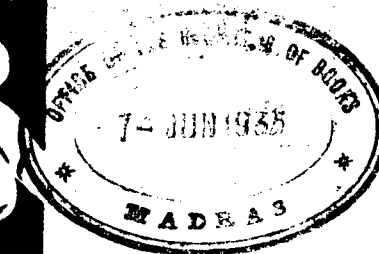


BRITISH TOMMY AT A HILL FAIR

1172

THE
MERRY
MAGAZINE



2205

Vol. III Madras, 8 June '35 No. 23

Rs. 300 FREE

Harindranath
Deisvi, 'Mie'
'Embusque'

Stars of 1936

R. Jagannathan
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THE MERRY MAGAZINE

(PUBLISHED EVERY SATURDAY)

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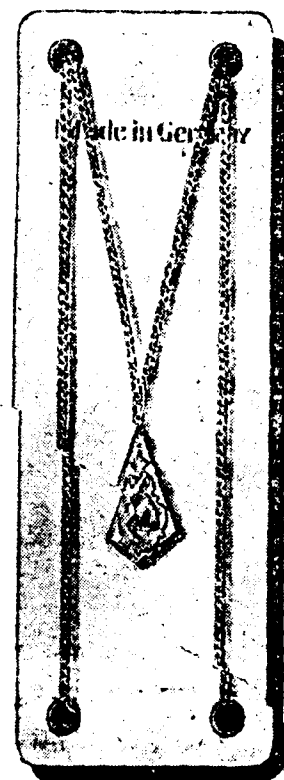
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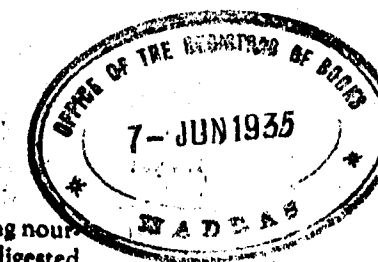
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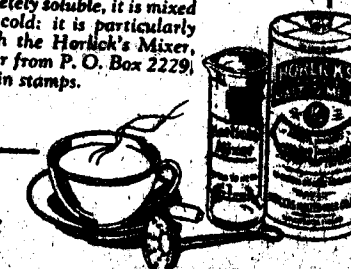
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MERRY MAGAZINE

MADRAS, JUNE 8, 1935

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HARINDRANATH CHATTOPADHYAYA

The Arab's Camel
(A Poem)

The Camel wriggles into the tent beginning with its head, progressing from neck to tail—all in! Charity in excelsis. An Arab who ought to be the father of The Good Samaritan, and elected President of the S. P. C. A.!

JOYFULL

A Frenchman's impressions of Madras.

Who owns The Madras Harbour? What is the rent of the Customs House? Madras, the queen among cities! A forest of waving palms (save the mark!) around the railway termini smiling welcome; *Vive la Madras!*

Frank! Festal! Febrifugal!

TENSE MOMENTS WITH
BIG GAME!

Not in Sundarbans: Not in Africa: but where?

On the asphalt roads of Calcutta!

In Chowringhee Road!
In College Square!

The primal hunt!

EMBUSQUE

The manufacture of An International Incident out of Cigarette Coupons! Lunar movements and lunatic war-correspondents.

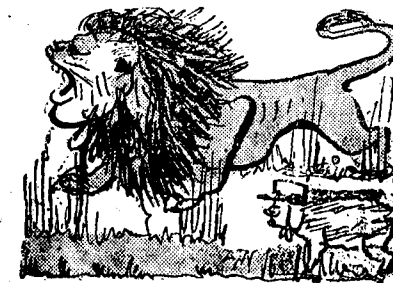
AUNTIE

Ever seen a General's legs? Bare ones? No? Very well, Reggie will show you a remarkable pair.

Incorrigible Reggie!
Also regular Features:
Bigger! Bigger! Brighter!

SPARKS FROM OUR ANVIL

Speaking in the presence of the King of Italy, Sgr. Mussolini is reported to have said that his gospel was: "Better live five years as a lion than thirty years as a sheep."



We cannot say whether the King sympathised with his subjects, or the subjects with their king.

Still, the sheep might have one advantage over the lion; they have a chance to celebrate their jubilee!

He further added: "Once Italy has taken up a position, she marches direct, and does not turn back."

May we suggest that he takes up the position at the foot of the Himalayas, and thus help the Everest expedition?

Herr Schafer, Director of the Ministry of Justice in Germany, forecasts that among the new crimes to be defined even *unsuccessful* attempts harm the person of Hitler is one.

We must strongly deprecate this sort of encouragement to would-be assassins!

From an account of their Majesties' state drive through the East End: "The Jewish shops were closed, being Saturday, but banners carrying loyal greetings in Yidolish were profusely hung."—*The Hindu*.

Apparently the greetings were couched in idolatrous language!

"Their Majesties walked over and chatted to a man in an invalid-chair, who was bed-ridden for 25 years in an East-End hospital."

The jubilee greetings were no doubt mutual!

The Pope has condemned sterilisation on the ground that thereby the world would return to the horrors of ancient paganism which had produced Beauty and its Art, but in its social life was entirely immoral.

If Beauty and Art are horrors of Paganism, that explains the Churches' hatred of them!

The League of Nations has survived another crisis over the Italo-Abyssinian affair.

But the condition of Sgr. Mussolini is far from reassuring!

In the *Dail*, Mr. Macdormott, leader of the Opposition, said that the Governor-General's salary of £2000/- was ample for the duties which nowadays could be performed by a junior clerk.

We are unable to account for this gratuitous slur on a great body of devoted, *under-paid* workers.

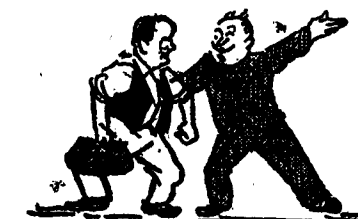
Mr. Ramsay Macdonald has been received in audience by the King.

We shall soon know where he is to be received next.

Referring to the amendments to the clauses pertaining to the Princes, and their accession to the Federation, Mr. Churchill complained that the Government were making a 'new deal' with them.

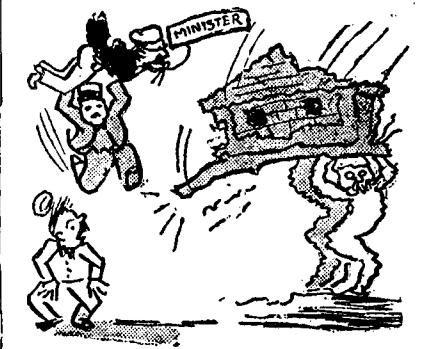
But they are still using the same 'old pack'.

The French Cabinet has been given plenary powers to deal with the alarming drain of gold from the Bank of France.



We understand that an alternative suggestion that Sir James Grigg, our Finance Member, be invited to restore public confidence is likely to be tried as a last resort.

It is rumoured that a fourth minister is to be appointed in Madras.



Obviously to strengthen the Ministry!

"By an amendment to clause 168, the future of the India Office buildings was settled."—*Reuter*.

The effect of it is that they will remain where they are!

"Sir Reginald Craddock moved an amendment to ensure that pensions of British officers were made payable to pensioners residing abroad."

We didn't know that they had been surrendering them till now!

Sir Samuel Hoare, amidst cheers, accepted the amendment.

We must in fairness point out that those who cheered were not *all* pensioners.

The A. P. I. has calculated that out of the 457 clauses of the India Bill, 167 have been *affected* by the amendments in the committee stage.

The rest continue to be as *unnatural* as ever!

It is authoritatively announced that there is no change of attitude on the part of the Government of India towards Congress Opposition in the Assembly.

We give the public the same assurance on behalf of the Congress.

● NEXT WEEK: A FRENCHMAN ON MADRAS ●



THE EDITOR HIS PAGE

A MONSTER IN THE MAKING

A ghastly sea-monster, 40 feet long, 26 feet round, with a mountainous head, a scaly body, weighing four tons (don't ask me who weighed it) was seen a few weeks ago in Galway Bay bobbing up and down, evidently mighty pleased with itself after a juicy lunch of herring. It must have been the runaway wife of the Loch Ness Monster on which the British press thrived last year; for it was sporting its dermal charms rather too freely, with the result that a heartless light-house-keeper in the Bay shot it dead. What happened to the beauty after that is not let out.

This piece of news served from England is of allegorical interest to us in India. A monster no less ghastly is being shipped to India from England for our special benefit. And, lest any big-game hunters over here should emulate the light-house man of Galway Bay, this monster's managers, like the managers of King Kong, are sending it along encased in bullet-proof, evil-smelling, steel armour to safeguard its fishy, smelly, vulnerable body.

The India Bill is coming.

It is hailed by a breezy British newswriter as a piece of constitutional wonder on which the grandest orations were delivered since Burke thundered against the crimes of Warren Hastings and Pitt scared himself into verbal apoplexy at the greatest political upheaval in the world, bar the Russian one of the present century. Inspired Mercurys, we may be sure, will herald the event in more and more picturesque language as the monster drags its ugly bulk to its terminus. But no amount of flamboyant piffle will beautify this abnormal freak, which a power-greedy, power-intoxicated genius has produced.

Viewing the grinning carcass of another monster, a philosopher remarked: "Beauty kills the beast!"

Is there beauty enough in this country—not the garish, revolting beauty of bejewelled feudal India at durbars and jubilees—but the spiritual beauty of communal harmony and political honesty, that could stare the monster out of countenance?

T H E W O L F A N D T H E F O X



Poem by H. Chattopadhyaya

(Concluded)

Illustrations by Mali

The fox was very very glad
To see the wolf a sudden had
Repented and renounced the ways
Of evil, trod in other days;
For very joy he could not think,
The gladness worked in him like drink.

So, on his hind legs, on the brink
Of that foul pit he sat, and down
The cavity did hang his brown
And dusty tail. The wolf,—he saw
The tip of it and stretched his paw
Towards the tail, and with a tug
Pulled down the fox...

"Here safe and snug
We twain shall dwell until the stones
Of death be showered upon our bones,
Until we crumble into dust!"
The wolf said.

"I suppose we must!"
The fox replied without a trace
Of fear or tremor in his face.
And yet within his inmost soul
He knew it was a dirty hole
Which he had fallen into now,
And wondered how he did allow
The wolf to play the dirty trick.
His brain grew wild, his heart was sick!
And yet he did not give up hope
Since well he knew his horoscope
Had once predicted that the fox
Would fall into a ditch or box.

Or some such trap, but would escape
Withal,—his little furry shape
In perfect piece without a scratch:
So, straightway he began to hatch
His usual foxy plan on plan
Saying, "I will escape—I can!"

The wolf began to chide the fooled
Unhappy fox—"Your blood has cooled
A bit, I hope? And your delight
At witnessing my sorry plight
Has changed, I trust, into regret
Such as you've never known as yet?

Who for a brother digs a pit
Himself shall tumble into it.
That's what you said a while ago
And now I know that it is so!

Now for the dirty game you played
Upon me, sir! you are repaid.
Can I forget the way you laughed
At all my grief? The way you chaffed
And jested o'er my fallen state?
Can I forget the scorn, the hate
The thrice discourteous words you spoke
To me, the stroke on cruel stroke
Of raillery you levelled at
My suffering form? The way you spat
Upon me wallowing in the pit?
And now, you've got to pay for it!
Now that we are at daggers drawn
Why should I let you live till dawn?

I show you what my anger means,
I'll smash you into smithereens,
I'll make your heart go pit-a-pat
You not-much-better-than-a-rat!
I'll make you shake and quake and shiver,
I'll feed my vengeance on your liver!"

Very collected and demure,
The fox replied: "I'm pretty sure
That you can in a simple way
Do all the dreadful things you say...
Before you, sir, I am an elf,
You are much stronger than myself.

And yet, it is a friend's advice
I offer you: Think twice and thrice
Before you really do commit
A bloody murder in this pit.
If you should slay me, who is there
Would give you back the sun and air,
The green wild freshness of the yard
That even now is graped and starred?
And who would give you back your bold
And kingly forest life of old?

Refrain from killing me, and then
We'll both return unto our den
In utmost safety, for, you see,
It was to work your liberty
That I returned."

The wolf replied:
"How can you prove, O clever-eyed!
That you who turned away to go
Leaving me in my state of woe
Could suddenly have changed your mind
To save the one you left behind
And left behind with foul abuse
Showered from a tongue grown wild and loose?
What was it then that made your feet
Reverse their tread, O Lord Conceit?"

"Believe me or believe me not,"
The fox returned, "good sir, I thought
That you had turned your heart to one
Who dwells beyond the moon and sun,
To Allah, who forever cares
For those who pray repentant prayers,
I heard you praying sorrow-bowed,
I heard you calling out aloud
To Allah in the highest who
Commanded me to rescue you.

And so I turned my steps and came
To save your life in Allah's name,
In Allah's name to save your breath
From an uncanny cruel death.
I heard you speak those beautiful
Four holy words, 'I will wear wool',

I heard you swear to Him you would
Join the devoted Brotherhood;
All this I heard, I clearly heard,
Yea, every sentence, word by word,
And I believed each word that you
Uttered to Allah's ear was true.
O play not with the heavenly Sire,—
To play with Him's to play with fire!"

The wolf replied: "Ah yes, indeed,
I prayed to Allah in my need,
And He has sent you to me now
To rescue me somehow, somehow,—
But tell me, how shall we proceed?"

"Just stand erect!" the fox's voice
Of power left no other choice,
"Just stand erect, and I will climb
Your shoulder, and from there I hope
To reach the ground, and ere the time
Of dawn to fetch a length of rope
Enough for you to scale and reach
To safety..."

Without further speech
Or argument, the wolf stood straight
Upon his hind legs. Swift as fate
The fox sprang to his shoulders and
Giving the wolf no time to think
He reached safe ground. "You understand!"
The fox announced with one sharp wink,
"It is most wonderful and grand
To stand again upon the brink."
And then in aggravating tones
He said: "Good Lord! how will it feel
When strong and unrelenting stones
Batter you down from head to heel?"

The dawn was breaking in the east,
Red as the blood of any beast.

And Mr. Fox, the trickster, found
A small way off, a giant mound
From whose high summit he could watch
The wolf become a bloody blotch
Before the daybreak grew to day;
For soon the owners came that way,
And noticing the wolf within
The pit more black than grief or sin,
Began to pelt great stones and stocks
At him, until the heavy knocks
And heavy shivers, heavy shocks,
Shattered the wolf quite out of shape,
Death was his ultimate escape.

Here ends the hoary curious story
Of Mr. Wolf and Mr. Fox.



THE END



The Story of My Life

by 'Mie'

and something white and sometimes a few rays of light reflected. Well, I mean to say, if I can't see it after a study lasting for hours, how do these people simply glance at it and say 104.35°? The thing, I am sure, is a big hoax. It is sheer guess-work. That is what it is.

Anyway there is the patient before them. They know he is not doing well and so they torture him a bit by thumping him, hitting him, nearly plucking out his eye-balls, dislocating his jaws and then they say he has fever. What fever, you ask. They snub you for being inquisitive and write out a prescription.

They write anything there. Sometimes they write their names, sometimes those of their sweethearts; occasionally a religious minded doctor writes down a prayer. Often enough, (I guess) they put down ribald jokes and swear-words. However, it doesn't matter what they write, for the compounder knows his job. The compounder will give A. P. C. powder, influenza mixture and malaria mixture in turn. He does not need to read the prescription at all. He never makes an attempt to. He ladles out his mixtures indifferent to the prescription-slip.

It is a good thing too, for an influenza mixture won't necessarily kill you while if the doctor had seriously written down a prescription and you had drunk it, it is ten to one you would be killed.

If an influenza mixture fails, they decide the man has got malaria. But immediately a doubt assails our Aesculapiuses. Is it really Malaria or is it Khal-a-zar? Well quinine shall be tried first, and later on he would attend to the case.

Likewise the surgeons. These are more terrible people. My advice is, never succumb to the blandishments of a surgeon. A surgeon would go on his bended knees with tears in his eyes to have a chance of cutting parts of your body open and fiddling with the inside-machinery. It doesn't matter what your trouble is. It may be just a cold or it may be Pterithyromandriaosis. He would swear by all the Gods that he would cure you with an operation. All he wants is your permission; having obtained which he would put you out of order temporarily with chloroform as an additional safeguard against your

WHILE writing this I feel strange spasms shooting through my thoracic regions. My vision is blurred. Hot tears gather in my eyes. My hands tremble, perspiration breaks out from every pore. My head sits heavily on my shoulders. These are not, as some of you have hastily decided, the effects of the Night Before. No, I never have touched a drop of whisky or anything like that in my life. I have only handled them in glasses.

A great fear seizes me. Will I be unable to complete this work? Will I deprive the world of those great and noble thoughts, of worldly observations, which are yet to be written. In fact will I die prematurely? My doctor assures me that I won't. He says that I will yet live for another fifty years. But I have no faith in my doctor. If he says a man's case is hopeless, the man is sure to pull through. On the other hand, if he assures someone that he is sure to recover, the next thing to be done is to take measurements for a coffin.

He believes in two things and two alone—a purgative and a rice poultice. Where a man does not need a purgative, as when he is suffering from dysentery, diarrhoea or cholera, Doctor B—would administer rice poultice.

It is a curious thing that we trust our lives when we are ill to a set of people who are as ignorant about our insides, about diseases and their treatment, as the grand Lama of Tibet is about Mae West. I am not making a wild statement. I have watched these doctor chaps at work. When a man's body is hot, they put a thermometer in his mouth for a couple of minutes, take it out and peer through it. I don't think they can make out anything. A thermometer is a glass tube which is supposed to contain mercury. I have never seen the mercury thread; neither can I measure the height it has reached. I turn it round and round expecting the thing to appear at each turn. But all I see are certain figures

protests, and then he would tuck up his sleeves and leisurely go ahead, now probing your peritonium, now unscrewing your intestines, now hacking your trachea to pieces. His delight in your inside is that of a child in his new toy, the monkey in a fresh flower. Be firm with the surgeon. Don't allow him to open his case of instruments.

Talking of surgeons reminds me of the sad case of my friend, Vijayam. Vijayam was a very handsome fellow, especially according to himself. He used to compare his features to those of Apollo, Magnifico, Gigolo and the other Grecian Gods, and the Gods suffered in the comparison. His nose especially was his pride. It must be admitted it was a perfect nose, straight, strong and smooth. He used to lavish creams and powders on this nose of his.

One day, while shaving, Vijayam noticed a tiny wart on his nose. His consternation could be imagined. Vijayam rushed to the nearest chemist and got an ointment. He massaged the affected part vigorously. For two days he continued the treatment, but to his horror the thing grew like a mushroom. Almost weeping, he ran to a surgeon. The surgeon rubbed his hands, examined the wart, pretended to be thinking for a few minutes and said an operation alone would effect a cure. Vijayam was in a dilemma. He was, so to speak, between Priscilla and Garibaldis. If he didn't allow the surgeon to operate, perhaps the wart would outgrow the nose in size. On the other hand, suppose the surgeon left scars? But the surgeon assured him that there would be no scar. He would graft a piece of skin from somewhere and cover all faces.

The operation was done; a piece of skin from his leg was rivetted on, and the bandages applied.

Vijayam waited in suspense, for the day when he would see the result. The surgeon came and untied the bandages. He smiled with satisfaction when he contemplated his handiwork; but the smile froze on his face. He started back in horror. He saw that a part of the nose where skin had been grafted on, was covered with a thick growth of hair!

Vijayam now shaves his half nose.

What I meant to say was that I never used to trust or believe in doctors and surgeons. One begins to hate them even while they are students. With sheer brutality and cold blooded ferocity they practise experiments on rabbits and dogs and frogs. They cut off a part of a frog's brain and scream with delight when they see it still hopping about. They cut off the brain, of one frog before its eyes, and that of another after them, and exclaim with satisfaction, "The sensory nerves in this case, instead of connecting to the brain, effect reflexes in the spinal column and the motor nerves in their turn etc, etc". They decapitate a dog and prick its hind legs with a red-hot pin to watch the reflex action. But always they perform their experiments on frogs and

dogs. This itself is an insult to us, their patients. Do they mean to suggest that our insides and that of say, a frog, are similar. Do they think that by watching a dog cough they can cure our pneumonia? Are they telling us?

And poor ignoramuses! They do not even know what some of our organs are for! If you ask them the use of the Vermiform Appendix, they will smile tolerantly and say, "We can't explain to a layman all the secrets of the Lymphatic glands and their diseases." They will tell you that a spleen can be removed from a person without his (or her) suffering for it. Then what on earth is the spleen for? According to them certain parts of our body were made purely for the pleasure it gave them in cutting them out. Oh! they make me tired!

The weakness of their treatment is revealed by the fact that no two doctors agree. If one prescribes a purgative, the other pitches strongly for an emetic; a third will recommend a stomach-pump, while a fourth will say the patient is not suffering at all!

But I am digressing. My pain spurred me on to launch this attack on doctors.

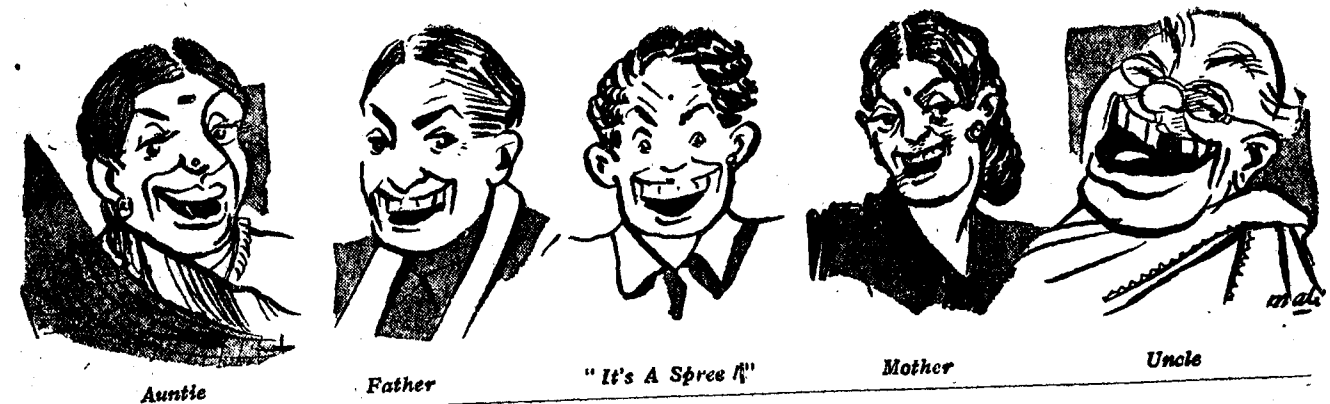
I can scarcely hold my pen. There is a curious rattle in my throat. My eyes, the mirror tells me, are blood-shot. I am sure it is not a mosquito bite, but something else equally serious.

My physical pain is nothing before my mental one. I have not written my will. I have not made my peace with God. I have not completed my autobiography. All my affairs are in a jumble. But before anything serious happens to me, I must declare Mr. V. B. Prasad, my friend, as my sole executor. I entrust all my manuscripts to him. My literary reputation, I know, is established. There may be a demand for my unpublished works and my letters. I knew my letters would be required for publication, and so I have kept a bunch of them filed in my drawer. They are not perhaps actual copies of the ones I sent. I have altered them considerably, but then the originals were unprintable. I do hereby request Prasad to attend to my wish (perhaps my last).

[Editor's Note: It is with great sorrow that I record the death of 'Mie'. He had been suffering for some time from Housemaid's Knee but who knew it was going to be fatal? The best attention medical science could provide was bestowed on him. It was all, alas, of no avail. Last night at about 9-30 'Mie' breathed his last surrounded by his children and grandchildren and his 107 great-grandchildren. The world has not only lost an eminent literary figure but it has lost a man which she could less afford to lose. May his soul rest in peace!]

His executor, Mr. V. B. Prasad, has searched through his papers and has discovered a sheaf of unpublished manuscripts under the title of 'Meanderings of Mie'. I have great pleasure in announcing that I have secured them for publication in *The Merry*.

STOP PRESS: While going to press I have received a copy of Mie's last will and testament. As it is too late to insert it here I am reserving it for the next issue.—Ed.



Fun For All The Family

Friend:—Your tour was not a great success, then?

Stage Manager:—It was not. When we played tragedy the box-office receipts were a farce, and when we played farce, they were a tragedy.

Father:—When I was a young man, girls knew how to blush.

Daughter:—What did you say to them?

First Cockney wife:—(proudly) My husband was one of the 'Old Contemptibles.

Second ditto:—(scornfully) That's miffin; all husbands is contemptible.

A patient in a hospital woke after an operation and found the blinds drawn.

"Why are those blinds drawn?" he asked.

"Well," said the physician, "there is a fire burning across the way and I didn't want you to wake up and think the operation had been a failure."

"Are they fresh?" asked a woman buying fish from a coster-monger. The coster looked at his ancient stock. "Fresh, mum? Why, just look at them." And turning to his wares, he shouted; "Lie still, can't you? Lie still!"

"Say, you love me; say it, say it!"
"You love me."

"What did you give for your car?"
"References."

"I'm a liar."
"I don't believe you."
"Does your wife play bridge for money?"
"No, but the others she plays with do."

"Shall I go to a mind-reader or a palm-reader?"
"Try the palm-reader. You have got a palm."

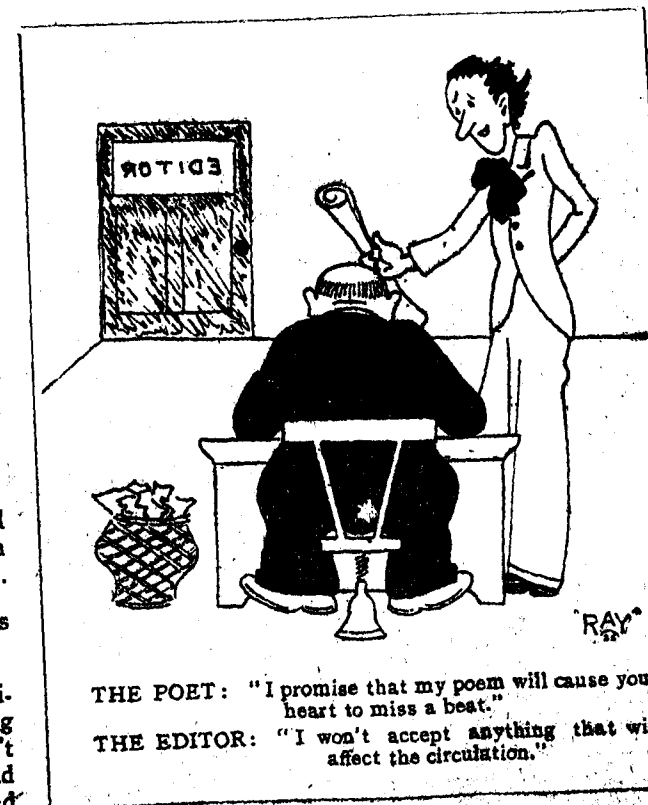
"Your car is at the door."
"Yes, I hear it knocking."

"I always wear a hat to suit my head."
"A soft one, eh?"

"Aren't we fools?"
"Please speak in the singular."
"Aren't you a fool?"

"Can I borrow five rupees from you?"
"I'm sure you can—you've had enough practice."

"Can I touch you for five rupees?"
"Touch! For five rupees you can sock me in the jaw."



THE POET: "I promise that my poem will cause your heart to miss a beat."
THE EDITOR: "I won't accept anything that will affect the circulation."



In the previous two Instalments :

Ramathilakam, a pretty young woman of the labouring class is handed over to Railway Police Head-Constable Rangaswamy Iyer, at Chingleput Junction as having been travelling without a ticket. She says that she came to Chingleput with the intention of drowning herself in the big lake that adjoins the Railway Station. The Head-Constable dares her to go and drown herself. She does so to the amazement of the Head-Constable, who has to rush into the waters and rescue her.

She makes another attempt to kill herself by falling before a running train, but luckily for her the driver stops the train in time. Head-Constable Rangaswamy Iyer suspects that the woman must have committed some dreadful crime to contemplate suicide, remands her to custody in the local station and has a messenger sent up to Madras to find out if a woman of her description is wanted there. As he waits for the reply from Madras news is brought to him of the removal of the woman from the Police Station by the Inspector to his house with intentions far from honourable. The messenger from Madras arrives to report that no woman of the description of Ramathilakam is wanted by the Madras Police. Rangaswamy Iyer regrets his action in handing over the woman to the Inspector and rushes to rescue her. He finds the Inspector's house shut and attempts to scale the back-yard wall, when the woman he was seeking jumps down from the top of the wall and falls at his feet.

Third Instalment.

Life and Death

"COME on! Get up! What is the matter?" asked Rangaswamy Iyer.

"You!—Oh! Why did you save me from death?" wailed Ramathilakam.

"What happened?" asked Rangaswamy impatiently.

"Oh, that Naidu! You delivered me into the hands of a beast. He made the most atrocious proposals to me. He was drunk! I have handled a drunken husband before. I pretended to be nice to the Naidu, made him drink a lot more, stunned him with a log, but found no way of getting out, as he had locked both the front and back-doors. I had to climb the wall and here I am at your feet."

"Get up and let us get going"

"Where to?"

"Where you belong?"

"Have you no heart? I tell you I have done no wrong. I merely want to kill myself."

"Alright, alright! Get up and come with me."

Ramathilakam tried to get up and attempted to walk. But a nasty sprain made her limp.

"I can't walk!" she moaned.

Head-Constable Rangaswamy Iyer, once again had to allow her to lean heavily against him as he led her along the deserted and dim, moon-lit streets, and Cupid, the optimist, once again emptied a bunch of his rusty darts at the Head-Constable.

"Have we far to go?" asked Ramathilakam.

"To the bus-stand. And then to Madras."

"Why?"

"The Police have no case against you except the offences of travelling without a ticket and attempting to commit suicide. But the Police have been sufficiently rude to compensate and condone your offences. I feel, that having saved you, as you say, from a watery grave, I must restore you to your husband."

With a jerk, Ramathilakam detached herself and looked with dismay at her saviour. "Anything but that!" she cried. "You don't know my husband! You don't know the full story. I would rather go to jail than to him."

"Don't be a fool!" said Rangaswamy. "If you are found anywhere here in the morning, God knows what the Inspector Naidu will do to you. And there will be trouble for all of us."

"I won't go to Madras!" said Ramathilakam stubbornly and squatted in the middle of the road.

"I will have to carry you then," said Rangaswamy, grinning at the recollection of how charming a burden she could be.

"If you touch me, I will scream and awake the whole neighbourhood," threatened Ramathilakam.

"Be sensible!" pleaded Rangaswamy. "You must get out of this place now. If you won't go to Madras, I'll arrange for your stay at Saidapet for the night. We shall discuss everything there. Won't you listen to me?"

"But why are you taking so much trouble over me? Why not allow me to die?"

He evaded the question, gently lifted her and lead her on. The moon came out of the clouds and shed its radiance, and a gust of southern breeze wafted the fragrance of the flowers on Ramathilakam's hair.

Police-Constable 526 was having an argument with the bus-driver. The bus-driver was contending that Police-Constable 526 had no power to delay the bus. The passengers as a body supported the driver's contention. But Police-Constable 526 was adamant and insisted that his orders were to delay the bus. The temper of the bus-driver and passengers was none too sweet when finally Head-Constable Rangaswamy Iyer arrived on the scene with his quarry. Briefly, he explained the situation to the driver in a whisper. "The woman is wanted for an offence and has to be transported to Saidapet in a hurry. Sorry for delaying the bus," lied he. Seats were found for him and Ramathilakam next to the driver and with a toot of its horn, the over-delayed bus rattled along. Police-Constable 526 stood staring at the bus and wondered how his Head-Constable was able to rescue the woman and what kind of trouble he would get into over it, later.

Rangaswamy Iyer never talked to Ramathilakam during the journey. He was chumming with the bus-driver while Ramathilakam sat wondering all the time what would happen to her. When late in the night, the bus stopped at Saidapet, Rangaswamy Iyer thanked the driver and motioning Ramathilakam to climb down, followed her. Her leg still pained her and Rangaswamy made her sit underneath a Banyan tree and told her of his plans.

"There is an old doctor here, a Naicker, whom I know and who is under an obligation to me for help rendered in the past. He lives all alone with his herbs and drugs and I intend taking you to him. We shall stay there for the night and to-morrow morning I shall go to Madras, see your husband, and give him a talking. I am sure I would be able to persuade him to treat you well hereafter. What do you say?"

Ramathilakam was silent. It should be possible, thought she, that before day-break she could escape from the misguided Brahmin constable and achieve what she had intended to achieve—end her misery.

"Do as you like," said she indifferently.

"That is a good girl!" said Rangaswamy and helped her to rise and walk.

To the old quack doctor Head-Constable Rangaswamy Iyer told a simple unvarnished tale of all that had happened and the old man was full of sympathy. He offered some plantain fruits and water to the midnight visitors. Ramathilakam was so tired that she could hardly keep her eyes open and went to sleep on the bare floor, improvising a plank for a pillow, while the two men went on talking till the early hours of the morning.

When Head-Constable Rangaswamy Iyer, the next day, sought the address given to him by Ramathilakam and arrived there, quite an exciting story was narrated to him. He was told that Ramathilakam's husband had been taken away by the city police as the result of a drunken brawl. He went to the nearest police-station and made discreet enquiries.

"That man!" exclaimed the station-writer. "Oh, he will get 7 years at least. What do you want of him?"

"We want to know something about his wife," said Rangaswamy Iyer.

"A pretty lass, I am told," said the station-writer, "and the cause of all this row. The story goes like this: The prisoner is a night-watchman and his wife used to take food occasionally for him to the factory where he was employed, during nights. A maistry there saw her and was struck with her beauty and when he enquired who she was, the prisoner lied. He said that she was just a woman whom he knew and who was not above being bought for a price. He pretended to act as a go-between and seems to have wheedled out of the maistry enough money to drown himself in drink. Somehow or other the woman seems to have caught scent of what was going on and bolted. That was day before yesterday. Yesterday, the maistry learnt the whole truth—of her flight and of her being this man's wife—and came to this man's house and picked a quarrel. This fellow was drunk—he always is—and from words they came to blows and in the end the maistry was neatly stabbed in the chest with a knife."

"Where is the maistry now?"

"In hospital. A dying declaration has been taken. If he dies, our man will certainly swing for it."

"Can I see him for a minute?"

"Certainly. I'll come with you."

It was a miserable specimen of humanity that Head-Constable Rangaswamy Iyer found inside the lock-up. He asked him a few questions but the man was grovelling with abject terror and was absolutely incoherent.

Head-Constable Rangaswamy Iyer thanked the station-writer and was about to leave, when the telephone on the writer's desk rang.

The writer attended to the 'phone.

"Yes, Sir? Dead, Sir? Very good, Sir. I'll be here, Sir."

"That maistry is dead," said the writer with a chuckle.

Now that her husband was inside a lock-up and likely to stay there till he is hung or sentenced, who would look after the woman, asked Rangaswamy of himself, seated as he was in a bus on its way to Saidapet.

At Saidapet, he told Ramathilakam and the old quack doctor the tragic tale and wound it all by saying to Ramathilakam: "I have wasted enough time over you. I have my work to do. I am going now and you can go and fall into a well or get run over by a train."

Ramathilakam smiled. "There is no need," she said. "If he is inside a jail and not likely to come out, I think I'll go and work somewhere and earn a living."

The old quack doctor intervened. "No, my dear girl," said he; "the Gods sent you here and here you shall stay."

"I haven't delivered you into the hands of a beast this time," said Rangaswamy Iyer to Ramathilakam and turning to the old man added, "Take care grandpa and don't marry her some day. Keep her indoor as the Madras Police may come nosing round for her."

"Won't you come here sometime to see grandpa?" asked Ramathilakam and Rangaswamy thought there was a catch in her voice.

"I may or may not," said he and strode out of the hut with a sense of relief.

During the week that followed Head-Constable Rangaswamy Iyer was greatly worried over a bruise beneath his left knee which he recollected must have been caused when he climbed over the coupling, in a hurry, the other day. The disappearance of Ramathilakam was not officially taken notice of, as the Inspector Naidu was loath to give publicity to an escapade where he was involved. He even went so far as to suggest to Head-Constable Rangaswamy Iyer not to place on record the handing over of Ramathilakam to the local police as they would be hard put to it to explain her disappearance.

The pain caused by the bruise on the leg became acute and disabled Head-Constable Rangaswamy Iyer. The leg was swollen. He couldn't walk or attend to his duties. When he finally went to a doctor, he was told that he had a lot of sugar in his system and that with care, the wound may heal in a fortnight or two.

He applied for leave and having nowhere to go thought of the old quack doctor at Saidapet. Some one told him that Diabetes could be cured by indigenous drugs. His leg pained him very much indeed and he thought the old doctor might be able to do something to it.

He had a warm welcome from the old man and his protegee. The old man was all praise for Ramathilakam. "She is gold, Swamy, and it is a kindly fate that sent her to me. I have told everybody here that she is my granddaughter. Don't you see a change everywhere in this



.....placed the little one's hand in his.....

hut? It's all her work. And—she thinks you are a God!"

"What nonsense!"

"You see, she thinks, that if you had not saved her, she would have died. Now that her husband is out of the way, she wants to live."

"Well, what do you think of my leg?"

"It is not bad; you say you have a month's leave. Stay with me. I'll put you on diet and treat you. And inside a month, I will drive all the sugar out of you."

"Will I be unfit for service hereafter?"

"Nonsense! You will be as fit as a fiddle."

"How about my food?"

"Oh, we will fix that with the hotel Brahmin. Till you are able to walk, we can ask the hotel people to bring your food and serve it here."

"Are you sure I won't be a nuisance to you?"

"Not at all. Don't I remember all that you have done for me before? But for you, I would be serving a sentence just now."

And so it came to pass that Head-Constable Rangaswamy Iyer had to play the role of an invalid with Ramathilakam always hovering over him and ministering to his comforts. The old quack doctor watched the ancient tale of a man and a maid unfold before him, while from somewhere in the background Cupid, the chubby little rascal, was very much at work.

Three weeks later, one evening, as the old doctor was about to enter his hut after a visit to the bazaar, he heard a peal of joyous laughter inside that made him hesitate on the threshold. It was Ramathilakam and she was saying, "I am only paying back what I owe you. Don't you remember that night when I sprained my leg and had to lean on you all the way?"

"I never can forget that night," Rangaswamy was saying.

"It is your leg now. Come on, walk a few more paces. Take my hand. Lean on me. Ah, there!"

"Teaching him to walk? What next?" wondered the old doctor and stood listening on the threshold for a few minutes. Then he cleared his throat audibly enough to be heard next door, but love is blind—and deaf too, apparently. For, when the old man entered the hut he found the invalid resting, eyes closed, with his head on Ramathilakam's lap, and holding her hand. And Ramathilakam's face glowed with beatific happiness.

* * * *

Thirteen months later, on one moonless dark night, there was a great bustle inside the old quack doctor's hut. On the pial outside, sat Rangaswamy Iyer and the doctor. From inside the house issued moans and cries that unmistakably signified the labours of a woman in the throes of child-birth. Kindly neighbours and the inevitable barber mid-wife flitted to and fro.

"Will it take long?" asked the old man of the barber mid-wife, as she was going in with a pot of hot water.

"I am afraid so."

"Are you sure you don't want a doctor?" asked Rangaswamy.

"There is no doctor here and it is too late to go to Madras and bring one."

She vanished inside the hut as a scream rent the air. Rangaswamy winced. "She is suffering terribly," said he to the old man.

"They are always like that for the first delivery. Don't worry. She is alright," assured the old man.

An hour passed and yet the agony inside the house continued. Even the old man got perturbed and went in to enquire. "It's going to be a difficult case," was all that the mid-wife told him. Two or three women who were inside the hut, wrung their hands and called on all the Gods for help.

"There is a lady at Mount," suggested one.

The mid-wife flared up. "Before you could get her, things would be over here," she said ominously. The old man returned to his seat on the pial.

The cries reached a crescendo. Womenfolk babbled in excitement, and above all and suddenly, the shrill cries of a new-born babe filled the air.

The old man breathed a sigh of relief. A woman came out and cried, "It is a girl!" and vanished again into the hut.

Fifteen minutes later, the barber mid-wife came out and whispered into the old man's ears. He hurried inside, and a few minutes later, one of the women asked Rangaswamy to come in.

On a crude coir-matted cot lay Ramathilakam, her face pale and her eyes wet with tears. By her side snuggled the new-born babe. The old man was sitting on the floor, his head held between his hands. A chimneyless kerosene lamp dimly lit the room and silhouetted the group of women who were standing at a little distance, with dismay written all over their faces.

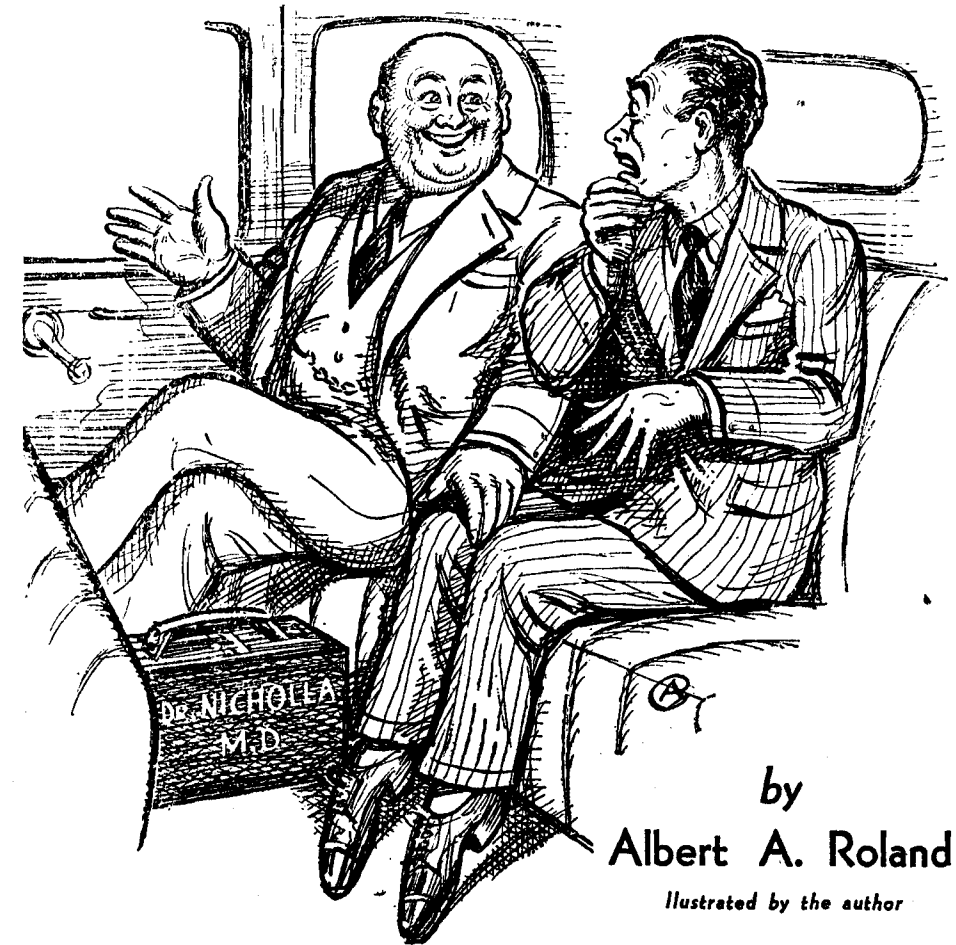
Mutely Ramathilakam asked for Rangaswamy's hand. He gave it to her. Then she turned in her bed with effort and lifting the little one's hand placed it gently in his. Her lips framed some words but she lacked the strength to utter them. She took his other hand and looked at him and smiled, a wan smile. Heaving a sigh, she closed her eyes.

And the next thing that Rangaswamy remembered was the old man removing his hand from hers and saying, "Come, Iyah, the Gods always take away the good ones. She is dead!"

[How does Rangaswamy dispose of the child?
Who is Meena?]

[Another instalment next Saturday]

Awaiting The Stork



by
Albert A. Roland

Illustrated by the author

THE two men in the speedily moving car were not only widely dissimilar in type: there was a very marked difference in their demeanour.

The elder of the two, a plump and rubicund individual of over fifty, sat back luxuriously, and from the genial complacency of his manner one would say he hadn't a care in the world. At his feet was a leather case bearing the inscription: "Dr. NICHOLLA, M.D."

But his companion, a not unhandsome youngster in his early twenties, was pale and fidgety to the point of being distraught.

A casual observer might have cynically guessed that here was the typically anxious father-to-be, hastening along with the typically unfeeling helper-in-distress.

And the casual observer would have guessed aright, as was apparent from the young man's next words:

"Oh, Doctor, this is our first baby, and I'm as nervous as a cat! What beats me is how calmly Mary is taking the whole affair." He smiled wanly. "One would think I was having the baby, not she! Aren't women wonderful?"

"Yes, bless their hearts!" agreed the medico, adding reproachfully: "and they've certainly more sense than men. Your wife knows there's no use working herself up into a panic. She's aware that millions of people are having babies daily. It's by no means a new idea, Mr. Saunders! And nowadays the danger-factor is almost negligible."

"I know all that!" moaned the young man, "but still.....Oh, the relief when it's all over!"

"Come on, snap out of that!" smiled the doctor. "Take your mind off it! We can't have you fainting on our hands, you know! Listen, and I'll amuse you with a few funny stories about maternity."

"Funny maternity stories!" groaned the father-in-waiting. "Ye gods! I can see nothing humorous in the subject! But go on," he continued, forcing himself to grin unnaturally, "I know you're trying to be kind...."

So, Dr. Nicholla stoutly made the following effort:

"I recall the case of a young father, not unlike yourself, and if anything, more distracted. Only there was one difference: he squinted badly—in both eyes. Later, when the stork had been, and he was allowed to hold his offspring, I noticed he was quite beside himself with pride and joy, despite the fact that the baby also squinted."

"He only squints in one eye," I said encouragingly. And what d'you think the blighter answered?

"Yes," he said, "but I can't complain. It's my very first effort, you know!"

There was an ominous silence. The doctor's sally was not rewarded with so much as one glimmer of amusement from the young man. Instead, he said suddenly:

"I don't think that's funny, Doctor, or kind either. Unfortunately, my wife squints, too!"

Apologising profusely, the now crimson-visaged doctor tried again.

"Here's a really comical experience I once had. My assistant was a brilliant young man who had worked himself up from very obscure beginnings. He had been for many years a news-boy in London. A jolly good fellow was Smith. But occasionally he lapsed into the language and habits of his boyhood.....especially when excited. One day, he came rushing out of the ward and almost collided with me in the corridor.

"Under one arm he carried a squawking baby, whilst with the other he held on high another baby. He was almost brandishing the poor mite. And can you guess what he kept yelling down the corridor?"

"No?"

"EXTRA!"

Came another poignant silence. Then:

"Oh, God!" groaned the father-to-be, tearing out a handful of his hair. "Oh, God, and twins run in both our families!"

After some time, the doctor murmured: "It's unfortunate that you haven't a regular family physician. He would know what references to avoid. But see here, young man, I'm determined to make you smile before we reach your home! How about this one?—I'm sure I'm on safe ground here.....

"I was in my consulting room one evening, when one of my young nurses came in and flopped down on a chair, quite exhausted.

"Gee, Doctor," she said, "I'm all in! I've had five babies and two haemorrhoids to-day!"

The young man sat bolt upright, interested at last.

"But, good lord, Doctor!" he cried, "how was that possible?"

"You don't mean to say you missed the joke?" yelled the doctor. "She was referring, of course, to her cases that day."

"Oh, I see!"

And then suddenly the youngster began cackling with laughter. There was a hint of hysteria in his

guffaws, and it was perhaps fortunate that at that moment the doctor called to the driver to stop.

"Why are we stopping?" demanded the still sniggering young man.

"Look there! Isn't that funny?" said the doctor, pointing through the window at a laundry shop plastered with the usual signs, and then to a sign-board which hung from the first floor premises above the shop. It carried the announcement: "The A. B. C. Maternity Home".

"What's funny in 'A. B. C. Maternity Home'?" asked the young man irritably.

"Nothing—but look at the sign belonging to the laundry beneath it, and read the two notices together."

The young man read: "The A. B. C. Maternity Home. Delivery guaranteed after four hours".

He found himself laughing immoderately, but this time quite naturally, so that it was some time before the doctor thought it necessary to speak again.

"How long now?" he asked presently, and when informed that another five minutes would bring them to their destination, he went on: "Well, I've time to tell you just one more story."

And then he told the story of the young man who was sent very suddenly one night to fetch a doctor, but who, being a newcomer to the town, knew of no addresses. So he got a brainwave and rushed into the nearest theatre. He clambered on to the stage, stopping the show, and appealed earnestly to the whole audience: "Is there a Doctor present?"

There was no answer. Then suddenly he realised that it was a conjurer who stood on the stage beside him, and that he had interrupted the artist at the very moment that he was producing a live rabbit from a top-hat.

So, without a moment's hesitation, he grabbed the conjurer by the scruff of his neck and dragged him off the stage, crying: "YOU'LL DO!"

When the laughter had subsided, the doctor said:

"I particularly appreciate this joke, you know, because I myself am closely related to the most famous of all conjurers—Dr. Nikola. In fact, I'm no mean amateur conjurer myself!"

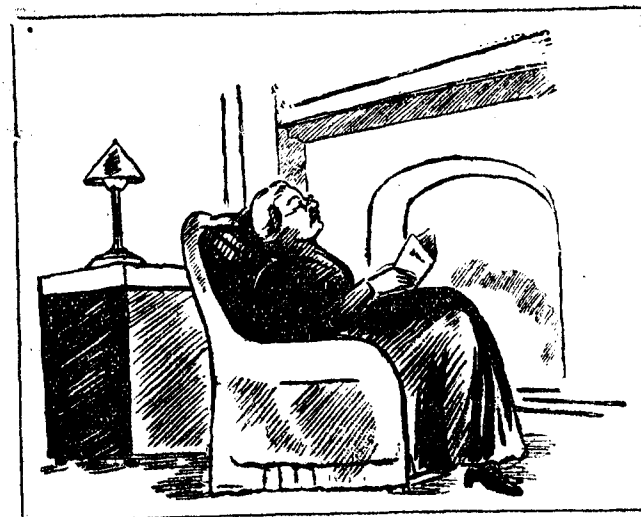
He indicated his case on the floor of the car, and added:

"I spell my name differently now, for obvious reasons—Here, what the devil—!"

The young man had fainted.

And when he came to, he whined imploringly:

"Not rabbits, Doctor! Don't say rabbits!"



I stopped dead on the threshold of the little room and stood looking intently and with a catch at my heart, at the little grey-headed old lady.

She was sitting in her cosiest arm chair, the chair she had been using practically all her life, and which had always been her favourite. The firelight threw little flickering jabs of redness over her sweet, beautiful old face, and the scene brought a lump to my throat. She seemed to be reading something, her glasses perched on the kindly wrinkles of her nose. From where I was, I could see that the book was the large diary she had kept through the long years and which she had often let me read.

The rose-shaded lamp turned everything in the room to soft, glowing, red-gold. The little bric-a-bracs on the wall and the mantel-shelf seemed to cower in the momentary, flashing spasms of shadow caused by the bright fire in the grate. Little things that the old lady had kept for years and years—from the day she had been married, when she was eighteen.

Standing there on the soft door-mat, with its green cheering letters—"Welcome"—I could guess the little old lady's thoughts as she read the diary. You see, she had told me her thoughts so often.

She had married a fine, strong artilleryman, in the days when India did not know what a motor car was; when bullock carts creaked their way over the dusty ribbons of road between more or less civilised stations.

He had been such a charming and fascinating young man, that artillery-man, all that a young and affectionate girl could wish for by way of a husband. Yes, John had been a fine man—then.

Life had gone on fairly happily for a year or two. It was a trying night on which the little old lady, then blossoming out into the glorious beauty of twenty, found that John inherited his father's craving for drink.

Yes, it was a trying night for the first baby was about to be born. John had come into the room just after the little mite had given its first cry on earth. The sight of the mother and the child did not impress his befuddled brain. He was ill on the carpet, and then adopted a horrible, maudlin sort of affection. With tears in her eyes she had repulsed him. She had not thought he could turn into a gibbering, belching nightmare.

Faith

Can Move a Mountain

by J. H. Acott

John was drunk again a few nights later, when the child, a boy, had died. With the nightmare horror of everything that night, the little old lady, even then beginning to feel very old and tired, had been a little mad for a few short minutes. Her anger had got nothing out of him but "Yesh, yesh, I know. Itsh dead. But so's last week's mutton."

And from that time a sort of hard, unyielding courage had been instilled into the soul of the little old lady. She had changed. She knew she would not lose any other children if there were any. She would bring them into the world, wean them and rear them, start them out in life on a path of glinting success. They would have no cause to regret having a mother, even though their father had been an unspeakable beast.

And there had been other children. Six of them. First a boy, then a girl, another girl, a boy and then two girls. They had been all in all to the little old lady, then blossoming out into a kindly, loving matron.

She had watched them grow from toddling lumps of humanity to boisterous, happy children. She had counteracted, as best she could, the alcoholic and bestial atmosphere of their father. They seemed unable to regard him as such. He was 'be' to them.

She had seen them all through school, and grieved deep in her heart each time they left home after their holidays.

Jerry was always the most homesick, and, naturally, towards him she felt an almost unreasoning and crushing love.

And then had come other days. Days which showed that the world was changing, that boys had to work and that families could not exist on a hundred or so rupees a month—with bills for dozens of bottles of liquor. It was veritably impossible to keep John from drink. He drank—and drank.

The time came when the little old lady, then growing into middle age, could stand it no more. She decided to part from John. She intended living with her eldest daughter. Matters were arranged. John left—to drink in solitude in the vast city of Calcutta.

John must have had a small particle of good in him, somewhere deep in the intoxication of his mind and soul, for he made his wife a small allowance.

(Continued on page 41.)

The Increment

by 'The Silent Watcher'

Sketches by Mali

LATELY the work in the Urban Bank which had the privilege of having secured my services, had become so heavy, that it was only the amusing company of Balu and Gopal after office hours which gave my brain some relaxation and prevented me from going mad. Each evening when I got home I would curl up in the easy chair, sip some coffee, and curl up again.

Conversation between Balu and Gopal was usually entertaining, but to-day I was hardly listening to them. I was considering whether it was advisable to approach my boss for an increment in my salary. My thoughts were disturbed by the following conversation:—

"Honesty is the best policy, if you are likely to be found out."

Thus spoke Gopal, and I could feel that he spoke from experience.

"But if you are very careful?" asked Balu.

"Ah, well, then of course, it is different!"

"Because," continued Balu, "in this *Kali Yuga* in which, unfortunately, we are born—"

"—for no fault of ours —" interrupted Gopal.

"—for no fault of ours," added Balu slightly irritated, but agreeing whole-heartedly with that parenthetical clause, "the word 'Honesty' is a very mis-used term. If I slap you on your back heartily to congratulate you upon something, it is no crime, and yet if done angrily, it is considered an offence and I am liable for prosecution and what not. The pain on your back in either case is just the same."

While I certainly did not call either Balu or Gopal my friends, they took it for granted that they were, and I being a bachelor and living alone, my room was usually our meeting place. Balu and Gopal, too, were still unmarried, but since Gopal lived with his parents, and Balu much against his wishes was putting up with some distant relations of his, they found my room most convenient to meet. The reason for those distant relations being so keen on Balu staying with them was that they had a daughter of marriageable age, quite in accordance with the Sarda Act, and though Balu for the present was earning only Rs. 100 a month, they took it for granted that he would soon inherit from his father a couple of large houses in the city, a large amount of cash and a larger piece of land, marry their daughter, and live happily ever after.

Balu was not very keen on this girl; firstly because the right eye of the girl had a squint, and as for the left, there wasn't any left. Secondly Balu had

fallen headlong in love with another girl altogether. It seemed she was a fairy. He had not given us more details and we did not press him further.

Again I was engrossed in my thoughts.

After considerable thought I decided to ask our Manager for the rise. I knew I had won good opinion all round. Any way they would give me an increment after the next Board Meeting, but that was three months ahead, and if I asked for a rise now, they could not very well refuse, in consideration of the work that I was turning out lately.

While I was deep in these thoughts, exciting plans, it seemed, were going on in my neighbourhood. I was jerked back to the living world by Balu addressing me.



"So, Raja, you don't think I would in anyway be infringing the law, do you?"

"Oh," I said startled, "not at all."

"Then when shall we put our plan into action?"

"To-morrow morning," I said promptly.

Balu and Gopal stared at me, and I knew I had blurted out some nonsense without getting the hang of the topic.

"As a matter of fact," I began, "I was more or less thinking—"

"—dozing, you mean—"

"—and so did not follow you."

"Then listen," said Gopal, "Balu is again in love."

"What do you mean by again?" ejaculated Balu.

"Well, from all reports, you had fallen in love with that mono-eyed cousin of yours, and had—"

"I say, have mercy upon me!" cried Balu. "Isn't it enough to live under the same roof as that ugly witch—"

"Bitch?"

"Witch, I said,—without all of you reminding me of it? To be exact, we have, that is this new girl,

whose identity for the present I will not reveal, and I have been seeing each other and writing each other for over a month. She is a very beautiful girl and very intelligent."

"I can't say anything about beauty," I said, "but I very much doubt her intelligence if that has prompted her to choose you as her future husband."

"You may make fun of me if you want to," cried Balu, "but I know that this is going to be the happiest marriage on earth. A runaway marriage! Just think of it, Raja. What excitement! What ro—"

"You had better be careful, my boy! Running away with girls is considered a crime and—"

"But the girl is a major, and it is with her full consent," cried Balu excitedly. "I have considered the legal aspect, and am quite safe."

"By the way," I asked, "who is this girl? Whose daughter, or sister or wife does she happen to be? Who are her relations?"

"I don't know myself," said Balu. "The only thing I know about her, God bless her, is that she is beautiful and that her name is Leela. She did not question me much about myself and I too did not pester her with too many questions. But what do these details matter? She is beautiful and loves me and I love her. But of this much I am sure: she is still unmarried, so my conscience is clear."



"Sir, can you spare me a couple of minutes?"

Our conversation was interrupted by the entrance of our Bank peon. Handing me an accounts book and an envelope, he stood aside.

"My God!" I cried after reading the letter, "the whole Bank seems to have conspired to kill me. I have to finish this work before I go to office tomorrow."

And dismissing the peon, I drove Gopal and Balu out and sat down to tackle the work.

The next morning, having finished the task and having made up my mind to ask for the increment, and if refused, to resign on the spot, I entered my Manager's office.

"Good morning, sir," I said, "I have finished the work. I sat at it nearly the whole night, but I have done it."

"Very good, my boy; I knew you were the only man I could depend upon," the Manager beamed upon me.

"Sir, can you spare me a couple of minutes?" I asked. "My work is getting heavy, far too heavy for me, and I feel that I have a right to a better salary than what I am drawing at present."

"That is the exact subject which has been occupying my thoughts for the last one week or so. Of course, the most that I could have done for you would have been a recommendation, but taking your case as an exceptional one I shall put your name before the Board on Monday and see that you get a substantial rise."

"Thank you, sir," I said, and that concluded the interview.

In spite of the hard work of the previous night, I was feeling exceptionally bucked up. My Manager's promise was responsible for this. When I approached my quarters I saw Balu and Gopal standing in the verandah, evidently awaiting my arrival. As soon as I had climbed the last steps, Balu caught me and pushed me inside the room, bolted the door and said in a whisper:

"We have decided to finish the job to-night."

"What job?" I asked. Being engrossed in my own thoughts for the last few hours, I was more or less out of touch with the things of the world.

"He means," explained Gopal, "that he is going to do the kidnapping stunt to-night, and wants us to help him."

This sort of thing unbalances the coolest of heads, and just then I was anything but cool. It took me several seconds to grasp the full significance of those words, and then in spite of the promises I had given, commonsense prevailed and I began to hesitate.

"But Balu, have you ever—"

"Don't you back out, you funk! A promise is a promise. No great deed was done half-heartedly. The responsibility of the risk is entirely upon my shoulders, and you have to do just a little of this and a little of that and the job is finished."

"I see," said I.

"The plan so far chalked out is this," continued Balu. "You and I will start from here at midnight in a taxi. I think we can permit ourselves the luxury of a taxi. We will go to the house of the future Mrs. Balu.

In the meanwhile Gopu will be there, outside her house, equipping himself with a ladder. She will be at the window. Gopu will hold the ladder, you will climb it, take the bundle of clothes or whatever the bundle contains from her hands. You will help her get down and then climb down yourself after her. I will be in the taxi at the corner of the road. You will all come there, give Leela in my charge, take a receipt for her if you want one, and then go home taking the ladder with you."

"And where will you go?" I asked.

"We will stop somewhere for the night and catch the first train in the morning for Bombay. No more one-eyed hags for me. I leave them to you with my blessings."

"Thank you!"

"I shall be back here after a couple of months, and now I must go arrange other matters." With that he was gone.

I had already begun to feel lonely. When Balu was gone we would find it a difficult job to amuse ourselves. I had already made plans for the expenditure of the extra remuneration. I intended to move to better quarters, and buy a Radio set. But Balu would not be with us to share the fun. I felt miserable.

To the other people who made up the vast population of the city, that night perhaps did not differ in any way from the rest of the nights. But to me everything was sinister. The stars as they twinkled in the sky winked at me as if they understood my plans. The moon too, as it sailed in and out of the clouds seemed to be aware of nefarious deeds on the Earth below.

The time-piece on my table pointed to 11.45. I had dressed up long ago. Climbing down the stairs, I found a taxi, got in and stopped in front of the Modern Hotel where Balu was to join me. I had not to wait long there. The streets through which Balu made the *chauffeur* drive, were not familiar to me, but this much I gathered: we were taking a circuitous route. At a corner of a road we stopped and met Gopal. I got down and followed him a few yards, leaving Balu in the taxi.

"This reminds me—"

"Sssshh!" said Gopal, and the eyes that stared at me in semi-darkness reminded me that we were in enemy's territory. We stopped at a two-storeyed house.

Out of the shadows of the wall Gopal produced a ladder and propped it against the wall, and signed me to climb.

A clock somewhere struck twelve.

Everything had gone off as planned. I looked up. A figure appeared at the top. I climbed. Leela, it must have been Leela, greeted me.

"Is everything alright?" she whispered.

"So far, yes," I whispered back, "that is, if you are Leela."

"Yes, I am."

I took the bundle which she held in her hands and helped her climb down. She had hardly touched the last steps when I heard a door open behind me and a voice cried:

"Leela! Leela!"

I turned round. A man came out through the door towards me, calling: "Leela!"

It was only after coming very near me that he discovered that I was not Leela. Meanwhile my position was every moment becoming more and more embarrassing. The sound of a ladder whisked off was the climax to the situation. My heart stopped beating and got stuck in my throat. The man caught hold of my arm and said:

"Don't try to escape, you thief! Where is my daughter?"

As if in answer to his question, the sound of a taxi engine starting came to my ear, the car getting into gear

followed it, a couple of hoots from the horn and the taxi was out of ear-shot.

"I think I can explain," I stuttered.

"You think you can explain kidnapping my daughter? Well, go on then," said the man and switched the light on.

The sudden glare of the light dazed me for a couple of seconds. The same must have been the effect upon my captor. Then I blinked at him.

He was my Bank Manager!

It was a very painful scene that followed.

Increment? I am hunting jobs now!

Parallelograms

by H. S. P.

IN a book published in New York, in 1852, by one Mrs. Oakes-Smith, she writes "I lately found in an old astrological work, the horoscope of the Prince of Wales (George IV), together with that of a little chimney-sweep, ushered into the world the same day and hour that witnessed the birth of the slip of Royalty, and who was therefore christened by the name of 'Prince George'. One child wrapped in purple, the other rolled in a sooty blanket; yet the same stars, indicating a similarity of destiny, and in result whimsically verified. Of the career of the Prince of Wales it is unnecessary to speak—his follies, his perjuries were all royal, and this fellow, the sweep, was not a jot behind him. The broom and scraper were found as ill adapted to the hands of one as sceptre to the hands of the other. The parents of 'Prince George' tired of his profligacy, finally established him as a tallow chandler. He was now a ruler with apprentices and coteries about him, and could follow the bent of his genius. He was handsome, courteous, gallant, a spendthrift and a gamester before he was 20. He soon became famous in his own sphere, dressed in the best style of his class, was the idol of the women, the essence of politeness, the greatest bettor and gamester at all the races and fairs within ten miles of London, and finally kept the best asses, and ran the best donkey races of the day. All this time his Royal compeer was working out a destiny perfectly analogous, except that one is 'high life above, the other below stairs'—the one races with a blood horse, the other with a donkey. But all glory must have an end; the Prince of Wales became bankrupt, and 'Prince George' smashed. The very day that the stud of His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, was sold by Tattersall, the racing donkeys and ponies of 'Prince George' were also put to the hammer.

Another instance is that of George III. In the newspapers of February 1820, the death of Mr. Samuel Hemmings was noticed. It was stated that he was an ironmonger and prosperous in trade—that he was born on the 4th of June 1738, at nearly the same moment as His late Majesty, George The Third, and in the same parish of St. Martin's-in-the-fields: that he went into business for himself in October 1760, when his late Majesty came to the throne; that he married on the 8th of September 1761, the same day as the King; and finally that he died on Saturday, January 29th, 1820, on the same day and nearly the same hour as his late Majesty.

To these might be added the third, the Late King Edward VII, with whom was born another man at Walthamstow on November 9th 1841, who died on May 6th 1910, the same day as His Late Majesty. Various other parallel incidents were noticed in his life. There is also the well-known Kaiser's double whose children have been born on the same date of those of the Kaiser who also had an identical horoscope with his Royal compeer.

DO YOU KNOW?



1. Which English queen had the largest number of children?
2. What book written about 300 B. C. is still used in most high schools and colleges?
3. What is Travertine?
4. Which was the first British Colony to receive full Dominion Status?

See answers on page 38.

The Letters of Private

No. 52. At The Fair

Madras, 8th, June, 1935.

DEAR MOTHER,

LAST week I told you about the fair up in the North-Country hills, and the people I met there. It was a holy fair, and you will remember how I made friends with the priest.

When I took leave of the priest, and turned towards the amusement-grounds, the first thing to catch my eye was the giant wheel. The wheel was raised on two stout poles, and wooden cradles hung at the extremities of the spokes. When the wheel was turned, the cradles whirled round and round, at one moment high in the air, at the next brushing the ground.

This primitive but exciting contrivance was undoubtedly the grand sensation of the fair. Young and old crowded to take turns, and I was surprised to notice that the older element predominated. Fathers and grand-fathers were as eager as the smallest children. The elders crowded into the cradles, two to a cradle, and were whirled round. They sat like images of Buddha, enjoying the ride with expressions of delirious complacency. Some of the younger women waved and shrieked to their friends, but the staid matrons evinced a little embarrassment at being so publicly exhibited during their enjoyment. The young men showed off by recklessly standing in their cradles, risking being brained at every revolution of the wheel, while the young women watched their foolhardiness with coyly-adoring eyes. The most astonishing exhibition was when

a very fat sub-inspector of the State Police took a ride. He had a cradle all to himself, and sat in it with the greatest dignity. As he went round, he surveyed the crowd with the air of a great man who condescends to unbend for a moment.

I reminded the proprietor that the sub-inspector had not paid his fare, but the proprietor, who had been chatting to me quite intelligently, suddenly seemed unable to understand me. When the sub-inspector descended from his cradle, I pointed out that he owed my friend two *pice*, but the sub-inspector was just as dense about it as the proprietor.



Joyfull

Sketches by Mali

A lot of children were gazing at the wheel with wistful eyes, and I got the idea that for a mere four annas I could make them all happy. When the news got round, quite sixteen children packed themselves into the cradles for this specially-chartered trip. I felt like a millionaire, and reflected that in India it is possible to give greater happiness, at a smaller expenditure of money, than in any other country. These children followed me about for the rest of the afternoon, crying, "Hurrah for the Maharajah!"

I wandered on into the thick of the crowd, and came to a man who was tattooing all and sundry with an electric needle. He had a book displaying all kinds of designs.

You could have a little flower on the back of your hand for two annas, or half the Hindu pantheon on your chest for five rupees. The tattoo-man wasted a lot of time between each operation, because every customer wanted to have a four-anna design for three annas. I thought the tattooing rather a repulsive custom, carried out in a very dirty manner; but I must admit it is popular among the more uneducated of my own people.

The man had a big piece of painted canvas to advertise his trade. The centre-piece was a large portrait of Krishna and his bride, but it was so execrably drawn that it put my teeth on edge. The artist was not possessed of even the elementary knowledge that we



acquire in our village schools, and the God and his Consort were squinting most horribly. Begging permission of the owner, I took some pigments and corrected the squint, so that the deities were not quite so hideous. The man watched me wonderingly, and evidently failed to understand what I had done. I showed him some of the simple rules of drawing, and everyone crowded round and said that *sahibs* were clever and knew everything. One old lady got frightened, and cried out that the eye I had drawn was looking at her from the paper, and it was magic. But when the tattooist next put a portrait of Krishna on someone's arm, he drew it with the same squint and disproportions as before, though I noticed he carefully preserved the paper on which I had illustrated my drawing-lesson.

All this time, I was aware of a certain man being at my elbow, and watching everything that I did. He had sly eyes, and a beard which was tied to his face in a

kind of hair-net. I hurried away to get rid of him, and went to where some gipsy-girls were dancing and singing songs. They were accompanied by an old rascal who played on a gourd and a set of drums. As soon as I arrived, the gipsy-girls changed their song, and began to look at me in a coy manner, and to sway their bodies. All the bystanders were very amused.

To my annoyance, the man with his beard in a net was beside me again. "These women belong to a criminal tribe," he said in a disapproving voice, "and they are insulting you."

"It is harmless," I replied. "They always sing rude songs about Europeans, and it amuses the audience."

But the man would not leave me alone. He stood in front of me, and insisted on knowing my name, and my regiment, and whence I came, and what was my business at the fair.

I was compelled to be rude. "Please go away," I said, "and mind your own business."

The man looked at me with very large eyes, and whispered impressively, "It is my business. I am an Inspector of Police in plain clothes."

I think he expected me to be terrified, which puzzled me. I had been afraid he was an extremist who wanted to make trouble because I was a soldier, so I was quite relieved to hear he was only a policeman.

"Good!" I said. "In that case, you will realise that I am a member of the public, innocently enjoying myself; and that I do not have to account to anyone. I was rather annoyed at your following me about. Now that you have confessed yourself to be a public servant, I require you, in the name of the law, to leave me in peace."

The man seemed taken aback at my words. "I tell you, I am a Police Inspector!" he repeated, working his eyes as if to strike me with fear.

"That's all right," I replied kindly. "So long as you go away, and do your duty quietly, I will not make any bad report about you."

The man went away looking perplexed and sorrowful. I saw him in the distance several times during the afternoon, and once when I was talking to the priest, he asked the latter if I were an officer. I think the priest told him that I was a learned man and a very high officer. He went around asking other people about me, and I imagine he must have been very puzzled by the replies he got.

I next watched a jungle-man with a bear. At first it was very amusing, because the bear was docile, and seemed to enjoy performing its tricks. But after a while I got annoyed at the cruelty of its master. The bear was a simple friendly creature, that once roamed the Himalayan jungles and ate honey, and harmed no living thing. Yet the bear-leader hit it with a stick to make it squeal and roar and roll on the ground in agony, so that people would think that it was savage and dangerous.

The man brought the bear to me, and made it beg for a present. I took out four annas, and the man stretched out his hand eagerly; but with the four annas I called a hawker and bought a great handful of sweets called *jelabies*, and gave them to the bear. I took off its muzzle to let it eat in comfort, and patted it and said kind words. The man danced round, rather like his own bear, and seemed angry. He shouted that the bear would hurt me; but it put one paw round my shoulder, and ate

the *jelabies* with the other paw, and looked so contented that the people laughed.

After that, I spent an hour watching the wrestling. I think it was a sort of village championship, because a stocky little man stood in the middle of the ring, and slapped his chest and boasted; and at intervals one of the bystanders rushed forward and challenged him to wrestle. The stocky little man was an expert, and generally put the yokels on their backs in a few moments. The yokels retired looking crestfallen, and sometimes saying angry words. All the while, four policemen with *lathis* walked round and round the ring, never stopping. They looked as if they expected a riot.

Now and again, a local lad would put up a great fight against the champion, and everybody got fearfully excited. Generally, the local lad got into a safe position and hung on like grim death, while the champion struggled to subdue him. Some of these trails of tenacity went on for ten minutes, until the suspense was overwhelming. But in the end, the champion always won.

When I got tired of the wrestling, I wandered away to a quieter spot. Here I found a dozen hill-women all sitting together and singing. They were not professional singers, but sang because they were happy. They sang slow, sad, tuneful songs, and I sat and listened to them, quite entranced. Suddenly, from the middle of the group, up popped a fierce man, who glared at me jealously. Then his face broke into a smile, and he said, "It is the *sahib* who came to see the fair." The group began to tell each other about my adventures with the priest, and the giant wheel, and the tattoo-man, and the bear; in fact, they had heard all about me. I waited, but the hill-women talked about me instead of singing, so I saluted them and took my departure.

In the middle of the fair-ground was a kind of open-air market, with trinkets and goods spread on the ground. I was surprised to notice that most of the objects were of a utilitarian nature. There were flimsy padlocks, cheap handkerchiefs, little mirrors, rat-traps, and fine-toothed combs for catching fleas.

Most of the people bought two articles, one useful, and the other a mere trinket. There were great heaps of glass bangles and Japanese toys. One dealer was selling little spectacles made of red celluloid. You could not see through them, but they gave your face a very surprising appearance. Nearly every child had a pair, so that they all looked like demon motorists, with their spectacles pushed up on their foreheads.

I took my last look at the fair. Young men were sitting in the trees, piping little tunes on wooden flutes. The wheel still whirled round. Sudden roars of excitement came from the wrestling-ground. The air throbbed with the noise of drums, and with bladder-whistles, and the shrieks of happy voices. Men of all classes were racing swagged from one attraction to the next. Young women ran about, calling excitedly to each other. Happy children straggled everywhere, or sat in solemn repletion, crammed with sweets. The older women sat in huddles, talking of family affairs. Young dandies roamed about, looking at everything, and holding hands. The vendors cried their wares and cooked their dainties. The noise, the smoke, the odours, the laughter, the bright colours, and the movement, made one of the happiest pictures I have ever seen.

Your Loving Son,
OBEAH JOYFULL.

Herr Hitler has cancelled the ban on Pola Negri and says she can act in Germany. Two weeks ago he said she shouldn't act. What's he trying to do now? Start an argument?

Hollywood is watching with amused interest the triangle within a triangle that is created by the presence of Jed Harris, ex-Broadway producer in the movie village.

Mr. Harris, not so long ago, was the persistent escort of Ruth Gordon, the stage star, the persistent escort that is, until a little unknown actress named Margaret Sullavan came along. Little Miss Sullavan, having recently separated from her husband, Henry Fonda, proceeded to star in a Harris production and to go about places with the producer thus replacing Ruth Gordon.

So what happens now? Mr. Harris is in Hollywood. So, too, is Ruth Gordon, about to start a movie career. And so is Henry Fonda, who will play opposite Janet Gaynor in *The Farmer Takes A Wife*. And Margaret Sullavan is due back almost any day with her new bridegroom, William Wyler. Hollywood simply can't wait to see what happens when they all bump into each other, as they inevitably will.

Ubiquitous Mickey Mouse

Walt Disney's Mickey Mouse has become a world citizen. In France, he is known as Michel Souris; in Germany, Michael Maus; Japan, Miki Kuchi; Spain, Miquel Ratonocito, also Miquel Pericote; Greece, Mikel Mus; Italy, Michele Jopolino.

Hollywood Vs. London

The outstanding feature of the last film year was the prominence of England in both London and Hollywood—not only the filming of tales actually laid in English settings, but also of the achievements of Englishmen in all parts of the world.

The British market, of enormous importance in Hollywood, has been a failing market for American films because so many of them have exploited subjects which have been alien or distasteful to both.

Unless British goodwill can be regained, Hollywood will be compelled to scale down its productions to second-rate dimensions.

Meanwhile British films have grown steadily in quality, and now one of the most important films in the



STAR DUST

world is *The Private Life of Henry VIII*. There is every reason to suppose that London Film Productions will be able to improve upon it, and indeed, that with the H. G. Wells story, *The Shape of Things to Come*, the London firm will achieve the remarkable feat of producing the film of the year for two years in succession. Among other notable English films produced are *Cecil Rhodes*; *Soldiers Three*; *Mary, Queen of Scots*; *Sorrell and Son* and *Lorna Doone*.

Apparently to compete with such British productions, Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer are coming out with *David Copperfield*, *Kim*, *Captains Courageous*, *Barretts of Wimpole Street*, and *Treasure Island*. Two of the most important pictures undertaken by Warners are *A Tale of Two Cities* and *The British Agent*, both starring Leslie Howard.

Other films from Hollywood are to be *A Fugitive from Glory*, based on the adventures of Lawrence of Arabia; *Jane Eyre*, and *Elizabeth and Mary* (with the new star Margaret Sullavan).

Hollywood is thus making a spectacular effort to re-capture the British fans.

Rosemary Ames has just had her fondest wish granted—she is to play the role of mother to Shirley Temple. The reason is that she has a kid of her own living with 'Daddy' in Chicago. Rosemary misses her baby so much that she wants to play mamma to somebody.

The favourite moving picture stars in France are Wallace Beery, James Cagney, Dick Powell and Kay Francis.

While Wallace Beery was in New York, he called Mrs. Beery every night on the telephone. He also talked with Carol Ann. One night, Carol Ann tried to tell him what she wanted him to bring her from the Big City. Wallace couldn't understand her but he tried hard because it was his last night there. At last he got it—Carol Ann wanted "...a wash-board for my baby tub"

The telephone call for the wash-board cost Wallace Beery 48 dollars!

The Ubiquitous

WE in India are a warm-hearted race, full of emotional response. Our languages are therefore richer than English in the vocabulary of relationship. Our sense of reverence leads to the careful difference between an elder and a younger brother or sister, as between an elder and a younger brother of the father. The father's sister, is again distinguished from the uncle's wife. What associations the *attai* and the *ammami* call up in my mind, the one a proud, indifferent and unwomanly woman, the other a virago, lazy and inhospitable. The uncles themselves are distinguished between the paternal and the maternal. Our vernaculars have also words for the two parties who contract a matrimonial alliance between their children. How stupid is the English word 'brother-in-law' again! No one can tell if it is the wife's brother or the sister's husband, and yet we are likely to have marked associations about each. The wife's brother may be a lazy dependent on his sister's charity, and the sister's husband the brilliant member of a profession; yet the

same word must signify both. Or it may be the reverse, and the defective character of the vocabulary is equally evident.

Now for the 'co-son-in-law'. An ugly word surely, but still it may prove a convenient gift to English. Social and family traditions are naturally different in India and in England. To a man the mother-in-law is not the terror in India that she is certainly in England. But what about the ubiquitous co-son-in-law? The bond between two men whom two sisters have married is proverbially very strong in this country, while he who has married your wife's sister is hardly your relation in England. Vertebrate men reject the kinship built on their wives' relations. A too lively sense of kinship with the co-son-in-law is certainly symptomatic of petticoat government.

A character in Shakespeare complained that 'misery acquaints a man with strange bedfellows'. What strange juxtapositions may not occur among men who marry sisters! Mr. Sivaraman is a celebrity of the university world, who commands the respect of the biggest in the land and enjoys an international reputation as well. But Mr. Sivaraman's co-son-in-law, alas, has served unending terms of imprisonment for cheating and is even now doing a six-year term. The sharper who so often claims the state's hospitality found it easy some times to get enlarged on bail, by mentioning his kinship with Mr. Sivaraman. Mr. Sivaraman's children feel a sharp sense of shame when their aunt's husband is mentioned. Why should they? They may be answerable for the aunt's doings, but who can be responsible for a stranger who happens to be married to the aunt.

Have you observed the keen sense of comradeship between two co-sons-in-law? Even two brothers are not



.....the one a proud, unwomanly woman.....

Co-son-in-law

by 'KAY'
Sketches by Mali

so cordial to each other, as they. This alliance which is stronger than nature and reason may warrant, must be diabolical. The one is perhaps duping the other. I know a couple of them who used to be together for every summer holiday, one an official and the other a wealthy *vakil*, who felt flattered by the kinship to the official. The official saw his chance and mulcted the "co" to get some of his own expenses paid by the other. Radhakrishnan is a Judge up in the North. His wife's sister is the third wife of Venkataraman, the broker, who lives in George Town. Venkataraman and his wife are the judge's greatest well-wishers, and never fail to acquaint them with the latest fashions in the city, and help them to make all their purchases in the city. Why is it that Venkataraman is filled with genuine exultation when the judge buys diamonds, a motor car, or a house in the city?

A Sanskrit text says that the son-in-law is the tenth planet affecting the destinies of a man. We easily recognise the scheming son-in-law who sponges on the father-in-law. Though he is an official (of modest status) he takes leave for months and months and lives at his father-in-law's, with his numerous brood. It is not of course to save his own expenses that he does this, but to give the aged parents-in-law the welcome company of himself and his family. He obliges them by driving their car all over the country, lest it should rust for want of use, and the father-in-law will feel it an insult if the son-in-law should pay for petrol for his trips in the father-in-law's car. When the father-in-law is no more, the scheming son-in-law turns to his "co". He speaks softly to his wife's sister and gets a double dose of hospitality in his house. He may try to establish himself comfortably in the "co's" house, and if the "co" is man enough to resent the invasion, the schemer may resort to the satanic pleasure of setting the "co" and his wife against each other.

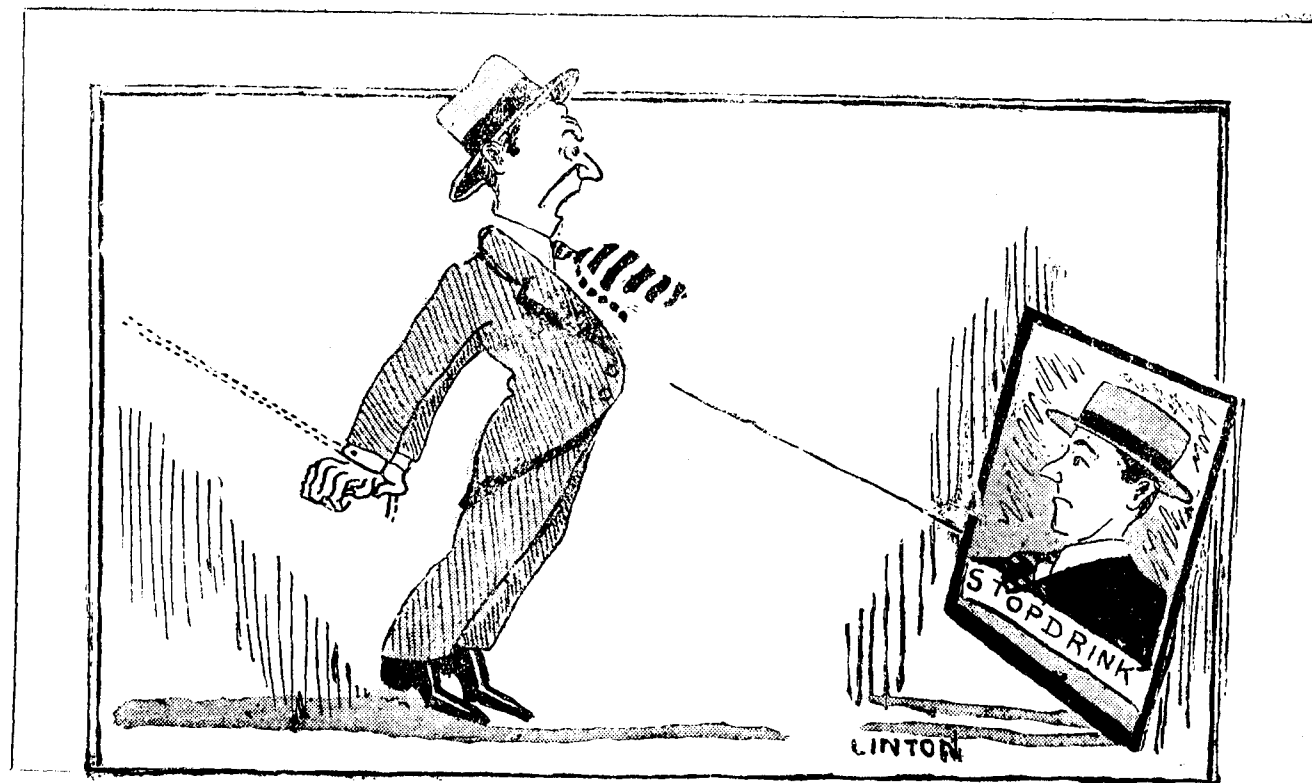
A couple of sisters may resemble each other very much, the fond mother strives to balance her affection exactly between the two. But the divergences occur soon

enough. The husbands influence their character, one becomes coarse and the other more and more refined. The differences are concretised in the children. The children of one are dark in colour and dirty, they are wantonly cruel to others, and often get into nasty situations. The children of the other are fair and clean in appearance, behave gently, and win the admiration of others.

Bah! this brotherhood of the co-son-in-law is an absurdity. You may with better sense speak of the brotherhood of railway passengers or of theatre-goers. Beware of the "co"!



.....the other a virago, lazy and.....



A Plea to Advertisers

by R. Linton

Illustrated by the author

ADVERTISING, we all agree, is the 'life-blood of trade', and without it we would be lost.

Still, it is necessary for me to comment rather adversely on certain advertisements that have recently been very lavishly displayed. If an advertiser, without meaning it, does a fellow damage, it ought to be considered a tort and everybody knows that a tort is a thing that Magna Charta kicks up a devil of a fuss about. Says it oughtn't to be, and so on.

Now I would like to draw your attention to an advertisement of the 'Stopdrink Infallible Treatment' which has appeared profusely in the papers for the past month or so.

The testimonial of a satisfied user says: "For years the demon (whisky) held me in its grip: I was a helpless victim of alcohol." Several times a week I had to be assisted into a taxi by a friend. In my home I was a fiend. My poor mother was generally in a half-starved condition and was compelled to live on long sighs and spasmodic gasps. At times, in fits of passion, I would even beat my dog about the head with my tennis racket.....One day a friend of mine told me of....." (Signed, R. L.)

Now I would like to bring to your notice the fact that not only is my name Raymond Linton—you get the

idea? R. L.—Raymond Linton—but the accompanying drawing that goes hand-in-hand with the testimonial is, line for line, a perfect representation of me. That wouldn't be so bad; but when you consider my face as being what you would call a stock face—like 6's in footwear—it goes to prove what I'm driving at.

As a result I figure in another advertisement as a perfectly bald man who has found salvation by the use of 'Hair-in-a-Jiffy Lotion'. Also as an unhappy sufferer from recurrent attacks of pimples, cured by the renowned emollient 'Pimplene'. And finally as the man who in six months added nearly two inches to his height by merely fixing some fancy gadgets to his shoes.

Now I want you to understand my position. There is a girl who lives somewhere in the neighbourhood. And she represents to me all that is sweet and whole some to a grass-widower. I often meet her at dances and such like and I am trying very hard to inspire in her a tender regard for me.

Yet this girl reads periodicals. When she picks up a magazine she must naturally go through the advertisements. It is then that the extraordinary resemblance between myself and those testimonials

(Continued on page 32.)

Sudha

by 'Henman'

Illustrated by 'ESVI'

SHYAMALABAI, sitting near the dim kerosene lamp in her kitchen, cooking the supper, saw a shadow flit across the threshold and looked up to see who it was.

"May I come in, mother?" asked a sweet voice, with just a suspicion of a tremor in it.

"Oh, is that you, Sudha? Why, yes, of course. Don't you know that you are always welcome in my house?"

Sudha entered and stood silently by the old woman, her head bent down and her dainty hands mercilessly crumpling a silk kerchief.

"Why, what is the matter, darling? You seem to be upset. Sit down, sit down by my side and tell me what troubles you," said Shyamalabai, looking up at the sweet face clouded by sorrow.

"It is your son," murmured Sudha.

"Oh, what did he do, darling? I thought you two were great chums."

The girl lifted up the kerchief to her eyes.

"There, there, don't you start weeping, darling," said the old woman, pulling Sudha down by her side and patting her back. "Didn't all your education teach you anything better? You must try to be self-possessed always, dear."

"Yes, yes, it is all very well for the mother of a mischievous boy to say that."

"My boy! What did he do, darling? Did he call you names? Did he.....?"

"Does a girl run to you with a complaint if she is simply abused?"

"What did he do to you, darling? Haven't I been your best adviser and friend all these four years since I moved into your neighbourhood? Why do you hesitate to tell me?"

"He—he—mis—misbehaved," said the girl, bursting into tears and reclining her head on the old lady's shoulder for support.

"Goodness, what a wicked boy! But, Sudha dear, you forgot one thing. You know that I have been discussing with your parents your marriage with my son, and they—noble souls that they are—have condoned my poverty. Don't you remember, Sudha, darling—there, there, don't rub your eyes out like that. They are already blood-red. Don't you remember, just two years ago, during your elder sister's wedding, we all had great fun in the mock marriage we staged between you and my boy? You naughty girl, you pretended perfect shyness even to mention Balu's name when the other girls teased you. All that must have made him so free

with you, you know. Can't you excuse him, darling? Isn't he your own Balu?"

"And that is why, perhaps, he disgraced me."

And Sudha began to sob afresh.

"Bear up, bear up, poor darling. These boys of the present day are all bad. You should be indulgent about them."

"So, after all, the blame is on me."

"Oh, no, darling. But, Sudha dear," and the old lady moved closer still to the girl and whispered in her ear, "do tell me what he actually did, darling, and let me know how far his wickedness has gone. The rogue!"

"I was playing in my garden in the arbour near the compound-wall. He suddenly jumped over the wall, rushed to me, and before I knew what happened, lifted me in his arms and began kissing my lips! I could not even scream."

"And then?"

"And then, I beat him and pinched his shoulders and managed to cry, 'Let me down, let me go!' 'I won't let you go until I have kissed you enough, darling', he said, and kissed me again."

"That is too bad of him, really, too bad! But do you mind it really, Sudha? Can't you forgive him? You know by next June you will have been married to him. And then.....Now look at me, Sudha. Look at me and smile."

"It would have been all right if I had been alone. I had two friends with me. They saw all and laughed and ran away. Oh! how am I going to show my face to those girls?"

And Sudha burst into tears again.

"Goodness, is that so? How blind the boy was! Don't you worry, darling. I know how to punish him. Be sure I will teach him to behave. Now, ease your mind, Sudha dear, and go and forget it. It is getting late."

* * * *

Fifteen minutes later Balu entered the house, whistling a tune and beating time on his left hand with his tennis racket.

"Is supper ready, mother? I'm awfully hungry. Had five sets of tennis to-day and beat all the blighters in the Club. Isn't that great, mother? I deserve to marry the Zamindar's daughter for my play, but the pity is, the Zamindar has no daughter."

"Shut up, for heaven's sake. I have heard of your exploit. I only wonder why you are not ashamed of yourself."

"Ashamed! Why should I be ashamed? It is those fools that should be ashamed, those who can't escape me."

"Yes, I know. Rogues usually crack petty jokes to ease their minds, specially after committing a criminal deed."

"Criminal, did you say, mother? Criminal indeed! You are old-fashioned, mother, and you have always your sympathy for the vanquished. You can't appreciate the valour of the conqueror, and you call him a criminal. You poor old darling! It is all because you are so good—good to blindness."

"I'm sick of it all, my son. Your father never dreamt that you would sully his name like this. He was lucky enough to pass away and leave me to bear all this disgrace."

"Father would never call it disgrace. Father was so different from you. He too was old-fashioned, but he could understand. Why, if he were living to-day, he would have said, 'Bravo, my son!'"

"Will you shut up or shall I strangle myself?" shouted the lady from the kitchen.

"Why, what happened, mother? Are you really angry?" asked Balu, and rushed into the kitchen.

"Why should I be angry, and with whom? I only pray to God to take me away soon."

"What *did* happen? Tell me first, mother."

"I am amazed at your pretended innocence. As if it were not enough for me to hear all this, you want me to recount all that you yourself did!"

"But what *have* I done, mother, that should upset you so much? And who has been telling you stories against me."

"Ah! Injured people come and complain to me of the indignities they receive at your hands. To whom should they go? But what do you care for an old woman like me? A few more incidents like this, and this neighbourhood will be too hot for us. Nobody will give you a girl to marry, and I shall have to die, leaving a universally cursed boy, the terror of all the girls."

"Girls! What girls? And who has been poisoning your old mind, and how long? Whose dirty brain is responsible for this? Tell me and I'll blow it out this minute."

"I know you would. Do I not know the blood that is running in your veins? For having suffered at your hands, the poor girl deserves to be killed by you!"

"Who is that girl, and what is her name?" hissed Balu, clenching his fists.

"Are you not ashamed at your age to climb over walls and molest girls?"

"Which wall, and which girl? Will you or will you not tell me?"

"Can't you stop still pretending innocence, when you know that I have heard all? Or have you jumped over several walls and molested hundreds of girls and wish to know which of them came and complained to me?"

"Oh, you are incorrigible! You are stupid!"

Balu put on his tennis shirt again and banged the door of the room.

"Have your supper before you go out. It will get cold," said the mother.

"Throw your supper into the gutter," said Balu as he rushed out of the house.

The old lady burst into tears.

* * * *

"Oh, what an age you have taken to come, Usha! Put down the rupee now," said Sudha, clapping her hands and jumping up.

"Tell me first if you have won the bet at all, and then you can have the rupee."

"I *have* won the bet, Usha dear. He *did* go out of the house without taking his supper. Oh, you should have seen the old lady when I left her! It was simply wonderful, I tell you."

"Tell me everything from the beginning. Are you sure he would not go home again and take his food? How can we yet conclude that you have won the bet?"

"I have won the bet, Usha, I have. Wait and see. He won't eat his supper at home to-night. Why only to-night, he won't take his food for another six months, unless I go and pacify him. Poor dear!"

"What did he tell you?"

"I didn't see him at all. I mean, he didn't see me at all. Ah, dear, dear, how wonderful it was!"

"You did not tell me you would do it to-day when we discussed the bet in the evening. When your servant came and told me you wanted me urgently in the garden, I thought of all possible reasons. Now out with your story. Begin at the beginning."

"You see, I learnt that Balu had gone out for his tennis and that the old mother was alone at home and the bet was simply torturing my brain, and I thought this evening was as good as any other time. So I went to the old lady and what do you think I did? I started weeping."

"Weeping?"

"Yes, darling. Weeping—weeping, crying, sobbing and all the rest of it. The poor old woman was really moved and believed every word I said. Oh, you should have seen the expression I put on. I believe my photo at

that moment over a caption 'Injured Innocence' would have won a first prize."

"But what is it you told her?"

Sudha moved closer to Usha on the bench and whispered in her ear.

"You rogue!" exclaimed Usha. "You shouldn't have actually said that. Poor Balu! He will never marry you."

"I'll take care of that, all right. Do you think I don't know how to undo the mischief I myself do, particularly when it concerns my Balu?"

"Even before marrying him you have got him under your control. But go on with your story."

"Yes, and then the old lady made me sit down by her side and tried to console me, telling me how he loved me; and how his attachment to me emboldened him and all that stuff."



Balu sat up and threw his arms round Sudha's neck.

"And what did you say?"

"I started crying once again."

"How bad of you! But did you really weep successfully, and could you do it?"

"Could I do it! Well, haven't I wept on more difficult occasions? Don't you remember, Usha, dear, when we enacted *Savitri* on the Prize Distribution night?"

"Oh, yes, you *are* an actress. And then?"

"Just for an instant I was afraid my plan would go wrong. But it worked out all right. I took leave of the mother, and hid myself behind the door and waited for Balu's return. He danced into the house, humming a tune and brandishing his racket—a perfect picture of happiness. I felt like springing at him with open arms....."

"Never mind how you felt, but tell me what happened. You seem to forget everything in the world when you think of Balu."

"Doesn't he deserve it all, Usha? Doesn't he? Is there another boy like him in all this town.....?"

"There, there, you are lost again."

Usha. I must go and find Balu and take him to my house for supper. I told mother I would bring him."

The girls were about to get up from the bench, when they heard the report of a pistol shot just behind them, a sharp cry of agony, and the thud of something falling.

The girls screamed as they clasped each other. "It is some murder. Let us run for our lives."

"But didn't you notice anything, dear?" whispered Usha. "The cry seemed to be rather a familiar voice to me."

"Impossible! Come on. We shall go home," said Sudha as she dragged her companion.

"Wait a bit. If, unhappily, it should be someone we know, could we leave him like this? The poor fellow may need a drop of water while he is dying. Come on, we shall see, and don't be afraid."

There was perfect silence and the girls tiptoed to the place behind the bench in the midst of the shrubs, and in the dim darkness of the night, found the prostrate body to be that of Balu. The hands were thrown out, the right one holding a pistol, the head was hanging over a little mound of earth and there was an unearthly stare in the eyes, made more ghastly by the darkness.

Taking in the whole situation at a glance, Sudha fell down on her knees and began crying, "Oh, Balu, darling! Why did you do this? I only played a joke and bet a rupee that I would make you not take your supper to-night and not that you should go out of this world altogether. I never dreamt my joke would end like this. Oh, my Balu dear, why didn't you rush out and kill me when you were angry? Why did you kill yourself? The very first word you said when you came home this evening was that you were hungry, and now you have gone away without food, without even a drop of water. Oh, God! How shall I show my face to your mother and tell her that I killed you?"

She bent down, placed her head on the body and sobbed aloud.

The next instant Balu sat up and threw his arms round the astonished Sudha's neck and said, "You devil, are you punished sufficiently for your mischief?"

"Oh, dear, dear Balu. You are not dead?"

"No, darling, but I might have been," said Balu, as they all got up shaking the dust from their clothes.

"You are the fittest match for Sudha!" said Usha.

"Well, girls, that bet would have really ended in a tragedy to-day. When I came out here with this pistol loaded, I never dreamt I would go back home. I heard your voices and something made me listen, and then I knew it was Sudha's bid for some excitement, and haven't I given you a big dose of it, Sudha?"

THE END

A PLEA TO ADVERTISERS

(Continued from page 28)

cannot be gainsaid. Moreover, I am positive she knows my initials are R. L.

Therefore, it stands to reason, that in her eyes—a deep brown—I am bound to figure as a once bald-headed fellow, covered from ear-to-ear with disgusting pimples and rolling about in the worst stages of drunkenness; not to mention the execution of vigorous forehead drives aimed with unerring accuracy at my dog's head.

Well, I ask you, dear readers, and advertisers! Is that description attractive to any girl? Is it likely to cause her to park herself on my kness and stay there Certainly not.

It is all very well for you to say that I can disillusion her when I get to know her properly. But I must ask you to bear in mind the fact that first impressions are important.

Nevertheless, I want to be fair to all concerned. I shall be perfectly satisfied if the advertisers will see that a pair of whiskers are added to the face of the testimonials. Or, better still, if as an act of grace, these various advertisers publish a statement in *The Merry Magazine* to the effect that Mr. R. Linton has never had any dealings with them. I shall accept the tribute gratefully and say nothing further about it.

Barrack-Room Geometry

by 'Chappie'

A gunner has size but no position.

A gunner's girl can seldom be called a plain figure.

If the side of one gunner is equal to the side of another gunner, and they meet on the Mall, they will cut each other, and will not be complimentary to each other.

Any two gunners in a company are together less than nothing.

A straight line is one from the square to the cook-house.

A Battery rasher of bacon has length and breadth and no thickness.

Promotion is a point from which all ranks are equidistant.

One defaulter, and one only, can pass through any three points in the same straight line.

If one gunner touches another gunner on a Thursday afternoon, then the financial position of the second is greater than that of the first, which is absurd.

If two gunners arrange to meet the same girl at the same point, they will probably meet again at some other point.

You may double the square without any mental effort by becoming a defaulter.

To divide a line into two parts, fall out just before you are inspected.

A quarter-master cannot be squared.

Two football teams cannot have the same centre.

MAY LUCKY NUMBERS

Have you copies of *The Merry Magazine* bearing any of the following numbers? Please verify and send your copy to this office and receive the prize-money. All claims should be preferred before 20-6-1935.

No. 739896 Rs. 50

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No. 754884 Rs. 5

Stars of 1936 ?

IN Hollywood, the movie producers leave nothing to chance. They know what pictures they are going to produce in 1936 and the next group of their stars who will bring millions into box-offices all over the world.

Every studio has experts, working with dozens of boys and girls preparing them for stardom in 1936.

In our country, on the other hand, there are film companies and film companies and I am afraid that not one of them is sure of what their next picture is going to be; nor do they know who will be the actors in it. In fact, I happened to ask a producer whether he had any plans for his next picture. The vague answer he gave me convinced me that he was as ignorant about his picture as I myself was. In short he was hoping that things would take their own course. In all likelihood he might pitch upon some mythological story at random, select a few of the noted actors from the stage and bring out an indifferent production full of irrelevant folk-songs, very poor acting and bad photography. I have no quarrel with a producer if a picture were intended for his delectation alone; in which case he can patronise any wooden-faced dummy of a stage-actor and get away with it.

But the cinema is the modern medium of artistic expression and it has to fulfil its true function. First and foremost it has to entertain and then it should stimulate the mind as well as stir the emotions. It should have something to tell that lingers long after the picture has faded from the screen. This modern alliance of the optical and the acoustic is the most forceful propaganda agent and can be used for good or ill; a cultural force, a mental stimulus, but it should not be a soporific, as most of our pictures unfortunately are.

Producers generally abuse this great power. I wish India would follow the example of Italy and have an 'Under-Secretary for Films'. The rise and fall of a nation's film industry can be taken to be a sensitive reflection of its internal affairs. The progress of this industry, therefore, should be the concern directly of every author and director. The outlook is now hopeful from the point of view of an ever-increasing desire on the part of the intelligent public to demand better films.

It is necessary that organised effort must be made to put the producers on the right path. The first problem, of course, is to find personalities prominent enough to justify expensive training. Here, we can follow Hollywood to advantage. For this purpose, the Hollywood studios have scouts everywhere. They keep discerning eyes focussed on the bit players, attend stock company performances and look out wherever amateur dramatic societies give plays. Neither do they ignore the productions staged at colleges and boarding schools. It is true that until a scout recommends one, it is almost impossible for an outsider to break into the movies. But when he does recommend one, the selected one's salary begins at 75 dollars a week and moves upward automatically every six months according to options. Once a month these young aspirants appear in a play which is

presented in a suburban theatre. All the executives, directors and supervisors attend these performances. Special voice instruction is given to these players by voice experts. The boys and girls report the dramatic coach daily to read different scenes in standard dramatic works. They discuss certain characters and analyse their reactions and emotions and walk about with heavy books on their heads for the sake of poise. Technique is thus instilled into the stars-in-the-making and real art is allowed to develop so soon as technique training is ended. When they act in pictures they are finished products!

In Metro, Oliver Hinsdell is dramatic coach, and has hopes about many. Of the stars-to-be in 1936 Martha Sleeper is one. She is highly talented and has real quality.

Betty Furness is very promising. She appeared in a production in one of Los Angeles's Little Theatres. A Metro scout saw her. She is now on contract with them.

A scout saw Bob Taylor in *Journey's End* at Pomona College. Recently he scored a big hit in *Society Doctor*. He has a splendid voice and a great personality.

George Wolcott was discovered playing light juvenile parts on the stage in New York. He has a flair for serious, emotional work and is, above all, an indefatigable worker.

Agnes Anderson is the beauty contest winner as Miss Detroit. Her expenses to Hollywood were paid by a studio and a test given. She has the background and education necessary for stardom.

Bill Henry was taken up by Metro Studios. He is the virile, athletic type, and under careful assistance, he is progressing and is developing with a brilliance that fulfils all the hope that was placed in him.

Another bright hope is Irene Hervey. She came to the studio herself—not through any scout. She is a Santa Monica high school girl and has the concentration which must be granted the first big stone in the foundation of a motion picture career.

Phyllis Loughton, is in charge of the Paramount Junior Players. She is twenty-six years and started to act when she was nine. Just now Miss Loughton has in her charge, some of the winners of the "Search for Beauty" contest. This contest was conducted last year in connection with the Ida Lupino-Buster-Crabbe picture, to discover the best looking boy and girl in all the English-speaking countries. Six of the original fifteen winners now remain with the Junior Players. Of these Miss Loughton believes Colin Tapley and Julian Madison the possible stars for 1936. Colin Tapley hails from New Zealand where his father has the base for Byrd's South Pole Expedition. Colin is a young and rugged character man and wouldn't be typed. His first real opportunity came when acting in *The Lives of a Bengal Lancer*.

Julian Madison is about twenty-four, and comes from Madison, where he was a band-master in a night-

club. Julian has tremendous ability but his camera angles need watching.

There is sixteen year old Diana Louis who can sing and dance. Apart from this, she has enormous innate ability. Diana was discovered in the chorus *Sham, Sham*, a musical revue played in California.

Fred Mac Murray, who scored brilliantly in his first lead opposite Claudette Colbert in *The Gilded Lily* is another star-to-be. He is twenty-three and is expected to make great headway.

At Universal, Florence Enright is in charge. She is concentrating two hours daily on two starlets, Irene Ware and Eole Gallee, coaching them for voice, elocution and dialogue. Irene Ware was once in the Follies, and later under contract to Fox. Eole Gallie is the sister of Gamberelli, the ballerina.

R. K. O. Radio's best discoveries are John Beal, Eric Rhodes and Frankie Thomas. All these three are definite stars-to-be.

Warners are putting great faith in Mary Russell. Fox are pushing June Lang who was in *Music in the Air*, Lynn Bari who is claimed to be a sensation in Dantes' *Inferno*, Blanca Vischer and Dorothy Dearing.

Columbia has a particularly interesting group headed by Billie Seward, Florence Rice and George Murphy (remember him in *The Kid Millions*?) and is trying to bring back Jean Arthur and Tala Birrell, talented girls neglected by other studios. Tala scores heavily in *Let's Live To-night* and looks like a logical contender for the glamour crown in 1936.

These are Hollywood star offers for 1936. Where are ours?

(Ask the Milky Way—Ed.)

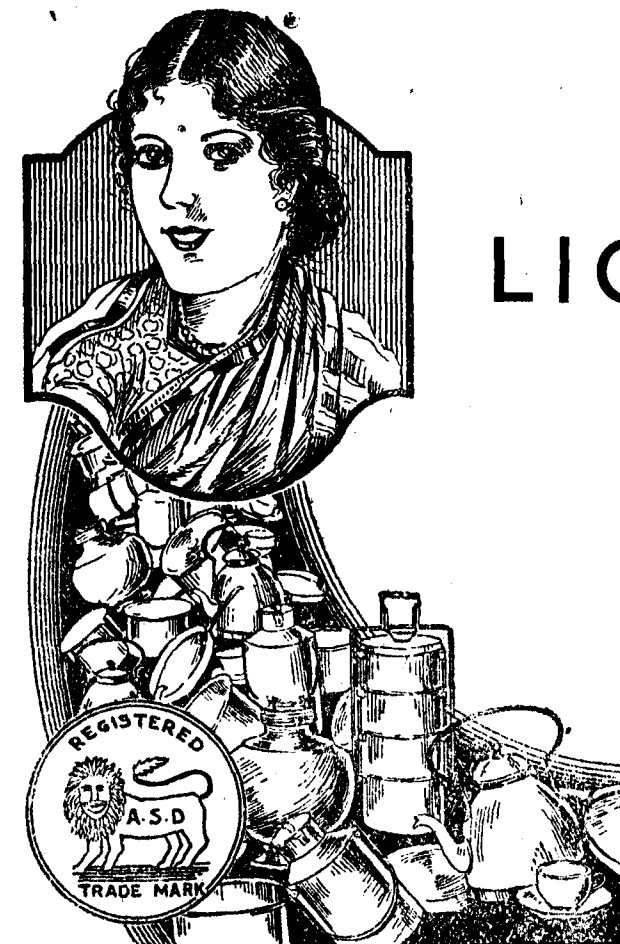
A WISE

HOUSEWIFE

SHE HAS BEEN
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R. B. ANANT SHIVAJEE TOPIWALA

MOTI BAZAR : BOMBAY, 2

[We also deal in Velvet, Pictures and Artistic-Picture Frames]



A Jest of Fate —

by 'Elmer Delville'

WANTED

By a widower still in the morning of his life, a wife Virgin, educated and modern preferred. Beauty of form and figure an asset. Apply to: X c/o "The Chanticleer."

THIS type of advertisement ordinarily provoked only amusement in Sarada. It was certainly like inducing love by correspondence. 'Still in the morning of his life', was he? Apparently he had not yet fully woken up from his previous night's sleep. All the assets were to be on the girl's side too—maybe to make up for deficits on his side. And how like a man all over!

A faint smile crossed her lips. Any other time she would not have given the flick of a thought to it, but now, somehow, the advertisement seemed to possess for her a strange attraction. The painful incidents of the

previous evening kept coursing through her head, for she had never imagined Govindarajan—her Rajan—was capable of disloyalty. If someone else had brought reports of his misdoings she would not have believed a word of them, but on this occasion she had witnessed some telling scenes with her own eyes. For the umpteenth time she reviewed in her mind the sequence of events that had ultimately shattered her romance.

Govindarajan and she had planned to go out for a spin in the country and he had managed to borrow a two-seater car from a friend of his father's. Rajan was a fairly reliable driver even with a sweetheart by his side, and they were both anticipating a good time. The car duly arrived and from his seat Govindarajan waved to her to come down. Waving back an acknowledgment from her bedroom window Sarada was about to comply when she was shocked to see a flashily dressed young woman shoot out of the dickey like a jack-in-the-box, where she had remained concealed. Almost at the same instant a stranger, until then loitering about the

place, suddenly walked up to Govindarajan and in the most vulgar manner demanded what it all meant.

"This woman is my wife, sir!" he challenged, "and what the deuce is she doing in your car? She disappeared from the house this morning and I now find her in your company."

Vainly did Govindarajan protest his innocence. He assured the man he had only borrowed the car within the past half an hour and that he had no idea there was a woman hidden in it. Sarada was throughout at her window upstairs watching the turn of events. She saw the usual inquisitive crowd collecting around the car and Govindarajan blinking like a trapped rat. He even made an attempt to get away, perhaps to run up and convince her at least there was some cruel mistake somewhere; but the other would not let him go. He caught him gruffly by the neck.

"Get this thing straight, young man," he snapped, "I'm charging you for the enticement of my wife—"

Govindarajan was no coward. He shook himself free and flicked his fingers in the other's face.

"I neither know you nor this woman," he said firmly. "If the damn thing is your wife, take her away and be done with it. I don't suppose this car is yours too by any chance?"

The girl in the dickey began to take part in the proceedings by suddenly bursting into tears.

"Take me away indeed!" she screeched, "and after promising to marry me and taking advantage of my love for you. I have left my home and husband for him." She turned her eyes eloquently to those standing round. "I have been suffocating in this box for over two hours for him, and now he kicks me away! Ooh-ooh!" she cried ever so bitterly.

Still crying and shedding copious tears she fell upon Govindarajan's shoulders and choked him with kisses, muttering, "Say, darling, you were only joking. You love me, don't you?"

Up to this time Sarada was able to stand the shocking incidents following hot on one another, but the spectacle of witnessing a young girl caressing and kissing the man she loved and to whom she was engaged was too much for her sense of decency. The siren had the audacity to do this in front of her own house too! How much of the guilt was Govindarajan's, she wondered.

Sarada ran back to her room and threw herself on her bed, after giving strict instructions that she was not to be disturbed on any account. Was there any truth in the allegations against Govindarajan she had just heard? Obviously there was. Here was a stranger who identifies the woman as his wife and she does not deny it. She is said to have disappeared in the morning and is found in the car hidden in the dickey and her endearing words clearly proclaimed there had been close intimacy between them.

Against that was the improbability of Govindarajan bringing a girl to Sarada's very house, especially when they had planned to go out for an outing together. But then, they might have been staying together and when

the girl found her lover preparing to go out she might have secreted herself to find out where he went.

Sarada's head was whirling. She did not know what she should do in the circumstances. One thing was clear, though. Until the whole mystery was solved she could not see Govindarajan nor be seen with him. By sheer force of will she took herself back to the window. What she saw staggered her though she was almost prepared to see something of the kind happening. There was a third man—one of the group maybe—in the picture now. He was apparently trying to bring about a settlement, while Govindarajan was drawing out a cheque which he handed over to the injured party. If he was innocent, why should he pay?

Sarada had seen and heard enough to make up her mind. She stolidly refused to see Govindarajan any more, though he made several attempts to do so. The notes he sent up to her, she tore into bits and flung up to the winds. Thinking out the problem soberly that night she decided it was best to break off the friendship for good. After all his father was absolutely against his marrying for another three years. They were however going to do it on the sly against the old man's wishes. It was, perhaps, a dispensation of fate. Veerasamy Chetty might have had sound reasons for prohibiting his son's marriage for a period.

However hard she tried to exonerate Govindarajan, the vision of another girl clinging to his neck lashed her into fury. He was her first and only love, and she had surrendered her whole heart to him. But he had betrayed her. Her love however cannot be stifled or destroyed. She still loved him, though marriage to him was impossible. To be true to her unsullied love and yet true still to her own self-respect, she must throw herself on the whirlpool of life and accept the consequences.

The advertisement before her offered a probable solution. She would marry this advertiser if he would have her. There was no love in the bargain. She was educated and modern and her friends had called her beautiful. A widower in the dock was worth two bachelors in the offing any time.

To decide, for Sarada, was to act. She searched out the office of *The Chanticleer* and wished to know the advertiser's address. They refused to give the information as it was against the rules, but said they would be happy to forward a written message. The look of despair and disappointment that came into her face brought a brain-wave to one of the younger sub-editors.

"I could get you the man on the office telephone," he said and with a sly smile added, "if you promise not to overhear the number. If you get him to give you his address it's not our business."

The idea was considered capital. The address being given over the wires, Sarada engaged a taxi and sped to a magnificent bungalow in Poonamalai High Road. A large brass signboard indicated that it was the residence of the Managing Director of the Clarion Dramatic Troupe. She was ushered into a most up-to-date drawing room.

"My master is upstairs dressing, madam," confided an intelligent-looking servant boy. "Won't be long. Just adjusting his tie I guess."

The advertiser strutted in all his war paint, smiled at his visitor and took a seat opposite her.

"You are the first one to see me personally," he explained, though a few have also written.

"Well, doesn't that save all the intermediate steps?"

"Yes, it does. But I can't understand a person of your age and—"

"Let us not discuss that, Mr. Veerasamy. You advertised in a newspaper and I'm here in person to answer it. Do I meet with your approval or not? That's the question."

"I should certainly say yes," said Mr. Veerasamy, "but—but—we'll leave that as you say. You impress me favourably. I have not specified family antecedents, caste, creed or anything, for I don't believe in them. But you would certainly like to know my position. This bungalow is mine and I have several—"

"I do not want a catalogue of your possessions or your own virtues, Mr. Veerasamy," interrupted Sarada. "You advertised for a wife. My presence here means I am prepared for anything. If you think I can make a good wife—"

"Not so loud. My son is in the library."

"Oh! You have a son, then? I love children. Call him in please. I should like to make his acquaintance. Here," she called the servant boy from the far end of the room, "bring your young master in."

Mr. Veerasamy Chetty did not like the look of things. His prospective wife was assuming control rather too quickly for his convenience. Sarada, on the other hand, had not been prepared to see Govindarajan introduced as Mr. Chetty's son!

Explanations followed on all sides. The son knew now why the father objected to his marrying and the father understood the son's infatuation for the prettiest girl in the city. Govindarajan was at last able to protest

his innocence in person though he could not still explain away the girl in the dickey.

"Then why did you submit to blackmail if you were innocent?" asked Sarada.

"I wanted to clear the crowd away first and hoped to explain to you later," said Govindarajan.

"It is all my fault," confessed Mr. Veerasamy, "from the very beginning to the end. I should not have sought a wife when it is my son's wife who should now reign over the household. But according to a silly clause in my late brother's will, if my son married before his twenty-sixth year or kept company with any girl who was not personally known to me and not approved by me—his property, a considerable amount, devolved to charitable institutions. Govindu is only twenty-three now."

"I understand now," said Sarada shortly.

"I heard from various sources that Govindu was on friendly terms with some girl or other," continued the old man, "and not knowing it was some one of your type, I arranged to break it up as nicely as possible. I was waiting for an opportunity. When yesterday I understood from my friend Keshava Nair that Govindu has asked for his car, I persuaded him—much against his wishes of course—to help me in arranging a little affair—"

"So it was you then?" Sarada could not help but cut in.

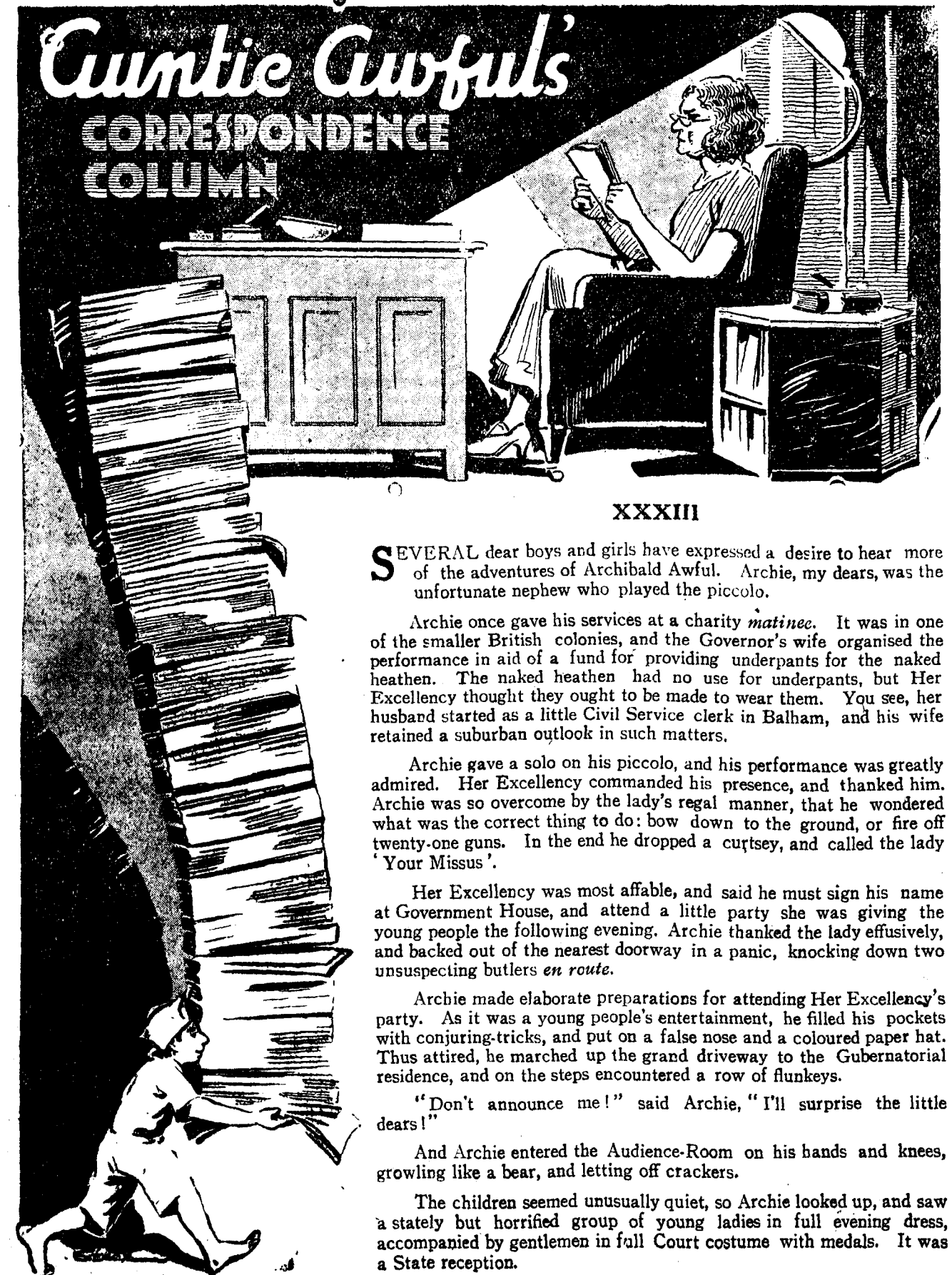
"Yes. It was a low down trick, but my motive, as I understood it then, was blameless. The injured 'husband' and the enticed 'wife' are two of our stars from our dramatic troupe. I thought one wise but fate deems otherwise. May you two be happy. I shall not insist that Govindu should wait for three more years, though it is in his own interest to wait."

YES! I KNOW!



1. Queen Anne, who had seventeen.
2. Euclid's Elements of Geometry.
3. A porous light-yellow rock consisting of a calcareous deposit from springs.
4. Canada.

These are the answers to questions on page 21.



XXXIII

SEVERAL dear boys and girls have expressed a desire to hear more of the adventures of Archibald Awful. Archie, my dears, was the unfortunate nephew who played the piccolo.

Archie once gave his services at a charity *matinee*. It was in one of the smaller British colonies, and the Governor's wife organised the performance in aid of a fund for providing underpants for the naked heathen. The naked heathen had no use for underpants, but Her Excellency thought they ought to be made to wear them. You see, her husband started as a little Civil Service clerk in Balham, and his wife retained a suburban outlook in such matters.

Archie gave a solo on his piccolo, and his performance was greatly admired. Her Excellency commanded his presence, and thanked him. Archie was so overcome by the lady's regal manner, that he wondered what was the correct thing to do: bow down to the ground, or fire off twenty-one guns. In the end he dropped a curtsy, and called the lady 'Your Missus'.

Her Excellency was most affable, and said he must sign his name at Government House, and attend a little party she was giving the young people the following evening. Archie thanked the lady effusively, and backed out of the nearest doorway in a panic, knocking down two unsuspecting butlers *en route*.

Archie made elaborate preparations for attending Her Excellency's party. As it was a young people's entertainment, he filled his pockets with conjuring-tricks, and put on a false nose and a coloured paper hat. Thus attired, he marched up the grand driveway to the Gubernatorial residence, and on the steps encountered a row of flunkies.

"Don't announce me!" said Archie, "I'll surprise the little dears!"

And Archie entered the Audience-Room on his hands and knees, growling like a bear, and letting off crackers.

The children seemed unusually quiet, so Archie looked up, and saw a stately but horrified group of young ladies in full evening dress, accompanied by gentlemen in full Court costume with medals. It was a State reception.

As Archie said to the prison governor afterwards, how was he to know that Her Excellency's idea of 'young people' included all officials under fifty years of age, and their wives and daughters?

Fruit Grower (Kulu). "How may I rid my orchard of a plague of grasshoppers?" They must be treated with the greatest care. Wrap flannel cloths round their throats, rub their gums with castor-oil, and massage their stomachs twice a day.

Anxious Mother (Ferozepore). "Please advise me how to deal with my twins, who are cutting their first teeth." Cover them with dry straw, soak thoroughly with kerosene, and apply a match. The little pests will soon stop bothering you.

(The replies to 'Fruit Grower' and 'Anxious Mother' appear to have got a trifle mixed—Ed.)

Student (Perumanoor). "I would like you to encourage all young people to learn to swim. Swimming is a wonderful exercise, and is often the means of saving life. Julius Caesar used to swim the Tiber every day, three times before breakfast." Auntie perceives that you have read your Pliny, my dear. As an enthusiast, perhaps you can explain something that has always puzzled her. Why did Julius Caesar always finish his swim on the bank opposite to the one where he had left his clothes?

Musical (Mallewaram). "Is it difficult to play the bagpipes?" It is, dear boy. Unfortunately, it is not totally impossible.

Miss Dubious (Agra). "A young man has offered to take me to the pictures, but my girl-friend advises me not to go, as the young man has a reputation for taking liberties." Auntie agrees with your girl-friend, my dear. Beware of young men who think that a couple of seats in a cinema entitles them to carry on like Clark Gable.

Seesaw (Mysore). "I am fed-up with paying doctors' bills. Do you advise me to get a book called 'The Poor Man's Physician'?" If I get it, I can be my own doctor." Auntie would hardly like to say, dear sir. She once knew a man who treated himself by following the directions in a book, and he died of a misprint.

Comedian (Mazagaon). "I called upon the agent and asked him for a booking, but the fellow refused me on the ground that the management objected to the use of bad language in their theatre. I never use bad language. Can I sue him for defamation?" No, dear boy. He was referring to bad language on the part of the audience.

Prudent (Kayangulam). "My father wants me to marry a rich girl, but I hear she is not much to look at. I am worried about it." Don't let it worry you, dear boy. The Bank of England isn't much to look at.

New Arrival (Trichy). "Please tell me how I may hold a driving-license in the Madras Presidency." It is quite easy, dear boy. Just grasp it firmly between finger and thumb.

Interested (Hubli). "When a film-star marries again, does she have to name and account for all her previous husbands?" Auntie does not think so, dearie. After all, it is a wedding, not a memory-test.

Latest Fashion (Madras). "Streamline", my dear, is an engineering term applied to a vehicle so designed that it moves rapidly through air or water, leaving the minimum of disturbance behind. Auntie thinks it is a somewhat ridiculous term to apply to feminine kickshaws,

such as 'streamline' hats, veils, and dresses. Young women may desire to appear fast, but they certainly do not want to leave the minimum of disturbance behind them.

Blue Coat (Peshawar). "I saw a soldier walking along the Mall on crutches. He said he had been wounded in the leg. Do you think he had been shot during some Border skirmish?" Well, my dear, do you think he had been kicked by his pet canary?

Avoidupois (Sanaar). "Dear Auntie, can you please tell me how to get rid of my superfluous fat?" Yes, my dear. Sell it to a soap-manufacturer.

Licentiate (Ballinguda). "I prescribed some medicine for the patient. As soon as he received the bottle, he threw it out of the window. As my office is on the third floor, his action might have endangered some passer-by. How should a physician deal with a patient who throws the medicine-bottle out of the window?" You should tell him to follow the directions on the bottle.

Patriot (Brijnagar). "What is it that binds us together, and makes us better than we are by nature?" Well, dearie, what is it? Corsets?

In Doubt (Lahore). "I have saved up a little money and want to buy a bicycle; but my brother says the cash would be better invested by purchasing a cow. I do not agree with him. I maintain I would look foolish trying to ride a cow." But no more foolish than you would look trying to milk a bicycle.

Bachelor (Mannugudi). "I am not going to be in a hurry to get married. There are just as many good fish in the sea as ever came out of it." True, dear boy; but what about the bait? Isn't there a danger of the bait becoming stale?

Amused (T. Gounder St.). "My neighbour has put a baby-carriage in front of his house with a notice 'Perambulator for sail'. I laugh every time I see it. Imagine someone going for a sail in a perambulator." Auntie can imagine it happening, dear sir—when someone raises the wind.

Medical Student (Madras). "The surgeon operated on the old gentleman, and I asked what he operated for. 'A hundred rupees', replied the surgeon. I still don't know what the patient really had." Well, dear boy, he had a hundred rupees.

Form V (Godavari). "I am rather a plump chap, but I do not think the teachers should poke fun at me. When I make a mistake in an exercise, the teacher says I am better fed than I am taught. Please tell me some reply to make." It is simple, dear boy. Just remind the teacher that it is not he who feeds you.

Complexion (Slave Island). There is nothing like friction for refining the skin, my dear. Obtain a rubber friction-sponge, and scrub your face with it after washing. If this does not effect an improvement, you had better resign yourself to wearing a mask.

Rhyme and Reason (Dacca). An epitaph about a dentist? Certainly, dear boy:

*Pause, gentle stranger, a tear softly dropping:
Here is a dentist eternally stopping.
But he has hope of successful extraction,
Crowning with gold, and complete satisfaction.
Pause, gentle stranger, and ponder with gravity,
Here is a dentist who fills his last cavity.*

Faith can Move a Mountain—(Continued from page 17)

Still the little old lady had faith. "God is good," she said. "And everything is bound to come out all right. Some day, children, our ship will come home."

The years crept on, and the ship still battled its way over stormy seas.

Came the day when the eldest boy had to have his training. She trained him, scraping, almost begging for the money to do it with. He proved to be naturally clever—a born artist. He left the homely nest.

"I have worlds to conquer, mother," he said as he kissed her an affectionate good-bye. "I'll make good, and then you'll be happy and comfortable."

He had gone, made good, and married, and forgotten. Mother had drifted into a squalid sort of background—a background of Victorian furniture and old china ornaments. He forgot that she still struggled with the schooling problems of the younger children.

And the little old lady still struggled fairly successfully.

The eldest girl but one was the next to be trained. She had been set on the road to a safe existence—not a glinting one, but safe, just the same. But she too, forgot—forgot that the little old lady had brought her into the world, suckled her, reared her and set her expectant feet on life's highway. Who cared?—but mother.

Then came Jerry's turn. He had always done well at English in school, and he wanted to write. India, mother pointed out, was not the country to write in. There was not enough scope. And mother's resources were becoming strained. She advised him to join the Army, telling him that in Indianised India there was not much chance for a young lad with a Senior Cambridge certificate.

Knowing that she was right, Jerry had done as she wished.

And although 'Red Tape' and rules altered everything and wasted a few years of his life, although mother felt disappointed, worried, sorry—despite all this, she still had faith.

"God is good," she said. "And everything is bound to come out all right. Some day our ship will come home."

And the years slipped by, and still the ship battled its way through raging waters, unable to reach the shores it was bound for.

However, mother was tolerably happy. Jerry's writing was getting brilliant. Some day he would make good. She knew!

Came a day when there was unpleasantness between Jerry and her. He was on leave from his Battery at the time. He stated that he hated the life he was living. The discipline that was a parody of justice. A hateful life.

A few days after his return to his unit, the eldest daughter and her husband had left for England on long leave.

"If we can get fixed up out there, mother, we'll have you all out in no time," they had said. The daughter had felt rather bad. After all, she had done more for her mother's happiness than the others.

The house seemed to be gradually crumbling away. The little old lady began to feel really old. She thought

of passengers deserting a sinking ship, but put the thought away from her as unjust and un-motherlike. She managed to obtain lodgings.

And then came the turn of the youngest girl but one. She set out on the bright road of life. And forgot—yes, forgot in the shimmering bubbles of cocktails.

Still mother had faith.

"The longest lane will turn," she smiled to her youngest daughter, who was undergoing her training. News came from the daughter in England. She and her husband were happy. They had managed to start a little business and did not intend to come out to India again. "And, of course, if you'd like to come out, we could barely manage a quarter of the fare."

The news and letters began to get scarcer. Of course mother couldn't take their half-hearted offer. Then the letters ceased with the suddenness of the crack of a gun. They too, had forgotten.

And still the little old lady had faith.

"It can't go on," she whispered, and although a whimper crept into that scarcely audible sentence, she firmly believed what she said.

Now the lines had begun to trace their spidery network all over the little old lady's skin. She not only felt very old—she was very old.

Another two years passed. After the first she had found that Jerry had left the Army. He had not returned to her. "When I make good," he had written, "I will, I'll come to you. And then you'll have ease and rest and comfort."

And looking back over the toil-laden years, the little old lady had let a smile hover around her lips.

It seemed that Jerry too, had forgotten, forgotten that mother was old and tired and deadly weary.

The youngest daughter left, treading out along the path of life. She too, after having seen how all the others had forgotten, forgot.

But still the little old lady had faith.

"Everything will come out all right," she quavered in an old voice. "It can't go on."

And that brought the little old lady to this evening, when, obviously tired after a day's praying and hoping, she sat down before her fire. John died that morning. He had been sober for a year. She had felt glad for that. And, seeing that John was dead, she thought she'd have a look at the diary of the years—years and years and years they seemed, in that yellow book.

My feet began to ache as I stood and watched her. She had not turned a page for some moments. The darting firelight continued to flicker around the little room. I walked in softly, and, putting my hands over her eyes, spectacles and all, I whispered almost in one breath, "They've published five books of mine, mother, and they want more. We're made—made! And I've seen all the others,—your children, my brothers and sisters,—and have shown them the error of their ways! They are all coming to visit you in the near future. Although I was cruel in a way, I loved you, mother mine. And in return, I hope you still love me, Jerry?"

She did not move under my hands.

The little old lady's faith had been rewarded and she had found rest and comfort and ease where no earthly being could give it her.

The Haunted Pavilion

by
'Embusque'



IT all started one morning, when Tom Lyall, the games-master of the Himalayan High School, opened the door of the cricket-pavilion, and saw two gruesome white objects hanging limply from the rafters.

"Good heavens!" he muttered, "Suicide!"

Hastily, he drew forward the scorers' table, put a chair on it, and climbed up. Then he saw that the drooping figures had no substance. They were the two umpires' long white coats, hanging from two nails in the rafters. Both coats were buttoned-up askew. One hung by an empty button-hole, the other was forced on to the nail by tearing the cloth. With a curse of mingled annoyance and relief, Tom unhooked the coats, clambered down, removed the chair and table, and hung the two coats on their proper pegs.

"Some joke on the part of the boys," he remarked later to Mr. Duncan, the mathematics-master. "It gave me a nasty turn. I wish I could lay my hands on the culprits!"

Mr. Duncan looked thoughtful. "Tom," he said, "I locked the pavilion after the match yesterday, and gave the key to you. The windows are not made to open. How did the young devils get into the place?"

"With a false key, I suppose."

"The lock is a patent affair, and there is no duplicate key. I defy any ordinary boy to get in and out again, leaving no trace. And why should an ordinary boy go to the trouble of breaking into the pavilion, merely to hang the umpires' coats to the rafters?"

"You are right. Moreover, a boy couldn't have hung those coats up there. I'm a six-footer, and I could scarcely reach the nails, even after piling up the furniture."

"And now I come to think of it, the coats were suspended in an extraordinary way. They were buttoned-up askew, and violently thrust on to the nails—almost as if by supernatural force."

"Supernatural force?"



"Don't punish me, sir!" pleaded David.

"They were not hung as any rational being would hang a coat, nor in a place that any rational being would select. I suspect an earth-bound spirit."

"Good heavens! An earth-bound spirit?"

"A *poltergeist*. Some entity that haunts the building, bound to it by an unassuaged desire. The *poltergeist* registers its unhappiness and bondage by acts of freakish violence. Has anyone ever come to a sudden end in that pavilion?"

"I've never heard."

"Depend on it, that is the explanation. An unhappy soul haunts the place, and is beginning to vent its feelings by acts of destruction."

"I can hardly believe it," said Tom Lyall. "Look here, let's keep this to ourselves. Unless there are repetitions, we'll just put it down as an inexplicable freak."

The following morning, Tom Lyall sought the mathematics-master during recess. His face was a little pale and strained.

"Come and see what your *poltergeist* has done," he muttered.

As the two masters approached the pavilion, they observed one of the boys, named David, trying to peer through the key-hole.

"What are you doing?" demanded Mr. Duncan suspiciously.

David seemed very confused. "Please, sir, some of the windows are broken," he stuttered.

"I know they are," interposed the games-master. "Did you have anything to do with it?"



"Oh, no, sir," cried David, in alarm.

"Then, scuttle!"

David scuttled.

Tom Lyall unlocked the door, and the two masters examined the windows. Three panes were broken, and two cracked. On the floor near the windows were a dozen smooth, whitish pebbles. Mr. Duncan pounced on these eagerly. They were of a curious, unusual kind of stone, slippery and greasy.

"Why, this is materialisation!" cried the mathematics-master. "Stones like this never came from the earth. Don't you see? The *poltergeist*, lacking missiles, materialised plasmic matter with which to break the windows."

"I don't agree," said Tom Lyall. "These stones were not thrown from inside. No one got into the place last night. To test the matter, I fastened a piece of cotton across the door, and the cotton was unbroken this morning. One of the boys must have thrown these stones from outside. I'll bet it was that wretch David."

"No, no," replied Mr. Duncan, "David is a young scamp, but he did not throw these stones from outside. Some of the windows are only cracked, yet all the stones are inside. Also, there are more stones than there are holes in the windows. The stones *must* have been thrown from inside."

Meanwhile, an object had caught Lyall's eye. Again piling up the furniture, he reached to a rafter and brought down an old cap.

"This was not here yesterday," he said. "Someone *has* been inside. Yet no one came through the door!"

Mr. Duncan took the cap. It had been torn across with more than human violence, and only hung together by the peak. "This settles it," said the mathematics-master gravely. "There is a *poltergeist* at work!"

"But why?"

"I have been making enquiries. There is a story that, some years ago, a master died in this very pavilion, of a heart-attack following a strenuous innings."

"Then, what shall we do?"

"We must sit up in the pavilion to-night, and endeavour to discover the reason for the spirit's unhappiness. If you can carry out its wishes, these phenomena will cease."

"Well, it is all very fishy," said Lyall, "but I'm willing." He strode to the door. There was a sound of hurriedly-departing footsteps.

"Someone outside, listening!" cried the games-master. "I caught a glimpse of him. I think it was that young beast David."

"Curiosity, I suppose," said Mr. Duncan. "We shall have to be careful, or this story will be all over the school."

It was after midnight, and the eerie silence of the pavilion was getting on the nerves of the two masters. Everytime the woodwork creaked, they started nervously.

At last came the manifestation for which they were waiting. In the emptiness of the room there was a grisly rustling, and then an unearthly sound like the chirping of a grasshopper, magnified many times.

Mr. Duncan moistened his parched lips. "If you can speak," he croaked at the empty darkness, "speak! We are friends!"

A far-away hollow voice echoed in the room. "If you would release my spirit," it said, "obtain a small round pot, place votive sweetmeats within, and leave it on the lawn in front of the pavilion. Do not stay, or watch. Then this haunting will cease."

While the voice was speaking, Tom Lyall switched on his torch. There was nothing in the room.

"I—I suppose we had better follow the instructions," quavered Mr. Duncan.

"All right, we will," replied Tom. "But," he added in a lower tone, "I am going to watch that pot. I don't believe in your *poltergeist*. It beats me, but it is some sort of game."

Mr. Duncan was unwilling to use any deceit. He felt it was better to observe the ghostly directions explicitly. But Mr. Lyall overbore him. They must finally satisfy themselves, he said. Accordingly, the two masters obtained a small vessel from the gardener's shed, filled it with sweets from the boys' tuck-room, and placed it on the lawn. They affected to go away, but, stealthily returning, took up a position behind the scoring-board.

Not many minutes had passed in silence, when the watchers became aware of a dim figure on the roof of the pavilion. It came down to the gutter, and then *down the wall*. It went to the pot, and remained motionless for a few seconds. Then the watchers saw a second stealthy figure appear from the shrubbery, and approach the first. There was a slight struggle.

Mr. Lyall switched on his torch, and revealed—the boy David, and a large blue-faced monkey! The monkey had its paw in the pot, and was vainly trying to draw out its hand, which was full of sweets.

"Now, David," said the games-master sternly, "come into the pavilion, and bring that animal with you."

The master switched on the electric light, and awaited David's confession.

"Don't punish me, sir!" pleaded David. "Jacko has always been my pet, and I wanted to have him at school. As animals are forbidden, I gave the gardener some money to look after him. Three days ago, Jacko escaped. At first I did not know where he had gone, but yesterday I found he had made his home in the big ventilator on top of the pavilion. He only came down at night for food, and I couldn't catch him."

"So it was this animal that haunted the pavilion?"

"Yes, sir. It was he that hung up the coats where you found them, and tore up that old cap."

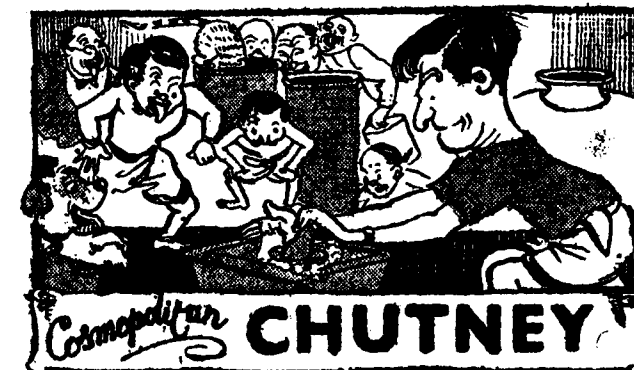
"And he threw the stones that broke the windows?"

"Yes, sir. They were in the pockets of the umpire's coats. They are what the umpires use for counting the overs. That is why they are so smooth and greasy."

"And you heard our conversation yesterday?"

(Continued on page 48)

by
Vanamali



HOLLYWOOD stars are not merely actors: they are inventors as well. Warner Baxter is credited with inventing a revolver adapted for night-shooting. The gun has a tiny search-light which throws a beam of light on the target. Temperamental female stars of Hollywood have at last got something good to go by at night, that is, if the Los Angeles Police boys O. K. it.

What are vitamins? Honestly, I don't know. I have a hazy idea that they are connected with the Theory of Relativity. Two Copenhagen University-men have discovered vitamin 'K'. It looks as if these savants won't rest till they have caught vitamin 'Z' by the whiskers and put it along with the rest in cold storage for the benefit of doctors and patent-food manufacturers. The question arises, what do the vitamin finders do if more vitamins pop up after the 'Z'? Instead of giving them such soul-less names as A1, B 2, C 3 etc., it would be a bright idea to call them Tom, Jimmy, Shaw, Basu, Nair, Birla, Kamala, Leela, Fifiella etc. I would further suggest that, whatever names foreigners give to *their* vitamins, we give ours only Empire names. I almost see Lord Rothermere smiling kindly at me.

Sanathana Dharma was born long before the Sun, Moon, Saturn etc., were born. These planets can exert a baneful or beneficial influence on men and things born only *after* them. Since Untouchability is a part of Sanathana Dharma, it is imperishable. I am not the author of this wise-crack. Thank His Holiness of Puri for this brainy invention. So, Sanatanist friends, take heart: don't let Gandhiji bully you.

I don't see why so many people in India turn up their noses rudely at the selfless labours of our Burra Sahibs in England who are giving shape to the India Bill. No single statute in the history of political constitu-

tions has had the honour of so many words lavished on it. To be exact: one and a half million words were spoken in over 2000 speeches with a daily average of 70 speeches, Mr. Butler delivering 200 speeches. Samuel Hoare 166, Page Croft 150 and Thomas Inskip and Churchill 100 each. And this, mind you, not counting the effusions of the great mystic, Macdonald and the bad boys of the Labour Party! Can any constitution in the world boast of so much pre-natal eloquence? None, *Brute!*

What are the standard measurements of an angel? Supply that information to the Czechoslovakian Customs authorities and earn their gratitude. A sculptor entered Czech territory with an angel in his luggage—not a live one, but one conceived in marble. Now, only life-size angels enjoy duty-free entrance into that country. As this angel was a compromise between a laughing cherub and a grinning man, the customs people demanded a £ 16/- duty. The sculptor paid it under protest, and appealed to the Ministry of Finance demanding to know the exact size of an angel. The whole Ministry is losing their beauty sleep over this difficult question. They have not decided the size of an angel yet.

In a recent number of this Mag. 'Embusque' told the story of a talking dog—which was really the story of a clever rogue at work with ventriloquism. Here is another from the Far East—a roguess, if that is the word. Tin Tsoi, show-woman and ventriloquist was inviting people to talk with her unborn child! Wise lad or lass that he or she was, the child refused to come into this Vale of Tears, even though the mamma was importuning it for ten years, choosing its mother's what-do-you-call-it to this unhappy world. So, some genial mugs asked questions of the birth-shy baby, and it talked! But the police talked one better and put the mamma and her ten-year-old, unborn baby in the cooler, to tell each other funny stories. Ah, what a world it is!

The Holy

K. K. S. SASTRI belonged to the get-rich-quick tribe. He became vastly rich during the short space of four years. As luck would have it, the said four years were encompassed by the Great War. It was then that he seized his opportunity and took to indigo. His speculations therein proved successful. In fact, he virtually attained the position of an indigo ace south of the Vindhyas. When, later on, the tide began to turn, he had the good sense and sobriety to cry

halt. Thereafter he began to settle down in Madras and stabilise his fortunes in gilt-edged securities.

He owned a palatial residence in Mylapore and a cosy summer retreat in the Kodai hills. Very soon he became a we-take-off-our-hat-to personage and was elected either the patron or the president of the multitudinous clubs and societies that infest the Metropolis.

There was, besides, Savitri, the wife of his bosom, to blaze the trail of his success. Whatever was visible of her person was decked with diamond and gold. So much had money done for them that Sastri fancied that there was nothing that it could not do. Needless to say that this idea turned his head. And he believed that it was meet vengeance against the University which, long ago, grudged him a bare pass in the Matriculation.

Padma, his eldest daughter, came of marriageable age. Unfortunately, there was hardly anything else marriageable about her, save her father's wealth. Savitri expressed her preference to giving her to her brother's son, Nanu, who was progressing leisurely to a degree in Law. K. K. S. rejected her proposal at once. His objection to Nanu was strong. For one thing, Sastri disliked relatives, especially if they were not well-to-do. For another, he disliked pet names, and the particular name, Nanu, seemed to have no dignity about it; it sounded rather plebeian; at any rate, it showed no promise of greatness. The decisive factor, however, was Sastri's long-cherished desire to marry Padma to an I. C. S. man, and establish her status as a Collector's wife.

Sastri's men and messengers combed the Tamil Nad to spot an unmarried I. C. S. belonging to the sub-caste named *mangudi brihacharanam*. But, unfortunately, at the moment the quest was not effectual. Firstly, there were only a few I. C. S. belonging to the said sub-caste. Secondly, all or nearly all of them were comfortably married. Thirdly, those of them that remained in single blessedness were in no frightful hurry to commit themselves to matrimony.

Sastri felt disappointed. Savitri urged him to give up the hunt and fall in with her choice. But his pride would not give way.

"Never mind, my dear," he told her, "if I can't get hold of a pukka I. C. S., I shall very soon make one to order."

"I fancy it is a tall order," she commented. "Surely, it isn't like cornering the indigo market."

"I daresay it's far more easy," he boasted. "you had better wait and see what money can do."

"How are you going to do it?" she asked.



Deadlock

by R. Jagannathan

Sketches by Mali

"Listen, my love," he confided. "It's this way. Go to the professor chaps in the colleges and get them to spot the most promising youth. Then back the bright lad and send him across the seas."

"Sounds wise enough," she said. "Suppose, by some mischance, he doesn't get in."

"Well, do you think that I haven't reckoned on that. If he doesn't get in, no Padma for him."

"What do you mean? How can you chuck your own son-in-law?"

"Aren't you unusually dense to-day, my sweet? You see the marriage does not take place till after he returns home a full-fledged I. C. S. If, God forbid, anything happens to him in the meantime, he is not our son-in-law. If he fails in the exam he is not our son-in-law. If he comes home with an English wife, he is not our son-in-law. So, you see, my proposal is the safest and wisest."

"Then the only risk we take is that we may lose the money which we have to spend on his behalf?"

"Precisely."

"But do you think you can get hold of a boy to suit your terms?"

"I can guarantee enough and to spare. Don't you know that the commodity is surplus in the market? What is wanted is money to give them a chance, and I shall give it."

Sastri handled the question in a thoroughly businesslike way. As a result he was able to hook a good catch. Gopinath, on whom fell the choice, was an Honours man from the Presidency College, to whom the University had done all she could in the way of a first-class degree, prizes and medals. But, silver and gold he had none, nor any influential relatives. So he had only the bleak prospect of having to begin from the bottom. When Sastri discovered him and unfolded his plans, the young man rose to the occasion. In fact, he was too much of a sport. When asked to see Padma for himself and satisfy his conscience before agreeing to the act, Gopinath replied:

"Oh, there is no need for all these formalities. I've no particular predilection. All girls in the Tamil Nad are

alike; it is only a question of dark, darker or darkest."

The pact was entered into, and Gopinath proceeded to England. He ground hard for eight months and faced the ordeal. Then, on a day in September, he flashed across the news of his success. Sastri reached the pitch of gladness. He did not even wait for the confirmatory letter. A grand dinner was given to celebrate the event.

Three weeks later came the detailed letter from Gopinath. "Thank God and your gold," he wrote, "that I have been able to qualify for your daughter's hand. But, I am afraid I must run the risk of surprising you. I have no intention of marrying your daughter unless I feel sure that she deserves me on her own and not as an heiress to indigo. Let me explain. You see, both of us have been duly tested and approved; you on

"You had better wait and see what money can do."



indigo and I on the bottle-neck of a competitive exam. Therefore it is now the turn of your daughter to prove herself. So do not give publicity to the question of marriage just now. There is still a year ahead. In case, however, I do not choose to marry her, I shall repay the money which you were good enough to spend on my behalf, together with the usual rate of interest."

Sastri got furious and fulminated. "Boys nowadays," he harangued before his wife, "are mean and selfish. They have no point of view except their own. They have no sense of honour either. Success is their only object in life and they would stoop to anything....."

"Don't revile so vehemently," interrupted Savitri. "Were you yourself any better, I ask? You rejected Nanu and looked upon a son-in-law as a business proposition. And you bargained with him as if he were a commodity in the market. You wanted to own him if he were successful. You had no scruples to chucking him off were he to fail. Was that a very high motive?"

"Don't compare me with these new-fangled fellows? Given a word, is he not bound to keep it? As for my part, was I not quite plain with him from the start?"

"Then the only thing for us to do now is to leave him out and resort to Nanu."

"No. Don't be hasty. Gopinath hasn't exactly refused. There is still a chance. You should put your shoulder to the wheel. Make Padma as attractive as possible. I shall engage for her a tutor in English, music, drawing, etc. I shall coach her in tennis as well. It these can't win him I don't know what will."

Sastri had an uneasy and anxious time of it. At times, he was prone to throw Gopinath overboard and choose a lad of humbler station. But prestige came in the way. Moreover he had already bruted it abroad that Padma's marriage to Gopinath was as good as settled and he had been felicitated on his wise choice. But the fear that Gopinath may let him down in the end and that he would become the laughing-stock among his friends, was hurting his pride and undermining his peace. He came to realise that there was no state in life more miserable than being a father-in-law or being forced to the necessity of becoming one shortly. It was degrading and humiliating. There was no escape from it.

The year gradually wore out. Gopinath returned to India in November and was received in Bombay by

Sastri and his daughter. Sastri's luck, however, did not desert him. For he did not have to wait long for the fateful word. Gopinath relieved his suspense and anxiety by declaring on the very first day of his arrival that he was willing.

Why Gopinath gave his consent so readily is not traceable. It is still in the realm of conjecture. Perhaps Savitri was able to bring about the result by transforming Padma into a thing of beauty. Perhaps Padma herself went one better and sent lyrics across the seas. Perhaps Gopinath had no other object except to give a temporary shock to vested interests. Perhaps the adult young man found the adolescent young woman irresistible and consent came out spontaneous. Or perhaps, it is due to the fact that all the characters in this story are imaginary.

END

The Haunted Pavilion—(Continued from page 44)

"Yes, sir. When I heard you were going to keep watch in the pavilion, I thought I would be outside, and help you to think that the place was haunted."

"What about the ghostly voice we heard?"

"Please, sir, it was me. I knelt outside, and shouted the ghostly directions through the waste-pipe of the wash-bowl. I wanted you to leave the pot of sweets outside, so that I could catch Jacko."

"That explains everything," said Mr. Lyall grimly "Well, Duncan, what shall we do with this young wretch?"

"Hurrrum!" said Mr. Duncan, with some embarrassment, "I do not think it would be in the interests of school discipline to let this story get about. Boy!" roared the master in his most thunderous tone, "will you give me your word that nothing more will be said about this—unseemly episode?"

"Yes, sir," promised David, thoroughly frightened.

"In that case, we will go to bed," said the mathematics-master majestically.

The trio departed, leaving the haunted pavilion to its erstwhile utilitarian calm.

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CLUES.	PUZZLE.
1. Ripple	URL
2. Grimace	MO
3. Pierce	ORE
4. Force	VI
5. Rumour	TAL
6. This Is Worn	HA
7. This sometimes misfires	UN
8. Hole	AP
9. Entangle	SNAR

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THE PARAMOUNT MISSING LETTERS No. 153.

(Substitute one letter for dash to get the meanings.)

No.	Words.	Exact Meanings.
1	P—LT	Blow
2	BA—E	Mischief
3	HO—E	Hollow

THE PARAMOUNT CROSSWORDS No. 154.

CLUES ACROSS:—

1. Salute. 4. Indian coin..... 7. Arrest 9. Thus.

CLUES DOWN:—

1. Entangle. 2. Alone. 3. Example (Abbr.) 5. Never. 6. Dull stupid fellow. 8. As far as.

GENERAL RULES FOR BOTH COMPETITIONS:—EXACT clues from Chambers XX Century Dictionary and all forms are treated as Direct. A, An, Any, The, To, have been omitted in the beginning of the clues. Bracketted words are not used. For each Competition Rs. 250 will be awarded to senders of correct or nearest correct solutions. Rs. 50 will be awarded to the first 5 correct solutions posted. Entries received without the proper fees or M. O. Receipts will not be considered. The Prizes will not be reduced under any circumstances. The Manager's decision is final and legally binding. Results will be sent within a week only to those enclosing 4 quarter anna stamps. Other Rules as usual. Address all your entries and fees to:—

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(SEALED KEY SOLUTION DEPOSITED WITH "TATLER")

Substitute one letter for each dash.

No.	WORDS.	MEANINGS.
1	R U —	Polish
2	R — N G	Wed with a ring
3	R — N E	Ditch
4	R — D D L E	Mark with a ruddle
5	R I —	Fissure
6	R A —	Ruin

RULES:—Ref. Chambers XX Century Dictionary and all forms are treated as Direct. A, To, etc., have been omitted in the beginning of the clues. Bracketted words are not used. The entrance fee is As. 8 for the First and As. 4 for each subsequent entry. Any number of entries may be sent with the requisite fee. The Prizes will NOT be reduced. Results only to those enclosing 2 half anna stamps. Entries without proper fees or M. O. receipts will not be considered. Manager's decision is final. Other Rules as usual. Address all your entries and fees to:—The Manageress,

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COMPETITION No. 5.

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Last Posting Date 20-6-35. Results within a Week.

(Sealed Key Solution Deposited with "TATLER")

1	U	2	G	3	K
4	O	5	O	6	O
7	N	8	U	9	U
10	S	11	U	12	U
13	S	14	A	15	S

Clues Across:—

1. Pull..... 8. Whit.

Clues Down:—

2. Proceed. 3. Stir up. 4. Interjection. 5. Not. 6. Interjection. 7. A prefix.

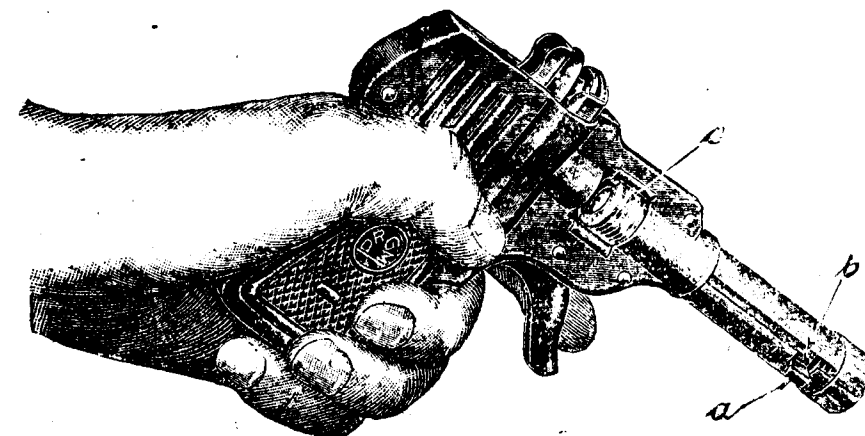
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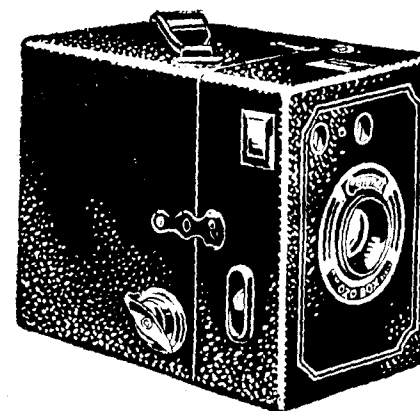
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