. Chetty Street). "I passed an iron-monger's the other day, and he had a notice hanging up, 'Iron Sinks'. I went into the shop and pointed to the notice and said, 'Of course it does'. The dealer was quite surprised." How clever you are, dear boy. But did it ever strike you that wine vaults, sulphur springs, jam rolls, music stands, moonlight walks, rubber tires, trade returns, marble busts and idiots babble?

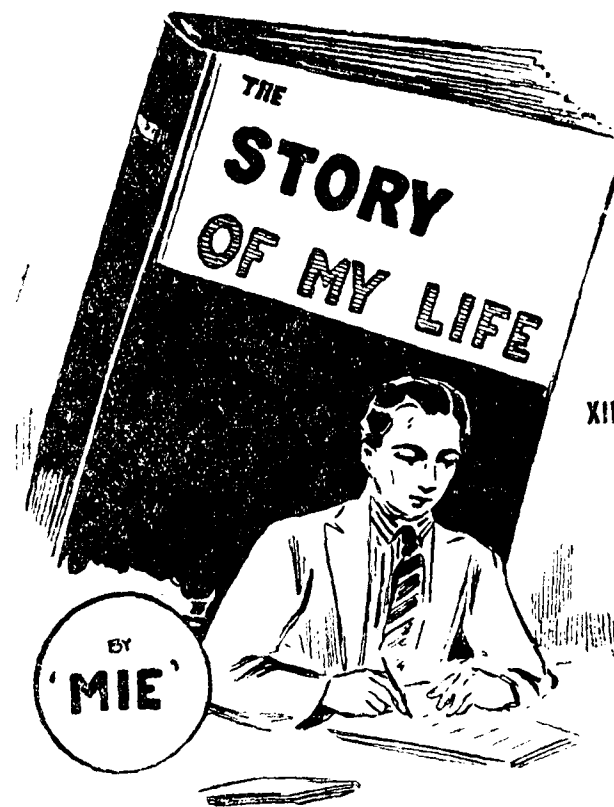
Insomnia (Vizagapatam). "Is it a fact that there is a man in South Africa who has not slept for eighteen months?" Yes, dear boy. It is thought that he is solving one of those cross-word puzzles.

N. Parkar (Central Provinces). "My neighbour is a disgraceful gossip. She stood for three hours watching the woman next door, and scandalising her to a visitor." Of course, you are sure of your facts, madam? No doubt you kept your neighbour under observation the whole time?

Club Bar (Mount Road). "A fellow wanted to bet me that he could get the whisky out of a bottle, without drawing the cork or breaking the bottle. Is there a catch in it?" Possibly, dear boy. For instance, suppose he pushed the cork in?

Filmgoer (George Town). "I do not see why the stars are alarmed about the coming of coloured films. After all, the camera never lies." You are mistaken, my dear. The present camera always lies; the new ones are going to tell the truth. Hence the alarm of the stars. I do not suggest that the stars ever lie about themselves; after all, they have press-agents for the purpose.

En Pension (Southern India). "Will you be good enough to advertise my boarding-house in your column? In return, I would gladly provide you with free accommodation. P. S.—I object to children." With reference to your last statement, dear madam, it is no good telling me, Why not mention it to your husband?



"Willow trees are weeping....." —New Song.
 "And he made himself a ball of leather....." —Anon.

CRICKET is a typically English game. It is sometimes played on greens but mostly through newspapers. The game is technically controlled by a body called the Marleybone Cricket Club (pronounced *Miraben*) but really by the Secretary of State for the Dominions, Mr. F. W. Thomas. Its exact source is not known. Sir John Marshall claims that the people who lived in the Indus valley (cf. Mohenjo-Daro excavations) played a game similar to it; but Herr Hitler denies that the Aryans ever had anything to do with it. In England at any rate it was introduced either by Pontius Pilate or William the Conqueror. In fact, one military authority goes so far as to say that the Battle of Hastings was won by means of Leg Theory bowling. Like many other things that came with the Normans, the game became popular. When the Armada was sighted, Drake, it is said, was bowling. In those days it was played by men in contrast to our own times when either, Gentleman or Players or Women play it, the difference between Gentlemen and Players being that Gentlemen can use their initials in scoring sheets and have separate dressing-rooms.

Before we go further, it is best to give definitions of a few terms connected with this game.

Wicket. A loose term, meaning the actual scene of operations as well as the stumps (for stumps see 'stumps'). If the visiting side is batting and piling up runs, the wicket is described as a perfect one; if the visiting side is not piling up runs, it is still called perfect—the cause for the

visiting side's failure lying in the superiority of the home side's bowling. When the home side bats (whether they are making runs or not) the wicket is said to be rotten, wearing, deadly etc.

Ball. A spherical affair, referred to intimately as the leather; though batsmen hotly deny that it is made of anything so soft as leather.

Stumps. See 'wicket'.

Bat. Made of willow; an ornament which batsmen carry when they walk out to the wicket. Also used for autograph purposes.

Bails. Nothing to do with a criminal court. They are wee things which batsmen employ as chalk.

Batsman. Is the hero of the moment. His arrival is as eagerly awaited as that of the hero on the Tamil stage. He wears gloves, and leg-guards and carries a bat. His business is to prevent the ball from hitting the wicket. Sometimes his visit is short and he returns a few minutes after he goes in. But sometimes he makes a long stay during which he can be seen fidgeting with his gloves, walking about aimlessly and drinking. Suddenly you have to shout. Then he will raise his cap and bow to you. This ceremony means that he has made a century i.e., a hundred runs.

Bowler. An important person. You will see him moving people about for no apparent reason. His business is to send away the batsman. He will employ polite measures first failing which he will try to hit the batsman. He is described by the newspapers as 'lion-hearted', 'unlucky', etc.

Umpire. There are two of this species in attendance during a match. They have got nothing to do. They are privileged people and can stand among the players themselves. They make certain gestures but are forbidden to speak.

Wicket Keeper. A man who wears boxing-gloves and stands behind the wicket, bending low. His duty is to shout out 'Zat' once in every two minutes.

Leg Guard. White; must be thick. Is used to catch every ball bowled on it.

Spectators. Can be divided into two classes. One of them, the ordinary County Cricket class, who sleep throughout the match and read in the newspapers what has happened. The other, the Test Match class, who shout derisively at the visiting team and whose heroes never play.

Newspapers. The soul of Cricket. The real fight is fought in newspapers. (cf. *Cricket on the Hearth* by Charles Reade.)

Runs. If the visiting team make these, the players are classed as styleless run-getters. If they pile up runs, it is called unpopular tactics; if the home team make a large number of runs, it is said to be magnificent and a proof of the superior batsmanship of the home team giants.

Innings. Same as rounds.

Having thus lucidly defined some of the terms, I go on to remark something about the game day. The countries

which have specialised in this game are England and Australia. They play a series of matches with each other often, to decide which is the best side. The English go to Australia and the spectators tell them what they think of them. The English captain then resigns and writes a book of reminiscences where he abuses the Australians. The Australians then go to England and the English crowd tells them what they think of them and tries to prove it too; but Mr. F.W. Thomas, Secretary for Dominions, prevents this.

Two important developments in cricket of to-day are Body-Line Bowling and the new L. B. W. rule. I don't know anything about the latter. Of the first I know only this much—that Messrs. D. R. Jardine, Larwood and Voce (who are gentleman and who played here?) have something to do with it. Mr. Jardine was the Captain of the English team which toured Australia and India and now he has married. Larwood is the world's greatest fast bowler and he has hit dozens of people on various parts of their bodies. Voce plays with his left hand and writes to newspapers with his right.

In India, cricket is played on a communal basis. If three players are selected from a particular community

for an All-India team, all the other communities also want three of their players in the team (if not three at least in proportion to the percentage of that community in the population). If this is not done, questions are raised in the Assembly, Councils, District Boards and Panchayats; walks-out are staged, protest meetings are held and there will be no peace in the land. Likewise the captainship is to go by rotation. For one season, one community sends a captain. In the next season, representation has to be made of the next community or the players will start grumbling. Occasionally the rule is broken to include a Prince! Gentlemen, His Highness!

But you may be wondering how all this has anything to do with the story of my life. I am a cricketer myself and want my readers to have some idea of the game before I proceed to talk about my achievements. I started playing the game very late and when I did start, it was a tennis-ball I used. I couldn't get a cricket bat and so I used the stem of a palmyra branch. True, the ball bounced a lot but it was possible now and then to hit the ball. Like the Ancient Mariner 'I stopped one of three'. I had no pads but my skin was thick enough.

(You ought to captain the next all-India team—Ed.)

Literator in Excelsis—(Continued from page 17)

volume of love between me, my father and auntie they begged me, implored me, prayed me, to embrace the Law and bring glory to their Race. I shook my head sadly, because it is a very sad experience to go in contra distinction to your loved ones. They dropped tears, saltish tears from their lachrymal glands honestly and still I was hard as nails or the broadside of a British Ironclad, which is of course as everybody cognises, a warship on water. Ultimately sensing my inexorability they changed their so far blameless tactis and made a quick change over to illegal reprehensible assault and battery. My dear he-parent grabbed hold of my skull-hairs and my dear Auntie rushed in in record time with the necessary reinforcements to the fighting zone in the form of a poetic looking frying pan. (I cannot conceal from you, Dear Editor Saheb, what really transpired to me at this dramatic junction because, Sir, of what terrestrial avatiment is the gaining of the whole world if you lose your sole by telling unnecessary non truths?). The battery on my personal parts was so unpremeditatedly sudden and so lustily prosecuted, that I went through almost all the hues of the spectrum which as you know is a triangular piece of glass. But to the Glory of Truth and Manhood, I held off bravely to the bitterest last. I repeated myself with that everlasting No of mine with Capital Letters quardrangularly underlined.

"Nothing lives but something dies" as Thomas (not the Dominion Secretary of course I need hardly say) said or (expressed in the other way) everything has an ultimate conclusion. Exhausted, they desisted the assault on me and (such happily is human mysterious frailty) they fell on my neck, and cried and blubbered to their stomachs' contentment and my neck's undoubted discomfort. "Is this my non mother boy whom I banged about? Is this

the continuity man of my dynasty whose hair I pulled out in vicious ire? Is this the student of my eyeballs whose nose I almost flattened with my suity frying pan? Ah me! Ah us!" cried my father and auntie in heart-rending symphony.

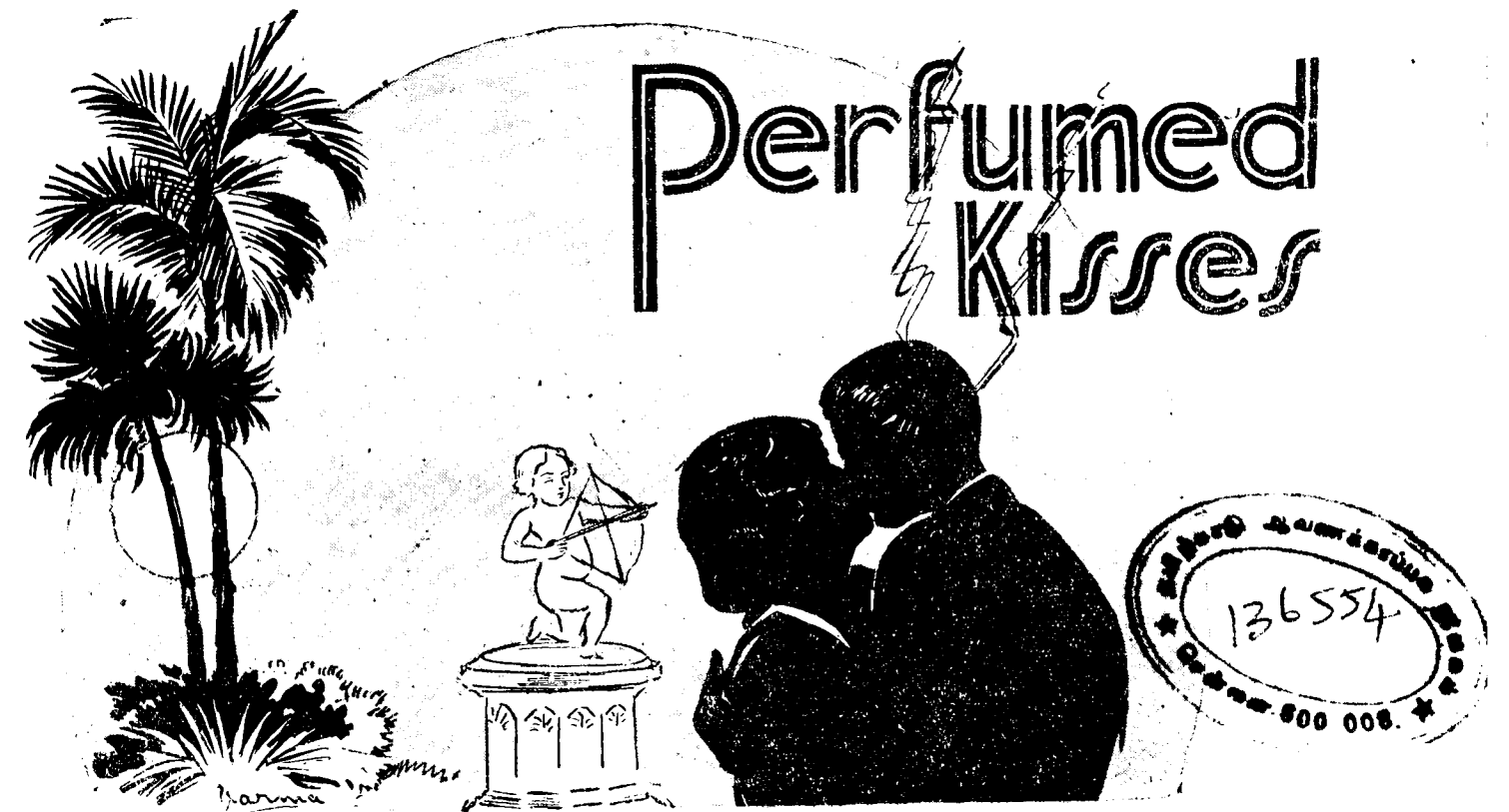
This domestic discord being so happily set at naught and the even shades being by this time converted into sunless night, my father adjourned the fruitless palaver *side a nie* amidst mild motions of no confidences from a few belligerent rough necks. All the family guests, excluding of course the feminist part thereof, sat to supper on a grand scale. Everybody was in higher jinks alias abounding in good humour which a good feast conceives. The meal progressed as all meals progress supplied gratuitously, with a furious exchange of funny witty repartees and a side line of winking, bare faced flirting, and synonymous like amorous high hatting.

Towards the culminating act of the meal my father began to oggle at me in an extraordinary pattern all the time furiously scratching his head. After a little of this idiosyncratic byeplay he gaffawed and hit the back of the fellow next to him in such a thumping savage *bong hony* that there was instantly an exquisite consternation amongst the guests. "Why in the name of all that is nuptialable," ejaculated my father, "I did not think of it before, is an unbeatable idiotic prodigality! Vittal, my dear goat, I will marry you! That ought to settle you in life's terrestrial mystery."

Amen! said the sufeited guests heartfully.

I was not indeed at all unagreeable to the marriage conception myself.

(Ah, Hymen! Cruel God!—Ed.)



By 'MEA'

['Mea', an authority on kisses, has a lot to say about the fragrance in kisses; he quotes if not exactly scripture, at least references in literature—Ed.]

"Coming to kiss her lips (such grace I found).
Meseemed, I smelt a garden of sweet flowers,
That dainty colours from them threw, around,
For damsels fit to deck their lovers' bowers,
Her lips did smell like unto gilly glowers."

—Edmund Spenser.

WE find numerous references in literature, both ancient and modern, to the pleasant odours of the breath, either natural or artificial, felt in kissing.

The olfactory quality of the kiss was known and cultivated by the Latins who perfumed the breath in order to enhance the pleasure experienced in kissing.

".....the fragrant kiss,
Which Venus bathes, with quintessence of bliss."

—Francis Horace, Book 1, Ode XIII.

Martial wrote, on the kisses of his favourite: "The fragrance of balsam extracted from aromatic trees; the ripe odour yielded by the fruit makes me perfume of fruits mellowing poet of the seventeenth or the flowery men."
of the Empress that her fairest bosom showing,
warmed by the har her lips, rich perfume blowing,
nian wine, broken Now kiss me and be going."

garden that attracts the Sicilian bees; of the alabaster jars of Cosmus, and the altars of the gods; of the chaplet just fallen from the brow of the luxurious;—but why should I mention all these things singly? Not one of them is enough by itself; mix all together, and you have the perfume of the morning kisses of my favourite."

Another lover says to his mistress:

"Her neck ambrosial sweets exhales:

Her kisses, like Arabian gales,

The scent of musky flowers impart."

In the *Kisses of Johannes Secundus* we read: "It is not kisses Neaera gives, it is fragrant breath-dews." And again, "Come all of you to the lips of my mistress. They exhale all the perfumes of roses and thyme, and the nectareous juice of the vernal violet; thence is the sweet scent of the anise diffused afar; they are moist with the true tears of Narcissus, and with the fragrant blood of Hyacinthus."

In *Kiss XIV of Bonefonius* we find: "Whilst I closely press your lips, my girl, and eagerly inhale your fragrant breath, I seem to myself one of the gods."

In the *Kama Sutra*, the Hindu book of Love, we read "that a man should have a small table at the head of his upon which to place essences serving to perfume the a sme. (Continued on page 27)

THE PRODIGY



Mr. L. SANJEEVARAYA

By V. B. PRASAD

Madras, 20th Feb., 1935.

My dear P,

I am getting up a show to-morrow at my place. All the boys are coming. Do drop in at 5 p.m. Don't say no. I have counted you in.

Yours,
S. T. T.

What show? I guessed at all the probabilities and drew blank. That was a particular friend of mine and this was a special invitation. Being a gentleman of leisure—rather too much leisure—I decided to oblige my friend. I washed and pruned myself a little more meticulously than usual (because the 'show' smacked of something juicy) and presented myself at, what the politicians call, the venue. I was ushered into a spacious hall, a bit dim with the waning day, chairs running all round it against the walls. Some sixty specimens of expectant humanity in as many different kinds of grins on their faces sat in those chairs.

"Hullo! Here you are!" said somebody.

There was a bench in the middle of the hall. That held and gripped my attention; not the bench, but what it had on its top. There were two objects on that bench.

One was a miniature coffin dressed in bright scarlet with green trimmings. This, I was to learn presently, was just a prosaic violin,—a poetic one if you will.

The other object on the bench was a dark, young man of about thirty years with a tired face, I

much older than he really was. He sat on the bench legs crossed, back hunched, chin held in his palm. He was close-cropped. A snuff-coloured serge coat, none too well preserved and rather looking a bit ashamed of itself, graced his back. The collar-stud of the shirt was missing. A cheap tie of an indeterminate colour and pattern, with an unmistakable stamp of honest and veteran service, secured in a rather picturesque knot over his bare skin straggled down his front in two separate directions. He had a gold chain on his neck; a few gold medals distributed with a certain nonchalance over the coat-collar and chest; a long garland of silken skeins with circular lace-worked pads at regular intervals thereon—a perfect replica of those delightful thingummies that you dangle on the necks of ministers when they visit your municipalities to receive addresses—reaching down to his middle. A silk cloth rested round his waist in a state of unstudied deshabille. The whole make-up of the young man shrieked in no uncertain voice that he was a an up-country bride-groom, ready for his bride.

So this was a wedding, I thought. How like that blighter S. T. T. to have called holy matrimony a show!

He (the groom) sat with eyes closed, a demure expression on his face, as if scared at the immense mystery lying beyond the brief, glamorous frontiers of wedlock.

I missed something—the bride; the necessary part of all weddings viz., the young women in multi-coloured saris smelling of attar, scent, roses and sandal-paste; the inevitable, round-tummied purohit to solemnise the contract. My eyes roved round the hall with an unspoken enquiry. I asked my host in a whisper, "Where are the bride and the girls?"

He looked at me reproachfully. He sniffed at me like a larcenous dog trying to locate the welcome savour that precedes dinner from the direction of the kitchen. "Of all days, on this one!" he said, "drinking?"

"What the hell you mean? I am not drunk."

"Then, what is the fun of asking for the bride and girls on a solemn occasion like this?"

"But what is the occasion? That sable gent sitting on the bench all alone is the groom, isn't he?"

"Bride-groom be damned! He is the prodigy."

"The what?"

"The Maths Wonder. The super-brainy one. Thethe.....what's-it."

"Well?"

"Problems in maths and.....and.....problems of that sort, which a dear dunce like you would take two and a half years to resolve, and that wrongly, this man eats on the spot."

"Eats!!!"

"That's right!"

I looked at the prodigy keenly again, and realised with a shock that he was totally blind.

A frail, effeminate creature of human vanity! But if this decking of the sufeited guests heart clothes and theatrical trap was not indeed at all unagreeable to the pleasure, thrills

(Ah, Hymen! Cruel God!—Ed.)

tongue. An interpreter was bundled into the proceedings. A battery of impossible questions was fired at him from all fronts of the hall.

On what day did 9th February 1867 fall?

Give the cube-root of 18937347.

Multiply 37943274727 by 257098.

What is the compound interest on Rs. 17,953 at 4½% per annum for 4½ years with half-yearly rests?

Divide 734272843 by 95345.

And so forth.....

He thought over each problem, moving his lips, a few moments, maybe a few minutes, and came out with the answer—correct each time!

I sidled up to the prodigy and brought my ear close to his head, expecting to hear the rumblings of his extraordinary cerebral machinery. Not a sound! I looked intently at his head; it was, for his age, rather smaller than normal: at the back of his head; no bulging nobs: at his forehead: no curvature, nothing remarkable: at his eyes; closed for ever!

It was lucky there was no tall-talking phrenologist

in that assemblage. Somebody would certainly have given him some nobs on his head to think matters over.

Such is Mr. L. SANJEEVARAYA, the prodigy, congenitally blind, a gold-smith by caste, born in the Cuddappah District, innocent of English education; indeed far away from the higher reaches of his own mother-tongue, to judge by his unlettered, crude accent.

How does one account for this terrific brain power; this extra-natural gift of retentive memory; this uncanny grappling with gigantic figures?

Talk of the Law of Compensation! Here is a mediocre-looking, under-sized, physically weak man, from whom Nature withheld the most precious gift in her possession—the faculty of sight. But she made good with a prodigal hand. She has, to balance the defect, given him a brain capable of Gargantuan feats, feats at which professors of mathematics would blanch with stark terror.

It is such phenomena as these, the contemplation of which would make even the heart of a hard-boiled atheist miss a couple of beats.

Perfumed Kisses—(Continued from page 25)

mouth. Again when a man is courting his lady-love, he is advised to pour upon her hair or her body the perfumed water which he has received for the purpose of making his own breath sweet. He is also admonished to eat betel leaves and other things which sweeten the breath.

In one of the folksongs of Sicily we find: "Her breath as cinnamon is odorous" and in a folksong of of Tuscany are the following lines:

"Perfumed b'yond compare are thy lips to me;
Bestow their perfume on my lips for me."

In English literature, too, we find numerous references to the odour of the breath or lips showing that this odour was regarded as a personal attraction:

"Her sweet lips with honey flow
And the scent of roses."

Charles Cotten (1689) wrote:

"Each kiss of thine creates desire,
Thy odorous breath inflames Love's fire."

The olfactory element in the kiss is mentioned by Southern: "The fragrant infancy of opening flowers flowed to my senses in that melting kiss."

Montaigne remarked that the clinging, fragrant, greedy, long-drawn kisses of youth used to adhere to his moustache, and remain for several hours after.

F. Beaumont is responsible for the following:

"Come my sweet Corinna, come,
And with thy sweet perfumed kisses."

It is a well-established fact that perfumes have an actual physical reaction, as well as an æsthetic influence over us. Massinger makes one of his characters say to his sweetheart:

"Lady, I would descend to kiss your hand,
But 'tis gloved, and civit makes me sick."

An anonymous poet of the seventeenth century wrote:

"The empress'th that her fairest bosom showing,
warmed by the han her lips, rich perfume blowing,
nian wine, broken áNow kiss me and be going."

We have yet another reference to the pleasing odours of the breath in the following lines by William Browne:

"He to whom your soft lip yields,
And perceives your breath in kissing,
All the odours of the fields
Never, never shall be missing."

Shakespeare refers to kissing-comfits. They are sugar-plums perfumed, that were made in those days with the object of sweetening the breath, and presumably the object of sweetening the breath was for the greater enjoyment of a salute with the lips.

"Let it thunder to the tune of green-sleeves, hail kissing-comfits."

Merry Wives of Windsor, V. 5.

"Nothing but perfumes or kissing-comfits."

Webster's *Duchess of Malfi*, (1623).

The same are meant, doubtless, here:

"Faith, search our pockets, and if you find there
Comfits of ambergrease to help our kisses
Conclude us faulty."

Massinger's *Very Woman*, I. 1.

The following is a recipe for making kissing-comfits, from p. 271 of May's *Accomplished Cook*, (1671).

"To make Muskelines, called Rising-comfits or Kissing-comfits: take half a pound of refined sugar, being beaten and searched, put into it two grains of musk, a grain of civit, two grains of ambergrease, and a thimble-full of white orris powder; beat all these with gum-dragon steeped in rose-water; then roll it as thin as you can, and cut it into little lozenges with your iging (q iron?) and stow them in some warm oven or stove, then box them and keep them all the year." They are sometimes called 'Kissing-causes'.

To-day there are tooth-pastes and powders, mouth-washes, cashets and lip-sticks, for all of which it is claimed that they impart a pleasant odour to the breath. Though it is not now customary to suggest that the use of these commodities is for the greater enjoyment of kissing, they doubtless serve this purpose.

Bloch states it as a fact that the kiss was originally a smell.

THE NEW COMER

THIRD OF THE SERIES

It is one thing to marry a girl and quite another to live happily ever afterwards. Though it is not exactly the same process as going to vinegar from wine, as somebody said, the change is somewhat akin. This is specially so where joint families are concerned.

Under such circumstances, being a wife is not a whole-time occupation. Husband apart, there are other entities to consider and propitiate. The preservation of cordial relations with every member of the family up to the latest-born, and the establishment of harmony with the mother-in-law are essential requisites for living happily ever afterwards. Such a wife has not yet been discovered; you may as well look out for the phoenix.

It is a common saying that a hundred men can live amicably under one roof; but not two women. There is no doubt as to the accuracy of the statement; but the merit does not lie with the male of the species, nor is the fault with the female. The fact is that men have their occupations elsewhere, whereas the women are confined to the home all the time.

When Shakuntala came to Chinna-swamy Iyer's house as Mayuri's wife, she was received with mixed feelings. Chinna-swamy Iyer felt proud of his newly-acquired and exalted state of father-in-law. Mayuri had achieved his heart's desire. Mayuri's brothers had no comments. Mayuri's sisters felt nervous and shy before the *chic* and learned sister-in-law. Mayuri's mother, Mangalam, welcomed her daughter-in-law with mental reservations.

The origin of her reservations lay in the fact that her objections to the marriage of Mayuri and Shakuntala were somewhat unceremoniously overruled by her enthusiastic husband. Besides, there were other factors. Shakuntala was not well-to-do. She did not bring any dowry or jewels. Being an only daughter she could have kept intact what was left to her by her father. On the other hand, she wasted all she had in the pursuit of a university degree in her new-fangled desire to emulate the male. And did she make right use of her education? So far as Mangalam knew, the only purpose for which she put it was to fall in love with the first comer and induce him to marry her. What right had a C-3 girl to yearn for A-1 husband; and what a misfortune that her son should walk blindly into her parlour?

But it must be said to Mangalam's credit that she kept these reservations in abeyance and inoperative. She did not want, she said, to earn a bad name as a cruel mother-in-law. If Mayuri married Shakuntala it was his business. She had enough work to engage her in the house.

Shakuntala, on the contrary, started cheerfully. She was a modern girl every inch, go-ahead, vivacious, and perfectly confident. She did her best to accommodate herself to the new surroundings and to be helpful and useful in the household. She undertook the task of looking after the girls, Swarnam, Nithya, and Rukmini.

Swarnam was 12 years old, Nithya was 10 and Rukmini was 4. Swarnam took after her mother in ignorance, faith, and tradition. To make her acquire the marriageable standard in letters, music, and deportment was Shakuntala's main function and she found it rather trying. Not that she was unwilling to impart knowledge but the girl seemed impervious. It was such a disappointment to find that where the sons were bright and clever, a daughter should be born so dense. But Shakuntala took to her duties earnestly. She resumed the role of a school-mistress and gave the pupil a bit of her mind:—

"Look here, Swarnam, unless you stop taking a stupid interest in jewels, marriage and other people's business, you won't get any decent bit of knowledge inside your head. Listen to what I teach and try to grasp it."

Swarnam dissolved in tears and then flew up:

"I don't want to learn anything from you. I shall be what I am."

Then she hastened to her mother and reported the matter. The mother's instinct in Mangalam rose in indignation and she reprimanded Shakuntala:

"If you don't know how to teach my daughter, you need not insult her. It doesn't matter if she learns nothing

(Continued on page 30)

By
R. JAGANNATHAN



(Ed.)

LIGHT-HEARTED HINTS ON ETIQUETTE

By J. H. ACOTT

WITH much cogitation, scratching of the head, rumination, (namely, chewing of the cud), and severe indigestion, I have set out to give a few valuable hints on that important and sometimes very annoying subject, Etiquette.

Choosing a starting point at random, remember that when you introduce a person, you must not speak as if you had a mouthful of old and delicious whisky. If you do, and you have just introduced Burns, your life-long friend, you'll find the other party saying, "Burnt? Who the hell's been burnt? I never heard anything about the fire." Or, if Smith is the introduced, "Smite me on the nose, will you? Well, we'll see about that!"

Also, when introducing somebody, try and make the whole thing pleasant by saying something like, "My ancient friend," or "My colleague at Pentonville," or "Quite mad, but absolutely harmless." That sort of thing will put you all at your ease at once.

In this little known art of introduction, I think it is only fair to tell you that a gentleman should be introduced to a lady, not a lady to a gentleman. See what I mean? Like this—"This, Mrs. Bunion, is my friend, Mr. Camelface. Mr. Camelface, don't take any notice of her, Mrs. Bunion, I mean." And when you are introduced to a lady, don't push your hand out in the hope that she will grasp it eagerly and thankfully. That is bad form. If she wants to shake hands with you at all, and if she sees your hands are quite clean, she'll do all the hand-shoving. You've got to cough, look up at the sky, and make a noise like a cipher.

To get along to another point. When a lady is paying an after-noon call, she should not remove her gloves. Especially if she has corns and hairs all over her fingers. When sitting down on a visit of this sort, she should sit on her hands, grunt two or three times, enquire, if the hostess is a spinster, after the children, and then hoot like a departing engine and go away. If she is fat, she must pay particular attention to leaving her seat behind, (the chair that belonged to the hostess, I mean.).

You should never make a formal visit before luncheon. If you do, the people you visit will think you've merely come along to eat all their fish and curry and rice and things. But if it is absolutely necessary to make a visit of this kind, take your own food along. You're teeming saffron; then be assured of your place in their winter repository; or of your place in the vernal season; or of silken robes; or of the Empress from her Palatine wardrobes; of amber warmed by the hand of a maiden; of a jar of dark Falernian wine, broken and scented from a distance; of a



that case he would be quite within his rights. His hat, stick, and umbrella must be left in the hall. But sometimes, when he is paying a visit to a woman who doesn't like him, he is allowed to take his umbrella in and use it as a shield against all the things she shies at him.

After a ball or party has been given by friends of yours, you must, (provided you were invited) allow at least a week or a fortnight to elapse before you visit them again. This is to permit you and your friends to revive from the effects of the cheap port that you all consumed.

After Brown (who has always been borrowing money from you) has died, you must visit his widow within a week or fortnight after the funeral, taking a large black bag with you, to collect all he owed you.

When you are receiving guests, don't snarl at them and make them feel that you hate the sight of them, or say, "Fine day for leaving, what?" Greet them as heartily as you can, thump them all over their backs, and say, even if you don't mean it, "It's so nice to see you! Come again next year." They will appreciate that.

When a guest of yours retires, spring from your seat, yell "Good egg!", ring the bell for the servant to open the door, (if you have a bell and a servant and a door) and accompany your guest as far as you think fit towards the door, helping him on with sundry kicks from behind.

Now a few words about dinner parties and such things. I'm sure you know how embarrassing these can be.

If you are a gentleman, (a male, that is) you should wear a black coat and a black pair of trousers at a dinner. This is a precaution in case you or any of the sofa guests suddenly die from the effects of the

Bear in mind too, that if you are a host or

hostess, you must not receive your guests in the bathroom. This is very bad form, though often done these days.

When dinner is announced, the host must offer his arm to the ugliest looking lady-guest and escort her to the dining room, doing what he can to prevent her from straining at the leash, while all the rest follow in procession, singing, "Yes, We have no Bananas."

During the meal, each gentleman with a lady seated next him must ply her vigorously with pounds of food. If she refuses this, the gent must promptly set to and consume the lot himself. If he doesn't, he is not being polite.

If napkins are used, you must not use your's as a handkerchief, especially if you have a bad cold; you must also be very careful that you don't tuck the thing

round your neck like a bib. You wouldn't look nice, and if you *had* been surreptitiously using it as a handkerchief, that would be quite the finishing touch, wouldn't it?

You must not set out to beat the eating record as soon as you sit down. At a truly well mannered dinner, all the knives, forks and spoons rise and fall in unison. This is what is called keeping time with each other.

And, whatever you do, don't have a second helping. Everybody will stare at you if you do, and you may overhear some nasty remarks about your capacity. Besides, when you swallow in grim silence, you don't seem to be able to do it quietly.

Well, cheerio! I'm just off to the nearest restaurant, after sampling the wife's dinner.

THE NEW COMER—(Continued from Page 28)

from you. What has been good enough for me is good enough for her. But I must tell you one thing. Keep a civil tongue in your head and don't assume the high-and-mighty before me or my children."

"I didn't insult her, mother," Shakuntala ventured in explanation, "I only wanted her to concentrate her attention on studies and not on jewels and gossip."

"Why should talking about jewels irritate you so? If you haven't any jewels on you, it is not the poor child's fault."

Nithya was cast in a different mould. She and Swarnam were poles asunder. Nithya was an active and intelligent girl and got along cordially with Shakuntala. She was quick at learning things and had a sweet and melodious voice. But she had one fault. She had no spirit of toleration and her remarks were often pungent and biting. She and Swarnam were constantly at loggerheads and Shakuntala felt inclined to take Nithya's side on the merits of the case. Swarnam's refuge was Mangalam who turned her wrath on Shakuntala:

"I know it's all your making. You can't keep peace between two sisters. You take sides against Swarnam. You have spoilt Nithya and trained her after you. See the result. She dislikes me for my old-fashioned ways; she constantly quarrels with her sister; and she has a tongue as unbridled as your own. I don't know who will marry her if she continues like this."

Rukmini was an innocent let loose. Being only four years old, she knew not what to do, what not to do, and what she was doing. She was constantly upsetting things, breaking glass-ware, spoiling books and note-books with her ugly scrawls. And she had a nasty habit of frequently coming in the way of Shakuntala and Mayuri when the twain were inclined to sport and make love. If Shakuntala brushed her aside with a sharp reprimand,

the little thing would kick up a row, suddenly become a tragic-heroine and run to her mother with a garbled version:

"Mother!".....sobs.....sobs.....irrepressible sobs."Madhuni beat me."

"Why did she beat you? What mischief were you up to?"

"I did nothing, mother. I only went in to brother's room to fetch my toy. She was there talking with him and on seeing me shouted out: 'Why are you roaming about spoiling everything? Go and sit quietly in some place and read.' I refused to go out without my toy. She brushed me aside and beat me."

Then Mangalam would espouse the innocent's cause and come out in defence. And you know what a mother's defence is; it is offence every bit, so far as the daughter-in-law is concerned.

Thus one by one, Mangalam's mental reservations came out in verbal battery and stinging retort. The frequent pin-pricks which she administered to Shakuntala gathered to a head. The tension increased day by day. Chinnaswamy Iyer was unable to compose their differences. Mayuri felt disgusted with the whole show; whenever he tried to intercede, Mangalam was wroth.

"If you don't know how to restrain your wife's tongue, you need not come to lecture to me. I, too, have been young and served my term under my mother-in law. I have never seen a disruptive girl like Shakuntala, so forward, arrogant and independent."

It was under such auspices that Mayuri decided to live apart from the family with his wife. Chinnaswamy Iyer felt it as a keen disappointment; Mangalam took it as a deliberate insult; the others were dismayed; and Shakuntala felt she had had her experience.

THE GHOST OF THE IRON WAY

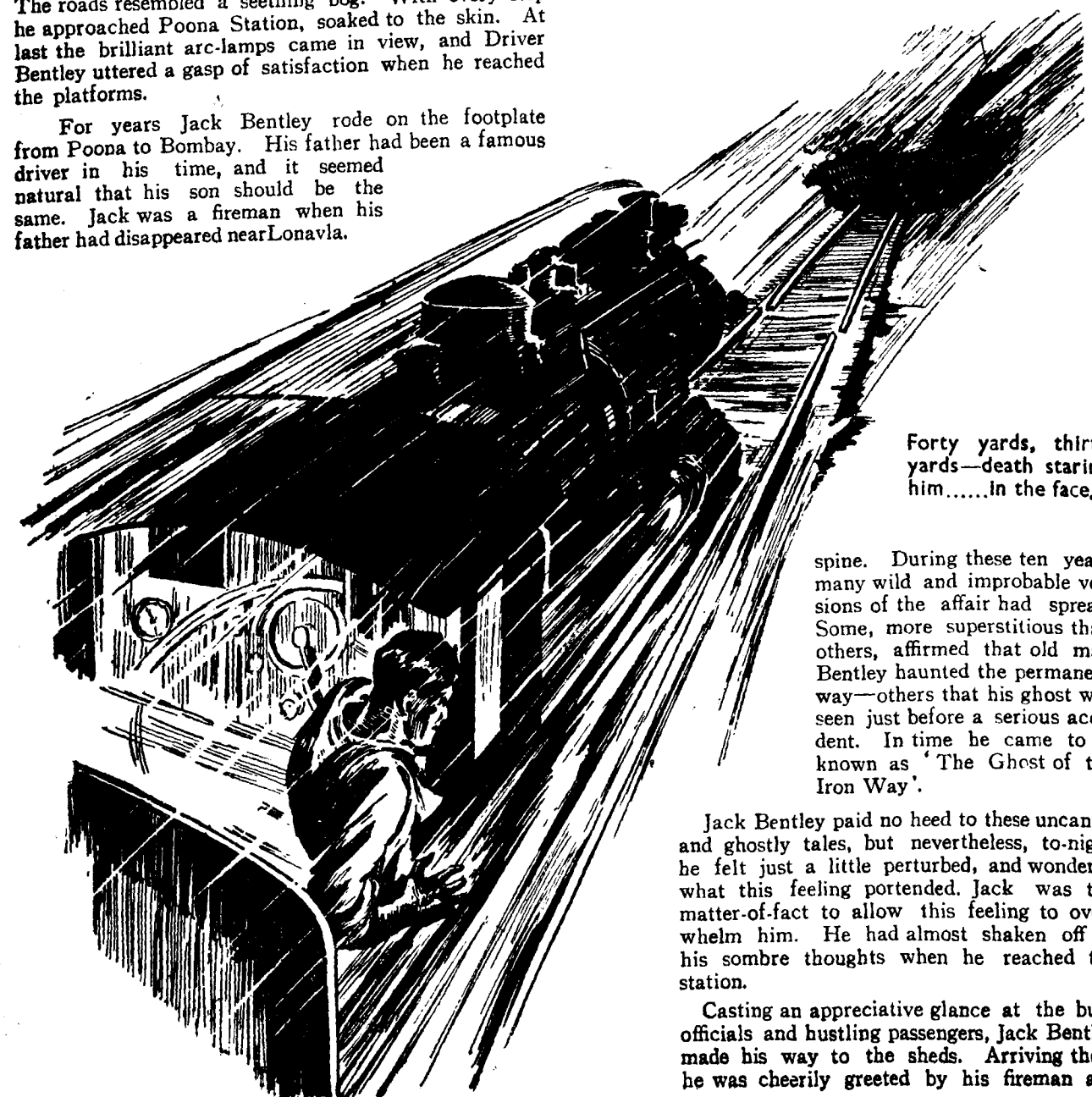
By JOHN R. CHAPMAN

THE rain was pouring down in blinding sheets as Driver Jack Bentley hurried on his way to the railway station. Buttoning up the collar of his overcoat and forcing down his cap still harder on his head, he squelched through the mud and flowing rivulets. The roads resembled a seething bog. With every step he approached Poona Station, soaked to the skin. At last the brilliant arc-lamps came in view, and Driver Bentley uttered a gasp of satisfaction when he reached the platforms.

For years Jack Bentley rode on the footplate from Poona to Bombay. His father had been a famous driver in his time, and it seemed natural that his son should be the same. Jack was a fireman when his father had disappeared near Lonavla.

What had really happened, no one can ever tell. When the pulsating train came to a standstill in Lonavla Station, the fireman was found unconscious on the floor of the engine, and the driver missing! Jack Bentley's father was never traced. Whether he was alive or dead—no word had ever been heard again of him.

Qualifying from fireman to driver, Jack Bentley assumed control of the same engine and route as his father before him. It was ten years ago to-night since his beloved father had vanished. Driver Bentley remembered, and a chill of foreboding ran down his



Forty yards, thirty yards—death staring him.....in the face,

spine. During these ten years many wild and improbable versions of the affair had spread. Some, more superstitious than others, affirmed that old man Bentley haunted the permanent way—others that his ghost was seen just before a serious accident. In time he came to be known as 'The Ghost of the Iron Way'.

Jack Bentley paid no heed to these uncanny and ghostly tales, but nevertheless, to-night he felt just a little perturbed, and wondered what this feeling portended. Jack was too matter-of-fact to allow this feeling to overwhelm him. He had almost shaken off all his sombre thoughts when he reached the station.

Casting an appreciative glance at the busy officials and hustling passengers, Jack Bentley made his way to the sheds. Arriving there he was cheerily greeted by his fireman and

confidant—Billy Hitchcock. Billy was rapidly getting up steam, and whistled gaily as he shovelled the black diamonds into the jaws of his furnace.

Billy did not know what superstition meant, or even how to spell the word. He had served the Railway longer than Jack Bentley, but he lacked the initiative to take over the duties of a driver. But he was contented.

A few minutes later both driver and fireman were moving slowly in the direction of the station. The coaches in position, they had only to await their passengers and mail before they could be off on their long night journey to Bombay.

Passengers and officials were tearing about in their endeavours to get the train off in time. Jack Bentley smiled pityingly at all this unnecessary chaos. He had seen the same thing nightly for years. The engine was throbbing like a thing of life. Jack unconsciously patted the engine. At last all the passengers were seated, luggage and mail sorted and classified; the guard stood by to give the 'all-clear'. The green lamp waved, a shrill whistle echoed throughout the station, and Jack Bentley gently released the brakes and let in the throttle.

The head-lamps of the engine gleamed like the wild eyes of some fabulous monster of a by-gone age. Slowly the train left the station—each revolution of the wheels accelerating its momentum. The driver and fireman had both done this trip scores of times. The footplate was their birthright—their livelihood. The Western Ghats held no terror for this experienced pair. Ten, twenty, thirty, forty miles an hour they raced through the night.

That spirit of foreboding—a premonition of impending evil—grew upon Jack. He could not define his fear—but it was there—remorseless and grim. He passed his hand wearily across his face and closed his eyes for a moment. Billy Hitchcock watched his mate anxiously, and asked, "What's the matter, Jack?" Jack collected himself and replied, "I'm alright, Billy, don't worry."

The fireman continued to stoke the fire, and Jack kept his eyes fixed on the Iron Way. A glance at the clock and he knew that they would soon be in Lonavla. Ten minutes only. Secretly, he would be glad and relieved when they steamed into Bombay.

Suddenly, Billy gave a scream of horror, and mouthed inanely at Jack. Jack turned to ascertain what was wrong. The fireman was pointing to the coal bogie. Another shriek of despair, and Billy jumped clean off the engine into the darkness. Jack knew that something was radically wrong, but—where? And what?

The lights of Lonavla shone in the distance, and as Jack looked through the window on to the line ahead he was stricken dumb. A great chasm yawned less than fifty yards in front. The rails had been torn up and lay like twisted serpents in the glare of the head-lamps. Jack was paralysed in body and in mind, and he could do nothing to check the mad speed of the massive iron monster. Forty yards, thirty yards—death staring him, in the face. The passengers were sleeping—secure in faith of the driver.

Jack stared at the throttle and brakes. Then the most wonderful thing in the world happened. The speed of the train slackened, the brakes were applied and the engine came to a standstill within three yards of the chasm of death!

Driver Bentley swooned.

He swore afterwards that he saw the wraith of his father at the controls. He knew no more until he awoke in the station master's office in Lonavla. He started to his feet, and cried hoarsely, "Did we crash?" "No," replied the official. "Due to your wonderful presence of mind, the lives of all your passengers were saved. You will be highly commended for this night's work."

Billy, the fireman, limped into the office. He had sustained nothing more serious than a sprained ankle. Later, at the preliminary enquiry, Billy Hitchcock stated that he saw plainly the emaciated form of a man on the coal bogie behind. The man was John Bentley, the missing driver!

Jack Bentley also saw his father's form if not his ghost. The idea of the supernatural was of course rejected at the enquiry. Both driver and fireman were commended on their heroic conduct. Did the Ghost of the Iron Way save this train from destruction? Or did Jack Bentley, in his blind terror, apply the brakes?



A lesson in correct sneezing

RAM CHANDRA'S HOBBIES

[Ram Chandra belongs to the same species as Stanley Featherstonehaugh Ukridge. In this and subsequent instalments of the series are set out some of the hobbies of Ram Chandra—Ed.]

I. WIRELESS

MR. Ram Chandra walked aimlessly backwards and forwards in the confined space he termed his garden. This plot of virgin soil was not a riot of luxuriant flowers, or even of vegetables. truth, Mr. Ram Chandra knew nothing about chrythemums and less regarding horticulture.

Recently retired from the railway service, his bank account was a real source of gratification. His only hobby was that he had not seriously cultivated a hobby which while away the long hours of his retirement. But Mr. Ram Chandra could not be considered a dull person. He had dabbled in science, arts and crafts, stamp and coin collecting (philately and numismatics he was wont to term them), birds, butterflies, black magic and fortune-telling.

None of his multifarious activities had been sufficiently deep-rooted to hold his interest for long. He had seriously considered the prospect of rearing bees and birds. This idea was reluctantly rejected. Bees occasionally sting, and his neighbours' cats showed a marked preference for birds for breakfast.

From north, south, east and west came shoals of every kind of prospectus. 'How to profitably employ spare time', 'How to rear babies', and 'English without a tutor', were but a few of the many rosy prospects held out to him as hobbies. They were all consigned to the fire, and Mr. Ram Chandra was still without a hobby. His one plunge into the realms of literature was a short story. A benign editor had returned the MS. the next day with a beautifully illuminated rejection-slip. Mr. Ram Chandra burned the MS. and framed the rejection-slip.

Mr. Ram Chandra retraced his steps and entered his house. As he crossed the threshold, his foot was caught in a piece of twisted wire thrown carelessly down by the electrician. He tripped heavily. He then jumped

to his feet, and there appeared a look of peace and contentment in his eyes. His hobby was staring him in the face. Wireless! WIRELESS!! WIRELESS!!! With a whoop of delight he dropped into a chair, and coned over the pleasant prospect of passing his evenings away tinkering with valves and tubes. He would 'tune in' every corner of the globe. Maybe he would hear the King's speech, or even politicians discussing 'The White Paper'. Glorious visions of his many friends listening to African jungle music, aboriginal sooth-sayers and Spanish operas, opened before his mind's eye. He would make his own wireless-set!

It was not long before Mr. Ram Chandra had all the technique of radio theory and practice at his finger-tips. He was ready to begin. A visit to the local wireless shop, and he had purchased coils, amplifiers, batteries, valves, cabinets, aerials, and all the paraphernalia so dear to the heart of the true radio enthusiast. He was puzzled why the shop-assistant was convulsed with suppressed laughter when he enquired the price of one or two wave-lengths!

Closely following the diagram, Mr. Ram Chandra commenced the pleasant task of assembling a wireless set. He had not been employed for more than half an hour before he was wondering why it was called 'wireless'. It was all wires, with a lot to spare!

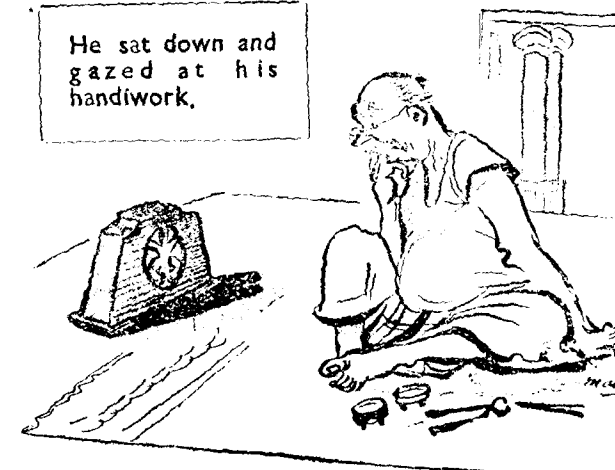
At last he had the set connected up to his satisfaction. True, a few wires could not be accounted for, but he would trust to luck. He fixed his aerial and took the earth-wire to the garden beyond. He then gave the knobs a preliminary twirl. A screeching and howling ensued. The noise was not unlike that of a mad dog, or the Dervishes at play. Mr. Ram Chandra gazed dumbfoundedly at the loud speaker fixed to the wall.

The more he twirled the knobs the louder screeched the elements. In despair he stuffed a cushion into the cabinet and

(Continued on page 37)

By
'CHAPPIE'

He sat down and gazed at his handiwork.



BRIGHTER DETECTIVE STORIES

BY 'CAPER'

Some enlightened member of the reading public should initiate a move for brighter detective stories in which:

1. The title shall not mislead;
2. Every step in the mystery shall be left open for the reader to deal with and to form his own conclusions as he likes;
3. The method of unravelling the mystery shall be merely suggested or diffidently hinted at with a nervous cough, so to speak, by the author, thus giving the reader the fullest liberty and the natural right of dispensing with the author's solution if it doesn't tally with his own (as of course it never will);
4. Finally the whole thing should be so beautifully planned that the reader never for one moment suspects that he has anything even resembling an inferiority complex.

I offer my humble services for the cause, and give below, as a first and tentative effort towards the realisation of the noble object in view, the reader's ideal *Detective Story*:—
[You will of course note with inward delight that as a title this can't be bettered.]

They're off! (their nut)

The detectives ordinary.

Human beings, not psycho-physiological freaks.

Not a case of the wise father not knowing his own son.

The legal touch.

The medical touch.

The supernatural element.

The advisability of birth-control.

Facing the facts.

The poetic touch.

The unromantic nature. The detectives ordinary, human beings.

The dismal touch.

"Don't you think he has done it?" queried Detective Crumplebey of England-Yard.

"Do you think he has done it?" returned Detective-Sergeant Purpleton, also of England-Yard.

"You think he has not?" asked Crumplebey.

"You think he has?" rejoined Purpleton.

This delightful conversation between the sleuth-hounds had been going on presumably for hours without their still being able to identify the culprit in the Buncombeshire Murder case. This affair had become now for four days public property. It was only too well-known how the Duke of Buncombeshire was murdered in his bath-tub. It was also notorious how there was practically no trace of a wound anywhere in the body except in the pit of the neck and on either temple. And even in these places, there was nothing to deserve the name of 'wound', because they were merely what seemed like pin-pricks.

Detectives, particularly Crumplebey and Purpleton of England-Yard, had been sweating at the case but still no clue had been unearthed.

"The death is most mysterious," declared Crumplebey.

"Isn't it?" cried Purpleton.

But this didn't lead them anywhere.

"Do you think the Duke's nephew could have committed the crime?" suggested Crumplebey.

"Has the Duke a nephew?" inquired Purpleton.

"Of course he hasn't any so far as we know, but then there may be one somewhere without our knowing about it," explained Crumplebey.

"Do you feel that way?" asked Purpleton.

"Do you feel differently?" returned Crumplebey.

The conversation was becoming really lively by this time but Purpleton felt he couldn't give a definite reply to Crumplebey's last question. Crumplebey said that he himself couldn't do any better either. However, they agreed to visit the scene of murder once again, to see if any clue could be discovered.

While nearing 'Buncombeshire Villa' where the murder had been perpetrated with so little attention to publicity, strains of wild music reached their ears. It was as if an earthquake was singing its whole soft heart out.

"Just listen to the sound of music, Purpleton," invited Crumplebey.

"Don't I hear it?" said Purpleton.

By this time they had reached the house. They were let in by an elderly lady in mourning, the unfortunate Duchess of Buncombeshire herself.

Portents.

Remember Archimedes.

Nemesis.

The milk of human kindness.

The effect of the coal-strike.

Catechism.

Is there a doctor in the House?

Twin souls.

Of Ophelia or yesterday's newspaper.

A friend in need.

Cold realism.

The scientific touch.

The detectives human beings.

The Arctic touch.

The detectives human beings because of 1. their despair. 2. their frailty.

Hobbies—two versions.

Mental telepathy.

The supernatural element in human life (for the second time).

Cf. Shakespeare: 'Lord, what fool's etc.'

The detectives ordinary human beings (again).

The invariable solution for everything including detective stories.

My own solution. Like it?

Straightaway, Purpleton and Crumplebey marched to the bath-room and entered it. Just then a portrait which must have been hanging from a nail above the bath-tub, fell with a crash into the bath-tub. At once both Purpleton and Crumplebey ran towards the bath-tub. In their hurry they had forgotten the slipperiness of the floor due to water splashed about on it. But they were soon reminded of it by a practical demonstration. Purpleton fell down on his head and Crumplebey nose-dived. Nothing daunted, both got up and shook hands, smiling sheepishly a while. Then they went to the bath-tub and stooped. Purpleton picked up the broken portrait and suddenly his eyes gleamed.

"I have got it!" he cried.

"What?" asked Crumplebey.

"The portrait!" replied Purpleton.

Crumplebey collapsed, recovered and collapsed again and recovered once more.

In the meantime Purpleton had rushed out with the portrait to the Duchess.

"Was there another portrait above the bath-tub besides this, my lady?"

inquired Purpleton in intense excitement. Crumplebey had joined them before Purpleton finished his question.

"There is one there even now!" replied the Duchess. Purpleton's heart sank within him and was drowned irrecoverably; and for a while he looked a perfect picture of disillusionment. Crumplebey then cheered him up and took him and the Duchess back to the bath-room. Once there, both the detectives began to examine minutely every little detail of the room. Purpleton discovered two cakes of soap dangerously poised above the bath-tub. Crumplebey found a dirty Turkish bath-towel on the rack by the dressing-table in a corner of the room.

Then both the detectives began scrutinising the bath-tub with magnifying glasses. All of a sudden both of them jumped.

"What is it?" asked the Duchess hurriedly.

"There are three brown hairs in the bath-tub, milady," cried both Purpleton and Crumplebey in one voice.

"May be they are the dog's, because it had a bath in the tub just before you came here," explained the Duchess.

Once again Purpleton and Crumplebey froze and knew not what to say.

After a search of four hours for a definite clue, Crumplebey and Purpleton left the Duchess, despairing of a solution for the mystery. They were tired out when they reached their offices in England-Yard.

Purpleton sank into a chair and lighted a cigarette. Crumplebey sank into another and did not light a cigarette. Then they looked at each other. Then they looked at the ceiling. Then they stopped looking and quietly closed their eyes. Then they, as quietly, opened their eyes; and then each looked at the other furtively from beneath practically completely closed eye-lids. The fact was they were both thinking hard about the same point, namely, the discovery of the unknown murderer of the Duke of Buncombeshire.

When they had been at these mystic rituals for more than half an hour Purpleton smiled a ghostly smile which was immediately answered by an equally ghostly grin from Crumplebey.

"What fools we were, not to know the solution of this simple thing!" said Purpleton.

"What fools we were indeed!" echoed Crumplebey. Then it was that the real Purpleton broke loose. He suddenly shot out a muscular right hand and hit Crumplebey across the face. Not to be beaten, Crumplebey shot out an even more muscular left which landed plump on Purpleton's nose, flattening its beautiful rotundity.

* * * * *

There you have it, dear reader, a detective story just as you would like it to be. And now for my own suggestions (you may reject them when they don't agree with your solution—you needn't mind my feelings. But in case they do agree, there is always this consolation for you that neither you nor I could have helped it.) :—

1. Fate.

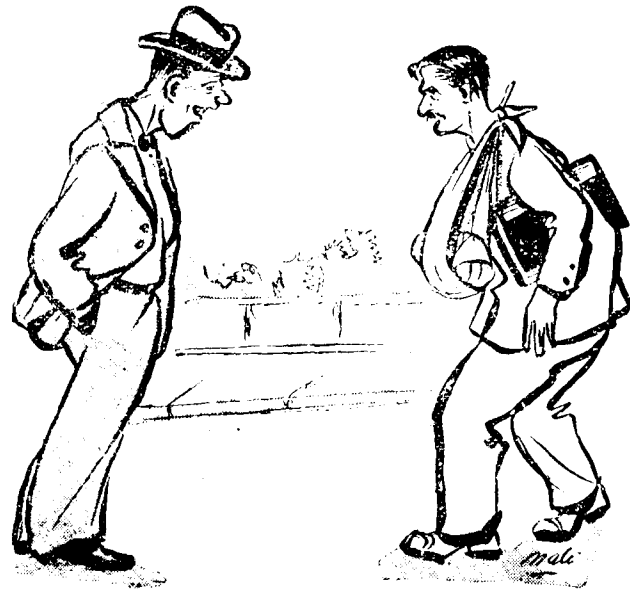
2. The chivalrous sentiments of Crumplebey and Purpleton which prevented them from letting down the Duchess whom they had all along known to be the murderess of the Duke.

3. Blimp!

(Hurrah! Now we'll cut a Caper—Ed.)

Meet Mr. Rajendranath

By "JAN"



"HELLO-hello-hello-hello!" I almost shouted. "Of all the unexpected people—"

"Hello me no hellos," he said, "and don't bother about dressing your queries in words. I can read in your eyes all the questions you want to ask me and I'll answer them forthwith. You want to know how I happen to be in Bombay to-day when I should be miles away; why I walk with a limp and carry my right hand in a sling; what has become of my indispensable tortoise-shell eye-glasses, and if I'm aware that I've come out without my hat."

"Marvellous!" I exclaimed in mock admiration. "Another Sherlock Holmes! Man, it's fellows like you we need in our police force."

"Patience, my dear Watson," he interrupted. "You wouldn't condemn your best pal to the humdrum life of a mere P.C. I'm made for greater things, I am. Anyway, here are the answers to your unuttered questions: Because I was bent on seeing the old place again. Due to a sprain in my left ankle and a fracture of my right wrist. Splinters; yes. Further particulars on inquiry."

"I inquire," I replied, and he proceeded.

"All due to my wanting to do some guys a good turn—at least my broken wrist was. Got a nasty bad turn, it did, and it was something to see it all twisted into knots. I saw two blighters fighting on a public thoroughfare, thought I'd act peace-maker, butted in and woke up in hospital. Those fellows scarcely left a single whole bone in my anatomy. I learnt later that the fight was a tame affair—a challenge, all arranged beforehand, with a big bet on."

"Bad business this—acting peace-maker. I remember once—"

"As for the sprained ankle," interrupted Raj, with a suddenness that almost jolted me, for I was by now thoroughly interested in his exposition of his theory of the ethics of peace-making, "I got it in your d.....d Bombay Catacombs."

"Catacombs!" I interrupted. "You don't mean—"

"Mean be d.....d!" he thundered. "I'm saying it. And, baby,"—to Raj I am anything between a baby and an old man—"would you mind giving me the right of way a little. Questions and interruptions later."

That settled me, and I blamed myself for forgetting that when Raj once started talking, there wasn't a woman alive who could outdo him.

"Yes, Catacombs," he repeated, "or whatever else you call those subterranean passages along the Waudby Road. Got my sprain there, where my splintered specs and my brand new hat are lying this moment. Happened last night. Got discharged from hospital two days ago. Landed in Bombay last evening, and thought I'd pay you a visit. Came via Bori Bunder and was just getting into Waudby road, when I stumbled over a mound and fell headlong into the bowels of the earth. All clear?"

"Everything," I assented with emphasis. "But what's this?" I added, relieving him of a brand new volume he had in his hand. "Been buying books, eh?"

"Book," he corrected—Raj was always a stickler for exactness. "And," he went on, "perhaps it will interest you to know that it is a book on 'Etiquette', and a prospective present to an enemy of mine."

"Enemy!" I gasped, "you don't mean....."

"I always mean everything I say, and you of all others should know it by now. And anyway, what's funny about it I'd like to know? Isn't an enemy a human being, and hasn't he got feelings like you and I? What's there in a fellow giving an enemy a present? Rather, I'd go the length of asserting that there is nothing more sensible than to give your enemy a present occasionally. He deserves it, and I'll tell you why."

"An enemy, unlike a friend, will never touch you for a fiver or a tenner, that is if he is a true enemy, and your cherished books will never become naturalised 'subjects' of his private library. He will not accost you on your way to the beach where you expect to meet a very interesting person, stick to you like the measles and spoil your evening. He will not plant himself on you in the train and overwhelm you with his borrowed views on the weather, or the political situation, or the economic depression, when you are dying to open your Edgar Wallace and find out what the hero did when the

blundering Scotland Yard man connected the crime with the woman whom he loved. Or if you happen to be reading the newspaper, he will not ask you for just that centre page which you are yourself most anxious to read, nor will he crane his neck over the back-seat and keep you from turning the page which you have just finished reading.

"He never slaps you on the back in public thoroughfares, or claims the shelter of your umbrella and makes you wish after getting thoroughly wet, that you had never possessed one. He never raps on your door at ungodly hours to engage you in conversation when you'd rather be snugly in bed. He never prys into your private affairs or offers advice on matters on which you know you are the best judge.

"When he marries, you haven't to bother about making a suit, or being best man; when he is ill, there is no need to take flowers every day and sit by his bedside for hours on end; and when he dies, you need not worry about sending him a wreath or hunting out for a black tie. That's an enemy in his true colours, and if you ask my opinion, I'd say without hesitation that there never was a truer friend than a true enemy."

"For once in your life you have convinced me, Raj," I said, "but what about that tenner I loaned—"

Raj understood. He winked; I winked; and the matter passed off.

"And now," he went on, "you will want to know who this wonderful enemy of mine is, and why I'm going out of my way to give him a present. Well, to be more

correct, he is not a true enemy yet, but he may be in time if things run smoothly. So far I've only come into contact with him once, and having discovered that one of his weak points was etiquette, I just found out a way of doing him a good turn.

"Met him on Governor's Day—the day the Mayor was 'At Home' to the Governor," he corrected, seeing the note of interrogation in my face. "I had an invitation to the function. Not many people in the city can say the same, mind you, and didn't I just feel flattered. I was one of the elect, but my elation was short-lived.

"At the entrance to the Town Hall my progress was suddenly interrupted by a fellow. He refused point blank to believe me when I assured him that I was one of those invited, and, playing what he thought was his trump card, he asked me to produce my card. I would have kicked him, but that would have made a loud noise and I wasn't sure how he'd react. Imagine a fellow asking guests to produce their invitation cards—preposterous!

"I learnt later that the strict watch at the door was due to the fact that many uninvited people rushed upstairs after the sports, before arrangements could be made to keep them out. All considered, the affair upstairs could best be summed up, in the words: 'Few were called but many were chosen'.

"Hello! Where are we? Flora Fountain! And I had to go to Bori Bunder!"

Saying which my dynamic friend honoured me with a stunning rap on my back, and swinging on his axis, headed away in the direction from which we came.

RAM CHANDRA'S HOBBIES—(Continued from page 33)

went to bed. For hours he pondered on matters wireless, and at last fell asleep to dream of controlling the B.B.C.

Next morning he applied himself to perfecting his radio set. After tinkering about with the connection etc., for nearly three hours, he again twirled the shiny knobs. Not a sound—not so much as a whisper from the ether. In sheer desperation, Mr. Ram Chandra dismantled the whole set, and following the directions in the book, re-assembled it. Still not a sound! Not a wee squeak! If a chopper had been handy nearby, Mr. Ram Chandra would have vented his displeasure on the valves.

He sat down and gazed pathetically at his handiwork. Suddenly he noticed that the wires were *not* connected to the batteries under the table. Labour in vain. Hurrah! Hastily linking up all the loose wires, he again settled down to 'tuning in' on Moscow. A succession of grunts and growls emanated from the loud speaker. Not being familiar with the language of the Russians, Mr. Ram Chandra decided that the sounds were that of some dead language! Anyhow, he would try again.

The same result, but LOUDER. Perspiration stood out in tiny beads on his brow. Passing into the garden to examine his aerial and earth-wire, he stopped speechless. Suspended from his aerial-wire was his bearer's best suit, complete with dhoti. The table-cloths

(Perhaps a poultry farm—Ed.)

and *durries* were also hanging from the wire as if from a clothes-line. The wire resembled a badly bent bow.

With a snarl of rage, Mr. Ram Chandra snatched at the *durries*, and down came the whole contraption. The steel aerial caught him a resounding thwack on the side of the head, and the huge *durries* enveloped and threatened to suffocate him. He extricated himself after five minutes, and crawled indoors.

Almost immediately a knock sounded on the door. Opening the door he saw the portly frame of the local Inspector of Police.

"I understand that you are in possession of a wireless-set without the necessary licence?" grunted the policeman.

"But I am only experimenting," returned Mr. Ram Chandra, in a faint voice.

"Experimenting or not, you require a licence, or you will be fined."

The door slammed!

Mr. Ram Chandra bought a licence, but he is still trying to 'tune in' on Broadway. The vacant look has again appeared in his eyes, and the postman daily brings the bundle of advertisements for suitable occupations. What will be his next hobby?



SUSILA

TACKLES THE MILK PROBLEM

(People believe that the cow, as a rule, is a very docile animal. Rules, of course, have exceptions as, otherwise, they cannot be rules and a tale hangs thereby.—Ed.)

explanation. Yes, my cook, Veloo, had taken a day off and Susila had volunteered to mind the kitchen without prejudice to her duties as the mistress of the house. So, that was that.

I got up and went outside.

"Dear," Susila sang out as soon as she saw me. "Look at his cheek! He has added a lot of water to the milk to-day—most probably filthy water—and he has the impudence to swear that it is pure!"

"Sir," the harassed Ayyasami turned towards me. "I swear by all that I hold sacred—"

"There is no need to swear," Susila said. "Look at the lactometer, man. The reading is nearer 'water' than 'milk'. You may bluff me, fellow, but not this instrument." And she flourished the instrument.

"Anma, the cow drank a lot of water yesterday—"

"Rubbish!"

"—and the green grass which it feeds on—"

"I am too wary a bird to be caught with that chaff and, you understand, from next week onwards we shall make other arrangements for our milk. You can send in your bill this day week." She dismissed him with a curt nod and marched off to the kitchen, with her nose high up in the air.

Ayyasami looked at me with a mute appeal in his eyes.



milk' was entirely Susila's portfolio, and I had no say, authoritative or otherwise, in the matter.

I made my way into the kitchen to see if Susila had apportioned any work for me in the preparation of my *chota hazri*. But closure had not been applied to the discussion of 'milk supply'.

"Dear, do you know the risk we are exposing ourselves to by buying milk from these vendors?"

I did not, and grunted accordingly.

"No? Your ignorance is colossal! Believe me, violent epidemics like cholera, typhoid and dysentery, to mention a few, have been known to originate from impure milk."

"Impure milk?"

"Yes, I mean milk to which is added impure, contaminated, bacteria-laden water. One can never trust these vendors to give us pure milk. They always add water, and impure water at that."



"If I might make a suggestion, dear," I ventured, "I think it would serve our purpose, if we buy a gallon or two of distilled water and give it to Ayyasami."

"Distilled water? Why?"

"Should he at any time wish to add water to our milk, let him add distilled water and so—"

"Don't be silly!"

There was silence for a few minutes on both sides and it was Susila who broke it.

"The best thing for us to do under the circumstances would be to buy a cow."

"And a calf," I got in edgeways.

"There! Don't you interrupt me, please. Yes, a cow and a calf. We would have an independent source of milk supply all for ourselves—no milkman's bother, no milkman's bill and what is of more consequence, absolutely no risk of catching the infection of—er—"

"Cholera, typhoid or dysentery, to mention a few," I murmured.

"Yes, all these and many more. So, that is settled, eh?" With that she exhibited a pair of dimples on her cheeks.

But that was not necessary; for, I was feeling the aching sense of void in my stomach more and more acutely every minute and I did not very much relish the idea of prolonging the discussion any longer. So, I played the role of the ideal hubby and bleated out a well-timed 'Yes, my dear'.

But even that, however, failed to produce the desired effect.

"So far, so good. Now, what about a cow-shed? Of course, we can't do without it, you know."

I nodded in the affirmative.

"The next thing we have to consider is—"

"Our breakfast," I cut in.

"No, the next thing we have to consider is the fodder for the cow. A cow can't live on air."

For a split second I thought the affair would pass off uneventfully. But only for a second; then my god!



"Neither can I."

"You know this is harvest time, when fodder can be bought cheap. You wouldn't have thought about it, I am sure."

"High thinking with an empty stomach is not a feat I am capable of," I reminded her.

"Now about the cow," she resumed, regardless of my interruption. "I shall do the selection myself. Give me a blank cheque and leave the rest to me."

And so I did. In a week's time all the preliminary arrangements had been completed. A cow-shed had been built under Susila's immediate supervision to conform strictly to the specification of the model cow-shed exhibited at the Health Exhibitions. The annual requirement of fodder had been purchased and stacked. And the cow also arrived in due course.

"How do you like *Kalyani*, dear?" asked Susila.

"*Kalyani*?"

"Oh! that is the name of the cow. She is a dear, isn't she?"

"I dare say."

"She is a bit difficult to manage; but that is not a serious disqualification. I got her for a mere song."

"That is fine! So you didn't cash the cheque?"

"Yes; what I mean to say is that the price I paid was ridiculously low. Many cow-fanciers opine that I bagged her at a bargain price."

The next morning Susila drafted the whole manpower available in the house to her aid in the operation of milking the cow. We—I mean, Veloo, my cook, Raman, my man, Pattu my brother-in-law and I—marched at once to the scene of operation. *Kalyani* was viewing the whole proceedings with obvious disfavour and was inclined to show fight. But Susila had decided to teach her a lesson.

"Now, look here, dear, you just tie a piece of rope securely round her hind-legs and hold it tight. Raman will pass five yards of rope round her body and keep her in position. Velu will catch hold of the horns lest she should have a go at me. And, you Pattu, my dear," she lowered her voice and beamed upon her eight-year old brother. "Just have this stick with you. I daresay it

will come in handy when the other measures fail. Now!"

We instantly girded our loins and fell to work. I managed to pass the rope round the cow's hind-legs and then squatting on the floor, I held it securely in my hands. Without more ado Susila washed her hands and the area of operation with soap and water to avoid any possible contamination of the milk and straightaway began her work. For a split second, I thought the whole affair would pass off uneventfully. But only for a split second; then my god! *Kalyani* jumped up—jumped up, in spite of all our efforts, individual and collective, to control her—one foot above the ground. And, synchronising with this upward movement she shot out her hind-legs backwards with a momentum that I could hardly credit the apparently domesticated *Kalyani* to possess. The kick caught me napping—no, not literally, of course—on the pit of my stomach. With a groan, I rolled on the floor. But, worse was to follow. *Kalyani* followed it up with another kick which not only knocked Susila's *pince-nez* off but badly bruised her face.

Ominous silence prevailed for a few seconds, while Susila picked up the broken remains of her *pince-nez*. In the meantime, I managed to sit up from my forced recumbent position.

"I am afraid the cow seems to be a bit unruly," came Susila's half-apologetic voice. "Don't you think so?"

"Yes," all of us shouted in chorus. I went a step further and added, "Too darned unruly to be of any use to us."

"So I think," Susila assented. "But it would be rather mean on our part, if we return the cow forthwith to the owner and demand our money back. So, the next best thing we can do under the circumstances is to send her up to my mother with our compliments. My mother is on the look-out for a cow herself, so I hear, and I think she might succeed, where we failed."

"She would," piped Pattu at my elbow.

"But what about us?" I wanted to know.

"Oh! We can reinstate our old Ayyasami. I shall send word to him this minute."

And she did.

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CLOSING DATE 17-4-35

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Fill in the completed words in the entry form.

RULES AND CONDITIONS

Solutions must be written *only on the coupon on next page*. All entries must be received by the last post on 17-4-35. 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:—
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CLOSING DATE 17-4-35

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2.
3.
4.
5.
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7.
8.

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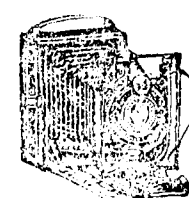
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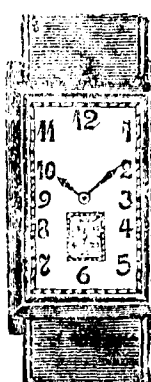
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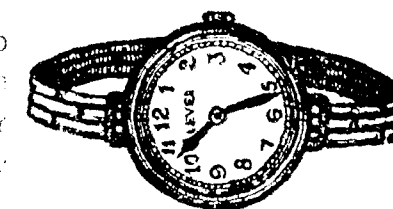
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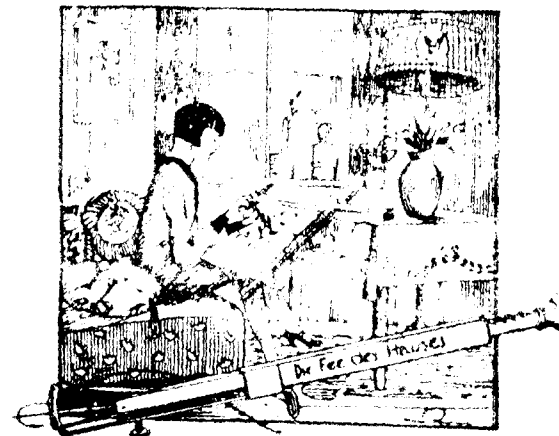
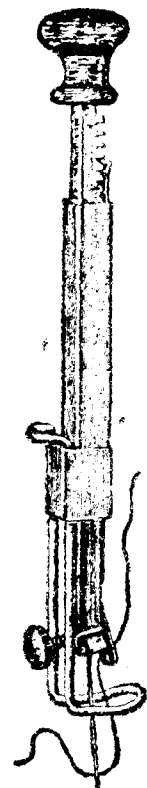
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