

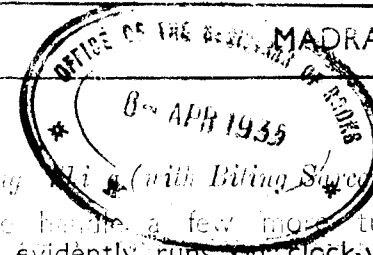
NEW 'EMBUSQUE' STORY

THE

MERRY

MAGAZINE

Vol. III



MADRAS, 6th APRIL, 1935

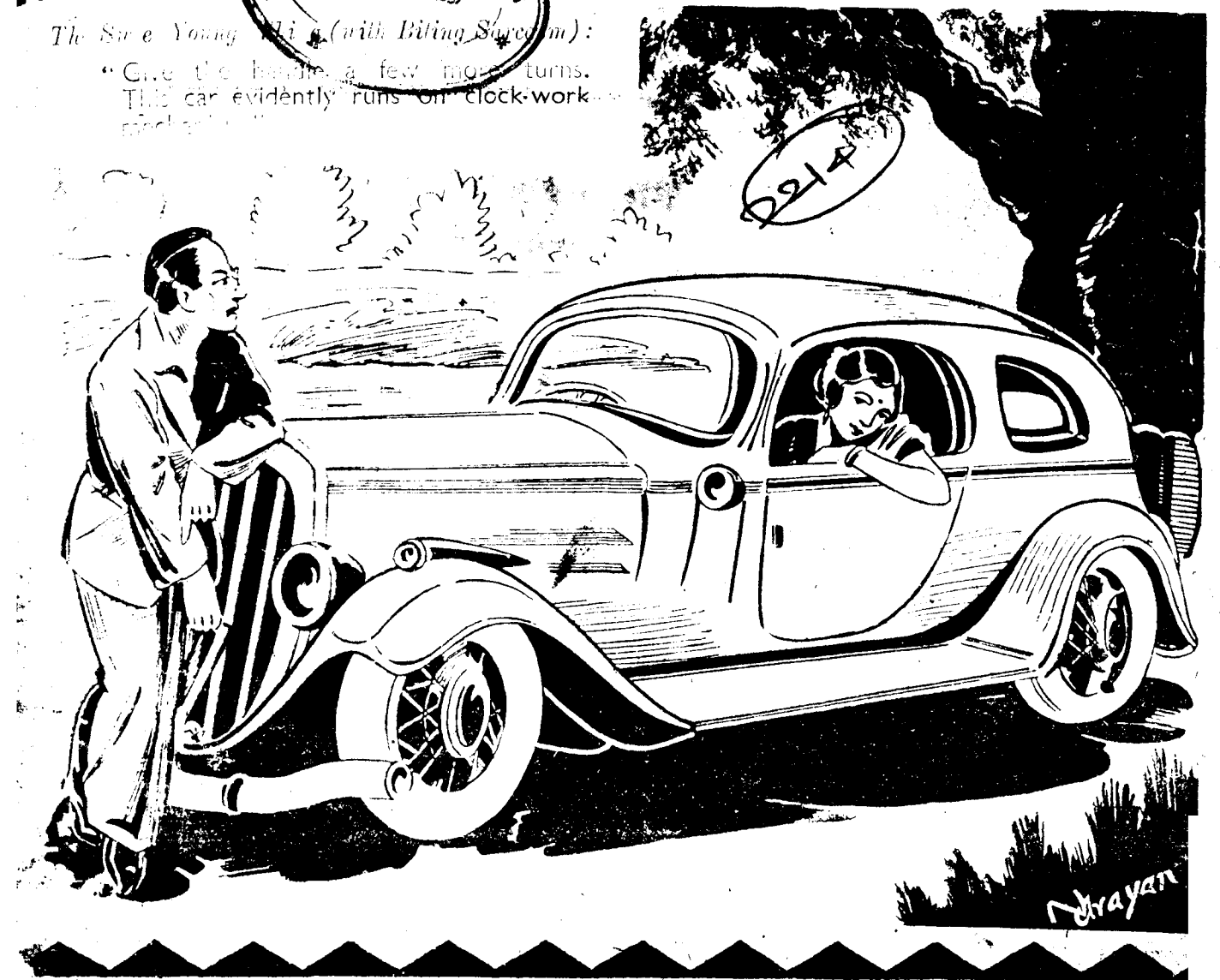
121

No. 14

The Sire Young (with Biting Story m):

"Give the handle a few more turns."

This car evidently runs on clock-work mechanism."



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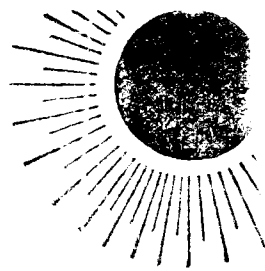
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Special Easter Holiday Season Tickets on the M. & S. M. Ry.

During the recent Christmas Holidays the M. & S. M. Ry. inaugurated a new system of travel through the medium of season tickets, which permitted a passenger to travel as often as he liked over certain defined zones of the M. & S. M. Railway system. This method proved exceedingly popular and no less than 40,000 of these tickets were sold for travel on the three zones into which the Railway system was divided. The success of the experiment has encouraged the M. & S. M. Railway to go a step further and during the coming Easter Holidays similar tickets will be available not only for third class passengers as was the case at Christmas, but also for first and second class passengers and moreover these tickets will not be confined to limited sections of the M. & S. M. Railway, but will be available over the whole system which comprises 3,230 miles. The price of the tickets will be as follows:-

1 Class	Rs. 75 0 0
11 Class	Rs. 37 8 0
111 Class	Rs. 12 8 0

They will be on sale at all M. & S. M. Railway Stations between the 12th and 29th of April and will be available for a period of ten days from the date of issue. These tickets may be made use of during the ten days that they are available by any train running over the M. & S. M. Railway system, excepting however the South Indian Railway trains Nos. 45 & 50 Blue Mountain Express and 13 & 14 Malabar Express and the Mysore Railway trains Nos. 149 & 150 between Birur & Arsikere.

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they need extra
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healthy growth

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energy, builds sturdily
bone and muscle.



AT school, at play, using brains and bodies all day long, children are apt to tire themselves out—unless special care is taken with their nourishment. For besides the energy they use up so fast, their food has to supply the body-building elements needed for the strenuous business of growing.

Doctors know that if children's nourishment does not supply both needs—they are bound to suffer in growth or strength or both together. Strength must keep pace with growth.

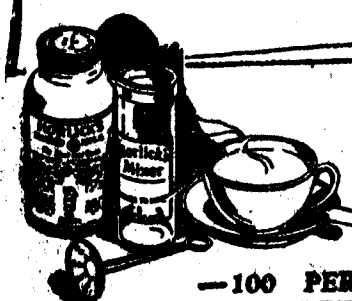
Horlick's for safety

Don't take risks. Make sure of a sound foundation for your children's health in after years by giving them Horlick's once or twice a day.

This addition to their diet gives exactly what they need—replaces the energy spent every day and provides a reserve of body-building nourishment for growing. And a special point about Horlick's is that all its goodness is used—it is so easily and completely assimilated that doctors regularly prescribe it for building up strength after illness when the weakened system cannot take anything difficult to digest.

What HORLICK'S is

HORLICK'S contains all the goodness of rich, full-cream cow's milk with the nutritive extracts of malted barley and wheat. It contains no starch. Besides a due proportion of body-building protein, it is rich in maltose and dextrin—pure energy-foods in the most easily assimilated form. Horlick's is 100 per cent nourishment—no waste matter. Children love it, and it is always perfectly safe. Completely soluble, it is easily prepared, hot or cold: it is particularly nice when made with the Horlick's Mixer, obtainable at stores or from P. O. Box 2229, Calcutta, for Rs. 14 in stamps.



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Between any
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over 100
miles apart.

I and II Classes
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double journey.

III Class
At one and three-fourths ordinary single
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Between any
two stations
100 miles or
less than 100
miles apart.

I and II Classes
At one and one-third single fares.

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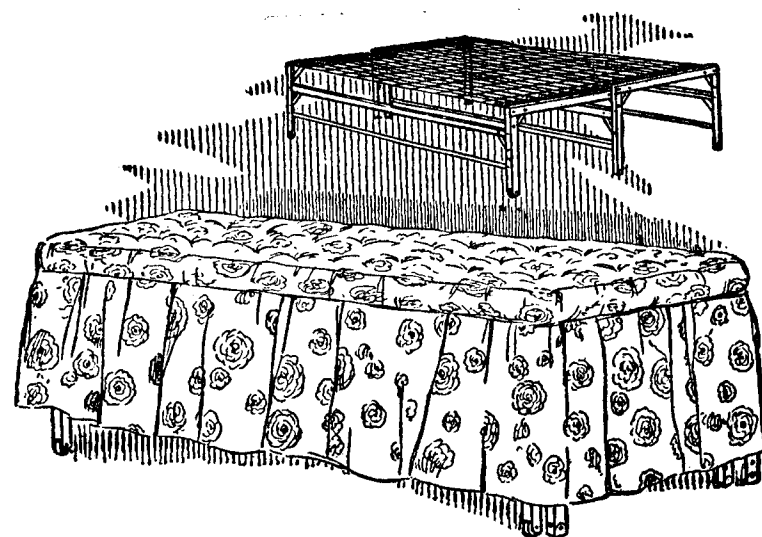
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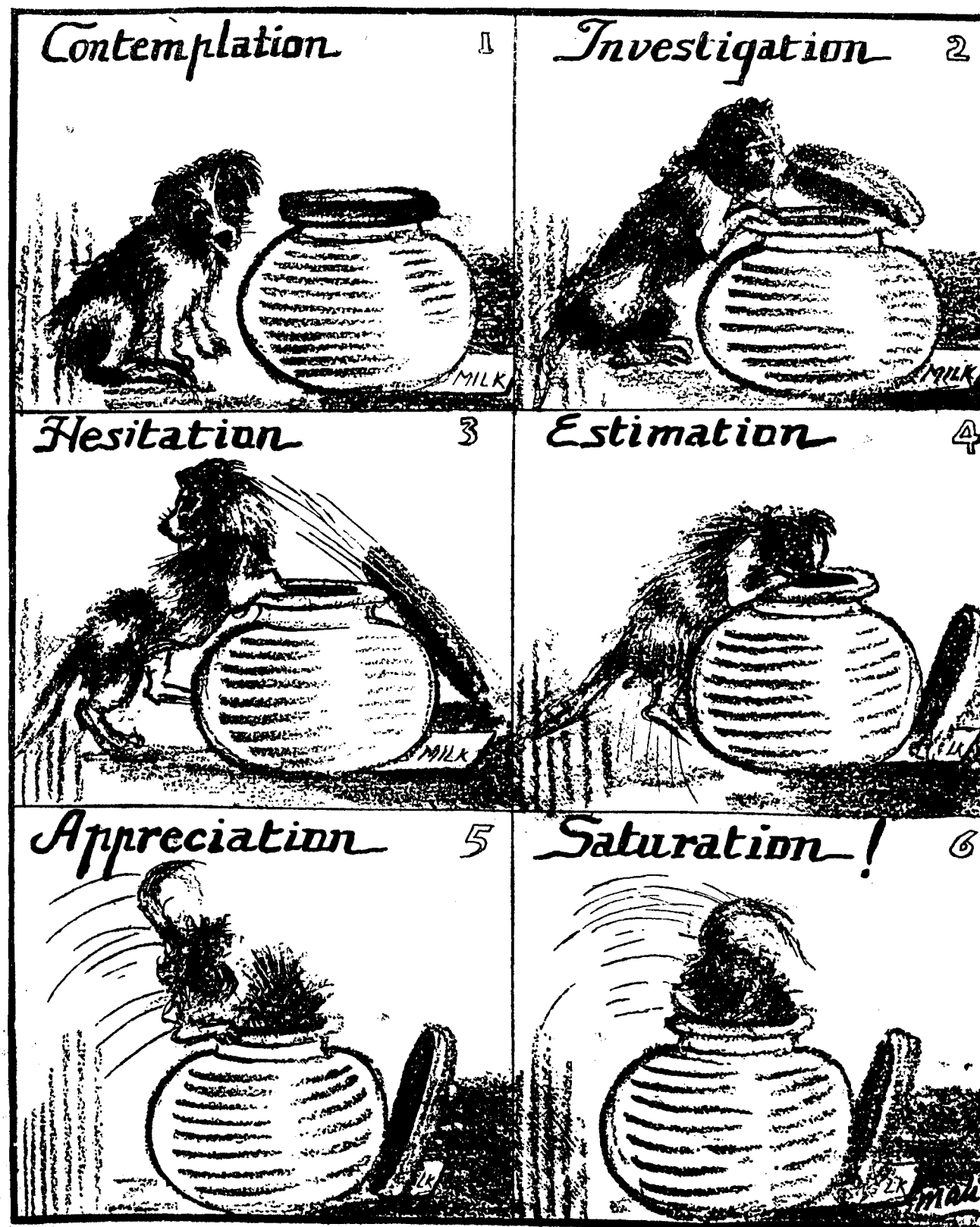
**CURZON & Co.,
MOUNT ROAD, MADRAS.**

THE MERRY MAGAZINE

Vol. III

MADRAS, 6th APRIL, 1935.

No. 14



SOPHIE DAW

By 'EMBUSQUE'

SOPHIE Daw was born in the Isle of Wight in the year 1798. She was the seventh child of Dick Daw, a fisherman and smuggler. Dick led a roving life, and was not overburdened by a sense of responsibility, so all his children—of whom Sophie was by no means the last—fell into the care of the Parish Beadle, who accommodated them in the local workhouse, and put them to labour as soon as they were old enough.

At the age of fourteen Sophie was hired out to a local farmer as a domestic servant. She soon cultivated a love-affair with the farmer's son and, aided by a little money obtained from this youth, she escaped to the mainland. Landing at Portsmouth, she became the companion of a naval officer, and acquired sufficient funds to go to London to seek her fortune.

On the London coach she encountered a travelling gentleman, and stayed a while with him at a wayside inn. He provided her with a recommendation to a business acquaintance, through whom she obtained employment with a fashionable London milliner. Sophie was by no means a pretty or an accomplished girl and she attracted no attention from the aristocratic patrons of the shop. Her only friend was a humble water-carrier; and when she was discovered to be the paramour of this person, the millinery establishment cast her off in disdain.

Like Nell Gwynn of Old Drury, Sophie now tried her fortune as an orange-seller in the London theatres. In the course of this occupation she met an aged Dutch merchant, who set her up in a little suburban villa. Sophie was unable to please the old gentleman for long. She was turned away with the present of a fair sum of money, which she spent in the taverns, trying to attract a new admirer.

No one wanted Sophie, however. Soon she was destitute, and the only employment she could find was in a Piccadilly brothel. She was not considered good enough to act as a hostess; she was simply a serving-maid to the more prominent inmates.

One of the patrons of the brothel was the valet of the exiled Duke of Bourbon. The valet noticed the despised serving-wench, cultivated her acquaintance, and removed her to his own apartment.

The Duke became curious about the little girl whom his valet had chosen from among the menial staff of a brothel. He commanded an interview.

The Duke of Bourbon was a nobleman of unusual tastes, and he was fascinated by the broad, muscular frame and coarse vivid conversation of the fisher-girl. Her phlegmatic plebeian insensitiveness titillated the emotions of the refined aristocrat. Sophie was established in a town residence as the Duke's mistress.

Then the whole world changed. Napoleon was defeated and banished, and the Royal House returned to



The Duke of Bourbon was found hanging from the window of his bed-room.

the throne of France. The Duke presumed the immense ancestral estates of Conde, of which branch of the Royal Family he was the last survivor. He was richer than the King or the heir-apparent, who belonged to the Orleans branch.

It was the custom of the ancient French nobility that their mistresses

must be given an acknowledged place in society. The Duke of Bourbon arranged Sophie's marriage to an impoverished, petty noble in his retinue. Immediately after the ceremony, the petty noble obligingly retired to newly-granted estates. Sophie, now a member of the nobility, was left behind to reign as the favourite of the third gentleman of France.

Louis Phillipe, Duke of Orleans, was the heir-apparent to the Throne. He was envious of his cousin, the Duke of Bourbon, and of his great wealth. He persuaded the King not to invite Sophie to Court.

The fisher-girl was mortified by the refusal of His Majesty to receive her at Court, in acknowledgement of her new status as a great lady. She began a secret correspondence with the Duke of Orleans, with the object of obtaining the recognition she desired.

She pointed out that her lover was in possession of the greater part of the Royal inheritance, and had no heir. Suppose the Conde estates eventually returned to the house of Orleans? Suppose the Duke of Bourbon made a will, bestowing his property on his cousin, Louis Phillipe, Duke of Orleans? Surely then, Sophie would be welcome at Court?

In a few months, Sophie had cajoled her lover into making the all-important will. Triumphantly, she bore a copy to Louis Phillipe. She was received at Court.

Directly afterwards came the revolution of 1830, and Louis Phillipe, Duke of Orleans and "friend of the people", ascended the throne.

The Duke of Bourbon was disgusted with the conduct of his scheming cousin, the new king. The old king was in exile, and the ex-royal family were penniless. Louis Phillipe was in possession of all the Orleans property, and was the heir to the Conde property. The Duke of Bourbon did not like the way things had happened. He decided to change his will secretly, to liquidate as much of his property as possible, and to flee with the proceeds. He went to his castle of Saint Leu to make the necessary arrangements.

Sophie, of course, immediately advised the King of her lover's plans. The day after the Duke of Bourbon reached the castle of Saint Leu, he was found hanging from the window of his bedroom. He was hanging by two large silk handkerchiefs, elaborately knotted and cleverly tied. It could almost be imagined that he had been hung by some cool, burly person who was familiar with fishermen's knots.

Exactly what part Sophie Daw played in the tragedy will never be known. She said that the weak and ailing old Duke hanged himself after she had left the bedroom that morning. Yet he seemed to have been dead for some hours. Anyhow, a special panel of doctors was hurriedly sent to hold an inquest. They were the King's own physicians. They returned a prompt verdict of suicide.

The friends of the exiled king commenced a law-suit for the annulment of the will of the Duke of Bourbon, on the ground that it had been obtained through the undue influence of Sophie Daw. The local court dismissed the suit, and the bench protested its great loyalty to the monarch. The plaintiffs appealed to Paris. During the hearing of the appeal, the chief judge began to show a

leaning towards the case of the plaintiffs. He was peremptorily dismissed from his post. Owing to the departure of the presiding judge, there had to be a retrial. Not unnaturally, the court found for the defendants.

Louis Phillipe was in sole possession of all the property of the royal family. He dispatched Sophie to England with a share of the spoils, and advised her not to come back. She returned to her native country as a grand lady of the nobility. She acquired a splendid country estate and a magnificent town mansion. The bold and hardy woman was never troubled by remorse, and never threw any light on her past. She was tremendously charitable, and became famous for munificent benefactions. These were in no sense a mark of compunction. The practical-minded lady considered that she was bribing Heaven as effectively as she had bribed the King of the French.

Nevertheless, she was afflicted with dropsy and died.

Louis Phillipe must have breathed a sigh of relief at the end of his former accomplice. As the *bourgeois* King of the French and Friend of the People, he was cultivating the utmost mid-Victorian propriety, and his association with the ex-prostitute must have been an inconvenient memory. Now he could reign undisturbed by spectres from the past.

But fate overtook Louis Phillipe, too. The miserable man lost his throne and died a friendless exile.

In The Next Issue

THE COLONEL AND THE CHAPLAIN By 'Embusque'

Old Madras, Frenchies besieging Fort St. George, tombs desecrated and a dog receiving the baptismal benediction.

POGGS AND THE FLY By W. J. Murray

Otherwise a brilliant police sleuth, Mr. Poggs has, unfortunately, a fly in his ointment.

GHOST OF CAESAR By 'Ram'

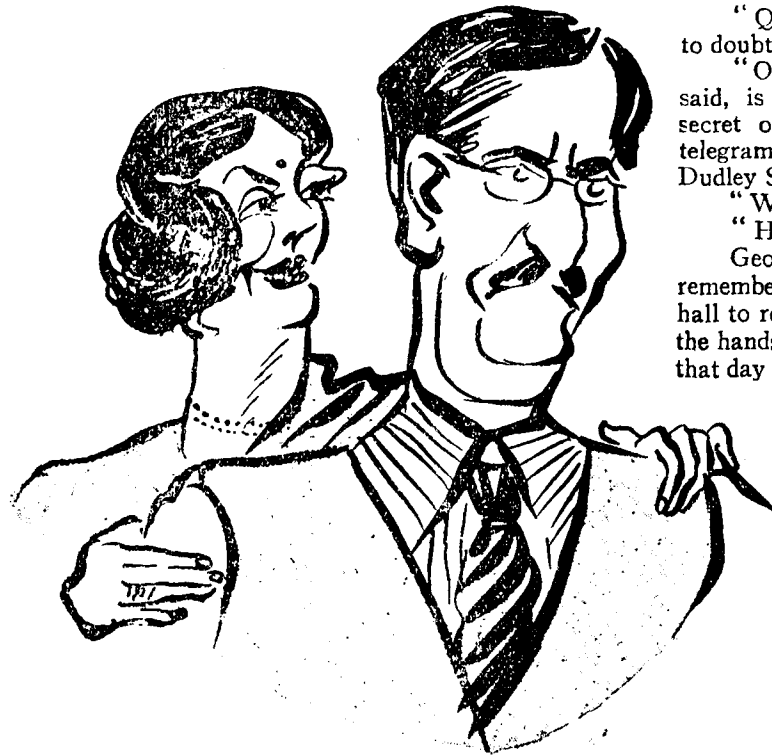
An authentic seance, ghosts galore, patrician ghosts of Imperial Rome discussing the N. R. A. and the next war.

PAPA DEAR By S. Narasimhan

The pathetic love of a Professor for his girl-pupil, the girl all unconscious of the heart-throbs in the opposite camp.

Also our usual bright features—Joyfull, Auntie, Star Dust Etc. Etc.

BRIGHTER GEOGRAPHY



"DARLING," said Leela, mobilizing all her dimples, "may I ask you a favour?"

I winced.

Leela has the knack of landing me well and truly on the horns of a dilemma. If I say 'No' she would go all girlish, while if I reply 'Yes' there is no knowing what the consequences might be. Once, in an unguarded moment, I succumbed to her wiles and paid for it dearly in the shape of yards of rainbow silk and the latest thing in electrical hair-drying appliances.

So I said evasively, "Excuse me, Leela, I'm frightfully busy at the moment. The Editor of *The Empire Daily* has asked me to write a fifty horse-power article on 'Safeguards—Then and Now', and it has got to reach the office by noon."

"Some excuse!" she sneered. "But do you really think you deserve to have a loving wife? And, after all, I wasn't going to ask you to buy me anything."

"Then, what is it?" I queried, writing away furiously.

"My little brother," Leela enthused, "wishes to come and stay with us for a couple of weeks. He writes to me that he hopes it would be a golden opportunity for him to improve his Geography. What do you say to it, dear?"

"Leela," I answered, "are you certain that he says 'golden'?"

"Quite. I shall fetch you the letter if you happen to doubt it. It arrived by the first post to-day."

"Oh, no," said I, "not at all. Faith, as somebody said, is the evidence of things not seen, and the secret of success in married life. Send the fellow a telegram right away, to pack up his tooth-brush and Dudley Stamp."

"Whatever is that, dear?"

"His text-book, I shouldn't wonder."

Geography has always been my forte. I still remember the fine evening when I strutted up the school hall to receive a consolation prize for geography from the hands of the head-master's wife. The Bible I got that day for my ability to spot Protocatapetl, Kuchinse-rabujima and Chichihuahua still occupies a prominent place on my shelf, along with the other twenty-seven copies of the Bible that have been presented to me since, by well-meaning (but slightly misguided) friends and relatives.

When Leela mentioned the word 'Geography' my heart warmed to the little blighter. I saw in it an opportunity at long last to show the wife that though she was far better than I in Bimetallism, Contangos and Collaterals, I was her superior in the physical features of Eurasia, America and Australia.

"Darling," said I, holding my Oxford Concise behind my back, "I shall be very pleased to teach the nipper the science of the earth's surface, form, natural and political divisions, climate, productions, population etc."

"A topping definition," Leela smiled. "Is that Oxford?"

"Lucky shot!" I applauded, trying my best not to look like a boy caught stealing his grandmother's jam while the old girl was looking the other way.

Sukku arrived the next day, books and all. He was a spectacled, vacuous lad who looked an abridgement of some absent-minded professor of philosophy. With his inane-looking face, high cheek bones and sallow skin, he was so singularly unattractive that if I had introduced him to any one of my friends as Leela's little brother, he would have thought I was attempting one of my usual puerile jokes.

For a thirteen-year-old, I should say, Sukku was remarkably learned. He could rattle off the names of the ports

of Mexico, or the islands of the Mediterranean or the mountains of Iceland, like my neighbour's gramophone. And somebody had evidently caught him young and supplied him amply with mnemonics to aid his prodigious memory.

"Look here, you," he said, shortly after his arrival, "can you name the ports of Mexico?"

I couldn't.

"Easy as ABC," he said, rattling away:

*"Vera Cruz and Tampico,
Acapulco, San Francisco
Are the ports of Mexico
Which export tons of nice cocoa."*

"Who put all this nonsense into your little head?" I asked him.

"It isn't nonsense," he replied firmly. "It is Brighter Geography."

"No," I objected. "It isn't geography. Mexico doesn't export cocoa. It exports gold and silver and wool and bishops; but no cocoa, unless you happen to be in great need of a word that rhymes badly with Mexico."

"I am sure you are wrong," said the boy. "Mr. Munisamy himself taught us the verse."

"Who is he?"

"Mr. Munisamy."

"Don't be a pig! Who is Mr. Munisamy?"

Sukku laughed. Not with me, but at me.

"If you had put that question in our English class," he remarked, "Mr. Munisamy would have given you a duck and a crack over the head. He says that you ought to ask: 'What is he?' And he knows what he says."

"I bet he does!" I froze. "Mr. Munisamy is your English master, is he? Has he taught you many such verses?"

"Heaps."

"Then let us hear a few more, if you don't mind."

"Thirty days....."

"Sh-h-h-h! I don't want that silly old rhyme. Something new, please."

"Look here, you. What do you want to hear?"

It was rather exasperating to be called 'Look-here-you' by an ugly duckling; but I remembered I was a husband, and maintained my equanimity.

"Sukku," said I affably, "I want to hear something like that cocoa stuff."

"All right," he said. "Ask and it shall be given, as Mr. Munisamy says."

*"Didn't I tell you, boys, last week
That Milton's not a mountain peak,
And Chichichoo and Timbuctoo
Are not two nobles in 'Who Is Who'?"*

"That is Mr. Munisamy's very own," he said enthusiastically, when he had finished his recitation.

"I thought so," I snapped. "It does sound the creation of a man with a name like that. I wonder if it was Shakespeare or your sister here who once remarked that there was much in a name."

"Sister," said Sukku loyally.

"Shakespeare," said Leela, blushing a trifle.

"Never mind," said I. "I won't have you two quarrelling over it. You are brother and sister, after all; and blood is thicker than vegetable soup, you know. But to come back to your Timbuctoo tosh, does your master call it Poetry?"

"No. Mr. Munisamy says it is Brighter Geography."

"Brighter Geography? What on earth is that?"

"I don't quite know. Mr. Munisamy says it is Geography for Life."

"Hasn't he told you what he means by it?"

"No. But instead of asking us to write 'Cattle and Sheep' across the map of Australia, as the other teachers do, he makes us paint fat cattle and sheep all over the map. And over the continent of America we are asked to paint sheep and cows so fat, they look like prize-pigs and hippopotami."

"Well, Sukku," I smiled, "that is Brighter Geography."

"Brighter fiddlesticks!" he muttered.

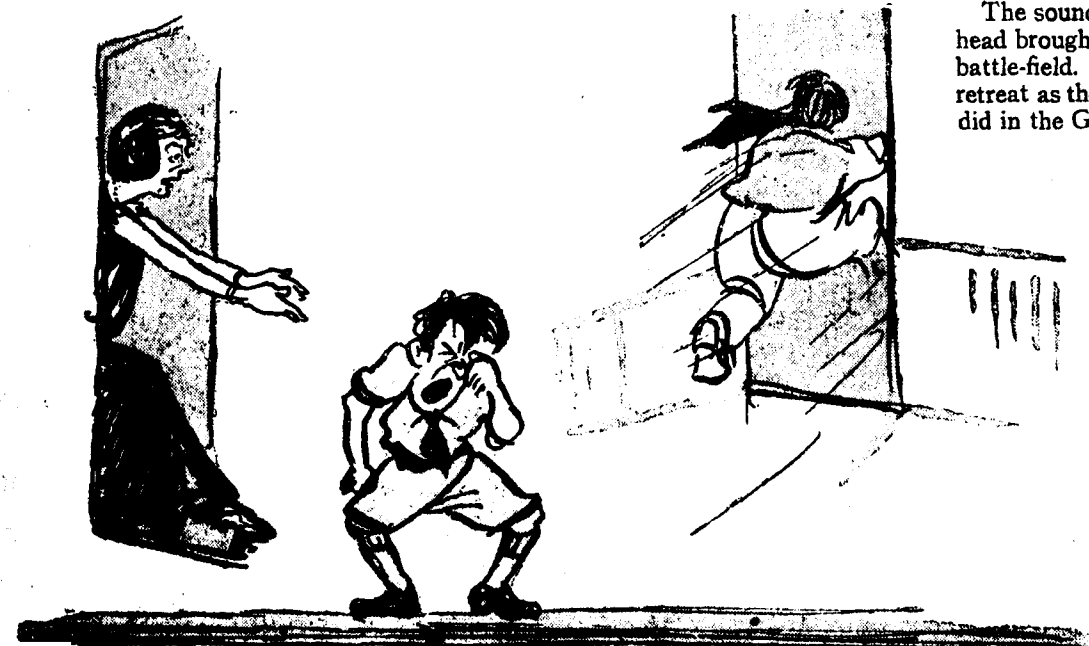
"Mind your words!" I warned him.

"Shut up you!" he cried.

I boxed his ears.

"Look here, you," he shouted, "you needn't try to teach me. You are a mug. I have heard sister say so. Three times."

The sound of a well-smacked head brought Leela on to the battle-field. I beat a strategic retreat as the Allied armies often did in the Great War.



I beat a strategic retreat.



SO long as the sun shines down on the earth, Cagliostro will carry on their tantrums, with the same degree of unsuccess. Man's attempt to turn baser metal into gold dates back before the birth of Christ and it has often-times been averred that A succeeded in bringing it off or B. But documentary evidence as to how he did it, there is, alas, absolutely none. So that unbelievers have begun to laugh at it, as at the Indian rope-trick. But consistently, through the Ages, unscrupulous men have, under the cloak of Alchemy, duped the unfortunate and unwary.

Five persons are being prosecuted at Savantwadi in Bombay Presidency for having scalded Yamuna Bai Harmalkar of Danoli, by pouring boiling water on her head. According to the prosecution story, in deference to the wishes of the Devi of Danoli, believed to be versed in witchcraft and to possess supernatural powers, Yamuna's father-in-law, with the help of some neighbours, tied the poor girl to a pillar and poured boiling H₂O on her head and body, all in the hope of turning her hair into gold, as the Devi had led him to believe. There is only one ending for such a story. The anticipated miracle did not come off. Yamuna was taken to the hospital and her tormentors to the law court.

What with the loud clamour raised by Indian women for more legal rights and equality with men, I do not think it would be out of place, if I mentioned that divorce in Russia is far more common and expeditious than in the United States. In just 300 seconds, you can get a decree for a mere 5 shillings and mind you, it is 'absolute' at once. No wonder there are, as the tell-tale statistics reveal, 229 divorces for every 1,000 marriages in that Red country. Nor are the alimony laws exacting. Generally, a third of the ex-husband's income is to be paid to the woman, if the break-away is not by mutual consent. A like amount for the maintenance of a child.

Which reminds me of an interesting case in Russia, related by a scribe in an English daily, in which a man was paying the whole of his income by way of alimony and still had not discharged all his obligations. When the court asked what he was living on, Stalinski replied, "On the money my wife gets from her former husbands. She is too fond of me to tell me how many!"

Karsan Nathu, a Harijan of Ahmedabad, had to go through a strange ordeal recently. He had to remain at the bottom of a well, into which he had been thrown, a whole dark night. One night, two neighbours of Nathu were having a row. Nathu, his sensitive ears grossly offended by the exchange of left-handed compliments, interposed and asked the brawlers to desist. But the latter were evidently of the type who stand divided but strike united. They both turned upon Nathu, trussed him up and deposited him unceremoniously into a disused well, head first. Nobody rescued the well-meaning Harijan for the whole night, for who knew where he was? However, his lonely vigil ended with the first streaks of sunshine, when the police, coming to know of his plight, rescued him.

The moral is: "Mind your own d—d business."

Another denizen of the deep has been conquered. Surf-bathers in Australia need have no fear of sharks, any more. Experiments are being conducted in Sydney with a high frequency electric ray projected from cylinders, a foot in diameter and placed eighty feet apart. The impulses sent out cover the area between the cylinders and although they have no effect on humans, they will paralyse the blood-thirsty thug, the shark. As soon as the latter enters the 'zone' of the ray, it will be unable to move and will float on the surface of the water as harmlessly as a gold fish in a bowl.

Chance had placed two business enemies, on the same board of directors. One day, after a meeting, Mr. Smith was holding forth.

"There are hundreds of ways of making money," he said, provocatively.

"Yes," put in his opponent, "but only one honest way."

"What way's that?" asked Mr. Smith sharply.

"Ah!" retorted the other. "I thought you wouldn't know it."

And by the way, I almost forgot to ask you. Did you go to the Island grounds last Monday as I told you? April Fool, reader.



Oh!

Flora Fitzgiggins
Is oh! so bad;
Her motto is simple:
'All men CAN be had'!

The man who can drink like a man never wants for company; the man who drinks effeminately is everywhere cold-shouldered.

This is truth; tho' expressed in
A peremptory tone;
Quaff and the world quaffs with you
Sip and you sip alone.

"I told a secret to a bank clerk, and he told it to everyone of his friends," complains our Joan:

My dear Joan
You should have known
That the feller
May be a teller.

I Ought To:

Lady mine, when'er you smile and throw your arms
Around my neck, and kiss me so;
That you are manoeuvring for a new hat
Or frock, I ought to know!

Sad Case:

There was a young lady called Betty
Who was oh, so fond of spaghetti;
She ate by the mile
And before a long while
She grew conspicuously fatty.

Epitaph:

Let's say a prayer,
For popo Lizzy Pratt;
She tried unsuccessfully
To get rid of her fat.

Remark:

"Ten scars make a man," reads a headline. All of them are of course made by the wife.

Pass Round the V. C.

Big-game Hunter: Six lions stared into my face. I turned to climb up a tree, but there a huge cobra confronted me.

Listener: That's nothing. I've often left five of my friends at the front door and turned to climb the stairs, and have been confronted by the—WIFE!

Who's Better?:

First Boy: My father is a boxer. He's boxed Dempsey and Carnera.

Second: That's nothing. My father's an undertaker. He's boxed hundreds of prize-fighters.

Another Employer Goes West:

There was an employer called 'B'
Who took his typist on his knee;
But it so came about
That his wife found him out;
Now let's wish the poor man R. I. P.

He Never Pays:

Freddy is the best-dressed man
In our city;
But it's his poor tailor
That deserves our pity!

THE EDITOR'S COLUMN

POST-WAR Europe has conceived and brought forth many queer things, at which the world is gaping with comic awe. But queerer than all, it has produced a phenomenon, which, notwithstanding its potentialities for mischief, has provided a welcome relief to a world staggering under a cruel economic incubus. Yes, I am speaking of the German edition of National Socialism with Hitler at the wheel. Who is this man to lash the Fatherland to a white heat of national hysteria? Whence his power? Why his crude ruthlessness and 'blood baths' at which Dillinger in his grave might well wriggle with envy? These are the questions which will be attempted to be answered in the *Merry* next week by one who knows a thing or two about Swastikas in a Nordic setting. Whatever the verdict of posterity over this funny looking, yet awe-inspiring, 'Aryan', who is giving the creeps to most people between Geneva and Washington, he will be long and gratefully remembered in the Chancellories of Europe as a political genius who raised the common cold to the dignity of a high diplomatic ruse.

To come down from colourful Chancellories to less spectacular regions with which I am immediately concerned, I have been placing before the readers for sometime now, the delightful fare cooked by that talented chef who, of all names in the world, bears that of 'Embusque'. 'Embusque' spins short stories in a masterly fashion, emphasising the high-lights of comedy, as of pathos, pulling the climax down with a click where one would least expect it, yet true to life! That, in brief, is literary art. I am publishing next week a story from the prolific pen of 'Embusque'. It conjures up vividly before us hectic Madras of the days of the East India Company. Fort St. George reeks with gun-powder and smells of steel. A brutal, profane military officer swaggers up the stage, but leaves it ignominiously with a *padre* and a whole battalion laughing in the fore-ground. It is great stuff and should on no account be missed.

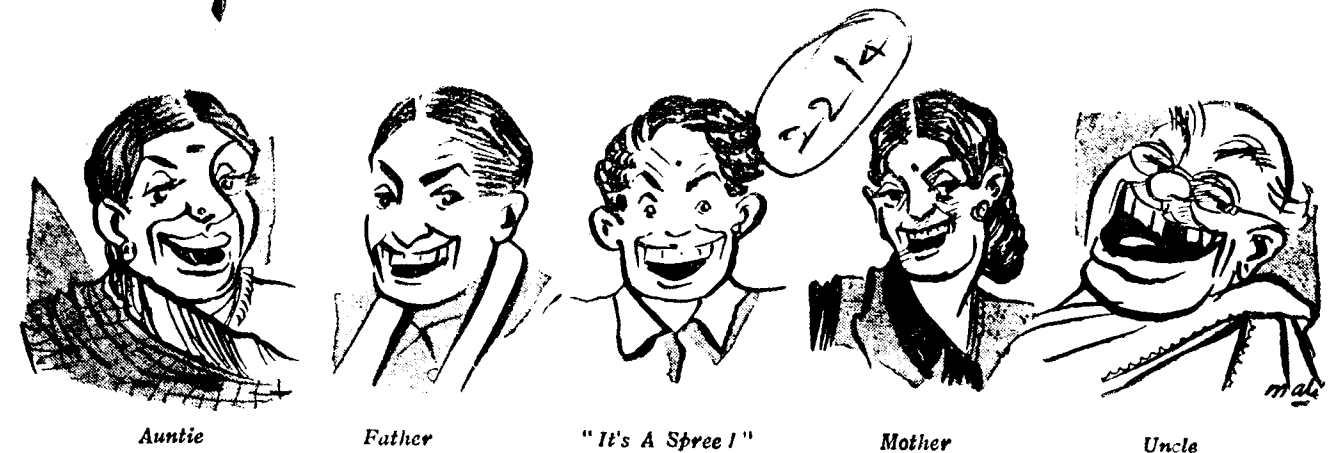
Of recent arrivals in our midst, J. H. Acott is one. His is a brand of humour which has a twang to it. He is a naughty, bright boy from Northern India and it looks as if he has come to stay.

By the way, I asked you a little while ago to tell me what you think of the *Merry* as a weekly. The response so far is gratifying, but not quite enough. So, sit down right now, and let the moving finger write. And believe me, what you write will receive the careful consideration of

—Your Editor.

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FUN FOR ALL THE FAMILY

Misunderstood

Uncle Bob came to stay, and he gave his nephew a ten-shilling note. "Now be careful with that money, Bill," he said. "Remember the saying, 'A fool and his money are easily parted'."

"Yes, uncle," replied Billy, "but I want to thank you for parting with it just the same."

No Chance

New Footman: "At my last place I took things easily."

Butler: "It's different here. We lock up everything."

Murder

The constable called at a villa and rang the bell. Inside the house the piano-playing ceased and a rather scared-looking young woman appeared at the door and asked: "Yes? What do you want?"

"Well, miss," said the constable, "we've just 'ad a telephone call to say that there is a fellow called Chopin being murdered in this 'ere house."

Mixed

"Makes washing a pleasure, does it?" said the grocer's irate customer, tossing a packet down on the counter.

"Does the washing itself, does it? Just throw it in the copper, and the clothes come out clean, do they? It's the soap—"

"This isn't soap, madam," said the grocer opening the package. "Your daughter came yesterday for half a pound of cheese, and half a pound of soap. This is the cheese."

"Well, I'm hanged!" said the woman. "I wondered all night what made the Welsh rabbit taste so queer."

Prepared For the Worst

"Suppose, Bobbie, that another boy should strike your right cheek," asked the Sunday-school teacher, "what would you do?"

PRESSED TO STAY!



The Timid Soul: Pardon me! Would you er—mind stepping off my foot. I have to alight at this station.

"Give him the other cheek to strike," answered Bobbie.

"That's right," said the teacher.

"Yes, m um," added Bobbie, "and then if he struck me I'd pulverise him."

He Knew!

"No, certainly not," said a woman to a tramp who had knocked at the door and begged for food. "Go away at once or I'll call my husband."

"E ain't at 'ome," said the tramp. "How do you know that?"

"Cos a man that marries a woman like you is only at 'ome at meal-times."

Too Good!

A missionary was having an earnest talk with a Hindu whom he hoped to convert to Christianity.

"Come, now," said the missionary, "wouldn't you like to go to Heaven when you die?"

The Hindu shook his head in polite regret.

"I do not think," he said, "that Heaven can be very good, or the British would have grabbed it years ago."

MR. Ganesh Iyer was sick of it all. Why should he drudge and drudge all the live-long day and others take the credit for it? He was a clerk in the city. His home was in Mambalam.

One rainy morning in November he felt discontented. As he was slowly sipping his coffee, rebellious thoughts ran across his mind. 'Life was dull,' thought Mr. Iyer. In short he was sick of the painful drudgery and monotony of it all.

The same old walk to the railway-station! The same old Electric train arriving noisily into the station!

Why were Electric trains so damnably noisy?

The weary journey to the 'Park Station'! The eternal wait for a bus at the bus-stop where buses never stopped! The same old cries of the conductor mingled with the innumerable cries and discordant sounds of 'Flower Bazaar'.

The splashing of muddy and unclean water as the bus passed a puddle. Dash it! The bus seemed to revel in it! The same old dreary office! The conceited old bouncer of a manager sitting so cool and collected in his chair rasping out:

"Why are you late, Mr. Iyer?"

Can't the blighter appreciate the fact that Mr. Iyer had foregone two *dosais* to be in time at the office? Anyway what does a mere five minutes matter? The same old desk and the same old scratchy pen! Adding, subtracting, oh! and a thousand other things. Would it ever cease?

'No,' thought Mr. Iyer.

It would never cease!

As long as he lived, it would never cease! After having come to this rather cheerless conclusion, he swore and then immediately cleansed his mouth with a sip of coffee.

The unhappy train of his thoughts was harshly interrupted by the harsh ring of coins on the floor.

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THE REBEL

By N. Anantha Narayan



He unfolded the sheets and the next moment!.....

"Your lunch and fare," rasped out fat Mrs. Iyer.

The same old eight annas gleaming dully making fun of him!

God has given Mr. Iyer an unsympathetic wife! Something snapped within him! He was angry! With a sudden resolve he decided to rebel!

Yes—rebel, rebel, rebel, the word seemed to instil new life into him! He would not go to the office that day. He would take a day's leave and spend it as he liked.

Happy thought! Mr. Iyer usually went to his office by the 9 o'clock train.

To-day he left home at nine and for once he was glad when he heard the porter say that the 9 o'clock train had left!

He boarded the 'nineten'.

He went to a friend's house; played cards the whole day; saw a 'super-talkie' in the evening and returned home, his mouth gleaming red from the *pan* he had chewed.

Mr. Iyer was satisfied.

He plopped into an easy-chair with a sigh. By the chair on a tea-poy reposed the evening paper, the only luxury Mr. Iyer allowed himself.

He picked it up idly. He unfolded the sheets and, the next moment, his eyes almost popped out of his head! For across the page in bold thick letters ran the words:

"Electric Train Disaster"

"The nine o'clock train from Mambalam met with an accident to-day. About forty people were killed and several others injured....."

The letters danced before Mr. Iyer's eyes which were becoming rather misty.

"Aren't you ready yet for dinner? Oh, you and your paper!" Mrs. Iyer rasped out from the kitchen.

"Fate!" muttered Mr. Iyer as he sank into the easy-chair with a profound sigh.

MATRIMONIAL OFFERS

By 'Elmer Delville'

WHAT train of thought a mere glance at a newspaper sometimes starts! It may just be the brazen headlines of an advertiser that first catches the reader's eye, or it may be the front page illustration, or even an ordinary news item. It was none of these, however, that unput Mr. Kalidas on this occasion, but just the date of the newspaper he was reading—December 31st.

It was agonising to him to be reminded that another New Year was about to dawn. His thoughts instinctively turned to his two daughters, who, having reached marriageable age, had been sitting too long on the shelf. Each New Year brought new hopes but no suitors. Mr. Kalidas twiddled his thumbs and chewed his moustache, which would have done credit to any shooting gallery proprietor. If his boys from the Borsapur High School had seen him at that moment, what a contrast he would have presented to their big bullying headmaster!

"Is there no merciful Providence that can arrange marriages," he cried, "when the girls fail to hook their bait themselves?"

To his credit be it said that Mr. Kalidas, since he lost his wife, had mothered his daughters as only a father can do and had brought them up in the ways of the world. But in one respect he could not help them—to find husbands. That was probably a mother's secret. Had he but known what artifices, what mystic charm his own wife had used to land him—

"Hello! Who's there?" He went to the door as a knock was heard. "Ah! Letters—and three of them, where none had come for ages!"

He opened the first.

"Sir," it ran, "I shall present myself at 9.30 tomorrow morning to pay my addresses to your charming daughter Sheila and to obtain your sanction for her hand—Ratnam!"

"Hoorah! Who said there is no Providence?" Mr. Kalidas jumped for joy and almost knocked his dome on the ceiling. "But who is this guy Ratnam anyway?" Then the next moment he decided it did not matter a toss who he was. He opened the second letter and the third.

"Pooh! Pooh! Dear me!"

It was too much of a pleasant surprise for Mr. Kalidas, for the other two were written almost in the same terms. He sank into a lounge and mopped his forehead vigorously. Here were offers for his daughters' hands with a vengeance. Three offers for his two daughters, and all in one day! Well, well, he was getting on famously. One of them, Ganesan, asked for Kamala and the other two, Ratnam and Durgaiah, were keen on Sheila. The last two would have to toss; that's all. But—was it a coincidence—they were all proposing to call that very morning and the times mentioned varied by not more than fifteen minutes between them.

"Whatever it is, this is the chance of a lifetime," thought Mr. Kalidas to himself, as he fussed about the chairs and tables, picking up imaginary specks of dust

here and there. "It's almost time they were here..... Why? There's a car at the gate now.....Good morning, sir. Won't you be seated?"

"With pleasure," said the visitor. "My name is Ratnam. Yes, coming to the question of the letter—"

"Yes, yes," stuttered Mr. Kalidas eagerly, pulling his chair forward.

"May I have a look at her before making any definite offer?"

"Most certainly. That's only fair, but she is out just now."

"Doesn't matter. I can look her up later. Would you then answer a few simple questions relating to her?"

"My dear sir, I'm entirely at your service," Mr. Kalidas beamed.

"Well, then," Ratnam braced himself, as it were, for a volley of questions. "What is the shape of her body?" he asked.

"I don't quite understand," said headmaster Kalidas, scratching his head.

"You know, I like graceful, classical lines and she must be built on big principles. What's her consumption?"

"Sir! Well—very much less than the average, I can assure you. She's very economical and she would make a very good—"

"That's great!" cheered Ratnam. "But is she handy—? Hello! who is that?" He broke in as a knock at the door was heard.

"That's another visitor I'm expecting," fidgetted Mr. Kalidas. "I hope you don't mind, I'm sure—"

"Don't worry, old bean. Go ahead. I shall look after myself," said Ratnam, taking up a newspaper.

Another young man jaunted in. He looked a little more weather-beaten than the other, and wore the unmistakable signs of a worried bachelor.

"This is Mr. Ratnam—Mr—" introduced Mr. Kalidas.

"Ganesan is my name," finished the newcomer. "Mr. Ganesan, we are all for the moment interested in the same subject, eh?"

"Indeed?" commented the smart one. "Have you had other offers for her, then?"

"In a way, yes," replied Mr. Kalidas. "But you may speak out your mind."

"I am not quite so particular," said Ganesan. "You see I'm a collector and having heard you had a rare specimen, I came to make an offer."

"Do I understand you, sir?" Mr. Kalidas looked bewildered.

"You should. I am speaking plain English," answered the other.

"Well, well. Anything you wish to know?"

"Yes, if you please. What's her diet?"

Here Ratnam looked up from the paper he was reading.

"Why! She eats everything that we do," answered the old man, chuckling at what seemed to him a silly question.

11

"That is bad for her; so experts say," said Ganesan. "Nuts and milk and plenty of fruits are all she needs. Does she bite?"

"Am I going crazy?" cried Mr. Kalidas. The good man was puzzled. Had he to deal with lunatics? Obviously. As visitors to his house he had to humour them.

"That is another question," retorted Ganesan. "Is she Irish or—"

"What the heck are you talking about?" The last two questions were to remain unanswered. For at that moment, without announcement or ceremony, a third young man entered the hall, looking as melancholy as a gib cat and bowed solemnly to the other two visitors.

"My heartfelt sympathies, gentlemen," he drawled. "What do you mean?" asked Ganesan. "His beloved daughter," began gloomy Durgaiah. "Well, yes—come to the point, then," cut in Mr. Kalidas impatiently.

"Will you please take me to her." "All in good time, young man," said the old man. "But sit down first."

"What is her length and girth?" asked Durgaiah, taking a measuring tape from his pocket.

"What has come over you people this morning? I think I'm growing old, moon-struck or something." It was pathetic to see the old man pulling at the remaining hairs on his head.

"You don't suppose I could get a coffin without knowing the right dimensions?" asked Durgaiah.

"Coffin! What for?" "For your late daughter, sir." "Don't say late. She is alive and kicking and has been kicking for the past thirty years," said Mr. Kalidas.

vehemently. "But who gave you this absurd information?"

"You," replied the other producing a letter and handing it to the old man.

"This! I never wrote it."

"From the looks of it, you never wrote it either," said Ganesan, also producing a letter. Ratnam also did likewise. Then they exchanged the letters and compared notes.

"It is as clear as daylight," said Ganesan; "somebody has been playing a practical joke on us. He has fooled us all right."

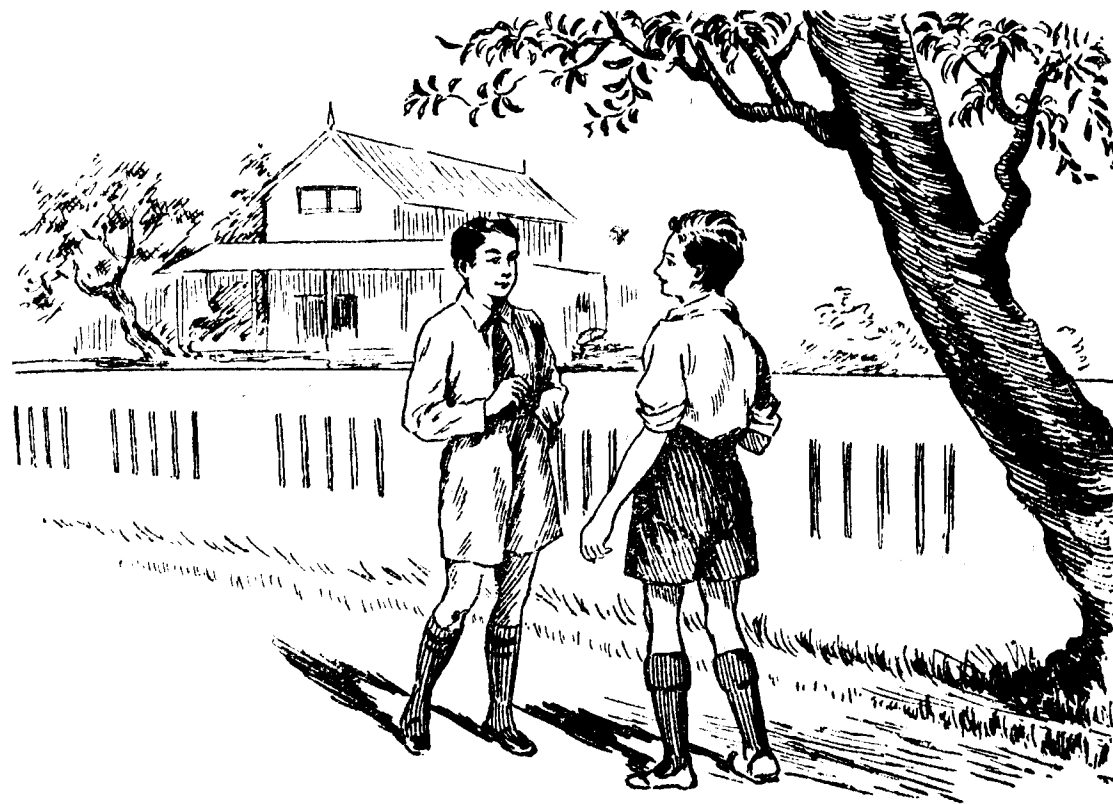
"The joke is on me, gentlemen," said Mr. Kalidas. "I suspect some of the boys in my school. I don't even have a wheel-barrow and Mr. Ratnam comes to buy a Hillman car; Mr. Ganesan comes to have a look at the pig I am supposed to have and you, sir," turning to Durgaiah, "come to bury my daughter, who is not dead. On the other hand I receive three letters allegedly from three suitors for my daughters' hands. Though I am not exactly responsible, I tender my apologies for the inconvenience caused." He bowed to the three young men.

"It won't be a bad idea, now that we are here, to forget our original mission and be introduced to your daughters in real earnest," said Ganesan.

The place was the garden adjoining Mr. Kalidas' bungalow.

"Your plan to fool the old boy worked magnificently," said one senior boy of Borsapur High School to his companion.

"I am glad you think so," said the other. "But the writing of those six letters to those three guys and the old ginger-pot, was some task."



.....the garden adjoining Mr. Kalidas' bungalow.



Once Too Often.

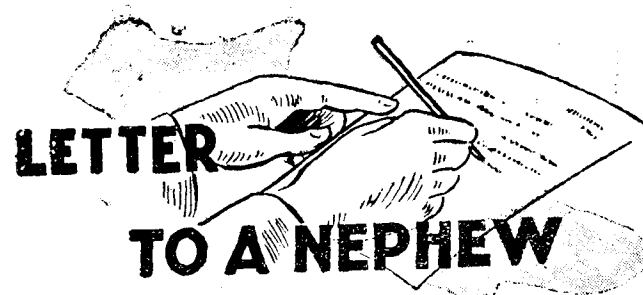
Author: "I left a batch of funny stories here for your approval. Do you happen to have read them?"

Editor: "Yes: many times."



Varying The Theme

Shy Young Man: "Must you stay? Won't you go?"



(Uncle's letter to Nephew published in No. 6 (p. 15) of this Magazine has created a demand for more letters from Uncle. Here is another and more are being drafted—Ed.)

MY DEAR SEENU,

YOU enjoy the position of the family idiot and you seem to do it excellently. This saves you a lot of bother. You usually escape certain responsibilities, duties and functions: you don't have to go to the Bank—a thing that entails journey in the hottest part of the day and indefinite waiting. You escape the monthly trip to the electric company's office for paying the bill; you are saved the bother of seeing the shop-man about the wrong entries in his account book; and of a thousand and one other duties, which the youthful section of a family is always called upon to do. The utmost that you are trusted to do is to run to the opposite shop and fill your grandfather's snuff-box with fresh Madras snuff; to buy a pie-worth of Gum biscuits for the baby; to take the little ones for a walk to the end of the street, and to change your voice and act as the bogey man when the children become troublesome at night. In the last role you shine particularly well. When you muffle your head in a blanket, assume a deep, hollow voice, and hobble about asking, "Are there any children crying, because I eat only crying children," the loudest child shuts up at once; and even we, elders, sitting around and talking, shudder at your voice.

I know all this is irrelevant. I have put it down mainly to work off my anger. I am very very angry with you because your latest letter has disappointed me. In your last you wrote that you were about to become a bus-conductor, and after putting me to the labour of filling several sheets on the subject, you calmly tell me now that you never seriously intended to become a bus-conductor but were really keen on becoming an astrologer. I do not believe a word of this. I know astrology is an after-thought. I really think that you had planned to be a bus-conductor till I explained to you that that profession requires brains of a very high order—in matters of tactics and finance. Did you really believe that it would be as easy as muffling your head in a blanket and frightening children?

Now I am almost tempted to stop here, sign "your affectionate uncle," and let you go to blazes. But they say that blood is thicker than water, and they are right. I can't let you go there.

I am very happy to hear that you have made up your mind to become an astrologer. My boy, astrology is a noble occupation whether you view it as a science, an art, or a business. Though I am doubtful if you will shine very well in it right from the start, ultimately, I am sure, you will do justice to the science, art, or business, because you will have my steady help on your side.

You just say you have decided to become an astrologer and leave it at that. I must know first which branch of astrology you propose to favour. You can forecast things by (1) looking at the lines on the palm (2) gazing at a planet chart and (3) simply closing your eyes and falling into a trance. You can choose one of the three lines, or if you follow your uncle's example, all the three. Naturally there is thrice as much money in the latter course. Some people believe in Palmistry, some in Horoscopes and some in Trance.

If you are going to be a palmist, you must tread warily. Every other man in the town will have read *Palmistry For All* or some such book and will be full of mounts, head-lines, and heart-lines. Unless you develop first the power of cowing down amateurs by your professional manner, you will never get on. It is not very difficult to do it either, because these amateurs will not have read much and even of the little they read they carry only a confused notion in their heads. The sceptic is the worst danger that a palmist has to face. You must have your wits about you when you deal with him. Years ago, when I was at the height of my career, a man brought to me a sheet of paper containing the impression of a palm. The impression was taken as usual in lamp-black, and the palm had come out very well. He paid me my fee and asked me to read the hand impressed on the paper. I proceeded in my usual manner, and studied the shape of the hand first. It was a slightly elongated palm with tapering fingers. Here was unmistakably the hand of an artist, and I told my visitor so. The head-line was strong, and the line indicating career was very good. I said that the hand belonged to a brilliant

thinker and artist, who would rise to international fame and acquire much wealth. The visitor made me write down the whole thing, and after I signed it and gave it to him, he said that the impression was that of a chimpanzee's hand! I had to pay him nearly fifty rupees to buy back the paper on which I had written a reading of the hand.

The next source of trouble for a palmist is the man who comes to him after visiting another professional. A man to whom I prophesied a longevity of seventy-two years and the career of a Dewan, told me that another palmist had told him that he would meet with a violent accident in about a year and either die of it or end his life in a jail. I was nonplussed for a moment, but soon recovered my presence of mind and told him that my predecessor's prophecy might be based on Egyptian Palmistry; whereupon he wanted to know how a person could have several futures according to different systems of palmistry. I told him that the Egyptian Science applied to those in Egypt and the Indian to those in India. After saying a lot of mystifying things about the longitude and

(Continued on next page bottom)

TO THE

Waste Paper Basket

By RUSTOM COOPER



ONE of these days, waste paper basket, I am going to wreak the most horrible vengeance on you. You, waste paper basket, (I will call you W.P.B. hereafter just to humiliate you) are the meanest creature on God's good earth. You are a Sadist, a fiend a-a-a well a fiend. And what is worse, you are a glutton. There is no manuscript too good for your all-consuming jaws. You fatten on discarded poems and rejected articles. You sit like an ugly fat spider under the table waiting, waiting;...but W.P.B. there will be no fat left on your contemptible carcass when I am through with you.

You, W.P.B., have had the temerity to brave my wrath. Six months ago you made a meal of one of my poems. I gulped and said nothing. After all, I said to myself, even waste paper baskets have to live. After wooing the muse for another three months I succeeded in producing another great poem. It was my master-piece. I had lavished all my art on it. With tears in my eyes I sent it to the editor. He is a kind chap, the editor; but what can he do when you, ugly fat spider that you are, sit under his table and tempt him? He was again tempted and you made a meal of my second poem too.

What more could I bear! I am resolved to be revenged. A tooth for a tooth, waste paper basket, and an eye for an eye.

You waste paper basket—may you have indigestion—are about to breathe your last. Say your prayers. No, do not quail like that. What did you say? You promise never to touch another of my poems? Ha! Ha! waste paper basket; too late. I have taken my resolve. Not all the entreaties of all the waste paper baskets in the world will move me an inch from my purpose.

Come out from under that table. Come out at once. That's better. Now take your stand in the dock. Yes, I have arranged for a defense counsel for you, but I have forbidden him to speak. How do you like that, W.P.B.? I should not torture you like that, you say? Ah, but W.P.B., do you not remember that only a month ago you munched my masterpiece and belched in my very face? Was not that torture? No, I will not be moved. I have devised a lingering death for you and a lingering death you shall have.

A lingering death? Yes; thus I lift you in my hands. You are pale as death, waste paper basket. Ugh! And how you do perspire! Thus I break your jaw-bone *snap snap snap*. I gouch out your hideous little eyes. You scream in anguish. Ah, if you could know, waste paper basket, what a balm it is to my heart, I am sure you would not scream like that. But there is more to come. I will snap every bone in your body one after another *snap crackle, crackle, snap*. Ah, I have never felt so happy ever before in my life! Now I will fling you on the ground, you fat, ugly spider! Thus am I revenged. Revenged? Nay. My thirst is not quenched yet. I will jump on your mangled carcass, crush it to a pulp under my heel. Jump, jump, jump jump.

"Hey IDIOT," roared my room-mate, shaking me viciously by the shoulder, "you will smash the bedboards banging your heels on them like that. Wake up, will you?"

LETTER TO A NEPHEW—(Continued from previous page)

latitu'e of a man's place and his destiny, I advised him in the end never to go to Egypt. You see I could very well have told him that all that my predecessor had said was gas, but such an action would undermine the prestige and integrity of the profession. People will either believe in astrology or not believe in it, but never in one man's astrology rather than in another's. You see my point?

You will not have all this trouble if you confine yourself to horoscopes. Gazing at a piece of paper, you can say anything you like to an average man, and depend upon him not to question your statements too closely. For, very few people can be expected to take the trouble to learn of planets, their positions, and all the intricate mathematics connected with them. So that you can proceed on the safe assumption that your customer is ignorant and credulous. If your prophecies come to

be questioned, you can always declare indignantly that the horoscope must be wrong, which will be true in ninety cases out of a hundred.

The easiest branch of the science is the Trance Astrology. You close your eyes and ask your client to mention the name of a flower or some number and remain silent for a while and then start saying anything you like. Your statements will not be questioned as long as you confine yourself to a description of a very pleasant future.

Write to me at once which of the three branches you propose to take, and I will tell you how to make a sound beginning.

Your Affectionate Uncle,

(Uncle continues his tips to the nephew in the next issue.)

TALKIES IN INDIA.

THE first phase of the great Indian Talkie boom is now in. Hindi, Urdu, Tamil and Telugu talking pictures galore are now sweeping the country, like an avalanche. We are now reaching the adolescent stage when we can pause to take stock of what we have produced and how many of these will stand the test of time. Some of us are saying that this amazing invention will bring fame and fortune to all those in the picture as well as the producing business.

But, so far as most of Indian-produced talkies are concerned, one is prone to think that silence is especially golden.

A successful talking picture is a rare thing. A well-directed and technically well-produced picture is rarer still. And if it can combine good acting all through, then it is surely a matter for congratulation all round. Beyond all these, a well-written story—barring the mythological ones—adaptable to the talking screen, is the rarest.

We have had *Karma* in English with Devika Rani, creditably playing a rather difficult role, supported ably by Himansu Rai.

There is *Lava Kusa* in Telugu which is the best yet seen in Telugu.

In *Nallathangal* in Tamil, Miss P. S. Rathna Bai plays the heroine to perfection. We feel a glow within ourselves. Our actors are beginning to understand talkies, we say to ourselves, and it will not be long before we can produce pictures generally of Hollywood standard.

Amrit Manthan is a Hindi talkie which in years to come may be described as the film which definitely established the Talkies in India. It is such a fine picture that one may imagine the most loyal supporters of Hollywood effects going over to the Indian Talkies whole-heartedly.

For this picture, Prabhat have adapted the underlying idea of Poet Tagore's *Sacrifice*.

The picture is well-produced technically, brilliantly acted and splendidly sound-recorded. The scenic effects are amazing artistic triumphs. The direction, too, is of the highest order—on a par with Hollywood's best.



The story deals with the conspiracy of the royal priest and the murder of a king who had prohibited human and animal sacrifice in his kingdom. The romance of the princess who succeeds him finally ends in Rajguru's death..... He severs his own head. It is a grim, relentless story, heartlessly realistic in some places.

The insanity of Sumitra is a theme of infinite pathos. Miss Shanta Apte feigns insanity to perfection.

The wail of Rajguru with blood gushing forth from his erstwhile omnipotent eye is tragic. His offering to the Goddess, of his own head, is gruesome. But these two scenes are the finishing touches to the grim character of Rajguru. The title *Amrit Manthan* does not, however, suggest all that is best in the picture; it is not germane to the main theme.

It is altogether a really great picture; one that may be regarded as a glorious tribute to Indian Cine-art.

THE BUSIEST PLAYERS:

An investigation by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences reveals that among the hundred or so recognised actors and actresses, forty six get two-thirds of the acting assignments. The list of Hollywood's forty six busiest players provides some surprises: Here, in alphabetical order it is:

Henry Armetta, Robert Armstrong, William Bakewell, George Barbier, Mona Barrie, Mary Boland, John Boles, Bruce Cabot, Mary Carlisle, Berton Churchill, Walter Conolly, Ricardo Cortez, James Dunn, Ann Dvorak, Madge Evans, Stuart Erwin, Glenda Farrell, Ralph Forbes, Minna Gombell, C. Henry Gordon, Alan Hale, Neil Hamilton, Samuel S. Hinds, Edward Everett Horton, Allen Jenkins, Isobel Jewell, Arline Judge, Henry Kolker, Otto Kruger, Una Merkel, John Miljan, Alan Mowbray, Herbert Mundin, Pat O'Brien, Jean Parker, Nat Pendleton, Zasu Pitts, Roger Pryor, Willard Robertson, Ned Sparks, Charles Starrett, Henry Stephenson, Lyle Talbot, Henry B. Walthall, Warren William and Fay Wray.

The Letters of Private Joyfull

43. THE VILLAGE CARRIER

Madras, 6th April, 1935.

DEAR MOTHER,

I am glad to hear that cousin Joe's business is still flourishing. Joe was always one to move with the times, and I am not surprised to know that he has invested in the latest Diesel-engined all-purpose lorry. It is just what is wanted for the business of a village carrier, who conveys passengers, goods, parcels, produce and live-stock.

Village buses in India also carry live-stock, but they are free passengers belonging to the insect world. Human passengers are allowed to take away such live-stock free of charge. In spite of these and other benefits, the fares on Indian buses are almost nothing.

It is strange to think that Joe started with a one-horse dray, and made only one trip a day to Oxford. Now he makes a trip every hour, and soon I expect he will have an aeroplane taking-off every five minutes.

I used to ride on the dray when I was a boy, sitting up beside Joe like David Copperfield with Mr. Barkis. I used to think what an important man Joe was, doing all

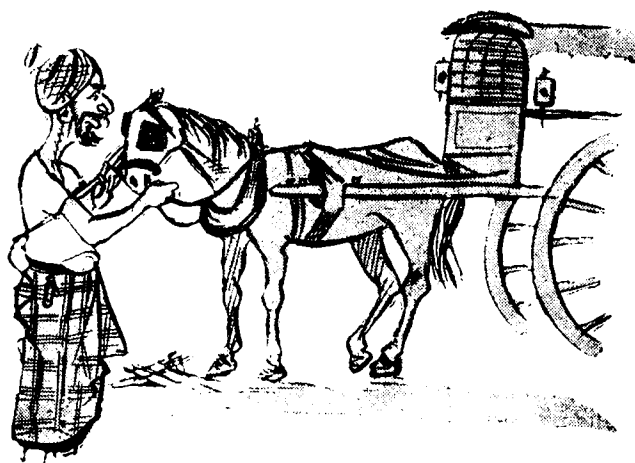
the business of the village. He had to bring back a bag of sugar for one, and a postage-stamp for another, and change for twenty pounds, and a young bullock, and Mrs. Witney's niece from school. In the other direction he took baskets of eggs, a broken pump, a commercial traveller, six prize marrows, part of a reaping-machine, a letter for a lawyer and two old women going to the market.

In India they have a man called a *jutka-wallah*, but the inhabitants do not seem to trust him like everyone trusts Joe. You practically never send a *jutka-wallah* to the bank to change five hundred rupees, and no one expects him to register the village births, captain the cricket-team, and take the chair at Council-meetings.

All the same, you must not imagine that villagers in India belong to a different species to ourselves. If you go and talk to them, you find they are exactly like our old gaffers back in Binsey. Their problems are of a sort that an English yeoman would understand at once, and the two would sit down together and have a proper farmer's grumbling-match.



I used to ride on the dray sitting up beside Joe.....



An Indian Jutka-wallah

Indian villagers can understand that a farmer may go away and be a soldier, but they are surprised that some of his family may be carriers, sailors, and merchants. I tell them it is on account of our system of primogeniture. The eldest son inherits the land, and only he remains on the land. This prevents the farms from being split up into uneconomic units, or from having to support too many people. As each younger son grows up, the farmer gives him a shilling and a kick in the pants, and tells him to go out into the world and earn his living.

When I say that some of the younger Joyfulls become clergymen, the Indian villagers understand this at once. In India, it is very easy to become a clergyman. You do not necessarily go to college or become learned in the scriptures. Instead of a visiting-card to announce your vocation, you dress yourself in an orange-coloured *dhotie* and a string of beads, and then everyone knows you are a clergyman, and you do not have to work any more.

A very interesting thing about India is that at one and the same time you may see all the different ways that the Joyfulls have carried goods during the last thousand years. It is like seeing all our history telescoped into a living panorama. The clumsy bullock-wains with which the ancient Joyfulls crawled from Binsey to Oxford, can be seen any day on the roads in India. In the North, you encounter men leading strings of pack-mules, such as the Joyfulls used for bearing goods over bad tracks between villages. On the river you see heavy clumsy boats very like the mediaeval barges in which the Joyfulls carried hay down the river to Westminster. There is nothing

in India exactly like the the one-horse dray that Joe used to drive, but the bus which he had before the present lorry, can be seen rattling over the roads anywhere out here.

I do not think Joe would like to be the village carrier and agent out here, because the people believe in Fate. When they are in a weak position, they resign themselves, but when they are in a strong position, they are hard bargainers. It is therefore difficult to conduct a business that depends entirely upon trust. The idea out here is that if Fate delivers anyone into your hand, it would be impious if you did not squeeze him until the pips squeaked.

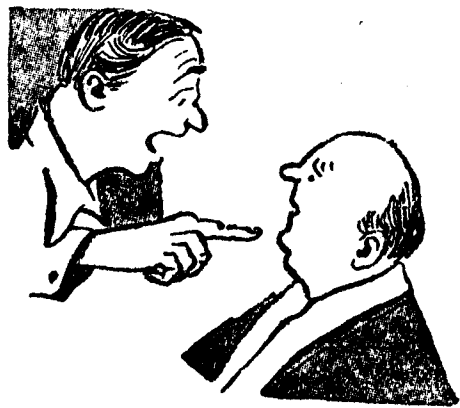
We have an idea that Fate is an accident, and we try not to allow Fate to interfere with general principles. The best illustration is if one of us is compelled to sell his bicycle, the buyer and the seller sit down together and conscientiously decide what is the just value of the bike on general principles. We think it is mean to take advantage of the special circumstances dictated by Fate, although some of us do take advantage. We wish, or at least pretend to wish, that both parties shall be pleased at the justness of the price.

This gives us our reputation for hypocrisy. An Englishman who is 'taking advantage' is ashamed of himself, and shows it in his manner. Other races take advantage as a matter of course, and therefore do not appear to be hypocrites.

Like all races with mystical beliefs, the Indians are realists in business. If you tell an Indian that you are compelled to sell your bike for whatever you can get, he naturally considers that Fate has delivered you into his hand, and he offers you eight annas. Even if you agree to eight annas, he will not close the bargain, but will go away and return next day, to see if Fate will make you accept six annas, and also to search for a bad four-anna piece; because Fate might make you careless in examining the money when paid.

The fact that we believe in general principles, and are ashamed of taking advantage, has helped to make us

DO YOU KNOW?



1. What is the origin of the expression 'to fight like Kilkenny cats'?
2. What is Cognac?
3. Where is the Inchcape Rock?
4. Who was Jack the Ripper?
5. Who is called the Old Lady of Threadneedle Street?
6. When was the Suez Canal opened?

Please see answers on page 22.

a nation of shop-keepers. In spite of lapses, we generally remain friends with our customers, and enjoy their confidence. This explains the friendship between the English and the Germans. Ever since the days of the Hanseatic League we have traded with the Germans on these terms. It is unnatural for the English and the Germans to hate each other, and during the last war both Governments had to take extraordinary measures to make the warring peoples feel hostile to each other. In spite of everything, the soldiers never hated the Germans, but called them 'Jerries', and made friends with any prisoners they captured. The English and German airmen kept on good terms to the very end of the war, and at first even the German submarine-commanders were anxious to save the drowning English sailors. When the war was over, the politicians tried to keep up the spirit of hate, but the British people would not have it, and voted for a new government which lent money to Germany, and excused the Germans their debts and penalties.

The Germans hate the Jews because the latter do not do business on general principles. It is strange but true that the fundamental cause of the constant German persecution of Jews, is the memory of every German of the time when he has had to sell his bicycle to a Jew.

The fact that out here people do not do business like Joe does, has always made it difficult to govern India justly, even from ancient times. The Indians are too merciless when strong. Therefore the rulers have always been tempted to keep the people weak, and never to show weakness themselves. There is a premium on harshness; whereas a ruler who shows apparent weakness by bargaining, invites an avalanche of merciless advantage-taking upon himself. In spite of our defects, I think that the British have shown their tenacity and sincerity, by steadily inviting these avalanches of bargaining, through every difficulty.

Indians complain that we are too cautious in our concessions, and too insistent on being explicit in our bargains with India. But everyone knows that, although contracts may be loosely-worded in England, or may be mere understandings, in India every contract must have the last 'i' dotted, and the last 't' crossed. There is the risk of a merciless bargainer coming back next day and reducing his offer to six annas; and you have to make sure that the annas are good ones. These are precautions that every sensible Indian takes for himself, no matter how honourable he is. You cannot blame us for following the customs of the country.

Ireland is a country that has always been badly governed, from the very dawn of history. In this case, the trouble lies in the characteristics of the Irish people, who are contrary and unstable. They are the nicest

people in the world in some social aspects, but you never know when an uneducated Irishman is suddenly going to stop being sociable. Irishmen are famous for being sensitive. If an Irish comrade comes into the canteen, he will take it as a slight if you do not immediately order a pint of beer for him, and he will pick a quarrel with you about it. So you apologise and buy him a pint of beer. At this he throws the beer in your face, and says he does not want to be insulted by your dirty drink. He says he can buy his own, and adds that no one is willing to lend him the necessary money, because they want to insult his country. Almost anything you do is another insult to Old Ireland, and if you give an Irishman his own way, he does not want it. So whatever you do, it is impossible to come to terms with an Irishman. Anyhow, the rulers of the country, whether native or foreign, have never succeeded in doing so.

I think the British did wrong to try and force the Irish to behave, a few years ago. It was a step encouraged by the hate-mentality fostered during the war. A lot of cruel things happened, but whatever we did, there was bound to be much innocent suffering in Ireland, as there always has been. All through history the Irish have cut off their noses to spite their faces, and I am afraid they are still doing so. Fortunately, they can no longer blame us for the results.

In my opinion, India will never go the way of Ireland, because the Indians have the qualities of their defects. Because they are keen bargainers, they have plenty of common-sense and responsibility; far more than you would imagine from the extremist speeches which interested parties are carefully reproducing in the home papers. Everything shows that India is progressing hand-over-fist. One of the most promising signs is that intelligent Indians nowadays welcome sincere constructive criticism, whereas only a few years ago they screamed at all critics, like the Irishman who has been offered, or not offered, a pint of beer.

All this seems to have strayed a long way from cousin Joe and his carrying-business. Thinking of Joe, I cannot help imagining him as a typical Englishman. Unfortunately, the people out here do not meet such Englishmen. The methods followed by Joe, in a small way, are the ones by which, in a big way, England became the carrier of the world. We no longer have a world-monopoly of the business, but I think we have shown other nations the way; and that there will still be room in the world for chaps like Joe.

Your Loving Son,
OBEAH JOYFULL.

"DEPRESSION," said Gunpat, "is merely the figment of some peoples' overworked imagination. Now take my case, sir. I lost my job here years ago and instead of blaming it on to the depression But I will begin at the beginning.

HOW GUNPAT MET THE DEPRESSION

By H. N. CLAY

You know, sir, I used to be a clerk at Messrs. Roychand Nihalchand & Sons: Importers, Exporters, and Commission Agents. They paid me thirty rupees and a bonus every *Divali*. It wasn't very exacting work..... but then one day like a bolt from the blue came the letter.

Mr. Gunpat Gunnarao,
Asst. Clerk.

Dear Sir,

We regret very much that we shall not need your services after the end of this month....

The order of the Boot. Retrenchment and all that. Business going down, what with the C. D. campaign and the *Swadeshi* movement. Well sir, I lost that comfortable job, and the next day set out to find another.

Up a flight of stairs. Knock. Knock. Knock.

"Come in."

"Ah won't you sit down, sir? And now, what can I do for you Mr.-er....."

"Gunnarao is my name, sir."

"Yes, Mr. Gunnarao. Now we have received by the last mail a choice consignment of....."

"I-er-I don't want to make any purchases, sir. I—in fact, I have come for a job."

The smile vanished from the fellow's face. He scowled.

"You want a job?"

"Yes, sir. My qualifications....."

"GET OUT!"

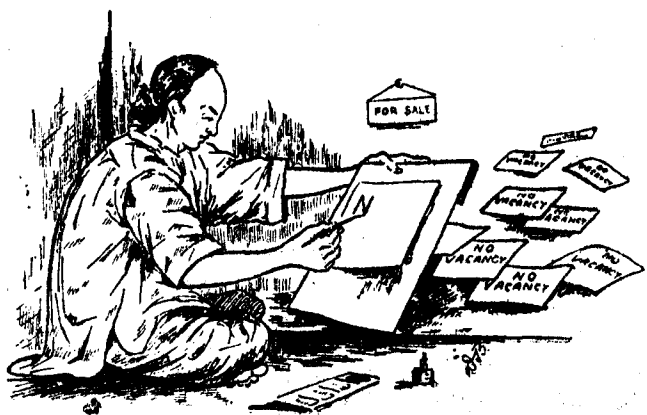
I got out. Out into the street. Another office. Another interview.

"We are sorry, but at the moment we have no vacancy."

"Extremely sorry and all that. But this depression, you know....."

"Sorry. Can't do anything."

Evening. My heart nearly in my boots, and my boots actually in tatters. The next day the same story repeated.



"Really, we ought to place a notice on the gates. 'No Vacancy,'" said the manager of Messrs Jackdaw Jackdaw & Crow, whom I had just interviewed.

And you will hardly believe it, sir, but what the manager of Messrs Jackdaw Jackdaw and

Crow, told me gave me an idea.

A corking idea. One of the best.

I took a tram back home. TRAM mind you, and me without a job too.

"Sita," I called my wife. "Your mother gave you a pair of gold ear-rings when you married, didn't she?"

"Why do you ask?"

"Sita," I told her, "now be a good wife and bring me those ear-rings. And those bracelets too, and please don't forget the girdle."

She brought them all to me. Oh, Sita was always a sport. I made them into a little bundle and slipped it into my pocket.

Five minutes later I was at Maganchand, the Marwari's.

"You want to sell them all?"

I nodded.

"Tell you what, Mister," he began with evident caution, "ornaments aren't any good nowadays. The depression....."

"Blast your depression," I exploded. "Are you going to buy these or are you not?"

He looked hurt.

"All right. Give you sixty for the lot." I gnashed my teeth, sir and he saw it.

"You know they are worth ten times that sum," I said. "But I will sell them for 500. If you refuse I go over to Rupchand next door."

At the end we compromised for Rs. 420. And with just those Rs. 420 I started my business. Incredible folly most people will call it. Starting a business in the thick of the depression. But the thicker the depression the better for me. Month after month my sales grew. Within a year, I had not only recovered all I had put into the concern but had actually bought Sita a pair of diamond bracelets. And to-day as you know sir, after five years of acute depression I own a car and a house...

You look surprised, sir? Ah, but I forgot to tell you the nature of my business. I manufactured and sold 'No Vacancy' boards.

XIV

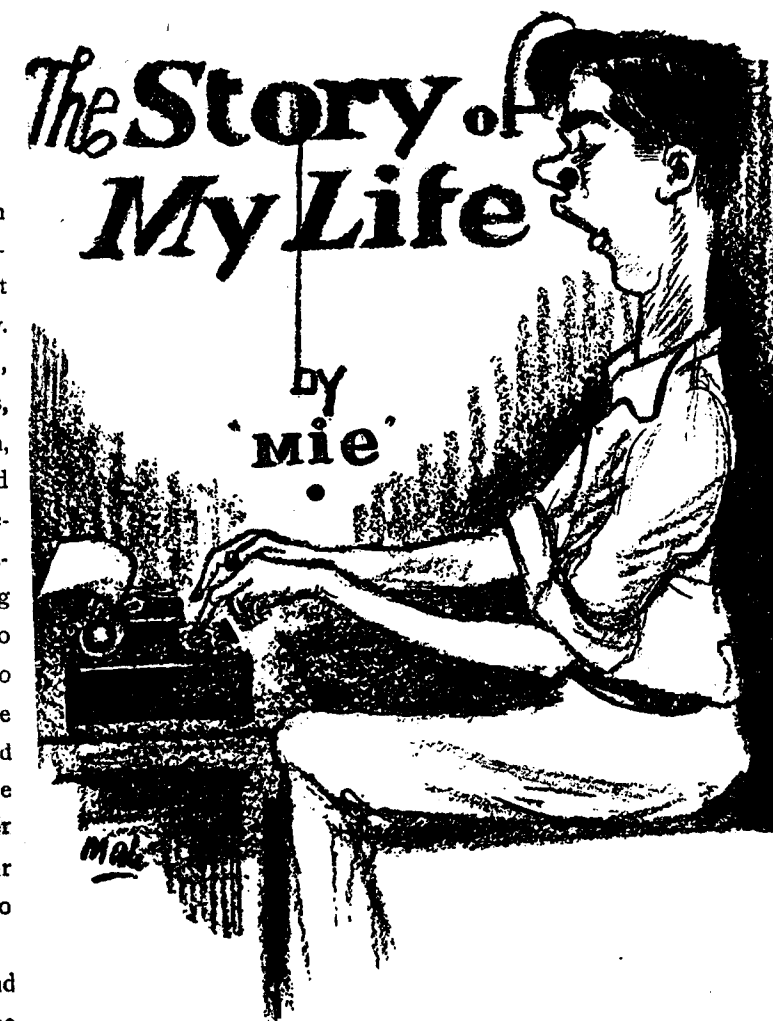
THE few bright and industrious stars in our class contemplated the approaching examination with sangfroid but the rest of us got feverishly busy. We were not sure which subject to tackle first, and so hurriedly pecked at all the subjects, never lingering for long over any one of them, as a rat treats different kinds of cheese spread before it. Most of us had two kinds of preparation. Last-minute preparation and post-preparation. The first consisted of jotting down important problems or answers to probable questions on thin sheets of paper to be smuggled into the Examination hall. Some neatly wrote their answers on their starched cuffs; others on their left-hand palms; some others wrote them on pieces of thin paper which they inserted inside the barrel of their spare fountain pens. A few boldly decided to take books for reference.

The post-preparations were arduous and often futile. The candidate ascertained the names and addresses of his examiners and paid them visits. Some of them granted interviews but others would not even see our poor visitors. Then there would be the common excuses like fever.

But Narayan had his own special methods of passing an examination. When he went to the examination hall, he took a beer bottle with him, which contained half-anna worth of snuff. He placed the bottle in front of him. The subject was mathematics. He had taken care to sit just behind the star-mathematician in the class and had arranged with him about the answers. The star had promised to pass on to him his finished answers. Narayan waited for the answers. But meanwhile he had to be doing something. So he got up in his seat. An examiner approached him.

"Sir, I want a pair of dividers."

He got the dividers and promptly set about drawing fancy designs. He filled a few sheets of paper and then



got tired of the pastime. Then he got up again, this time for some graph-paper. The graph-paper was treated in a like fashion. Half an hour had elapsed. Narayan now addressed the star sitting in front and pounding away at the problems for all he was worth.

"Look here Karunakaran, pass on a few answer sheets."

"Wait Narayan, wait—in a minute."

Narayan again took up his borrowed instrument-box and started drawing circles and squares and parallelograms. Every five minutes or so he took the beer bottle, emptied a small quantity of snuff into his palm and drew it in. Then he would take out his kerchief and wipe his watery eyes. Again he asked Karunakaran to lend him a few sheets. But Karunakaran was too busy and would not even reply. The hands of the clock moved on. Until suddenly the examiner got up and announced: "Time is up. Stop writing." Narayan was now thoroughly alarmed. He had

depended on the other for his answers and he had failed him. If he had not been so foolish, he would at least have brought in a text-book. Now it was too late. But he didn't lose his presence of mind. He could see Karunakaran triumphantly getting up after clearing the paper and starting to arrange his answer books. Without hesitation Narayan leaned forward and snatched at the bundle his companion held. He got half the bundle. He coolly took them, wrapped them in a clean sheet of paper and not heeding his friend's howl of protest, handed the bundle to the examiner. Karunakaran dared not make a complaint to the examiner: he was so much afraid of the other, and so silently but almost tearfully, he handed over the other half. When the results were announced, both had got equal number of marks.

Then there was Vaithi who stood six-feet-four in his socks and measured forty-two inches round the chest. He took a hunting knife to the examination hall, placed it in front of him and started copying his answers from a text-book. The examiners wisely left him alone.

Mathematics was not my bugbear. Mine was physiology and allied sciences. The bacillus Johnnies troubled me a lot. My teacher told me that bacilli were responsible for most of the diseases in the world. At this I began to entertain a great amount of awe and respect for the blighters. My teacher went on to say that some form of bacillus was present even in my throat. I was startled at this. I could almost feel them wriggle down my throat. I was very nearly sick at this. I was then informed that another kind of bacillus was present in my intestines. All on a sudden I felt them move in my inside. I could feel them romp about gloating over my agony. I felt completely miserable. I wondered how they could possibly have got in. I never used to keep open my mouth longer than was necessary. However, I decided to ask my teacher

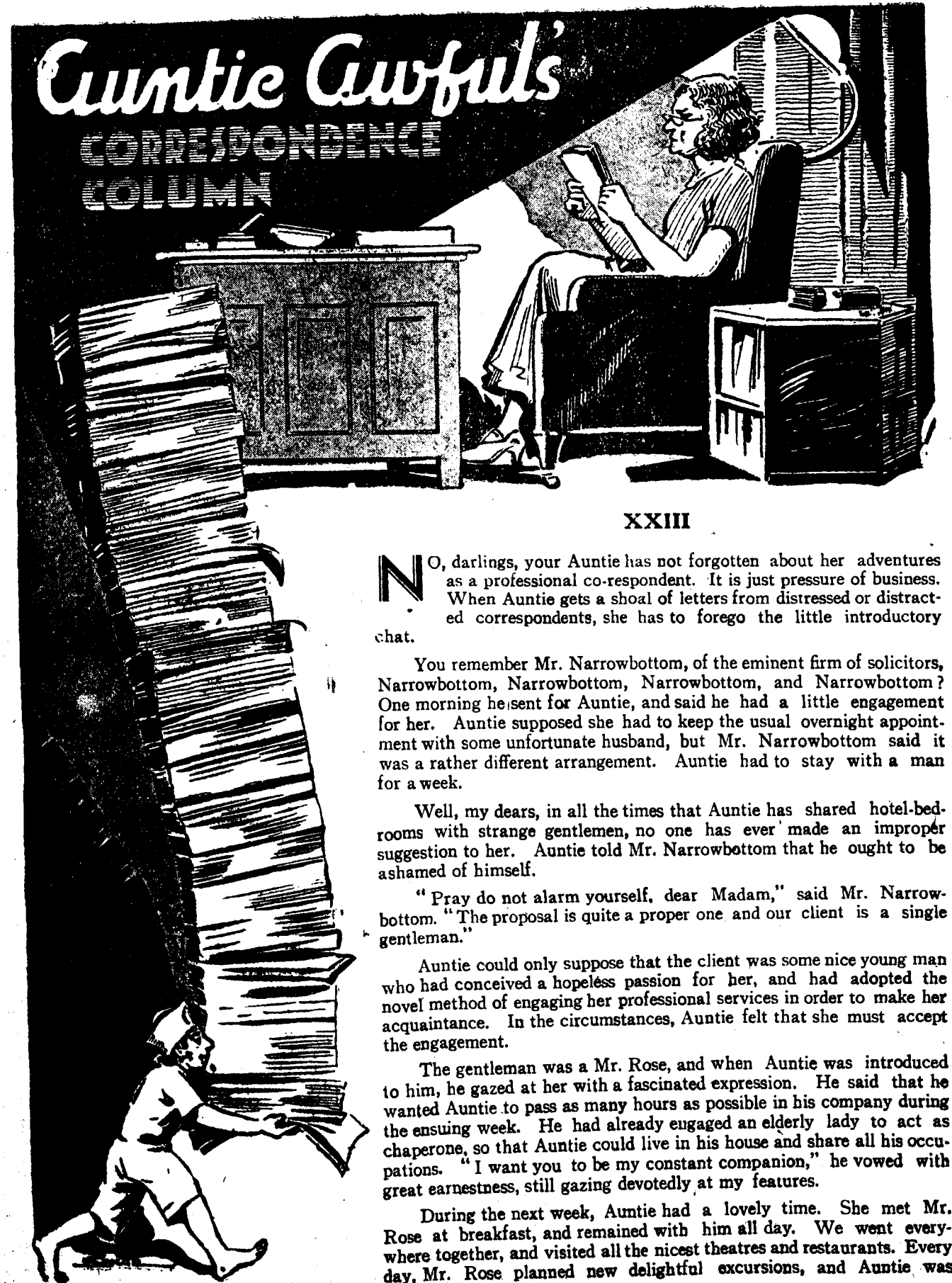
at the end of the hour for the best method of getting rid of them. But just then my teacher said that bacilli were of two types, the good and the bad and that some of them found inside were of the good type. I felt immensely relieved. I blessed those creatures for remaining inside me and doing good to my system. But still there were a few of the bad type. What was to be done with them? But my teacher explained that the human body is capable of looking after itself provided you looked after it a bit. There are apparently in our blood a police force called white corpuscles. These people saw to it that none of the evil-doers did any harm. Ordinarily this is a strong force. They are a well-fed lot, strong, conscientious and not afraid of a few tumbles. When any ill-disposed bacillus enters our body like a thief in the dark, the W. C. get scent of it; they are a vigilant lot and they immediately eject the thief or haul him in. But if you treat the W.C. meanly, they lose their manhood and become weak and unable to perform their duty. At such a moment there is an armed dacoity, so to speak. The dacoits or the bacilli make a determined attack in numbers, overpowering the W.C. The result is some kind of disease. So the W.C. are the real protectors of our system. You cannot afford to despise them. They fight the bacilli, use *lathis* and batons and at last vanquish them. So strengthen the force. That's what vitamins are for. If you stoke in sufficient quantities of vitamins, you'll strengthen the W.C. and there will be long life and prosperity.

YES! I KNOW!



1. During a rebellion at Kilkenny the soldiers amused themselves by tying cats by their tails and allowing them to fight each other to death. Once, when they saw an officer coming they allowed the cats to escape by cutting their tails, and explained the presence of the two tails by the story that the cats had devoured each other up to their tails.
2. It is a French brandy of superior quality, distilled from the wine of Cognac, a district in France. The name is now extended to any French brandy.
3. A rock in the North Sea dangerous to mariners, a subject of one of Southey's ballads.
4. In 1888, an unknown perpetrator of a series of murders in London, characterised by revolting features, styled himself by this name.
5. The Bank of England.
6. In 1869.

These are the answers to on 18.



Auntie Awful's CORRESPONDENCE COLUMN

XXIII

NO, darlings, your Auntie has not forgotten about her adventures as a professional co-respondent. It is just pressure of business. When Auntie gets a shoal of letters from distressed or distracted correspondents, she has to forego the little introductory chat.

You remember Mr. Narrowbottom, of the eminent firm of solicitors, Narrowbottom, Narrowbottom, Narrowbottom, and Narrowbottom? One morning he sent for Auntie, and said he had a little engagement for her. Auntie supposed she had to keep the usual overnight appointment with some unfortunate husband, but Mr. Narrowbottom said it was a rather different arrangement. Auntie had to stay with a man for a week.

Well, my dears, in all the times that Auntie has shared hotel-bedrooms with strange gentlemen, no one has ever made an improper suggestion to her. Auntie told Mr. Narrowbottom that he ought to be ashamed of himself.

"Pray do not alarm yourself, dear Madam," said Mr. Narrowbottom. "The proposal is quite a proper one and our client is a single gentleman."

Auntie could only suppose that the client was some nice young man who had conceived a hopeless passion for her, and had adopted the novel method of engaging her professional services in order to make her acquaintance. In the circumstances, Auntie felt that she must accept the engagement.

The gentleman was a Mr. Rose, and when Auntie was introduced to him, he gazed at her with a fascinated expression. He said that he wanted Auntie to pass as many hours as possible in his company during the ensuing week. He had already engaged an elderly lady to act as chaperone, so that Auntie could live in his house and share all his occupations. "I want you to be my constant companion," he vowed with great earnestness, still gazing devotedly at my features.

During the next week, Auntie had a lovely time. She met Mr. Rose at breakfast, and remained with him all day. We went everywhere together, and visited all the nicest theatres and restaurants. Every day, Mr. Rose planned new delightful excursions, and Auntie was

greatly touched by his romantic devotion. Everywhere we went, the dear man kept his eyes glued to Auntie's features. I longed for him to declare his love, and had quite decided to sacrifice my career as a professional correspondent, as soon as I could persuade him to ask me.

All too soon, the week came to an end. Over the dinner-table that evening, Auntie sought to encourage the poor gentleman. At last when the repast was over, Auntie drew him to the sitting-room, and planted him firmly on the sofa.

"Dear Mr. Rose," cooed Auntie in melting tones, "Tell me all!"

"You—you won't be offended?" queried Mr. Rose nervously.

"Of course not," confided Auntie, patting his hand.

"Well, dear Auntie," said Mr. Rose, "I am madly in love with someone."

"Oh, Mr. Rose!" said Auntie bashfully.

"But she is—rather ugly," gulped Mr. Rose.

"They say beauty is only skin-deep," remarked Auntie, but with less warmth in her manner.

"I was afraid that if I married her, I would be worried by her lack of beauty," continued Mr. Rose. "So I decided to spend a week in the company of the ugliest woman I could find. Mr. Narrowbottom recommended me to you."

"Indeed!" said Auntie, in icy tones.

"How can I thank you!" cried Mr. Rose. "You have let me gaze at you uninterruptedly for a whole week. I am quite cured. I shall always appreciate my future wife now. Compared with the memory of you, she will always seem positively handsome!"

And the horrid man actually wanted to pay Auntie double the fee.

Of course, my dears, it was really a joke invented between Mr. Narrowbottom and Mr. Rose, don't you think?

Needy Nephew (George Town). "Dear Auntie, if you could see how I blush with shame while I am writing, you would take pity on me. I need a hundred rupees instantly, but I have not the courage to tell you so. I would sooner die than ask you for the money. I am sending this by messenger, who will wait for an answer. Your most obedient and affectionate nephew, Seshu. P.S.—Overcome with shame at what I have written, I have been running after the messenger in order to take the letter from him, but I cannot catch him." Dear Nephew, console yourself, and blush no longer. God has heard your prayers. The messenger lost your letter.—Love from Auntie.

Insulted (Bihar). "I am a clerk on the railway here. Being so far from home, my work-mates jeer at me. One of them is always saying that my pet monkey is a cross between a Madrasi and a baboon. All the office-staff make jokes about it." Auntie is sorry to hear of this, dear boy. The next time the man says your monkey is a cross between a Madrasi and a baboon, you should go and shake his hand, and reply, "What luck! Then we must be both related to him!"

Bogie (Podanur). "Some of these ultra-religious people are very tiresome. In the train the other day, a

man reproved me for 'smoking, and said I was on the way to hell. What would you have done?' I would have advised the gentleman to leave the compartment, dear boy. He was obviously in the wrong train."

Business (Bellary). "A dealer owes me a sum of money, and has suddenly gone bankrupt. I went and reproached him, and he offered to make me a preferred creditor. Will this be any advantage?" Quite a lot, dear Sir. A preferred creditor may be told at once that he is not going to get any money. Ordinary creditors have to wait thirty days for the information.

Hubby (Madras). "We have a very stupid servant. I came home last evening, and my wife was not in the house. I asked the servant for my wife's whereabouts, and he said he had not seen them." Well, perhaps they were at the wash, dear boy.

Unloved (Poona). "What should I do if I catch a man in my bedroom?" Lock the door at once, my dear. You may never catch another.

Acrobat (Royal circus). "I am prepared to issue a public challenge that I will go across Wellington Circus on a tightrope." Auntie does not approve of such precautions, dear Sir. Why shouldn't you walk across, and risk your life like the rest of us?

Rooter (College Sports Club). "We are very anxious to win our next soccer match, dear Auntie. Can you suggest any method that will increase our chances of success?" Yes, dear boy. If you have a pretty sister, bring her to the ground, and send her to flirt with the opposing goal-keeper.

Humorist (Lyallpur). "Dear Auntie, what would you do if you were engaged to a man with a wooden leg?" I would break it off, my dear.

Modern Girl (Lahore). "I know how to treat men. I simply turn up my nose at them." That is a very good idea, darling. Of course, every time you turn up your nose, you get kissed?

Orthodox (Bombay). "I do not like your jokes about the sunlight cult. I look down on nudists." How interesting, dear sir. I suppose you discover their haunts and then climb the nearest tree?

Dubious (Park Street). "Would you marry a man if you knew that he had stolen 50,000 rupees?" I think I would first find out if he has still got them, my dear.

Disgusted Voter (Punjab). "The way the Municipality wastes money is appalling. They have built a veterinary hospital especially for the reception of cows, and now they find that there are no cows for treatment. Everyone uses camels in this district." That is nothing, dear sir. At Pittsburg they have built a magnificent General Post-Office at a cost of three crores, and they now find they have not provided any place where the public may post letters.

Sighing (Mylapore). Auntie thinks you had better go to a firm which supplies office sundries, and order a rubber-stamp bearing the words, "I love you." That ought to make an impression on your girl.

Pinch of Salt (Triplicane). "Dear Editor, I think that Auntie is an old tarratiddler. I do not believe she was ever a professional co-respondent." Never mind, dear sir; a little romancing is always more interesting than a lot of cold facts. You wait until Auntie tells you about the time that she was ship-wrecked!

THERE seems to be a material flaw in the argument for birth control; and that is as to when the control is to be exercised.

For Providence has a queer way of dealing out children to the human race. The best of the lot do not necessarily come out in any definable numerical order. It happens not infrequently that the first-borns are a sore disappointment and the later arrivals, like one's second thoughts, seem to be better endowed. Therefore, if a man, having achieved a son or two, proceeds to birth-control the rest of his species, it is just possible that he may be denying himself a Pitt or a Napoleon.

I don't fancy any numerical order in birth, apart from the fact that one's wishes in the matter don't count. All the same, there does seem to be some merit in being born third. Of course, there are many ways in which one can arrive third. The first two may be daughters and the third a son. The first two may be sons and the third a daughter. The first three may be tarred with the same brush of disappointment—daughters. Well, there are sundry other ways too; I fancy this is a question in permutation.

In all the above cases, there appears to be no special merit in winning the third place. But, if the third happens to be a son, after the first two have been sons, there is, if I may say so, a conjunctural advantage. The third son is thrice blessed. Once by each of his brothers and once by his male parent. The mother usually doesn't come into the picture. If her wishes were horses, the third should be a daughter.

This leads me to the subject proper, Kunjidapadam, Chinnaswamy Iyer's third son. From the very start Kunju was marked out *à plus ultra*. Coming as he did after Mayuri and Ramamritam, he imbibed their best traits and shunned their foibles. He developed the proper perspective. He had the go-aheadness and courage of Mayuri; he imbibed the guts and obstinate determination of Ramamritam. But he was not caught by the glare of modernism which swept Mayuri off his feet. Nor was he, on the other hand, prone to don the soul-charged dogmatism of Ramamritam. So, he had in him the makings of infallibility; and he built it up sedulously as the years rolled on.

To build up this edifice of infallibility was no easy task. It demanded sacrifices of another kind, because infallibility is never built by strokes of brilliance. One has to grind hard, scorn delights and live laborious days.

Kunju did all these things. It was hard, but being; surety and strength.

The result was that his academic career was one of distinction, prizes, medals and honours. His friends felt him impregnable so far as examinations were concerned. He was at the top every time.

After leaving the University, he decided that the I.C.S. should be the career for him; and he set to it with heart and soul. He could not think of going to England for competing in the London examination; for he had not enough means for that enterprise. But the Delhi I. C. S. was open to him, luck favouring.

The Delhi I. C. S. examination is a queer experience. To anyone south of the Vindhya it is nothing short of an ordeal. The examination is usually held in January when the cold winds do blow, piercingly and biting chill. In the South, the worst rigour of winter can be borne if one has an ordinary shawl as an overall outfit. But in Delhi the cold is something of a menace, and shakes one to the very marrow. Day-light is a miserly moiety.

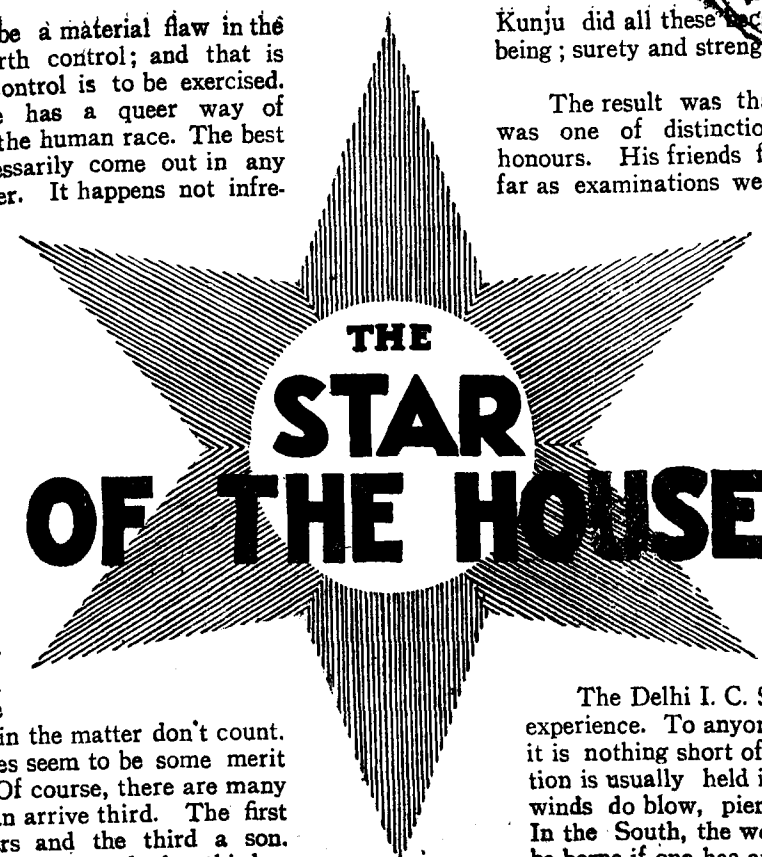
But Kunju was fore-warned and came with an infallible equipment; and he looked quite a sight in it. A Balaclava at the summit, a banian and two sweaters over the trunk to ward off possible pneumonia, woollen stockings to enliven the frozen keel, gloves to preserve his fingers, and a huge overcoat to maintain himself in working order. Does a Polar expeditionist need more? Well, so was everyone from the South and Kunju didn't mind the curious gaze of the Northerners.

The exam. went off well for Kunju so far as the written papers were concerned. Then came the *viva voce*. Was it a snare or a lure? Many an otherwise capable candidate has walked unwarily into the parlour of the Four Wise Men on the Board. The desire to make an immediate impression often results in an anticlimax. I know of a case or two.

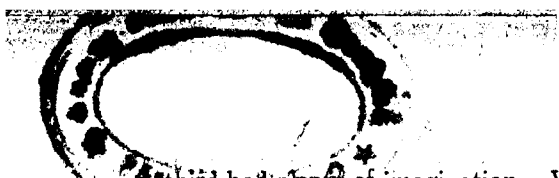
A Mathematics giant, first-class and all that, steered straight and was progressing hopefully when he was asked what he knew of Alsace-Lorraine. He replied at once:

"They were a pair of devoted lovers in medieval times."

One more unfortunate, when asked as to what was his hobby, said it was travel. But on further investigation the Wise Men found that he had not travelled anywhere outside the city of Madras, barring the I. C. S. campaign.



R. JAGANNATHAN'S
FOURTH ARTICLE OF THE SERIES



third had plenty of imagination. When asked as to what was Dera Ismail Khan, his unhesitating reply was:

"A Red Shirt leader in the Frontier."

Kunju was aware of such pitfalls and walked warily enough. All the same it was rather a trying experience. The reason is that it is difficult to create striking first impressions when you measure only five feet two from Himalayas to Cape Comorin. True, great men have proved the fallacy of height. It is not in growing like a tree that the merit of a man lies. They say that Napoleon was short. For one thing, Napoleon never appeared for a *viva voce* test; and for another, in juxtaposition with the six-footers of the North, want of height is rather depressing, never mind the Board. Kunju, however, had his consolation. The standard height of a Madras is in the neighbourhood of five feet two; besides, if height were of any account, it was a matter for the Medical Board and not for the *viva voce* Board.

Kunju duly presented himself for the interview. But just before he was called in, he was assailed by small doubts. How was he to greet the Wise Men? He was timed at 3.30 in the afternoon. What was he to say? 'Good afternoon', 'Good evening', or 'Good day'? Then again, should he 'sir' the syndicate or confine himself to the chairman or omit it altogether? Before he could settle the doubts he was called in.

The Four Wise Men were very cordial and the Chairman took up the first over. He began with a series of preliminary questions which were very flattering to Kunju since they related to his academic career. Then he was tossed over to the Second Wise Man who happened to be a politician and a man of affairs. He took Kunju to the post-war States of Europe, repudiation of war-guilt by Germany, the Statute of Westminster and sundry other things. Kunju was equal to the task. The Third Wise Man evinced an insatiable thirst for details of Indian economics. Deriving his inspiration from the Indian Year Book he tackled Kunju on the mineral wealth of India, distribution of crops, budget figures of the Government of India, and the total length of railways in India. Kunju managed to come out unscathed.

The Fourth Wise Man watched all these silently and with a knowing smile. He was short, spectacled and scholarly-looking. He had no notes or references. His first sally was:

"Are you aware, Mr. Kunjidapadam, of the theory that Bacon wrote the plays which Shakespeare is supposed to have written?"

Kunju was taken aback just for a moment not knowing where it would lead to; but he composed himself and replied, caution redoubled:

"Yes, I am aware of such a theory."

"What is your opinion about it?" pursued the Wise Man.

"I think it is very fantastic."

"Can you adduce any proof in support of your opinion?"

"I should imagine that the onus of proof is on the Baconian."

The Wise Man smiled and said:

"Well, I shall put you another question. Was Shakespeare's Hamlet really mad?"

"I don't think so. If he were really mad, Shakespeare would have been the last man to touch him."

"What are the grounds for your opinion?"

"A mad man may be a meet subject for one's pity; but certainly not a subject for Art."

The Scholar seemed to appreciate the reply.

"Just one more question, Mr. Kunjidapadam. What do you think of Milton's sonnets in comparison with Shakespeare's?"

"I should think Milton was one generation too late for sonnets. If we except his sonnet *On Blindness* he suffers considerably by comparison with Shakespeare. Milton's pedantry is intolerable."

"Thank you, I have done," said the Scholar and left him.

When the results came out a few months hence, Chinnaswamy Iyer felt he was the happiest man alive. Kunju fulfilled his high hopes and came out successful. He elevated the plane of the family. Mangalam suddenly found that she had attained an exalted status and become an important woman. Hitherto, their richer relations had not taken any particular notice of Chinnaswamy Iyer and his family. Now they began to pour in with congratulations. They claimed to know Kunju from his very birth. Those of them with marriageable daughters became very active; they were beaming with smiles and were very obliging. So much so, that Chinnaswamy Iyer's pride, provisionally be it said, knew no bounds.

"As I have told you many a time," said he to Mangalam, "Kunju takes after me in intellect."

If she were in the usual frame of mind, Mangalam would have disputed the proposition at once with illustrations. But she was in a mood generous enough to pardon his pride.

THE WIFE LEARNS CYCLING

By "DHALO"

ONE evening, I sat in my study chewing the cud—not like a cow after a spell of brouse—but was only arranging the ideas in my brain pan for a real editor-baiting skit to replenish my almost empty purse. As I sat there, Dhanvati breezed in with one of her thought-provoking smiles. I smiled back dutifully and waited. She dealt out another overwhelming smile and left me dripping with the ooze of her gaiety.

"Dhalo, my precious," she gushed. "What do you think I've bought, with the money I got for the cross-words competition?"

"Clothes for the children," I hazarded. I had hoped this item on my budget would be met by her, and had even hinted to her about this.

"Oh!" she said with a naughty pucker of her lips. "No: guess again."

"A typewriter, a sewing machine, a gramophone, an ice-cream freezer, a radio-set, a case of whisky, a locomotive, a—" I reeled out just to damp her spirits.

"Stop, you silly," she cut in with the air of an infant-standard teacher. "I have bought a... a... a lady's cycle."

"A what?"

"A beautiful lady's cycle with tools, lamp and pump complete."

"What for?"

"To ride, of course."

"You, you ride a b...b bike!" I stuttered. "Great cormorant!"

"Yes, for me to ride; and you are going to teach me cycling right now," she beamed spicing her answer with another devastating display of her pearly teeth.

I groaned. "Dhanvati," I said, "I have given you enough freedom so far. You can do anything; smoke—yes; use my old mss. to start the kitchen fire—yes; wipe your shoes with my kerchief—yes; go through my pockets everyday—yes; pull me by the nose—yes; but cycling on our dusty roads like a giddy girl—no; this 'no' is final."

I put on the look of Lindrum before he bath-murdered his third wife, and sat glum.

But I may as well have dialled in the look of ten Lindrums and as many Bluebeards. Dhanvati never even moved an eyelid.

"Brave speech, indeed!" she applauded ironically. "The cycle is in the verandah; come and have a look."

I eyed it with the same feelings which a fat missionary caught by cannibals may have had, when he looked at the cauldron before he was put into it.

"Isn't it a beauty?" she asked with pride.

(Continued on page 30)



THE NIGHT HAWK

By JOHN R. CHAPMAN

RALPH Brooks puffed wearily at his cigarette, and flung the smouldering stub into the grate. His long slim fingers passed nervously through his hair, to return again and again to tap the table in front of him.

At length he rose, dimmed the table-lamp and wandered out into the wet streets. Unmindful of the cold drizzle, without coat or hat, Ralph Brooks gave himself up to bitter retrospection. Less than two years ago, he was considered one of the luckiest and most daring pilots of the Royal Air Force. Less than three months prior to the Armistice, Ralph Brooks had brought down an enemy plane in burning spirals to the ground. This gruesome spectacle had played havoc with his nerve-centres, and consequently he was not retained in the Service after October, 1918.

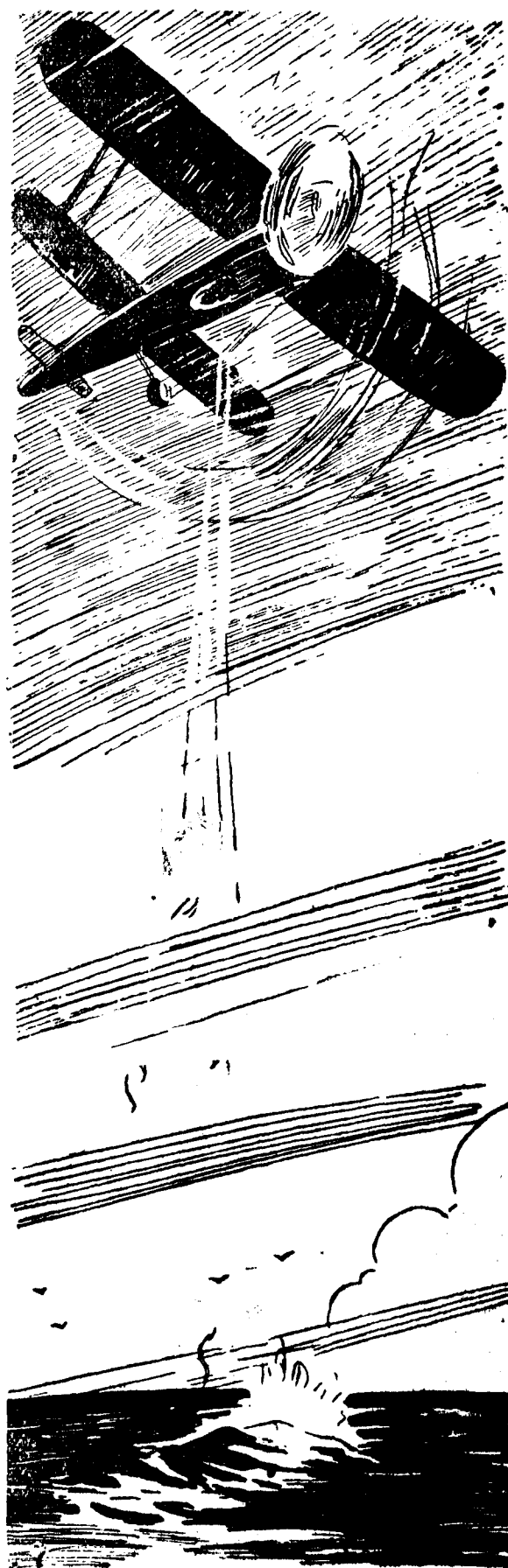
From boyhood to manhood, Ralph Brooks had been familiar with machinery, and it was his passion for aeronautics that had paved the way for his commission in the R.A.F. Both his parents had died whilst he was in France, and except for a small legacy and his gratuity from the Service, he was practically penniless.

Husbanding his small reserves as carefully as circumstances would permit, he had taken a job as an aeroplane assembler in a factory in Birmingham. His previous association with and knowledge of planes of all descriptions had proved a valuable asset, and had Ralph Brooks been content to accept regular employment this story would never have been written.

But Ralph Brooks hankered for a life in the open air, thousands of feet above the earth. The whistling of the wind in the struts and wires of a plane was music in his ears. The big air-mails were being inaugurated and, in some cases, extended to India and the Far East. Pilots, men with nerves of steel, were required to lessen appreciably the time taken to cross the huge distances. Ralph Brooks applied to all the air-lines for a billet as pilot, and he was automatically rejected. They were sorry, but they were afraid to trust a pilot who had previously crashed, and had been discharged from the Service as medically unfit.

Ralph Brooks paid a fabulous fee to a Harley Street physician for a thorough medical examination. He was pronounced fit, and was granted a certificate of fitness to fly. Even then, the companies would not consider him for a pilot's berth. Their refusal to accept him as a pilot, however, could not prevent him flying his own plane if he chose to do so.

the baskets of snakes disappeared into the English Channel!



He was fully qualified, holding an Air Ministry 'A' & 'B' certificate.

When the germ of the idea of possessing his own plane first entered his mind, Ralph Brooks rejected it as impossible. How could he ever afford to purchase a plane? The idea persisted, however, and it was not long before he was making enquiries at military aerodromes regarding the disposal of obsolete and unwanted military planes.

A sale of old aeroplanes took place at last at Farnborough. He journeyed there and managed to buy an old Bristol fighter for £50-0-0. The engine was serviceable; the fuselage, etc., barely held together. However, Ralph Brooks had great hopes for the future and set to repair, renovate and fix up the old bus. As yet he had not flown the plane. He altered the construction of the body to carry two passengers.

The wings and fuselage he painted a sombre black, and inscribed the name NIGHT HAWK on the sides. He was proud of his handiwork. All was ready for flight. He took the plane up for a trial. The engine behaved splendidly, and as Ralph Brooks glided gracefully on to the drome at Croydon he felt exhilarated.

He had to pay a quarterly fee for the use of the aerodrome, hangar, and mechanics. He inserted an advertisement in all the leading 'Dailies' to the effect that a fully qualified pilot—with his own machine—was prepared to undertake aerial commissions, mild or dangerous. As a sideline, he was prepared to teach pupils to fly. The 'advert' appeared for a week. Ralph Brooks fully expected that he would be overwhelmed with commissions, vague and various: but nothing happened.

Ten days later he was still without a commission. Not an enquiry came his way. Ralph Brooks became very despondent. His savings were nearly exhausted, with hangar and petrol charges mounting-up rapidly.

The rain beating on his face cleared his clouded mind, and Ralph Brooks smiled a grim little smile. If

he could not obtain commissions, he would take a shot at breaking the world's record to India. If he succeeded in breaking a record, all would be plain sailing; if he failed, well..... Returning home with a calmer mind and outlook, Ralph Brooks slept and woke-up refreshed.

A letter reposed on his table. In a trice it was opened and the contents read. He was delighted. A commission at last! The writer requested the pilot to call at his earliest convenience at No. 53, Belgrave Square. Prompt to take advantage of a probable commission, he presented himself at the imposing house. A butler was expecting him, and quickly passed him through to the study. He introduced himself to an old gentleman who termed himself a zoologist. He required certain rare specimens of snakes from India. They would be delivered to the aeroplane at Karachi in wicker baskets. Would he undertake the commission?

Ralph Brooks felt like kissing the old man. Certainly. He would accept the commission, and at the same time make an attempt at the world's speed record to India.

Dawn—the glistening tarmacadam casting a ghostly sheen over coated mechanics hurrying backwards and forwards. Ralph Brooks, dressed for the air, was watching the sky for the first grey streaks of light. He was ready. The NIGHT HAWK, resembled more than ever the bird of that name.

Ralph Brooks took his seat in the cockpit. He lightly fingered the controls. CONTACT! The engines roared their song of power. The chocks were knocked away from the wheels, and the black plane moved slowly forward. The engines responded to the pilot's touch of the throttle with ever increasing speed. A touch on the joy-stick and the bat-like aeroplane rose and disappeared into the sky.

Ralph Brooks sat joyfully, peering to the left and right. The old spirit of freedom had returned with trebled force. The plane and engines were doing their utmost to place the laurels of victory on his head.

Three days later Ralph Brooks descended from the sky at Karachi, weary but happy. He had broken all existing records for the lone flight to Karachi in a £50 plane!

Besieged by cameramen and news-agency reporters, he felt supremely happy. His name was made. Two days later he left Karachi on his homeward trip with a consignment of poisonous snakes as cargo. He had decided to make the journey home by easy stages. He wondered how many air-lines would compete for his services as a pilot now. Possibly it would be more profitable to retain his status as an owner-pilot.

At Naples he was feted as a world's record-breaker. Then he was again in the air, swiftly nearing Croydon with every revolution of the screw. For some unknown reason he turned his head and looked at the baskets containing the reptiles. He was horrified at what he saw, and very nearly lost control of the plane. The lid of the wicker basket had worked loose, and snakes were crawling over the side of the cockpit. The rear seat was covered with wriggling reptiles. Ralph Brooks



was petrified. He gave a hasty glance below, and saw with a groan that he was somewhere near the middle of the English Channel. One large striped specimen was crawling nearer and nearer to him. Certain death, either way. If he descended, he would certainly be drowned: if he kept on, he would surely be bitten to death. What could he do?

He could plainly see the snake's wicked fangs darting within a yard of his leg. Suddenly he remembered his experiences in Flanders. There, he had been called upon to perform crazy flying stunts to escape an enemy 'plane's machine-guns. He would loop the loop! The snake was now less than a foot away. Automatically his left foot pressed forward his rudder bar while he took his control stick over to the left. He was now in a

'half-roll'. He remained in this position until the loss of height forced him to return to an even keel.

The old NIGHT HAWK groaned and quivered. Looking round, he saw that the baskets of snakes disappear into the English Channel!

A few minutes later he was nearing Croydon. Circling over the 'drome he could see thousands of excited sightseers awaiting him. He landed, and a battery of cameras clicked their welcome. Escaping at last from the crowd, he arrived at the home of his benefactor. The scientist smiled when he heard how Ralph Brooks had disposed of his consignment of snakes.

Ralph Brooks is now a famous pilot, but he is always willing to accept a private commission in the NIGHT HAWK.

THE WIFE LEARNS CYCLING—(Continued from page 27)

"Yes, but you are not going to ride it," I said frigidly.

"Oh! Don't I?" she spilled. "If you won't teach me, I shall ask our peon to do it."

That shot took me amidships. My memory jerked back with a quiver to my college days, when I had given lessons in cycling to a pretty thing in *saree*, and I remembered how I had enjoyed doing that bit of service; for, teaching cycling to a girl gives one the chance even to hug her. If my wife were to be my peon's pupil, it would be a repetition of history. I perspired at the idea and capitulated unconditionally.

"Well. I shall teach you to ride," I agreed with as much grace as I could command.

"That's a good boy," beamed my wife triumphantly.

My wife is not a Juno. So, when the lessons began, I need not tell you, I had a beastly time of it. With my wife on it, the cycle tilted either to the left or to the right. Somehow it had the list of a two-bottle man who had doubled his rations. And oh! those pedals; they were the devil's own tools. They hit my shins and peeled off bits of skin whenever I mistimed my strides. Well, by the time my life's partner had mastered the tricky hobby, I had developed tennis elbows, house-maid's knee, and St. Vitus dance. I had expiated all my past sins and I expect St. Peter to send me a harp, carriage paid, even before my death.

Later when Dhanvati enjoyed her solo rides, I was left alone except perhaps when she regaled me with gushy stories about her long spins. But one day, she barged into me with a queer look, the look of a fish at the end of a hook.

"A silly policeman stopped me at the cross-roads today," she informed me. "and asked me, why I did not stretch out my hand when I took a turn."

"What happened?" I questioned with concern.

"I told that galoot that only motorists need do that and that cyclists need not."

"But—" I tried to interpose.

"Wait. He then wanted my name and address and," she laughed, "I gave him the name of our *ayah*."

"Good God!" I gasped. "You are a fool. By giving your *ayah*'s name you have committed a very serious offence. What made you do that?"

"Don't be silly," said my wife light-heartedly. "The police would get the *ayah* fined and of course we shall pay it up. What does it matter as long as they collect the amount?"

Oh! Her ignorance of the law! Imagination boggled at it. I explained the legal aspect of her thoughtless act and informed her that she may be jugged for the crime of giving a false name. Her face blanched.

"Oh! What shall we do!" she whimpered. Beads of perspiration broke out on her forehead. She began to weep.

"There, there, take heart, Dhanvati," I consoled her, "there is always a way out."

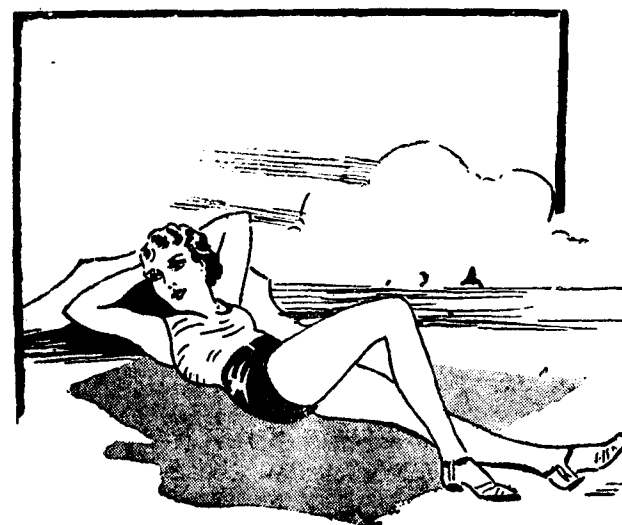
I managed to get the affair decided *ex-parte* without the humiliation of Dhanvati having to appear in the court.

I was poorer by the large fine I paid and she, I hope, richer by her experience.

Confound Those Monkeys

By

J. H. ACOTT



"You must be a poet," she smiled.

"Oh, I write sometimes."

"Ah! An author?"

"No, don't mistake me. I've got to write to a rich aunt of mine occasionally. Otherwise her money will go to a Children's Sand-castle Building School or some such thing."

We were silent for a while. And then, having rather foolish notions in my mind, I brought the subject round to something more interesting.

"And what, if I am not being personal, do you think of marriage?" I asked hopefully.

She wriggled slightly and gave a delightful chuckle.

"Well, in my opinion, it's a fine institution," she replied, her grey eyes on mine. "I believe you learn to cook things, pull your husband's boots off, give him a mustard foot-bath when he's got a cold, and—and....."

"Make him learn to love you?" I put in, my heart beating a little faster.

"Yes, that's right. That's the chief thing about it, I believe."

I sighed, and she laid a soft hand on my knee, sending me all of a twitter.

"You're one of those poor, unfortunate bachelors?" she asked sympathetically, and my eyes flickered swiftly to her slim fingers. No rings at all, thank goodness!

"Very unfortunate," I said.

"Have you never thought of getting married?" came her next question.

"Not till just very lately," I replied. "In fact, I don't know yet if she cares for me or merely thinks I am a Thing."

"Poor chap," she sympathised. "But you must go out of your way to show her your feelings, you know. When you're with her, don't sit twiddling your thumbs and talking about the high price of cocoanuts these days."

I stopped twiddling my fingers.

"And," she went on after a short pause, "don't wait too long before you propose. That's fatal."

"Is it?" I asked fatuously, wondering if I'd have the courage to take her advice.

"Undoubtedly. If you do, she thinks you regard her as a—er—a bit of flotsam on the beach."

"Thank you," I said, my heart imitating a kettle-drummer's drumstick.

"Not at all," she smiled sweetly. "Glad to give you a bit of advice. My, this sun's good, isn't it?"

(Continued on next page bottom)

SHE was a very pretty girl, and I was promptly struck dumb for a moment when I saw her. Not more than twenty-one or twenty-two at the most, she took my bachelor's breath away. The beach at Bombay seemed to take on a wonderfully beautiful aspect. Even the nasty looking crabs on the sand reminded me of some famous film actors. And the sand! Well—er—the sand, yes, the sand, I couldn't get away from the fact, looked just like sand.

Resolved to make my holiday as pleasant as possible, I flicked a bit of crab's claw from my trousers' seat and approached this charming vision that was looking rather lonely. She lay on her back, the warm rays of the sun, (lucky things!) playing over her soft skin. She did not notice me for a moment, but when I coughed suggestively, she opened wide her beautiful eyes and looked full at me. A smile flickered over her delicious lips.

"Do sit down," she said, her voice a beautiful contralto. "Have you tried Vick's?"

I stared.

"Vick's?" I echoed, seating myself on the sand beside her and foolishly scratching my left calf.

"Yes, the famous vapour rub. Good for asthma and pneumonia, you know."

I saw her point, and obligingly cackled.

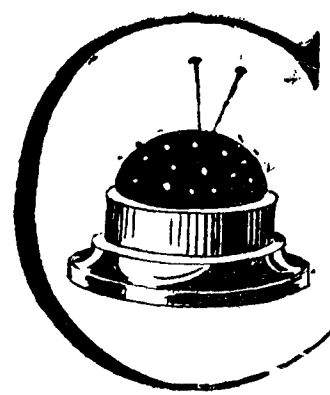
"Oh, that's only tonsillitis," I said. "You see, they forgot to remove the darned things when I was a kid, and they've been troubling me of late."

"Oh!" she said, rolled over on to her elbows, and began to draw queer figures on the sand.

"Nice place, Bombay," I ventured after admiring her profile. "Nice sands, nice theatres, nice....."

"Crabs?" she put in, and looked at me with her eyes twinkling.

"Jolly fine crabs!" I went on determinedly. "Nice show altogether."



COMMON PINS

By AMY M. HENRY

THE word "common" sounds very common. Nobody likes anything common; yet common pins are common all over the world and how useful, though com-

mon! They render the world the greatest service man can ever dream of. Praise be to the name of the man who invented it.

If you want to pin up several sheets of paper, you run for a common pin. If your tie would insist on fluttering, a common pin comes handy. If you want to play a joke on your teacher, there again appears the common pin, the culprit of many a mischief.

Ladies will know how troublesome it is to tack a garment. To avoid it they resort to the common pin. A gentle hint to the ladies alone. If any man would insist on kissing you on the lips, don't forget the common pin. Keep one in your mouth with the head turned inwards. And don't swallow it as one of my friends did.

The dirty common pin refused to explore the digestive system vertically. It entered horizontally scraping the walls of the throat with its tail. My friend rushed to the doctor in alarm. By the time the doctor was free to see her, the common pin had disappeared like magic.

The doctor shook his head after examining the throat, saying, "This is serious, you must be X-rayed at once." The X-ray showed the thief stealing the food from the walls of the stomach. The doctor

rushed my friend to the hospital to catch the common thief of a common pin. He ripped open the stomach and removed the rascal and sewed it up again.

That worthless common pin cost my friend over \$500 and nearly her life, too. Of course she blamed me for my silly advice, which was formerly a good advice. So don't rely upon my advice but you can rely upon a common pin to play any amount of tricks.

Do you know the love-song about the common pins? It goes something like this:—

"I'll give you a row of pins
That's the way the love begins
Will you marry, will you marry
Will you marry me."

The next verse tells the whole story:

"I don't want your row of pins
If that's the way the love begins
I won't marry, I won't marry
I won't marry you."

If any gentleman goes courting, he should avoid common pins. There is no place for anything common where Cupid is at work, even though Cupid's arrow may prick like the common pin.

This article will no doubt be a prey to the common waste paper basket but it was worth writing than burying my common talent.

CONFOUND THOSE MONKEYS—(Continued from previous page)

"Fine!" I answered, my throat feeling constricted with excitement. "There's a darned good show on at the Empress, you know. A powerful love story."

"Really?" Her tone was polite, but I thought I detected a slight coldness about it. But I wasn't going to give up so easily, not now, after her giving me all these valuable tips.

"Would you care to come along?" my voice was shaking, I hate to confess.

"We-l-l, I'll let you know later," she put me off.

"How much later?" I asked eagerly, convinced that things were turning out all right, and that wedding-bells would be ringing inside the week.

"In half-an-hour, if you're still hanging about."

That half-hour was easily the longest I have ever experienced. At last a voice behind me made me jump.

"Well, Lucy my dear, are you ready?"

We both sat up. I saw a man, who, grey-bearded and dignified, yet seemed sprightly and straight-backed. I decided that I was going to like Lucy's father.

"Yes, dear," she said, gracefully rising from the sand and with a smile on her lips. "But let me introduce you to a friend of mine—Mr.—Mr.—"

I supplied my name, and with an enigmatic smile she left us to dress, forgetting, I noticed, to mention her father's name.

At last, arrayed in a light, figure-revealing frock, she returned from her bathing-machine.

"Mr. James has kindly invited me to a show at the Empress, darling," she said to Grey-Beard. "You don't mind if I go?"

"Not at all! Not at all!" he said jovially. "Youth must be served!"

With a start of surprise I noticed the wedding-ring on Lucy's finger. She must have taken it off in preparation for bathing. She was still smiling.

"Oh, Mr. James," she said suddenly. "I'm sorry I forgot to introduce you properly. This is Professor Young, the famous monkey-gland specialist, and my husband."

When I left the hospital four days later after my nervous breakdown, I promptly took up a course of monkey-gland treatment!

Ram Chandra's Hobbies

By 'CHAPPIE'

II. POULTRY FARMING

MR. Ram Chandra was in high spirits. Not the spirits usually associated with flat-faced bottles, but simple happiness. His ill-timed plunge into the world of radio was but a fleeting memory of the past. Reclining at his ease in his favourite arm-chair, he gave himself up to satisfied retrospection. His complacency can be gauged by the absence of the wireless-set and loud-speaker on the wall. He had managed to sell the residue and reminder of his folly to another enthusiast of radio. True, a small sum of money had been lost on the deal, but Mr. Ram Chandra did not grieve over the pecuniary loss. His gain in peace and temper out-weighed any other consideration.

Idly turning over the pages of a multi-coloured prospectus on 'Poultry Farming in India', Mr. Ram Chandra read and re-read the many and glowing testimonials of the multitude of poultry farmers and fanciers who had (so said the prospectus) made fabulous fortunes from chickens and eggs.

Recollection of his uncultivated garden decided this seeker of peace and hobbies. He would become a poultry-farmer in a small way. His mind made up, nothing short of an earthquake or the liquidation of his bank could alter his determination to try his luck. Moreover, the expected financial return would amply recompense him for the initial outlay on birds and equipment.

A few hours later, Mr. Ram Chandra was as busy as a hen with one chicken. He had literally devoured the contents of an illustrated brochure on all matters feathered. Rhode Island Reds, Leghorns, White Minorcas, Bantams, coops, runs, incubators, etc., glibly took their respective places in his vocabulary. An army of workmen soon altered the appearance of his neglected plot of ground. Chicken-coops sprang up like mushrooms or ant-hills.

Regardless of expense, the future abode of his feathered pets speedily assumed business-like proportions. Two incubators were installed, one for the hatching of 36 eggs and the other for 72 eggs.

At last the clatter of the workmen was over. Mr. Ram Chandra smiled happily, but checked himself when he visioned the cheque payable. Nobody, however, could accuse Mr. Ram Chandra of being chicken-hearted. He argued with himself that he

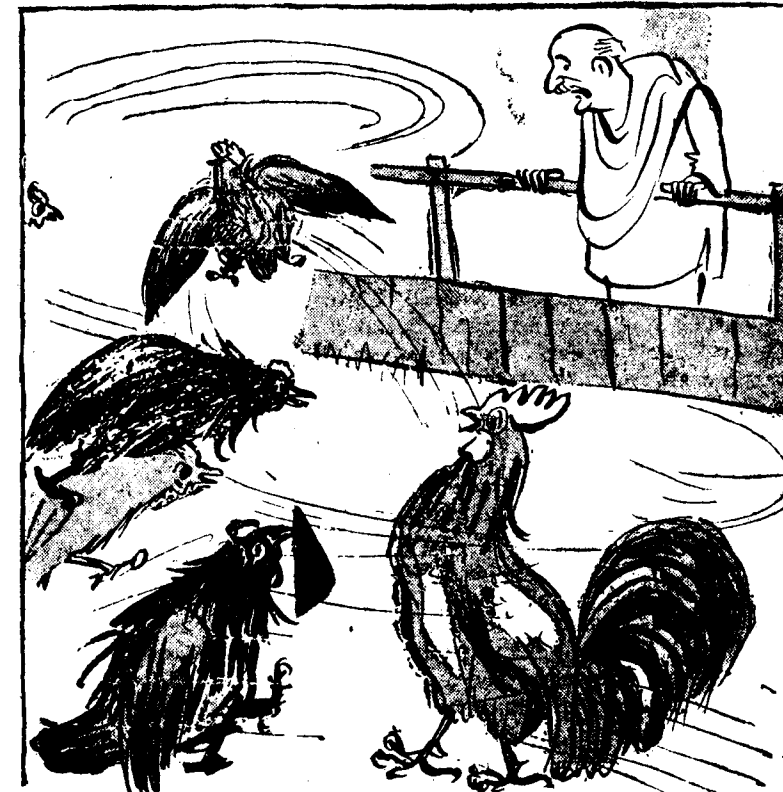
had this time selected a paying hobby, and that he was not counting his chickens before they were hatched.

The only fly in the ointment was the reiterated clucking of a score of youngsters from their gardens, and the inane questions of an army of neighbours. Offers of assistance and expressions of sympathy were hurled at Mr. Ram Chandra. Cynical remarks apropos monkeys and runs, the possible use of the coops as a protection from dacoits, were but a few of the remarks and caustic comments made by his neighbours.

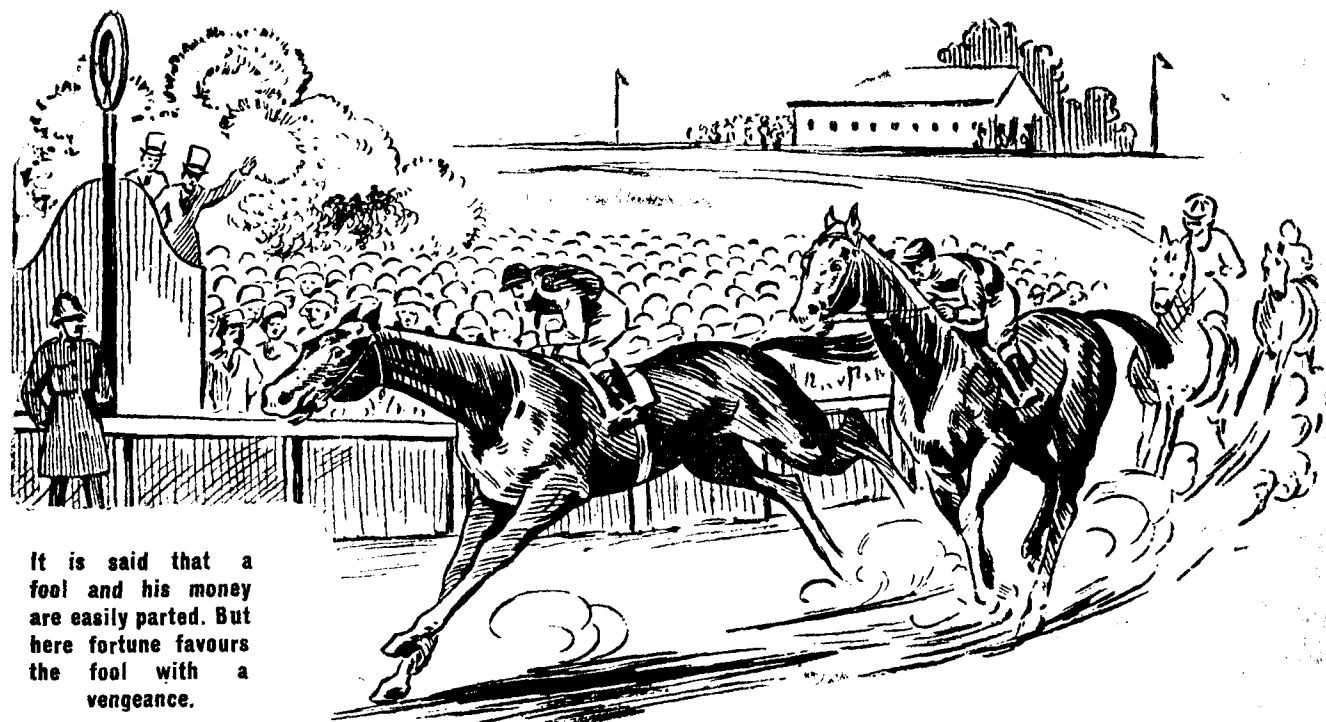
He would show these bantering blighters that their remarks were treated like water on a duck's back. That day, after a heated argument with the egg-walla, he purchased 108 eggs. Placing them carefully in the trays of the incubators, he lighted the little oil lamps inside. Glorious expectations of seeing 108 little fluffy chicks gambolling in the now empty runs passed through his mind.

A visit to the fowl market ensued. Returning with five hens and one decrepit cock of doubtful age and

(Continued on page 40)



The hens made a combined attack on the cock.



FOOL'S LUCK

By 'A. B.'

THE common-room of the college hostel was buzzing with conversation. Narasimham and Sebastian, the 'inseparables', as they were called by their fellows, walked in. They were a queer pair, quite the opposite of each other, but still the best of friends. Narasimham was a tall, fair, well-built young man with clear-cut features. He belonged to the much-maligned Brahmin caste but, thanks to the advanced views of his father, he was not over-conscious of his caste in his relations with his fellows. He was the captain of the College Football Eleven and a great favourite not only in the college but also with the sporting public of the town. Sebastian, on the other hand, was a dark, lean, short fellow with a serious countenance. He was a reserved and sedentary youth. He was an Indian Christian. His father was a clerk in a Government office and had to deny himself many comforts to keep his son at college. Sebastian would have stayed in the college for four years and left it without anybody taking any notice of him, had it not been for Narasimham, with whom he shared his room. Their friendship started when they came to the college as freshmen and were put together in room number 23. Although it was over three years since they had first met, they never had a quarrel, in spite of fundamental differences in opinions and in temperament.

As the two friends entered the room, Sarma, a flabby Brahmin youth, was delivering a learned discourse to an admiring group of junior students. He was the bore of

the Hostel and, like all bores, he was appreciated by few, dreaded by many, but checked by none.

"It is all stuff and nonsense to say that we in India alone believe in *kismet*," he was saying. "Any stick is good enough to beat us with and even old Gray in spite of all his kindness to his students cannot help sneering at us. What about the civilised West where, after centuries of scientific progress, astrologers and palmists are plying just as profitable a trade as in India? Why, I know a local astrologer who gets, by every mail, a hundred letters from England and America asking all sorts of silly questions. It is human nature to believe in destiny, and Science must cry itself hoarse before it can prove that this faith is irrational."

"Come on, Sarma, don't put your silly ideas into the heads of youngsters," interrupted Narasimham. "Destiny indeed! In the life of an average man there are very few surprises. I can predict what you and I will be doing this day ten years hence. Cataclysmic changes occur only in novels, not in life. All the destiny in the world cannot make you the Viceroy of India."

"I am surprised at you, Narasimham! In our own time we have seen a water-carrier becoming an Amir, and a cabin-boy becoming a Viceroy of India. If one of these cases is made the theme of a short story, you will turn up your nose at it and call it romantic rubbish. There are more things in Heaven and earth than....."

"If every water-carrier becomes an Amir and calls it destiny, it is time that something was done about it," replied Narasimham.

"That is exactly what destiny is not. If every water-carrier can become an Amir, there would not be any *kismet* about it. It would be something like a caterpillar becoming a butterfly. If, on the contrary, the British Parliament should pass a bill that the best soccer player in India should be selected for the Viceroyalty and if the choice should fall on you, I should certainly call you a man of destiny and write your biography."

At this stage a group of students who had just returned from the evening show at a local cinema entered the room, and one of them, Govindarajulu by name, (Zulu to his friends) accosted Sarma. "I wish you had gone to the pictures with us, Sarma. They are showing an interesting film of the Irish Sweepstake on the Derby. It is really wonderful how a few lucky fellows scattered over odd corners of the earth suddenly find themselves masters of immense fortunes through no fault of theirs."

"There you are mistaken, Zulu. If a man is lucky enough to patent an invention and make a fortune out of it, you think it is perfectly proper. But if a fellow buys a ticket in a sweepstake with a millionth chance of getting anything out of it and wins a prize, you think that he does not deserve it. The popular judgment in this matter is warped by jealousy—the jealousy of the unlucky many against the lucky few. There is some method in luck as in madness. I would call it the law of conservation of luck. A man's luck is a constant quantity. If it is frittered away in a series of small successes, there will be nothing more left for bigger things. If, on the other hand, a man is generally very unlucky he will get his great chance sometime. That is why an unemployed labourer in London, a barber's assistant in Capetown, and a petty school-master in Pegu drew the biggest prizes in the last sweepstake."

Sebastian who was a passive spectator of the scene till now thought it was time to stop his friend's rigmarole. "Sarma, old man," he said, "you seem to know a lot about the mysteries of luck. Why not give us a demonstration by actually winning a prize? You will then be interviewed by the papers and you can gas away to your heart's content."

"That is just where you have the advantage over me, Solomon." (Sebastian was called Solomon by his friends, not so much for his wisdom, as for its absence.) "Fortune is compared by the poets to a fickle maiden who bestows her favours not on devotees who understand and prize her, but on fools who think that they are getting their rights. One of these days you may be a great man. But what are you going to do about your intellect, dear lad? You would never give up the practice of reading a thing a hundred times before you catch what it is about."

Sarma would have gone on for hours like this, he was in the mood for it, but something absolutely unforeseen happened. Poor Sebastian was very touchy about

the remarks on his stupidity, though it was a fact he never understood books at the first reading. Without realising what he did he gave a resounding slap to Sarma. Sarma would have returned the blow but was prevented from doing so by the arrival of the Warden who, in the course of his daily round, was attracted to the common-room by the unusually loud conversation.

While Narasimham was mumbling some palpably false explanation about the origin of the noise to the Warden, Sebastian began to realise the enormity of his deed. Physical violence was something absolutely unheard-of in the life of the hostel. It was an irony of fate that he who had not the guts to frighten a rat should be guilty of what he did. Should he go to Sarma's room and apologise for his conduct? No, not at all. Sarma asked for it and got what he deserved. He would think twice before ridiculing him again.

Absorbed in these reflections, Sebastian turned to his room. All the students dispersed laughing at Sarma's discomfiture, but Sarma was telling them that he laughs best who laughs last. He scowled at Sebastian and whispered a dark threat that he would get even with him all right.

Late that night when everybody else had gone to sleep, Narasimham and Sebastian were engaged in an earnest conversation in their room. The latter was relating with bitterness how, under a momentary impulse, he had spent away the money sent to him by his father for buying clothes which he urgently needed, on a lottery ticket. Narasimham was shocked. "I did not know that a puritan like you could be so foolish as to waste money on sweepstakes," he said.

"It is a long story," began Sebastian. "You know my anxiety to get a first-class in the University. When Sarma told me once that the famous astrologer who foretold Sir Raman Nair's appointment to the High Court Bench five years before the event, was a great friend of his, I could not resist the temptation to go and consult him. Sarma took me to his den and we found it crowded by a host of his admirers. I was really ashamed of having gone there but I could not decently come out without paying the usual two chips and getting an absurd prophecy. What do you think he predicted for me? Absence from the examinations and a windfall in three months that will make me one of the richest men in my place. In a moment Sarma was all over me. He began to behave towards me as if I were already a very rich man and not a silly fool wasting his father's hard-earned cash on swindlers and astrologers. He read out from *The Madras Times* that some imbecile at the Bombay races fancied *Lalchaman* simply for its name, backed it and got a neat packet of ten thousand. He said that something like that was indicated in my case. If he had not looked so frightfully serious, I should have suspected him of pulling my leg. Sarma was at it for two days citing instances in which his astrologer friend had made startling but true predictions and finally succeeded in making me think that there might be something in it after all. I told him that I did not know one end of a horse from the other, and that I was as likely to make money in horse-racing

as by the manufacture of motor cars. He argued that only such people were generally lucky, and called it 'fools' luck'. Further, a sweepstake ticket had nothing to do directly with horse-racing. Finally he foisted on me a ticket for the Irish Sweepstake on the Cambridge-shire and here I am with not a whole shirt and with no prospect of getting any more money for God knows how long."

"My dear fellow," said Narasimham with a smile, "Sarma had done you in neatly, and no mistake. You seem to take the famous proverb about fortune literally. If the old dame has to favour every fool in the world, her hands ought to be pretty full these days."

"If that is how you feel about the matter, there is nothing more to be said about it. I am sorry I kept you awake all this time."

"Come, come, Solomon, don't go into a huff. I am really sorry, but who can help laughing at a folly like this?"

"Well, then, Narasimham, I have a request to make of you. You don't mind losing a few rupees. But I can't afford it. Please buy the ticket from me, so that I need not write any lies to my father."

"Right-ho old man, don't worry. Good luck is not one of my failings. But I will buy your ticket and make a present of it to you again."

"No, it is not at all fair. Suppose I get a prize, it will be a downright swindle, making you pay for the ticket and grabbing the prize myself."

"All right, old man, this seems to be a complex business. Let me get it straight for you. Let us start a firm. The firm is to be called Narasimham and Solomon Ltd.—Line of business, making money in sweepstakes—Capital called and paid up, Rs. 6/12—Assets one I. F. S. sweepstake ticket, in the custody of the junior partner—Dividends, if any, to be shared 50-50 between the partners. O. K. isn't it? But, while we are about it, let me give you a bit of advice as the senior partner. Put that precious ticket at the bottom of your trunk and think no more about it. That is how big prizes are always landed. You remember that what-is-his-name Sait who drew *Felstead* once in the Calcutta sweep and made a pile of sixteen lakhs? It was said that he could not find his ticket at all, until somebody discovered it a month later in his waste paper basket!"

"Thanks very much, Narasimham, you are a brick, and I knew that I could rely on you. It is very late. Good-night."

Within a few days after the happenings mentioned above, the college was closed for the Michaelmas recess for two weeks. Most of the students living in the hostel had gone home except two or three senior students who stayed behind to work hard for their examinations. This was the first vacation for which Sebastian did not go home. On the first day, he found time hanging heavy and the empty buildings reminded him of a town deserted by the inhabitants during an epidemic of plague.

He made a serious attempt to get to work, but his mind simply refused to work. What was the matter with him? Was he falling ill? The astrologer's prediction that he would not be able to sit for the examination was ominous. What would his poor father think of him? His father was expecting him to take his degree and help support the family.

The celebration of the sixtieth college day and the Golden Jubilee of the college was fixed for 22nd of October and Sir Rajabushna Mudaliar, Minister of Education, 'graciously' consented to preside on the occasion.

The great day dawned at last. Punctually to the minute everything went off splendidly. The Minister was in time to open the Science Exhibition with a short speech about the advantages of Science and incidentally about politics. He went round the exhibition, put the same questions to the students as he had put at least on a dozen similar occasions, pretended to have been greatly enlightened by them and complimented the Principal on the success of the Exhibition. The sports started at 2 o'clock in the after-noon under a blazing sun and went on merrily for three hours.

The last item in the sports was a fancy-dress competition. Sir Mudaliar, the leader of the local Bar, and the Principal who were the judges, suggested that they should adjourn for this item to the pavilion erected for the public meeting. As the large assembly of ladies and gentlemen took their seats, the competitors issued forth and caused not a little merriment. One student was disguised as a native waiter in an English hotel and brought the judges three cool drinks on a tray. Another student came dressed as a snake charmer, and the policeman on duty would not allow him into the pavilion under the impression that he was a real snake-charmer. A third disguised himself as a Rohilla woman and began to ply a profitable trade in knives.

When the audience was shrieking with laughter, a fat Muhammadan telegraph peon presented a telegram to the Minister and another to Sebastian who was sitting near the dais. The Minister opened the telegram and, with a smile, handed it over to the Principal who read out "Long life and prosperity to Sir Rajabushana Mudaliar. From the students of the Oriental College, Rajahmundry." When it was known that the telegraph messenger was only a disguised student, the audience clamoured that the other telegram should also be read out. Sebastian, however, looked very uncomfortable and would not let anybody look at it. But when the Principal asked for it, he gave it up with a groan and sank back in his seat. The Principal read out:

"J. K. 10175 drew *Colorado Kid*. Claim forms posted. Fill as instructed and return by registered post along with ticket. Aidsic."

A deafening roar of laughter greeted the reading of the message and even the President could hardly restrain himself. After a brief colloquy with his two colleagues the President announced that the first prize was awarded to Sarma for his disguise as a telegraph messenger.

The public meeting started, and the President began to deliver his address. But to one member of the audience at least the show was detestable. Sebastian was writhing in agony in his seat and was weeping tears of shame. He sent a chit to the Principal begging to be excused from making his speech and got a curt reply that it was too late and that he had to make it. He hoped that the President would go on speaking for ever, or that some catastrophe would happen and save him from appearing on the platform. He remembered Sarma's dark threat and regretted that he did not square up with him in time. What a vindictive villain. He could never face his friends after what had happened. He would drown himself in the Godavery at mid-night. Did not some student of this very college throw himself into the river when he was caught copying at a University examination? That should teach malicious Sarma a lesson.

In the midst of these reflections he heard his name called out by the President. He walked like a man in a dream and was greeted with deafening cheers and laughter. He distinctly heard some back benchers shouting 'fortune's favourite'. He had a sensation of sinking, and steadied himself by clutching the President's table. Looking at the ground he began to repeat mechanically the speech which he got up with so much care. He made a hash of it and could not get the sentences right. Happening to look at the back benches he found his friends laughing at his discomfiture. Abruptly in the middle of a sentence he had an irresistible impulse to run away from the grinning mob and so wound up his speech with the words, "Ladies and Gentlemen, with these few words I commend to your acceptance the toast

of the Old Boys of the College." He ran straight to his room and bolting the door inside stretched himself in an easy-chair brooding over his misfortunes and awaiting Narasimham's arrival.

"Even supposing Sarma wanted to humiliate you," argued Narasimham, who looked unsympathetic, "why should you make an ass of yourself? You could have laughed away the whole matter as a joke. You might have stood up, read the telegram yourself and added at the end 'How I wish that my friend were a real telegraph peon and the message that he delivered a genuine cable from Dublin!' You could have come out with flying colours and turned the tables on Sarma."

Gradually Sebastian began to realise that the matter was not so serious after all and that he could survive it. But the consciousness that Sarma scored and scored heavily against him was maddening. He said to Narasimham that if after all this fuss they really got a prize it would be a grand thing indeed. Would not that idiot Sarma look silly?

"My dear fellow," snapped Narasimham, "if fortune really favours fools, you have now definitely established your claim for her favours."

Next morning the first message that was received at the Rajahmundry telegraph office was a cable from Dublin addressed to Sebastian almost in identical words as the bogus message of the previous evening, except that the horse drawn was *Raymond* and not *Colorado Kid*. The two friends decided to go to Dublin to receive the prize.

The Flatterer!



The Smart Lawyer:

I have an idea!
I'll advise you to
sue your husband
for restitution of
conjugal rights
instead of main-
tenance. We
will get out of
him more by this
method.

MISS MANI —THE CAT

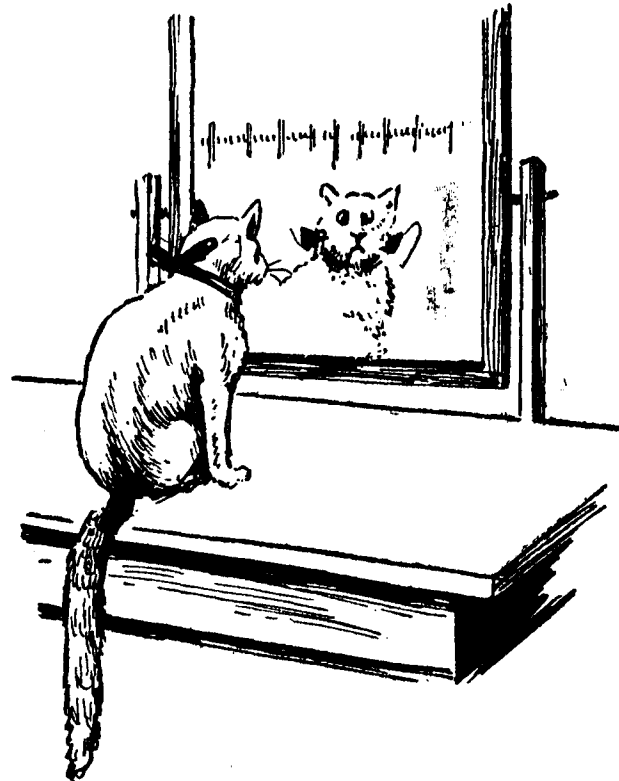
By 'Viloo'

SHE was a hundred candle power bulb. She had all that a man wished for in a dream, a rose-bud mouth, shell-shaped ears, languorous eyes, cheeks that called for kisses. She had the grace of a water-nymph and the ethereal beauty of the Taj in moonlight. To cut a long beauty short, Miss Mani was lovely.

She loved chocolates, ear-rings, clothes and bananas. Her pet aversion was cats. She threw things at them—slippers, volumes of Shakespeare or flower-vases, in fact anything that came in handy. The cats had done her no wrong; no cat ever tried to make a meal of her pet canary, for the simple reason that Mani hadn't one. No one could fathom the mystery of her cruel persecution of poor pussy! She once threw an ink-bottle at a little white cat; it hit the indomitable chin of Mussolini. (No, Mussolini was not present—it was just a photograph.) Miss Mani though sweet of face was not a good bowler.

Still the cats loved her. They say love begets love, but perhaps that was in 1665; Miss Mani always found a cat snugly sleeping on the cot beside her, sometimes white, sometimes black, sometimes spotted! She dreaded going to sleep; she hated a cat for a bed fellow. She began to brood.

"Supposing," she mused, "I had been a cat. O! How hateful! Would I have to say 'miaoo'?" Suddenly she found herself saying 'miaoo'. Was she going mad? She put a hand over her dainty mouth to stifle an imminent 'miaoo'. She felt bristling hair tickling her soft, pale hand. Was she growing a moustache? She sobbed; but she heard herself 'miaooing' instead, as she had seen cats doing so often. Suddenly she found herself changing into a fine, white, soft-plushed cat! You, reader, will not believe it. Neither did Mani. So she looked into a mirror and she saw herself—a cat. Poor girl! What could she do now. She was safe, comparatively, for it was night and she



.....she looked into the mirror and saw herself!

was in her own room; but what would happen in the morning? She couldn't go to the college as a cat. The professor would shoo her out of the room. As she was admiring her white plush coat in the mirror, (Oh! Vanity!) she heard a growling 'miaoo' and saw a mottled tom-cat coming through the window. A strange male in her bed-room! She blushed. Her whiskers quivered in shy nervousness.

"Hullo! White stranger!" said the mottled one, "where have you come from?"

Poor Mani was bewildered—what should she say to this confident male? Should she tell him that she was not a cat at all? He would think her crazy. "I have come from afar," she said meekly, in the cat-language.

"Really! How fine! I hope you will come to my Court. I am the King of Clayton Road. If....."

Suddenly he broke off and ran swiftly to a corner and Mani, following his movement with her bright eyes, saw the reason of his sudden activity. It was a mouse! But the mouse was quicker than the King of Clayton Road. It eluded his pursuer and ran towards Mani. Poor Mani was frightened. She had always been afraid of mice. So, as she saw the mouse running towards her, she jumped on to a table to avoid the mouse and the bold mouse scuttled into his hole, kicked his wife and told an admiring group of little children, how he had frightened a big, white cat.

Meanwhile the King of Clayton Road came to Mani and demanded in regal tones, "Why did you let the mouse go? Oh! You she-cats! Depression and you would drive anybody crazy! Why didn't you try to catch it?" Poor Mani! She forgot herself and said, "What shall I do with a mouse?" The King of Clayton Road was flabbergasted! He couldn't speak for a few minutes. He thought, "She must be the Queen of Sheba travelling incognito. She must be used to daintier dishes, if she does not know what to do with mice..... Mice!" He at once became an abject slave of Mani. Which tom-cat will not? "Pardon me, your Majesty," he said meekly. "This is a poor country and we have to make shift with mice. You live on milk and honey—pardon your silly slave for daring to question Your Majesty."

Now, Mani did not know how to act like a princess,

much less a cat-princess, so she just nodded. The more the King of Clayton Road talked to her, the more he was convinced by her novel ways that she was much above him and was indeed the great Queen of Sheba—his Empress. He rejoiced in his luck. He entreated her to come to his Court. The great Queen consented, for Miss Mani, though beautiful, was an enquiring philosopher. "Since I am a cat, I must make friends with cats," she argued.



Miss Mani on the throne—

The King jumped to the window and requested the great Queen to follow. Mani jumped. How easy it was! She followed the King over house-tops without feeling sick till they reached a forsaken courtyard—the great King's Court. All his subjects were assembled there and they got up as the King entered. The she-cats whispered among themselves and made caustic comments about the King's companion. "The fluffy hussy! How uncattish her walk! She must be a foreign flapper." They got more angry when the King requested Miss Mani to occupy the throne—an empty barrel. The King silenced his subjects with a menacing growl and addressed them: "My dear subjects, you are fortunate in that you have been given a chance to have *darshan* of the great princess of Persia—the Queen of Sheba." All eyes were turned admiringly on the great Queen, who tried her best not to blush. The she-cats forgot their jealousy and the he-cats saluted. "It is our proud privilege," the King continued,

"to entertain Her Imperial Majesty. Let the music begin."

Then followed some enthralling melodies. Only those who have heard cat-music at its best can understand how miserable poor Mani must have felt. At last, the sweet cattish songs were over. The East was blushing with dawn and Mani felt tired. She had by now become used to her regal status. She graciously dismissed the assembly and, escorted by the respectful King, she returned to her bed-room. She was tired. She sought her couch and immediately fell asleep. When she woke up in the morning she found that she was a human being! Was it all an unpleasant dream?

Presently the cat-King came. Her heart-beats quickened. Would he recognise her? He did not! He imploringly 'miaooed', apparently for food. She gave him a bowl of milk, a few crumbs of bread and some chocolates. The King was surprised, but he made a hearty meal.

Night came on again. Mani shut the windows to keep away the King of Clayton Road and settled down in bed. Lo! She changed into the white-furred Queen of Sheba! So it wasn't a dream! She bit her rosy paw to make sure. It hurt! She stepped down from bed and contemplated herself in the mirror. There she was, a beautiful cat! Suddenly she saw a big mouse running towards her—the same mouse who had frightened her the previous night, now grown bold. Poor Mani ran out into the corridor, pursued by the mighty mouse. Mani was no Marathon sprinter. The mouse was gaining upon her. There was a screech, and looking behind, Mani saw the gallant King of Clayton Road with the mouse in his mouth. Saved! How could she thank her deliverer! The King dropped the defunct mouse and swaggered towards Mani. She snuggled in the protective paws of the bold King.

There was ineffable love in the eyes of the King. In her pathetic helplessness Mani made a lovely picture. "It is not for a poor servant to question Your Majesty, but why were you afraid of a little mouse, O Queen?" "Ugh! The mouse wanted me to eat him, but I wouldn't. He insisted, so I had to run away. I couldn't eat a *thing* like that, could I?" she asked coquettishly, playing havoc with her eyes. The poor King was non-plussed. He very much liked mice, but to appear aristocratic before this great lady, he lied and said nonchalantly, "Yes, mice *are* troublesome. They always want you to eat them."

There was no mistake. The King had fallen for this white furry beauty! But he hadn't the courage to propose. He felt too small before her imperious beauty. The poor love-struck King sighed and, leaving the mouse reluctantly, he made a sorrowful exit. Miss Mani returned to her room and slept. In the morning she was again the same old Mani of the sweet rose-bud mouth. She was agitated. How could she lead this double existence? It was, to say the least, very awkward. She thought and thought. Yes! What about an exorcist? She started enquiries. At last she located one and drove thither in her two-seater sporting car. With a throbbing heart, she knocked timidly. A sharp voice bade her come in. She found an old man with a very long beard seated in a big chair. His eyes were cold and piercing and his voice was firm as he addressed her. "Please be seated.

What can I do for you, young lady?" Poor Mani faltered, "You—you will think it silly.....but.....but..."

The exorcist inclined his head encouragingly. "A terrible thing happened to me....." She poured forth her harrowing tale.

For a time he was lost in thought. He got up and took a musty volume from a shelf by the wall—an old Sanskrit book. He studied it for a time and looked up. "Yours, young lady, is a strange case, but such a thing has happened before. I have a cure for it. To-night, when you change into a cat, come here at once and I shall drive away the devil that haunts you." She thanked the old man and returned home.

Night! And poor Miss Mani became a cat. How could she go alone along the lonely roads at night? The dogs might kill her. Luckily, the King of Clayton Road came again and stood before her like a strong, silent—cat. She ordered him to accompany her. He was delighted. They reached their destination. The King was asked to wait outside.

The old exorcist was reading. Mani said, 'Miaoo', meaning in the cat tongue "Here I am!" The old man laid his book aside and came towards her. He took her up in his arms. She wriggled. Which young maiden would want to be fondled by a hateful old man? The old bounder kissed her! She struggled, she scratched, she bit; she was free. She had a feeling of positive

loathing. He came towards her. She was terrified. She closed her eyes.....And when she opened them she was once again beautiful Miss Mani, with all her curves!

The wicked old man laughed. "I have rid you of the cat-devil," he said.

"How did you do it?" she asked, tingling with shame and pleasure.

The exorcist laughed in his beard. "Loathing for cats turned you into a cat and a distaste for a human being changed you back! But I am not so ugly as I look," he said and pulled off his long beard.

Mani saw before her a tall, handsome, young man with laughing love-laden eyes. "Oh!" she gasped, "you!!!"

"Yes, I, Mani, whose love you have spurned. Shall we say 'let by-gones be by-gones'?"

Mani hung down her head. The bum exorcist took her in his arms again. She didn't bite this time, but held him tight in a passionate embrace.

* * * * *
Bang! Mani rolled down from her cot, clutching madly at her pillow.

"Ugh! What a spooky dream," she muttered and curled herself to sleep again.

Poultry Farming—(Continued from page 33)

lineage, he had the satisfaction of installing the first inhabitants in their new homes.

But these darned hens would not become friends with one another. The hens fought one another, and then made a combined attack on the cock. Mr. Ram Chandra was sad. Sounds of feathered conflict could be heard during the long hours of the night. Next morning his neighbours threatened to approach the magistrate for a writ to prevent the fowls becoming a nuisance. The five hens had not laid one solitary egg between them!

A glance at the incubators, and Mr. Ram Chandra found that both lamps were dry and cold. Replenishing the supply of oil he again lighted the lamps.

A week later Mr. Ram Chandra decided that his purchase of the fowls was a frost. Not an egg to cheer him up. The neighbours continued to groan and gloat by turns.

One night Mr. Ram Chandra had inadvertently left open the gate of the chicken runs. In the darkness of the night his feathered friends strolled unconcernedly into his bedroom, and recommenced their combat of the previous day. Scenes of wild disorder followed. In his efforts to 'shoo' them back to their homes, Mr. Ram Chandra suffered untold agonies. Up and down the windows and walls they fluttered, screeching and squeaking. As fast as he ejected one, another popped up from behind a box. The cock hid himself in the blankets on the bed. Mr. Ram Chandra passed a very sleepless night.

Dawn revealed a scene of indescribable confusion. Broken crockery was scattered all over the floor. Feathers were mixed with his hair, and the five offenders were missing! A search of the garden and the neighbouring gardens failed to reveal the truant hens.

Grinning neighbours, however, could have enlightened him as to their whereabouts. Suspicious heaps of feathers were visible for days afterwards near their kitchens.

Three months later the lamps still burned under the incubators. Mr. Ram Chandra wondered when on earth they would eventually hatch. A cautious enquiry, and he discovered that the hatching was several weeks overdue! Overcome by emotion, Mr. Ram Chandra then realized that poultry-farming was not his true vocation. Gently tapping the 108 eggs in turn, the conviction was brought home to him that he had been over-eager to buy the eggs.

A little harder tap on each egg next day. Mr. Ram Chandra was becoming distinctly annoyed at the non-appearance of the fluffy fledglings. With a feeling of disgust at human depravity, he returned to his sitting-room.

The eggs were all—BAD, and had been bad three months before!

Mr. Ram Chandra never refers to hens these days, and the sight of an egg is quite sufficient to put him off his food for a week. He, however, looks forward with hope to finding a suitable hobby, some day.

'ADD-A-LETTER' COMPETITION—RESULTS

The Correct Solution is:

- | | | |
|------------|---------|-----------|
| 1. BANGLE | 4. SOIL | 7. MATCH |
| 2. SCATTER | 5. FEAL | 8. LOCATE |
| 3. NAG | 6. MUM | 9. FORGED |

Since no competitor had submitted an all-correct solution, the First Prize of Rs. 100 is divided among the following Five Readers who have submitted one-error solutions, each getting Rs. 20.

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2. G. Radhakrishnan, Clerk, Construction Audit, S.I.Ry., Trichinopoly.
3. K. C. Antony, 'Koithara House', Kadavanthara, Thevara B. O. (via) Ernakulam.
4. B. A. Nayak, C. P. C. Co., Ltd., Mangalore (S. K.)
5. R. Natesa Iyer, Land Office, Jamshedpur.

The following 46 Readers who have submitted two error solutions, share the Second Prize of Rs. 50 each getting Re. 1-1-0

- | | |
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| 5-6. R. T. Velu, Vandipalayam. | 33-34. R. Natesa Iyer, Jamshedpur. |
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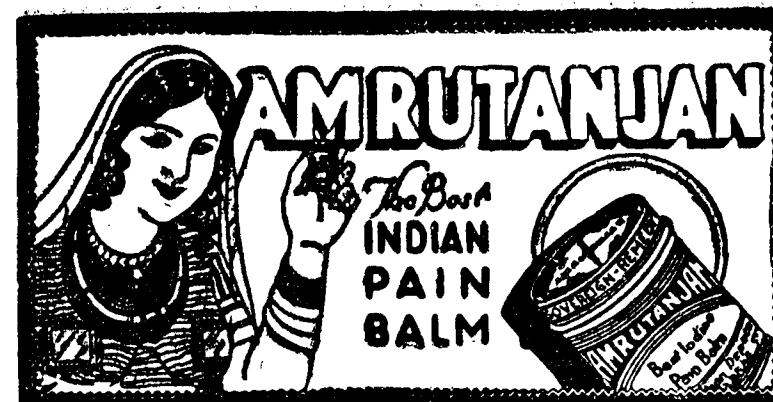
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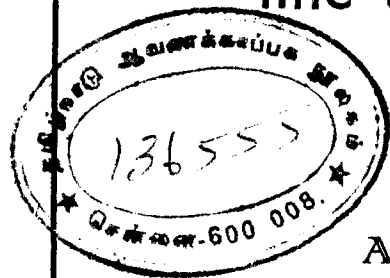


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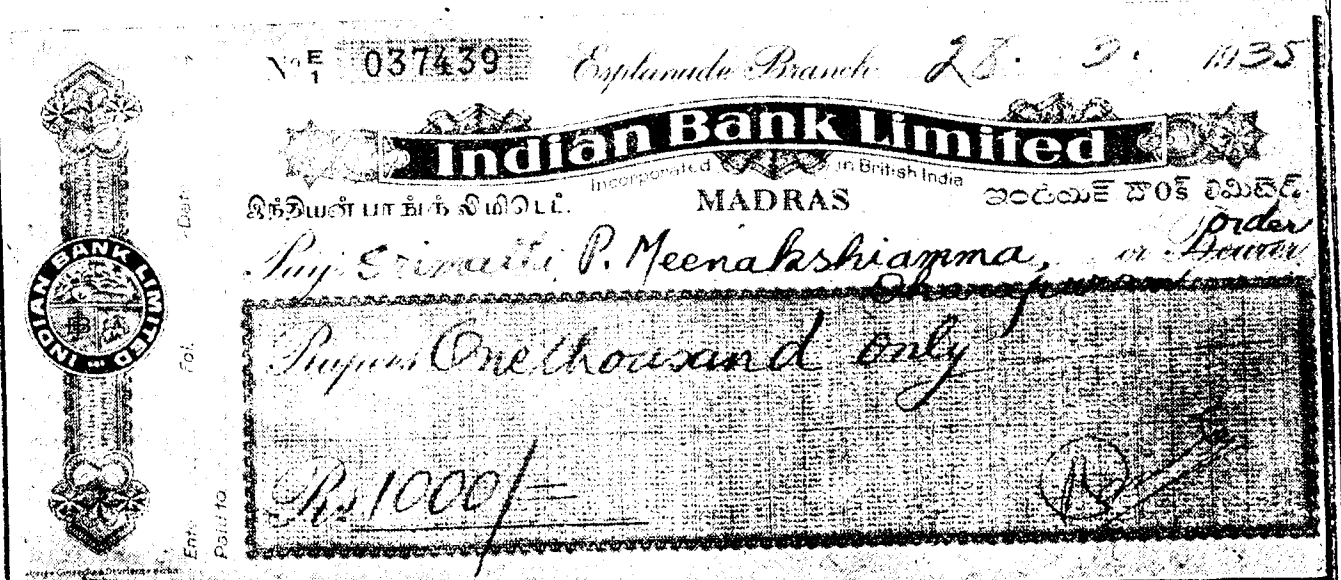
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