

SPECIAL: G. B. SHAW'S AUTOGRAPHED SKETCH

88

THE
MERRY
MAGAZINE



2175

Vol. III Madras, 6 July '35 No. 27

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•
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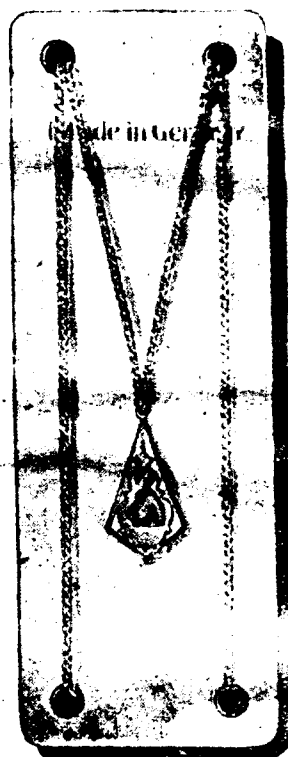
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MERRY MAGAZINE

MADRAS, JULY 6, 1935

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T. P. Scott-O'Connor
The Snake (Part I).

The triangle eternal, dissolved by King Cobra—a cruel nemesis.

CHATTOPADHYAYA

Tragi-Comedy (A poem).

The eternal question of the head in front (in the theatre) blocking your line of vision, till you do the needful and expose the scandal in all its baldness.

A. T. MacNaughton
Thomas

Love at First Bite.

The course of true love is not a railway, said Dickens. But true love can start in the cook-house and end in—oh, the beastly Billimoria!

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SPARKS FROM OUR ANVIL

Speaking at the Police dinner, the Marquis of Zetland said: 'Under the new constitution, the ministers themselves will come to look up to the police as their best friends.'



Let us hope, they will never become so unpopular as that implies!

The A. P. I. reports that Quetta continues to experience tremors. One of them was of such intensity that it caused the entire destruction of Rs. 20,000 of Free Press Security.

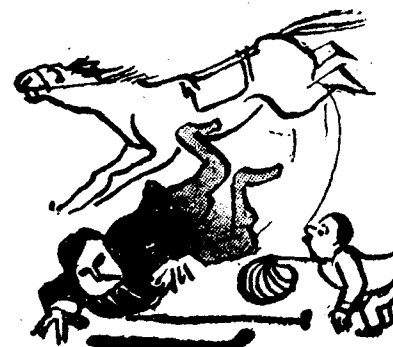
Replying to a congratulatory address, Sir R. K. Shanmukham is reported to have said that he deliberately chose public life.

In our opinion, this is an aggravating circumstance!

He also added that he did not regret his choice.

That is for the country.

The Rajah of Bibbili had a nasty fall while playing polo.



We hope the next one in politics will be more agreeable!

Opposing the India Bill in the House of Lords, the Bishop of Exeter denounced the idea of universal adult suffrage as 'an awful heresy'.

It must relieve him to know that the great majority of people in this country will be free from this taint.

He further added: 'I do not know what will be the effect of this great tragedy. If it is like the tragedy of China, it will be a sad ending'.

His lordship however failed to give an instance of a tragedy with a happy ending.

At a dinner given to the Japanese Ambassador, Sir Samuel Hoare, the new Foreign Secretary declared; England and Japan, the two great island-powers, had much in common.

But, not all of it is, we think, proper!

He further added that the speedy settlement of the Chinese situation was essential to the prosperity of the world.

He must have meant, of course, the rest of the world.

The Anglo-German naval agreement is described as a contribution of great importance to the cause of naval limitation.

Judging from France's determination to build another 35,000 ton battle-ship, it seems to be a case of imitation more than of limitation.

A manifesto issued by the British clergy deplores the increase of expenditure on the fighting forces, and says that the state of international unrest is due to the failure of the victors in the late war to disarm.

A truer way of putting it would be to say that the vanquished succeeded in re-arming themselves.

Says Mr. Satyamurthi: 'I can manage the Madras Ministry as well as and even better than the Raja of Bobbili.'

We regret to have to say that the comparison proves nothing in favour of Mr. Satyamurthi.

'The duchess—has given a new popularity to ostrich feathers which must be a source of delight and content ostrich farmers in South Africa.'



We gather that there is no such unanimity of feeling among the ostriches themselves.

Lord Halifax explained that the term 'Dominion Status' was not introduced in the preamble, because it was dynamic.

This should explain Lord Halifax better than it explains the term.

It is understood that the fee for membership of the Justice Party is to be fixed at two annas for the year.

After all, this is only two annas more than the present rates!

Mr. Shaukat Ali says that he will obey the order the Police Commissioner prohibiting him from entering Karachi.



This is an original way of making bureaucracy look small.



THE EDITOR HIS PAGE

MR. MERRY and 'DIGOO'

On the opposite page, a remarkably pleasant-faced gentleman, with a grinning dog as his companion, makes his debut. He is Mr. Merry, sole representative, as the advertisements say, of this magazine—the high priest of our national humour.

He is out to amuse, but if, once in a while, by mistake, he instructs too, it is, he emphatically says, not his mistake. The dress he affects culminating in his absurd turban is partly South Indian. After all he comes from Broadway. But his South Indian affinities end there. He has a large all-India soul, so large in fact that its tail dangles over Cape Kanyakumari and its eye winks at the playful Afridis in far Nor'West.

That leering dog at his side is Digoo, as great a humorist as his master, with tons of tricks in his little, hairy head. That he will capture your hearts with his delightful pranks is a sure prophesy from my Delpi. These two are inseparable and will come upon you henceforward with their eternal, infectious grins at any and every odd corner, scattering good cheer and goodwill, striking terror into the hearts of the gloomy, inviting all and sundry to laugh with them at this mad world.

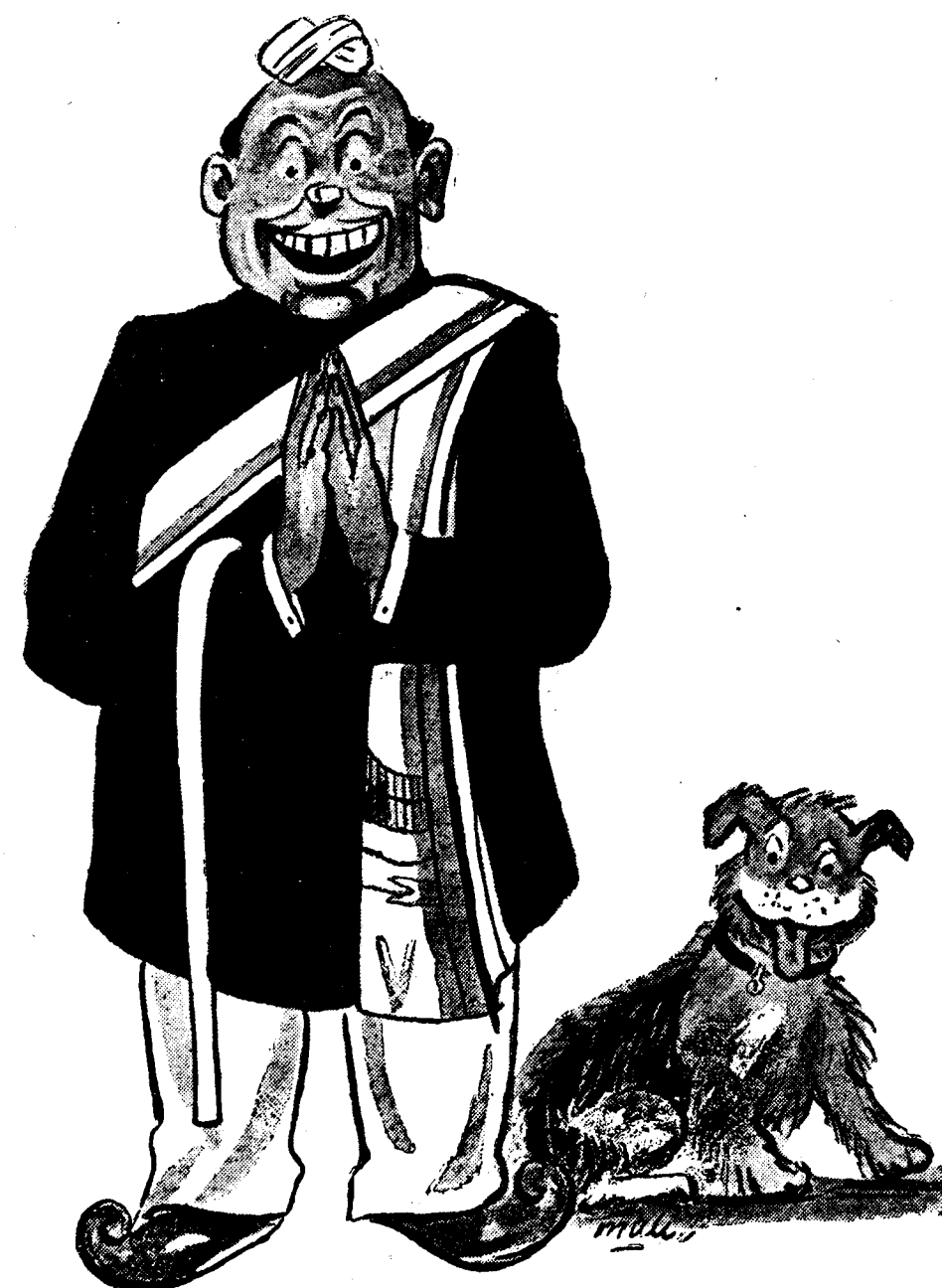
They are the beginning of an institution.

SUPPLEMENT

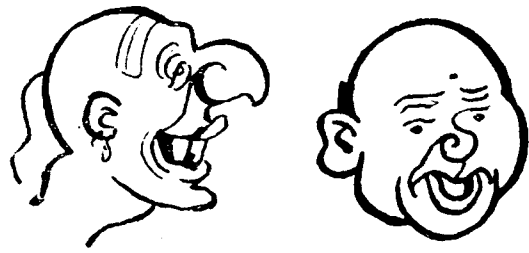
This number is carrying a supplement. George Bernard Shaw who laughs at the world because he cannot weep at its petty villainies, graces that page. It is an interesting sketch, the interest being enhanced by the autograph of Shaw, which, in his inimitable fun, he scrawled across his patriarchal beard. It may interest readers to know that it is easier to squeeze oil from sea-sand than to get Shaw's autograph. This, then, is a rare sketch. It is my hope to give you a supplement at least once a month.

AN INVITATION

I have so far placed before you seven numbers of this magazine after giving it an elaborate oil-bath. I invite friends and readers to tell me what they think of it and to offer me suggestions for its further improvement. I am not offering a cash prize for the 'best opinion' received, because, however much this age is commercialised, a cash inducement, says Mr. Merry, is not a dignified offer. I am offering something instead—my gratitude.



Mr. Merry and His Faithful Dog 'Digoo'



The Noses

Poem by H. Chattopadhyaya.

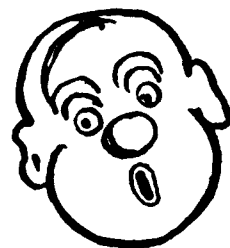
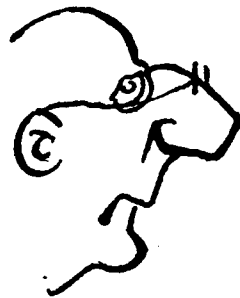
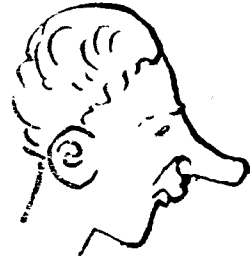
I have seen many noses in my time,
Noses of different shapes, in different places.
I always have considered them sublime
Appendages glued fast on human faces.

At different times I fancy different types,
It all depends upon the mood I am in:
This much is sure,—all noses are as pipes
Of breath you had much better not examine.

Sometimes I like a nose that's hooked and curved
Like to a parrot's beak or tiger's claw,
In it concealed beauty is conserved
Fit for a brave cartoonist's pen to draw.

At other times I think that, after all,
The nose that brings the heart a sense of hope,
Is one which is unobtrusively small
And is but kissed beneath a microscope.

And then,—it all depends upon my mood,—
I love the nose that's truly nice and snub,
For then, like Hamlet on it I can brood
Slowly soliloquising, "There's the rub!"



I Love

Caricatures by Mali

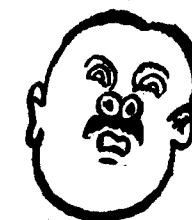
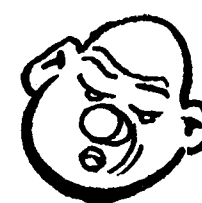
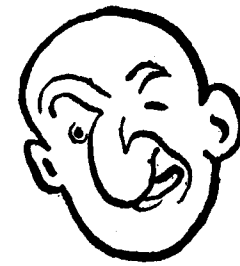
I also fancy in a certain state
A longish nose that puts on many airs
And seems unconsciously to carry weight
And poke itself into all men's affairs.

I never tire of noses. They are sweet
Whatever be the shape or size or shade:
Imagine how absurdly incomplete
Faces would be if noses were not made!

I love the way that nostrils dance about
And twinkle in a stream of flowing breath:
Life, minus noses, would, beyond a doubt,
Have been a stupid synonym for death!

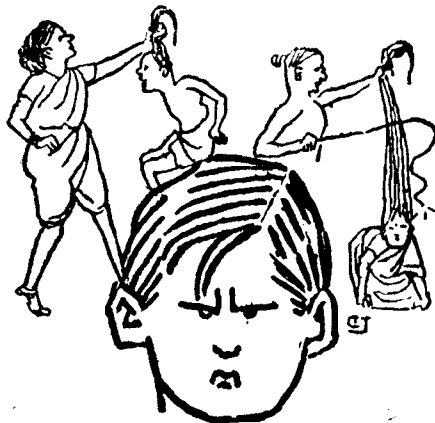
Profoundly! you, with every curve and line
Which makes you what you are, usurp a place
Important, even as at a supper, wine,
In the warm rondure of the human face.

Pea, out of you a breathing, set to time,
Like to a secret river flows and flows!
And yet, O Nose! I wonder in my rhyme
Why God made noses—that God only knows!



To Marry or Not to Marry

by 'Observer'



TO marry or not to marry—that is the question. Who can give a convincing answer?

A club has recently been formed in Madrid whose object is: 'To defend men against the temptations of marriage'. And who is not familiar with the cynical advice of *Punch* to those about to marry—"Don't". The horrors of marriage were depicted most cruelly during the conventional nineteenth century.

"You can always tell whether a man is married or single from the way he's dressed," said the comedian; "look at the single man: no buttons on his shirt. Look at the married man: no shirt." That reminds one of Lord Henry's advice to Dorian Gray. "Never marry at all, Dorian. Men marry because they are tired; women, because they are curious: both are disappointed." But against this there is the strong evidence of the medical man who says that matrimony makes for longevity. "Married men live longer and are less likely to end up in the workhouse than bachelors," says Mr. Edwin S. Budell, professor of Social Science at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. The professor is further of opinion, based on statistics, that married men commit fewer crimes and less often go insane. "The married man," says the professor, "has less at stake in the community because he has a lower status. *Marriage is the best insurance in the world—insurance against crime, insanity, poverty, premature death.*"

So the question again crops up like King Charles' head—to marry or not to marry. I am in a great fix. Shall I plough my lonely furrow or shall I put on the marital yoke? Married friends tell me that a bachelor is a donkey who shirks his regular load; while those who have not yet fallen in the matrimonial net are ready with the retort that a married man is a donkey who insists on being saddled with a load. This does not help matters. Shall I take a leap? In reply to this I am reminded of the late Justice Macardie's counsel: "A bachelor is a man who looks before he leaps, and having looked leaps not."

But I have decided. I must marry. I must taste the matrimonial sweets even though they cause a permanent indigestion. I look upon a bachelor as a shirker who is always torn in a conflict between 'I will' and 'I won't'. Such men can do little in life. It requires some courage to be united in wedlock. There is more than an element of truth in the English saying—"Faint heart

never won a fair lady'. People who are lily-livered should not dream of marital happiness. As Stevenson said: "Marriage is a field of battle, it is not a bed of roses." Those who are not prepared to incur any risks should take a vow of celibacy and lead the life of a recluse. No man with a weak heart should lead a wife to the altar.

Now let us see what arguments bachelors advance against the institution of marriage. It is said that

married men are the masters of their will. They have to dance to the tune of their wives. They are under the petticoat government which is said to be the most autocratic and tyrannical. I have no apprehensions of this nature. I am not going to be a 'hen-pecked' husband and my wife must think many times before she nags me. I am a he-man: I am not going to be dominated by others. In this world there is a perpetual conflict for ascendancy. Either you lord over me or I lord over you. I am going to lord over my wife, whoever she may be. I shall hold the purse-strings in my hand and he who pays the piper must call for the tune.

Then come the children. A string of kiddies is an inevitable concomitant of married life. More children mean more expense and more worry. That is true. But then one or two children are a source of real joy to the parents. Why should I have a team of kiddies? For fear of many children, shall I sacrifice the joy of a lifetime? I do not agree with this puerile argument.

I know of a distinguished personage who had made it a rule to employ married people as far as possible, for he knew that married people were more responsible and earnest than bachelors. That is true, too. Bachelors are too rash and foolhardy. Finding that they are absolutely lone people with nobody to look after, they hold their life cheap. Who said that a bachelor was like a clock without a regulator?

But are married people really happy? Have they attained the *summum bonum* of life? Are they not tormented by a hundred and one fears and anxieties? Happiness is an elusive thing. It depends on the state of one's mind. Some people are constantly weeping. I shall marry and, what is more, I will be happy. I do not agree with the cynical advice of Socrates who in reply to a question whether to marry or not to marry said, "Whichever you do, you will have to repent."



• FUN FOR ALL •

Husband: "You don't seem to have the courage of your convictions."

Wife: "I should like to know how you came to that conclusion?"

Husband: "You say it's no use talking, and then you talk for hours."

A small boy had fallen into a stream, but had been rescued.

"How did you come to fall in?" asked a bystander.

"I didn't come to fall in," the small boy explained. "I came to fish."

As a tall, athletic-looking young man entered the room he was greeted by many friends.

"A popular young man?" asked a stranger of his neighbour.

"Yes," was the reply. "He distinguished himself when the circus was here."

"In what way?" asked the stranger.

"A lion escaped, and, when everybody was yelling and trying to get away, he walked calmly to the lion's cage and shut himself inside."

Doctor:—"Well, how do you feel this morning?"

Patient:—"Not quite so bad, doctor, but my breath keeps coming in little short pants."

Doctor:—"Well, what do you expect it to come in—plus fours?"

He blushed a fiery red;
Her heart went pit-a-pat;
She gently hung her head
And look'd down at the mat.
He trembled in his speech;
He rose from where he sat,
And shouted with a screech,
"You're sitting on my hat!"

"What is your rule of business—your maxim?" the Stock Exchange magnate was asked.

"Very simple," he replied, "I pay for something that I can't get with money that I haven't got, and then sell what I never had for more than it ever cost."

"Fader," said young Ike, "vot is meant by the word morality?"

"Vell," said old Ike, "this is vot is meant by 'morality'. If a customer pays you twenty quid in mistake for a ten quid account, the question then arises, are you goin' to tell your partner or not?"



"Where in Hell have I seen you before?"
"You are wrong. I was never in that place."

The MISFORTUNES of Meena



In the Previous Six Instalments.

Ramathilakam, a pretty young woman of the labouring class, alarmed at the depravity of her drunken husband, determines to put an end to her life. She travels without a ticket to Chingleput with the intention of drowning herself in the big lake that adjoins the Railway Station.

A Ticket-examiner hands her over to Railway Police Head-Constable Rangaswamy Iyer. When she says that she came to Chingleput with the intention of drowning herself, the Head-Constable dares her to do so. She does so to the amazement of Head-Constable Rangaswamy Iyer, who has to rush into the waters and rescue her.

He takes her over to Madras to restore her to her husband from whom she has fled, but finds that the husband had been locked-up for stabbing his Maistry in a drunken brawl. As Ramathilakam has nowhere to go, Head-Constable Rangaswamy Iyer leaves her under the care of an old quack-doctor at Saidapet.

Eventually and sometime later, Head-Constable Rangaswamy Iyer has to return to the doctor for treatment. While staying at the doctor's house he falls in love with Ramathilakam.

A year later, Ramathilakam gives birth to a girl-baby and dies. Head-Constable Rangaswamy Iyer is hard put to it to rear the baby and when the baby is ten months old, he takes her to his sister at Mayavaram, and tells her that the baby is an orphan, having lost both her father and mother and that he is her guardian and custodian. The sister believes the story, receives the child Meena, and treats and brings up the child as if it were her own. Two years later, her husband, in the course of certain negotiations for the marriage of his first son, comes to Saidapet, and there learns the truth about Meena. He returns post-haste to Mayavaram and tells his wife Kamakshi, that her brother Rangaswamy had foisted a *Sudra* kid on their Brahmin family.

Kamakshi, Rangaswamy's sister, writes to him and he comes to Mayavaram with a forged document purporting to be the last will and testament of Meena's fictitious father. This document somewhat re-assures the Dikshidar family about the origin of Meena's birth. But rumour had gone round the *Agraharam* to the effect that Meena was born to Brahmin Rangaswamy Iyer through a *Sudra* woman. As Meena grows up, she notices the way in which the *Agraharam* people behave towards her.

A Circle Inspector of Police in the Tanjore District sends his cousin Mr. Jambu, who is employed in the office of the Inspector General of Police to interview Head-Constable Rangaswamy Iyer with proposals for the hand of Meena. Mr. Jambu finds out the truth about Meena's birth which reaches the ears of the Dikshidar. He cleverly brings about a meeting of Messrs Jambu and Rangaswamy and confronts the latter with the truth. Greatly agitated, Rangaswamy Iyer has to admit the truth and rushes away from the terrace where they were sitting.

Seventh Instalment

The 'Divine' Uppumav

AS Rangaswamy Iyer rushed down the steps, he almost collided with Meena who was coming up the stairs, looking for Kamakshi. "Where is mother, Uncle?" asked she, and stood still, frightened at his haggard face. Ignoring her question, Rangaswamy seized her and, holding her at arms length, gazed intently at her. Then, gathering her in his arms, he lifted her and crushed her close to himself for a fleeting moment to her amazement and discomfort and then, as violently, he released her and literally ran from the place.

It was very near ten o'clock that night and like a mad man, he wandered along the Luz, further on to Santhome and finally found himself on the Marina. Walking up to the wather's edge, he spread his upper-cloth on the sands and lying flat on his back thereon and gazing at the stars, he tried to calm the storm that was raging within him.

What would the future of Meena be? Will people of his caste and community marry her, if they knew the truth about her birth? Was it possible to so train the girl hereafter as to make her look upon herself as not of Brahmin origin? Would people of other castes take her as one of them? Would she be happy among them? These and other thoughts kept him on the rack all night on the seashore and at the first streak of dawn, he rose, washed his face at a public water-tap, proceeded straight to the bus-stand and boarded a bus bound for Chingleput.

Police-Constable 526 was a loyal friend and comrade. Head-Constable Rangaswamy Iyer and Police-Constable 526 hit it off very well, in their joint career extending over a decade. There wasn't much to do at the Railway junction where they were posted to duty. Through Police-Constable 526, Head-Constable Rangaswamy Iyer sent a letter to his sister's husband, the Dikshidar, temporarily staying at Madras. The letter ran thus:

Salutations!

I realise that it wouldn't be fair to keep Meena on your hands hereafter. My profound thanks for looking after her, so far. As for my sins, my only excuse is the love of one's own flesh and blood. I pray that my sins may be forgiven. The bearer of this note is my trusted friend and colleague. Meena may be sent with him to me. My sister may be told that though it is impossible to find another mother to equal her for Meena, I shall endeavour to fill the role as best as I can.

With manifold salutations,
Rangaswamy.

"Uncle Rangu is mad!" Meena had said, referring to his behaviour on the steps leading to the terrace. "I was coming up, mother, and he came down almost toppling over me. Then, seeing me, he caught hold of me as if I was a thief, looked at me like a mad man and then crushed me. Then, pushing me aside, he bolted. What is the matter with him?"

"He loves you, darling—very much, I am afraid," Kamakshi had said.

Since the Dikshidar couple were guests and couldn't find the necessary privacy, it was tacitly agreed not to discuss in their host's house the affairs of Meena. When Police-Constable 526 delivered the letter and sat determinedly on the front-pial, the Dikshidar sent for Kamakshi and whispered to her the contents of the letter. "The man is sitting on the pial!" he said in a hoarse whisper and awaited Kamakshi's decision.

"I will not send the child with a constable. Ask him to go away. To-morrow morning, anyway, we are leaving Madras and we will break the journey at Chingleput. There is a lot to talk with Rangu," said Kamakshi.

The Dikshidar came out and took Police-Constable 526 aside. "We will be coming to Chingleput to-morrow morning. We will bring the girl with us," said he.

"Sami! Orders are orders! I have been asked to bring from here a girl. Where is she?" asked 526.

"She is inside!"

"Please bring her here."

"She won't go with you, my man!"

"Won't! What do you mean?"

"Never mind what I mean. You go and tell your Iyer that we will ourselves bring the girl to-morrow morning."

"Look here, Sami! My orders are these. My head said, 'If you deliver this letter, they will hand over to you a girl about ten years old. Take very good care of her and bring her by bus straight to the station'. I have given you the letter. Where is the girl?"

"To-day is not auspicious. Your 'Head', as you call him, doesn't know these things. To-morrow is a good day and we will bring the girl with us. Now then, don't make any *thagarar*: please go away quietly."



Then, gathering her
in his arms he lifted
her and.....

"Alright, say all that you have said in a letter and give it to me."

The Dikshidar agreed and indited a letter. Police-Constable 526 received the letter, hesitated, scratched his head, and finally pocketed the letter.

"Who is the girl?" asked he, casually.

"Your Head's daughter!" blurted out the Dikshidar.

Police-constable 526, choked, gulped down an imaginary lump, exclaimed, "Ada Rama!" and departed.

* * * *

There was an old Brahmin widow at Chingleput, who ran a cheap boarding house to find her son's school fees. Head-Constable Rangaswamy Iyer patronised this woman, for, the food was good and its price, absurdly cheap. After sending Police-Constable 526 to Madras to fetch Meena, Head-Constable Rangaswamy Iyer sought the old woman.

"Do you know, granny, I have a daughter?" asked he.

"Goodness gracious! You never told me! How old is she?" exclaimed the old lady.

"Just ten. My wife died when I was thirty-five. She left a baby. I sent the baby to my sister and all these years my sister was bringing up the child. But, recently, there has grown a misunderstanding between me and my sister's husband and I have decided to bring back my daughter here. In fact, I am expecting her to-day."

"But you have no home, no women-folk to look after so young a child!"

"That is where you come in, granny. I will leave her with you—only for a few months. Teach her to cook—to manage a household. She is old enough to learn all these things. And when she is trained and ready, I intend setting-up a house all on my own."

"I shall only be too pleased," said the old woman, glad to be assured of an extra income. "When will she be coming?" she asked.

"To-day—and you will like her!"

Head-Constable Rangaswamy Iyer awaited impatiently the return of Police-Constable 526. He mentally rehearsed what he would say to Meena and how he would try to put her at ease. If his sister or her husband had told Meena the truth, was she old enough to realise the full calamity of its implications? Supposing she should cry and make a scene and make herself miserable? He shuddered at the thought.

The wonder of Police-Constable 526 never ceased on the thirty-five miles of journey by bus from Madras to Chingleput. His Head-Constable had a daughter! How on earth could an unmarried man have a daughter? For over fifteen years, Police-Constable 526 had been serving with Head-Constable Rangaswamy Iyer in the police department. And to him the Head-Constable's life was an open book. And yet, the 'Head' had a daughter.

Police-Constable 526 returned to the station in the afternoon and with a grimace, threw the Dikshidar's

letter on the table, before Rangaswamy Iyer, remarking "You are a nice Brahmin!"

Head-Constable Rangaswamy Iyer was so engrossed in reading the letter that the Constable's remark was lost on him.

"What did you say?" he asked, after reading the letter.

"I said you are no Brahmin. You don't know what day is good and what day is not. And the only thing you seem to know is to produce a daughter without a wife."

"So! And who told you that?"

"Never mind who. Tell me how it is done."

"Easy, if you must know. You marry a woman and the stork does the rest. More later. Sit down and listen to me. The man who gave you this letter is my sister's husband."

"I know."

"Don't interrupt me. My sister and her family will be arriving here to-morrow morning by the 9.30 train. Meet and tell them that I was suddenly called away on duty and that you don't know where I have gone or when I will return. Say anything you like, but see that they proceed to Mayavaram. Buy them tickets if they ask, delay the train, do anything and pack them off. On one thing you must insist and that is, they should leave Meena behind."

"What is Meena?"

"The girl you went to fetch."

"Your daughter, I see. And then?"

"After they are gone, bring the child to the old woman's house where I take my food."

"Supposing they refuse to proceed to Mayavaram and the girl refuses to come with me?"

"You would be unfit to be in the force."

"Thanks. May I know what is scaring you? Why are you avoiding them?"

"It's my business."

"Thanks again. You are very communicative. All along, I was under the impression that there were no secrets between us. It's time now I put in my pension application."

"Finish the job on hand first," said Head-Constable Rangaswamy Iyer with an air of finality, but Police-Constable 526 couldn't resist a final parting shot.

"I wish I knew," said Police-Constable 526 half to himself, "how one produces a daughter without a wife."

Nevertheless the next morning Police-Constable 526 was alert and ready on the platform to meet the 9.30 A.M. train. When the train drew up the platform, he covered more than half the length of the train with swift strides and located the Dikshidar family. The Dikshidar, his wife Kamakshi, their last two boys and Meena were in a third-class compartment and preparing to alight.

"*Namaskaram, Sami!* You needn't trouble yourself about getting down," said Police-Constable 526.

"You!" exclaimed the Dikshidar. "Why? What is the matter?"

"My 'Head' thinks that he wouldn't be able to find here accommodation for all of you. He is coming with you to Mayavaram. He has bought tickets for all of you. Here they are!"

"Where is he?" asked Kamakshi.

"He was suddenly called out by the town police. He will be here any minute. Would the children want coffee or anything?"

Kamakshi was glad to hear that her brother would be accompanying her for the rest of the journey; but not so the Dikshidar, who was not at all anxious to meet his brother-in-law. Police-Constable 526 insisted on taking the children to the refreshment room and the boys eagerly jumped out of the compartment.

"Aren't you coming, *amma*?" asked 526 of Meena.

"May I also go, *amma*?" asked Meena of Kamakshi and Kamakshi permitting, Meena followed the constable with the boys.

In the refreshment room, Police-Constable 526 had his eye on the clock, while the children were helping themselves to a liberal supply of *laddies*. Meena was slow in eating and the coffee served to her was steaming hot. Police-Constable 526 who was waiting for an opportunity, made a suggestion. "Have you a *kooja* in the compartment?" asked he of the elder of the two boys. The boy nodded assent. "I'll send a hotel servant along with you. You too run along and send the *kooja* through the servant. Let sister stay here and finish her coffee. She can bring back the *kooja* full of coffee to you and it will be useful for the rest of the journey."

The boys fell in with the idea, and a hotel servant was promptly sent along with them. Meanwhile, Police-Constable 526 attempted to chum with Meena.

"Know your uncle?" he asked her.

Meena nodded assent.

"Like him?"

She pouted her lips.

"He is my master!" said 526 with exaggerated pride. Meena was neither interested nor impressed.

"Do you like me?"

A vigorous shake of the head from Meena.

"You will, by and by," said 526 grinning, and the first bell rang.

"Stay here! I will see what has happened to that *kooja*," said Police-Constable 526 and went out. He could see the hotel-servant running down the over-bridge with the *kooja* in his hand. He took it from the servant and whispered something in his ear. The servant looked puzzled.

The engine whistled. Police-Constable 526 crossed the rails calmly, but became very active when he reached

the platform. Necks were craned from the third-class compartment occupied by the Dikshidar family and there was great alarm therein. "Where were the tickets? Where were Meena and Rangu—and the *kooja*? What hoax was this?" cried the Dikshidar and his wife. The train moved and Police-Constable 526 came running up to the compartment.

"It is alright! Here are the tickets! Here is the *kooja*! Your brother and Meena were blocked up on the other side and couldn't catch this train. They will follow by the next train!" he cried, running alongside the moving train and assuring them that everything was alright.

"That's only half the job done!" sighed Police-Constable 526, looking at the receding train in the distance and walked meditatively to the refreshment room.

Meena was sitting, demurely, having finished the coffee.

"I am a fool!" said Police-Constable 526 with extreme contrition to her, "and I have made you miss the train!"

Alarmed, Meena looked up at him.

"But don't be afraid!" assured 526, "I'll take you to your—your uncle and he will attend to the rest."

Contrary to the Police-Constable's expectations, Meena neither cried nor created a scene. True, her eyes were full of tears which she courageously wiped out with the hem of her skirt. "Take me to uncle!" she said, standing.

Police-Constable 526 wondered at the girl's courage. "A true daughter of a Policeman!" thought he and was about to lead her by the hand, when Meena withheld it from him and put it behind her back. His admiration grew as he walked by her side to the lodging house of the old Brahmin widow.

Head-Constable Rangaswamy Iyer was in great trepidation. Would Police-Constable 526 bring his daughter? His daughter! How would she take to him? Would she cry, be miserable and long for the home and people from whom he was compelled to take her? Would she hate him? What should he say to put her at ease? While engrossed with such thoughts, Police-Constable 526 brought Meena before him.

"That you, Meena?" said Rangaswamy with a lump in his throat and motioned Police-Constable 526 to go out. "Come and sit near me, my dear," he said to her.

Like an automaton, Meena moved, came and sat near him. Head-Constable Rangaswamy Iyer didn't know what to say. He looked long and intently at her. She never moved or showed the slightest symptom of uneasiness or fear. Head-Constable Rangaswamy Iyer was not aware of the kind of ruse by which Police-Constable 526 was able to separate Meena from the family. He expected Meena to be in tears. There she was, sitting like a statue. She reminded him of a volcano that may at any moment erupt into action. His life, hereafter, must be dedicated to her future. He must know her, her moods, her nature and mould her views. How to begin about it?

"I am your father, Meena," he found himself saying, and immediately bit his tongue at the crude and clumsy way in which he announced such a startling fact.

"I know," said Meena and hung her head.

Rangaswamy was startled. "My God!" he exclaimed. "Who told you?"

"Mother," she said calmly.

A silence fell between them.

"Do you hate me, Meena?" asked Rangaswamy piteously, after what seemed to him eternity itself.

Meena merely shook her head.

"I have no right to expect you to love me, Meena. I don't know what you think of it all. If there is anything you want to ask me, do not hesitate?"

"Who was my mother?" she asked, looking away from him.

"Didn't Kamu tell you?"

"No."

"Your mother, my dear, was a very good woman."

"Wasn't she a Brahmin?"

"Does that matter, my dear?"

"Wasn't she married to you, uncle?"

"You can call me *appah*. The old lady in this house, Granny Janaki, who will look after you hereafter, knows you are my daughter. I have told her that you were born to me by my late wife."

"But uncle—I mean *appah*—a few years back, at school, a girl-friend told me that you were my father and that my mother was a *Sudra* woman. At that time, Kamu-amma said all that was a pack of lies. She told me then that my father and mother died and that you were my guardian. Yesterday, she told me that she was wrong all the time and that you were really my father and that I should, hereafter live with you. She wasn't sure who my mother was? But you must know."

"My dear child, you are young and you cannot judge the rights and wrongs of things which you cannot understand. For the present, it is enough to know that you are my unfortunate daughter. The rest can wait. We have lots to do to-day. You have no spare skirts or jackets. We must buy some bed-sheets and pillows. Come, my dear, let me take you to granny Janaki with whom you will have to spend the days in this house."

As the months passed, a great sympathetic understanding grew between father and daughter. Meena, shrewd enough for her age, guessed that there was some blemish about her mother or in the relationship between her natural parents. She missed Kamu very much indeed but she had her work cut out day-to-day and had very little time for musing. Till ten in the morning, she would help granny in cooking and washing. On her way to school, she would look up her father at the station and on return from school, again help granny to prepare the night meal and again proceed to the station early enough in the evening. She would romp all over

the station and the railway staff took to her kindly. Her grace, her winsome manners, her bold and almost boyish pranks endeared her to one and all. The cabin-man allowed her to manipulate the levers and the block-operator explained to her the mysteries of clearing the line. The refreshment-room attendants gave her willingly and freely the delicacy of the day and the Permanent-way Inspector, an occasional lift in his trolley. She was the 'Head's' daughter to all of them and a motherless child. Her school holidays were the most exciting days in her life when she would wander about the station all day.

Six months after she arrived at Chingleput, Rangaswamy thought he could safely attempt the experiment of setting-up house for himself and instal Meena as the mistress of the house. Police-Constable 526 was against it. True to his original prophecy when he met Meena, Police-Constable 526 had ingratiated himself into her good graces. He was her constant companion and sharer of all her adventures. He became young in her company and to her amusement acted as if he was a boy of twelve. And he loved her much more than he loved his half-a-dozen ugly brats.

When his 'Head' mentioned to him the proposal of setting-up a house, Police-Constable 526 almost flared-up in anger.

"What! You are mad, *Sami*! That baby must not be made to cook, scrub floors and wash dishes at this age. What is wrong with the present arrangements?"

"My dear fellow! She is growing. Soon, she must be married. She must learn to run a house, cook, scrub floors, wash dishes."

"There is time enough!" grumbled Police-Constable 526.

"There is not. And she can do it all well. The old woman has been coaching her, and yesterday Meena cooked a full meal, all by herself. It was delectable."

"Ah, I have something to quarrel about with her when she comes here in the evening. I ought to have been invited."

"The old lady wouldn't allow you——" and Rangaswamy stopped abruptly and winced.

"What is the matter?" asked Police-Constable 526.

Rangaswamy hung his head and groaned. "Sit, my dear fellow and listen to my misery. Do you remember the incident of a woman who attempted to drown herself, ten years before, in the lake over there?"

"Oh, yes. And you sent her to Inspector Naidu, rescued her from him and then took her to Madras."

"She was Meena's mother."

And little by little Head-Constable Rangaswamy Iyer unfolded to Police-Constable 526 the full story of Meena's birth. "I was telling you before I started this story," concluded Rangaswamy, "that the old Brahmin widow wouldn't allow you inside her house to partake of Meena's dishes because you are not a Brahmin. What about Meena herself? Is she a Brahmin? Would a Brahmin marry her? Would she marry a Non-Brahmin? That is the agonising problem."

"What a mess!" observed Police-Constable 526 and departed to cogitate over the fresh facts he had gathered.

Head-Constable Rangaswamy Iyer opened his drawer and took out his savings-bank pass-book. Ever since Meena's birth, he had been putting away monthly a small sum in the savings-bank. Most of it was not money earned by honest or legitimate means. There were 1200 rupees, all told. "Two hundreds to furnish and equip a house and a thousand for her marriage!" mumbled Head-Constable Rangaswamy Iyer to himself and set about seeking for a house.

Setting up a house and running it, gave Meena plenty of excitement. Police-Constable 526 was always near at hand to help her. Granny Janaki came often and offered suggestions and appreciation for work well done.

Nor was Meena's education neglected or her gambols at the railway station restricted. But for her future, Head-Constable Rangaswamy Iyer had every reason to be happy. She was fast growing and held out promises of blossoming into a beautiful woman. She had not the reserve, the shyness, so common to girls of her age, caste and community. She was almost boyish and totally unconscious of her arresting, attention-compelling beauty. The arch of her eyebrows, the long languid lashes, the cleft in her chin, all reminded Rangaswamy poignantly of her mother, Ramathilakam.

When Meena was thirteen years old, she happened to take a wager with the cook at the Railway refreshment-room that she would make a better dish of *Uppumav*

(Continued on page 49)



Finally, he pushed one of the plates aside and taking the other said, "This one is better!"

The Lesson

by C. Venkatramani

Drawing by Nadkarni

MID-DAY, and I was resting in my favourite easy-chair in the drawing-room, after a rather good performance at the lunch table. I was smoking and, between puffs, peacefully watching the blue smoke rise and go out through the window. That was a moment, when like Pippa, I felt that God was in Heaven and all was right with the world.

But, it has always been the way of this world, never to let a man to have too much of a good thing. In ordinary every-day life, you will invariably find that when a chap has comfortably settled himself and is chewing the cud, so to speak, with a heart full of peace and happiness, Nature or Fate or Providence or whatever you call it, unfaillingly sends a wasp slowly up his unclothed ankle. The happy dreamer is startled out of his Eden, and the nearest Chemist sells another bottle of Milk of Magnesia.

It has been the same with the History of the World. Empires have tumbled down like cards, at the height of their glory. Thrones have been lost, revolutions had ravaged countries, and politicians had gone to the guillotine, all when there wasn't the least sign of appro-

aching disaster. In short, Life can be compared to a trick cigar. All peace and satisfaction this moment; next there is an explosion and you are black in the face with emotion—and pieces of stinking cigar.

As I was saying I was preparing myself for my usual after-lunch beauty-sleep, when I heard the door open, and a pair of feet come pattering towards me. I promptly covered my face with my newspaper, and pretended deep slumber. That did not put off the intruder in the least, for I felt my paper being removed, and my ten-year old nephew's horrid piercing voice said:

"Please, uncle, are you asleep?"

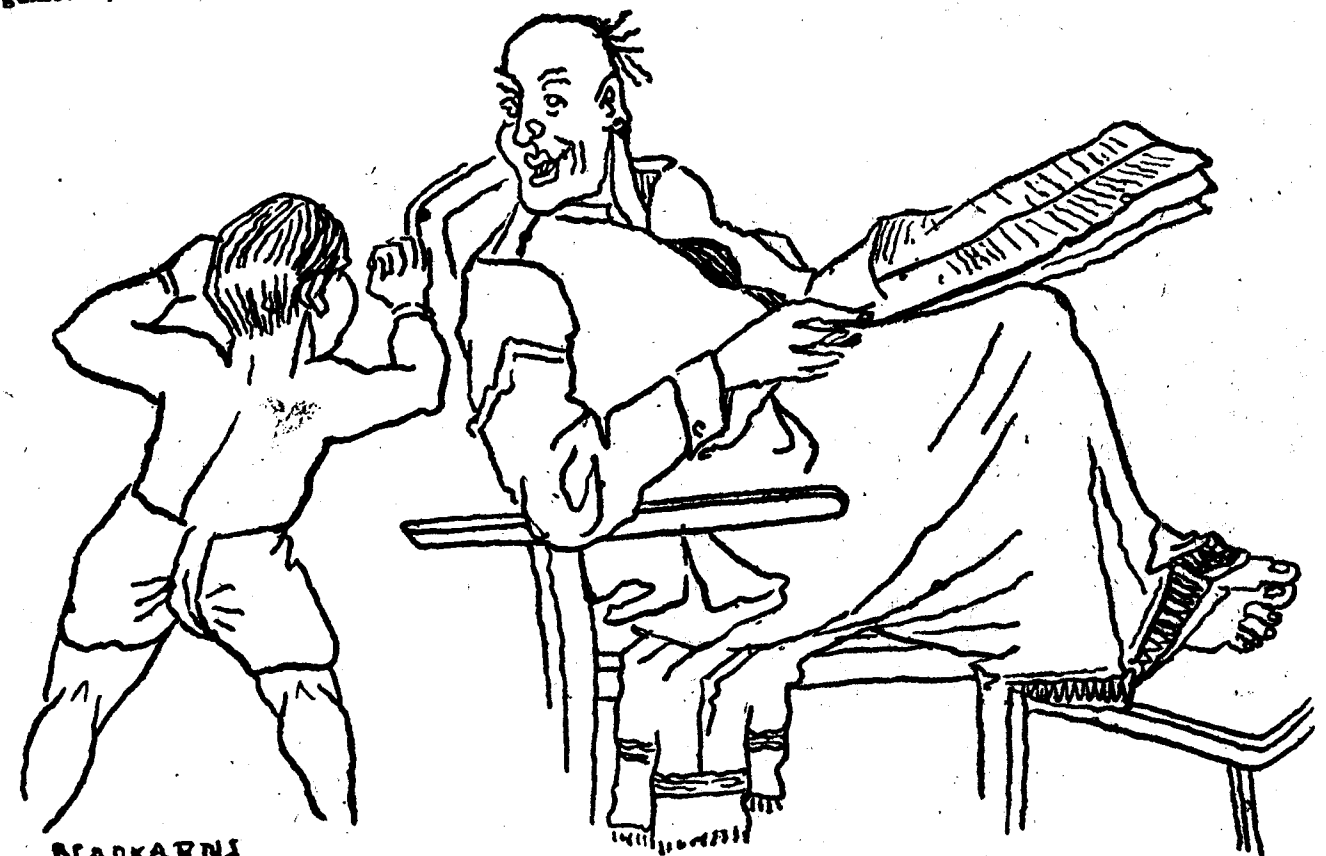
"Yes," I answered, very curtly indeed. But the little villain would not leave off.

"Please, uncle," he shouted again, "I want to ask you something."

"Go away, you limb of Satan, and ask me after tea. I shan't tell you anything now," said I.

"If you don't tell me, I will cry," threatened Lala.

"All right, go ahead," I encouraged, unperturbed.



NADKARNI

"Right!"

I was looking at her keenly, and suddenly said, with triumph in my voice:

"Look at *your* elbows!"

She looked, and then blushed faintly.

"What's wrong with them, idiot?" she asked.

"Just like my neck!" I said, feeling that I had out-battled her.

"How can they be, jackass?" she asked, beginning to look annoyed. "I've never seen a neck like an elbow yet!"

"I mean," I sneered, "have you washed them this morning? They're fairly grubby, you know. I thought you never met your friends—"

"Oh, shut up!" she said quickly. "My elbows got like that through leaning them on this table. The table's dirty."

"But it's got a cloth on it," I said.

"Then the cloth's dirty."

It's no good at all trying to argue with Ophelia when she gets into one of these moods. So I said, "Alright," and fell silent again.

"Now," she continued, "what about your using this Donkey Brand Soap!"

"What's it cost?" I asked carefully.

"Eight annas a cake," she said, and I jumped.

"Eight annas!" I ejaculated. "And you think I'm going to start buying it? Why, Good Lord, Gorilla Brand is only an anna a half-pound cake! No fears! I'm sticking to jolly old Gorilla!"

"But," she went on insistently, "it's so good that you can use it as tooth-paste. And if the plaster starts falling off the ceiling or the walls of your room, you can patch the holes up with Donkey Brand. If you're visited by a mother-in-law you don't like, you feed her on Donkey Brand."

"Have you got a mother?" I asked irrelevantly, thinking that Ophelia could look very charming when she started talking about soap.

"Certainly I've got a mother!" Ophelia sounded angry for some reason or other. "You don't think I was hatched from an egg, do you?"

"No—but what I mean is, is your mother alive?"

"No."

"That's all right, then," I said.

"What do you mean?" she asked indignantly, but I think she knew that I had been falling in love with her for a long time.

"Er—er," I began, but she interrupted me.

"Well, that's got nothing to do with this soap that I'm talking about."

"Oh, all right," I said. "Go on. Tell me some more about your blinking Donkey Brand. Can you use it as chewing gum?"

"Fool!" said Ophelia with a smile. "But really, you'll find that, although it costs eight annas, the various

uses you can put it to will prove its economical value. And besides, as I say, you won't have to go about with a dirty neck. It's made specially for necks."

"And elbows?" I politely asked, with a glance at her dainty ones.

"Yes," she said, not a bit put out this time. She's pretty hard-skinned, is Ophelia—metaphorically, I mean. Literally, she's got a wonderfully soft skin. And by Jove!—

"What the devil are you looking at?" asked Ophelia.

"You," I said, feeling myself go a bit red. "You look fine to-day. What about—"

"I'm not having any proposals just yet," she said very firmly. "Let's finish this argument about the soap first. If I can get you to use it, well, I'm sure I'll think a lot more of you than I do at present."

"I won't use it!" I said.

"But why not?" asked Ophelia. "I've told you it's a wonderful soap. Nothing to beat it!"

"I don't like it," I sulked.

"But you've never seen it," she went on.

"I know, but I don't like it, just the same."

Ophelia snorted, which she very rarely does.

"You make me impatient!" she said.

"You're very beautiful!" I returned.

She blushed.

"Well, you don't look too bad either," she said after a pause. "Something like a horse sometimes, but on the whole—"

"Ophelia," I gushed. "You've a charming skin! You—fascinate me! You're glorious! Will you marry me?"

Her reply was quick. "I've told you she is mad."

"Will you use Donkey Brand Soap?"

"Oh, all right," I said. It was well worth using Donkey Brand Soap and letting a girl have her own way if I could marry Ophelia. "By the way," I felt curious all of a sudden, "what brand of soap do you use?"

Ophelia smiled, and it was her reply that joined us together for better or for worse.

Said Ophelia, "Gorilla Brand."

THE LESSON—(Continued from page 18)

gate when I heard a laugh, a silly ribald sort of laugh, from a feminine throat. I looked up disapprovingly. My sister, the silly woman, was standing at the bed-room window holding her sides with both hands. At once there was an answering gurgle from the still writhing Lala. I couldn't bear to witness their ridiculous, senseless behaviour any longer. "Oh, cut it out!" I exclaimed, feelingly and walked quickly but with great dignity into my study, resolved never again to descend to the level of the ten-years old monkey—my nephew.



Episodes Elysian

or
The Experiences of a Released Soul

PART I

by E. L. Shipman

Illustrations by 'Dial'

I lay on a bed of sickness. Doctors and others of that ilk crowded around my sleeping form like ants around a pile of spilt sugar. No doubt they were also seeking sustenance, though I knew their hopes were in vain.

I was barely half-conscious, yet was I vaguely aware of a gentle hum of conversation around me. This seemed finally to reduce itself to the following brief dialogue:

One doctor to a second: "Well, I am afraid he is pretty nearly finished."

The second, in reply: "Yes, poor fellow! It is doubtful if he can last till morning."

My fate thus appearing to be definitely settled between them, I gratefully relapsed into slumber.

The General Manager of the Recently Released Souls' Guide Department was in an evil humour. He had just

finished reading H. G. Wells' *Food of the Gods*, and he was still a little man. A light flashing out on the information-board on the opposite wall recalled his wayward thoughts. Savagely, he banged the bell on his office table. Anticipating the possibility of any reply to his summons, he again banged the bell. And yet a third time did he bang it. And then he threw the unoffending instrument against the wall, incidentally increasing the Celestial P. W. D's budget for the forthcoming year.

Entered the Office Cherub, trembling but speedily.

"What the devil do you mean," demanded the G. M. R. S. G. D., "by keeping me waiting?"

"Beg pardon, sir," began the Office Cherub, "but..."

"But me no buts," thundered the G. M., with an entire lack of originality, "or I will have your wings clipped. Who is next on the list for guide-duty?"

"Mr. Othasoka, sir."

"Get him," yelled the G. M. R. R. S. G. D.

"Get him," yelled the G. M. R. R. S. G. D.



"Yes sir."

"And be quick about it."

"Yes sir."

The Office Cherub burst into the outer office with his halo wilting.

"Hey! You chaps!" he yelled, "Othasoka to the front. Fetch him along. The boss is chewing the rag more than usual, so you'd better get a move on."

The denizens of the outer office rose as one man from their comfortable sprawling attitudes, and scattered like a flock of quails. Othasoka was searched for high and low, for some time unsuccessfully. At long

last, he was discovered sitting on a rainbow in the 'Damp cloud' saloon, sipping Ambrosia and drawing horrible discords from a harp. They lifted him, not gently, from his seat, and did their best to thump into him a sense of his duty. He was, however, found to be too unsteady on his wings. He was therefore taken to his bed to sleep it off, a 'haif of the dog' being placed beside him to ease his waking moments.

An immediate and unanimous move was then made, by general consent, to the couch of Grisiphetha, next on the roll for duty. One shook him by the shoulder. With a slight yell, Grisiphetha bounded two feet into the air, dropped back heavily on to the bed, and opened his eyes. He seemed rather perturbed, but not over averse to being called.

"I'm glad you fellows woke me up," he said. "I dreamt I was being chased by a mad butterfly. If you'd been just a little late, I might have got hepidopterophobia. Horrible thing to get! Spots on the wings, you know, and a tendency to produce one's young in

the form of hairy, crawling creatures. However, my back appears to be still good."

"Come to think of it, though," he continued, "the night is yet young. What's the great idea of waking me up at this unearthly hour? I don't look like the Queen of the May, do I?"

"No, old dear," replied the spokesman of those present, "your looks would kill any Queen of the May. We've only come to tell you that there's a job of work in front of you. Othasoka has qualified for a month on bread and water."

"What's he been doing?"

"Need you ask? You've surely known him long enough."

"Hm! They did make that last lot of Ambrosia a bit strong."

"Well, you'd better look slippy. The G. M. has got no end of a grouse on, and we've already kept him waiting nearly two hours."

Grisiphetha rose and made a hasty, and not too adequate toilet. In due course he presented himself before the General Manager.

"What the dickens do you want here?" demanded the G. M., whose condition was by now verging on the apoplectic, "I sent for Othasoka. Where is he?"

Grisiphetha edged closer to the door, and then gently explained that Othasoka was suffering from a mild attack of *Ambrosobibbia Soporificalis*. With superangelic restraint, the G. M. kept his seat, but his ensuing remarks were pungent and to the point, though entirely unprintable.

Grisiphetha landed gently by my bedside at the witching hour of three a.m.

"Hallo!" he greeted me.

"Hallo! Yourself," said I, "who, what, where and how are you?"

"Grisiphetha, spiritual guide, here and tolerably well, thanks. I've come to take you along to Heaven."

"I'm not booked for the other place, then?"

"Well, I've got no definite orders about you yet, but we'll have a shot at Heaven first, on the off-chance that they may let you in."

As previously related, sometime had elapsed, subsequent to my death, before Grisiphetha had been sent to my assistance. As a consequence, my soul had become rather gummed up in its former casing. After some moments of strenuous effort on the part of Grisiphetha:

"Come, do something to help yourself," he said, "you don't expect me to do all the work, do you? I came here as a spiritual guide, not as an agricultural labourer. If it's the last you're needing, I'll just go back until you're ready for me."



".....who, what, where and how are you?"

"The labourer," said I, "is, or ought to be, worthy of his hire."

"Quite so," he agreed, "and, if you think you are worthy of going any higher, you'd be well advised to do some of the labouring yourself."

A further, somewhat protracted, struggle on the part of both of us now took place. When we at last stopped for a rest, only a little toe of me was left adhering.

"Can't we sacrifice the toe?" I pleaded, when we were about to resume our labours. "I can probably get along in Heaven just as well without it."

"Can't be done," said Grisiphetha. "If I don't take you along whole and complete, I shall have to spend all next week thinking up my reasons in triplicate. Now then, let's have another shot at it. Both together.....heave! Ah! We've got it out at last."

"Well," I remarked, *en passant*, "judging from the feel of it, I still think it might have been better to sacrifice that toe: In any case, I'm afraid I'll probably lose it before very long."

"For the love of goodness, stick to that toe!" cried Grisiphetha. "If you'd ever had occasion to think up your reasons in triplicate, you'd have some pity for a poor fellow in trouble."

"I'll do my best," I promised, "but it's not an easy job, so I can't guarantee to do it for too long."

So away we went. Grisiphetha's wings provided the motive power and a breeze to keep down the temperature to a certain extent. With one hand I grasped my precariously pendant pedicular protruberance, otherwise known as a toe, with the other I clung fast round Grisiphetha's neck.

Time passed, and yet more time. In fact, time seemed to do nothing else but pass. I began to wonder if Heaven was to consist of nothing but travelling for the rest of eternity. I knew, of course, that some people's idea of Heaven was an eternity of travel. As far as I am concerned, though, one can have too much of a good thing, and I said so.

"Curb your impatience," counselled Grisiphetha, "or summon philosophy to your aid. Later on, for all you know, you may be sorry you didn't go on travelling. There are worse things. I could mention a few—However, it's a bit too soon to start frightening you yet."

Nevertheless, our journey eventually came to an end, at any rate for the time being. A large and brilliant ball, not unlike the moon in appearance, shone ahead of us. As we rapidly approached, it gradually lost its luminosity, flattened itself out and appeared rather like the old Earth I had left not so long ago. You could, however, apparently have covered most of it with a pocket-handkerchief.

"Where are we now?" I enquired, as we came to rest.

"This is Eros."

"Never heard of it. Is it a planet, a comet or what?"

"What, mostly. It's only a little place, but we'll try it for a start. You see we got rather crowded during the great war and we haven't succeeded in getting all you souls straightened out and in your proper places yet. During the war we were compelled, for the sake of peace, to keep all the different nationalities separate, and so we've kept on using it off and on ever since."

"Well," said I. "I don't like the look of the place much. As far as I am concerned, I only hope the name of it is prophetic."

"How do you mean, prophetic? What name?"

"Why, E-ros(e), of course."

"Look here," said Grisiphetha, "if you continue to make remarks like that I'll drop you right away and chance the explanations."

"If," I pointed out, "the loss of a soul's little toe involves explanations in triplicate, to say nothing of the week's hard work inventing them, you'll bust up entirely if you try to do away with a soul *in toto*."

"If I do make up my mind to get rid of you," said Grisiphetha, "I'll at least try to make a good job of it. There may be some suffering over the matter, but we'll divide it between us. If you're wise, you'll avoid your share of it, since I'll certainly do my best to make yours the worst half."

"Is that a threat or a promise?" I enquired.

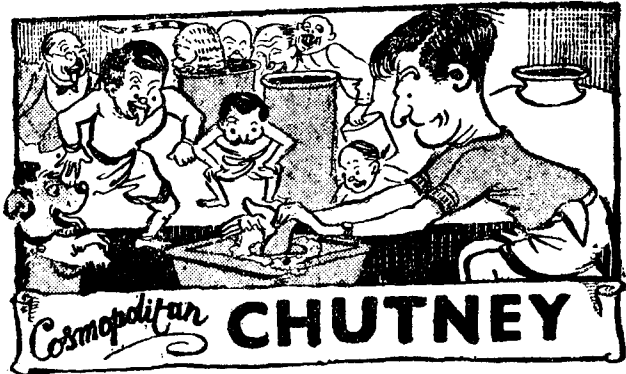
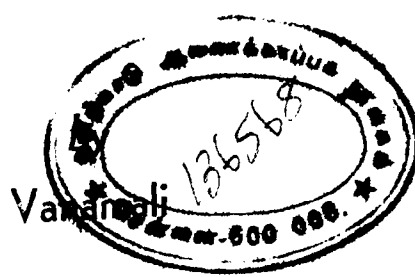
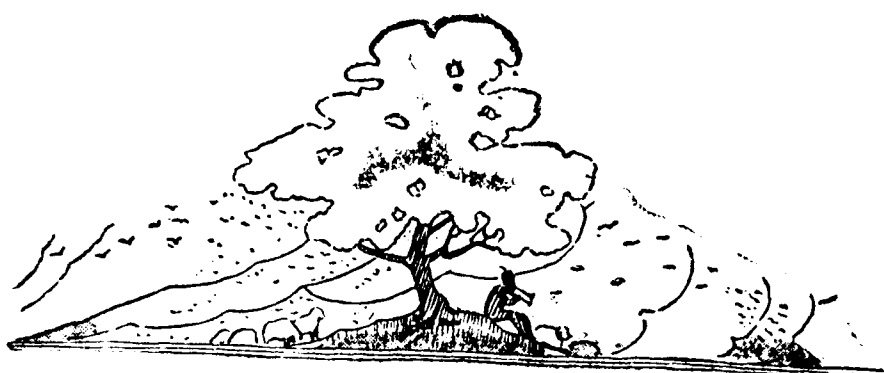
"Shut up!" said Grisiphetha, "I have got other things to do besides answering your silly questions."

(To be continued)

YES, I KNOW

(Answers to questions on page 18)

1. To be bearable, a violin must be perfectly in tune. Hence, a fit person's body is as fit and in tune as a fiddle.
2. Quarterly, by drafts on H. M. Paymaster-General.
3. Officers of the Navy.
4. Kircoobry; Kohoon; Rootan.
5. Chimaera.



This one ought to be by rights, an American story. Unfortunately, it is not. It is an Empire product, with its origin, as the seismologists say, in South Africa.

A man was very lucky in his fishing one day. He wisely decided to keep a few of the catch—fine barbel—alive in the back-yard to draw for the kitchen later. One fish was a particularly fine specimen. It disappeared. Next morning the lucky angler again betook himself to the river and on his way he overtook a large barbel wriggling along the ground 200 yards from the house! He picked it up and its gills had the marks of his hook.

Jerome K. Jerome in his grave must be feeling pretty green.

There is a real Tarzan in the wilds of Solymar near Budapest. His face is old and cadaverous, covered with a long beard. He has a shock of wild hair on his head. His only piece of dress is a shirt *i.e.*, what remained of it after years of service. A party of excursionists saw him. One of the party hailed this strange being. He climbed up a tree with the rapidity of a squirrel and disappeared round a rock much more neatly than ever Tarzan did on celluloid. Eventually the police caught him and he told his story to a priest.

His name is Karl Richter, a Bavarian Engineer. 200 years ago his family castle caught fire and was threatened with complete destruction. Miraculously, rain descended in torrents, and the catastrophe was averted. Karl's grateful ancestors vowed that the youngest of the family, after attaining 24 years of age, shall lead a hermit's life for ten years. So, Karl has kept that ancient vow. It is more than ten years since he took to this wild monastic life. But he says he has no wish to return to 'civilisation'. There is a man for you with the courage of his convictions.

To switch on from monasticism to matrimony, Ivan Torlesco, a Serbian commercial traveller is probably the most married man in the world, counting out Oriental potentates, of course. He married 50 wives under different identities, and he flew from one wife to another by plane. One of his earlier 'catches' found out things, and our flying Don Juan is in police keeping. He prays that he be kept in prison for the balance of his life, not in fit of repentance, but afraid to face the 50-faced music. Asked for an explanation of his extraordinary feat, he says that though he doesn't believe in matrimony, he can't resist the ladies. May the fates deal mercifully with this susceptible soul!

Sneezing is considered a bad omen out here. Evidently it is the same elsewhere too. Albert, a young Negro, visited his uncle. After the customary exchange of compliments, he left. Immediately he left, a five-dollar note was missing from the uncle's table. Uncle was a nasty fellow. He called in the police. The police called in Albert, and stripped him naked. The note was not on him. Albert smiled sadly at his heartless uncle. He lifted his nose at a virtuous angle and prepared to step out. He sneezed. The missing note shot out from his mouth.

Imagine the rest.

Probably the only author in the world who is alive and is yet described 'the late' is Dr. Alexander Irwine of Canada. He is the author of the famous book, "My Lady of the Chimney Corner". The mistake of announcing him as dead happened when the publishers were issuing the 46th re-print of Dr. Irwine's book. This mistake is being repeated with each successive edition.

A good deal is heard of unemployment in England. But, till a few months ago, none knew how many homeless there are in London. A census was taken on the night of February 15 this year. It was ascertained that London's homeless amounted to 3421. Of these 3078 were men, 327 women and 16 children. This 'census' did not count in those homeless who paid for beds in common lodging-houses.

With its millions of population, London has only 3421 unfortunates who have no roofs over their heads. Even at this modest figure they raise their arms and roll their eyes in horror.

But, has anybody counted the homeless in Indian cities? The facts that would be brought to light, if anybody here were to undertake a 'census' of those whose beds are pavements, pials and gutters, would send a shiver down the spine of an alligator. But then, this is India, land of half-naked fakirs.

Two years ago a little girl, fostered by wolves, was "unearthed" from the jungles of Bengal. Every country in the world has the experience of wild animals nursing strange babies born outside their 'family'.

A hen in Essex was giving shelter to a baby rat under its wing. A dog tried to bite the poor little rat, as dogs will, but the brave foster-mother gave battle, and drove the dog away.

Mother and baby are doing well.

The Agent

by 'Ram'

Illustrations by K. N. Roy



...had put his feet on the desk and a handkerchief across his face...

MR. Chandra Sekhar De was, if one believed the neat plate outside his office, an Agent. For what or whom, it did not enlighten the reader. Just one word 'Agent' in modest lettering. Mr. De was clever; so clever in fact that his friends called him a fool and his enemies ignored him. Therefore he was successful—though the extent of his success was in no wise indicated by the modest office which he rented in (let us say) Cornwallis Square, or the unobtrusive clerk-secretary whom he employed.

At present he had put his feet on the desk and a handkerchief across his face; he would have said, if asked, that he was thinking, but in all probability the clerk would have told you he was sleeping, and you would have believed the clerk in preference to his employer. But Mr. De would have been right and you (or the clerk) would have been wrong. Another of his habits; the telling of unlikely truths in the hope, apparently, that they would be disbelieved. Usually they were.

Suddenly, the centre rose of a little artificial bouquet on the table sprang into subdued red light—a light operated by anyone standing outside the door, or pressing the neat onyx bell-push. He pulled out the drawer of the table and let his hand rest carelessly therein. On certain occasions he preferred the slim knife strapped inside his sleeve for emergencies, but this was not one of them.

"Come in," he called.

A tall, heavily-built Armenian entered. He was well, but not overdressed, with glossy black hair, a rich olive complexion, hard calculating eyes, full lipped sensual mouth, and the high brow of an intellectual. There

were no rings on his fingers and his tie, shirt, socks and shoes were in the best of taste. In short—Mr. Ezra French, which was no more his name than his nationality. Once a girl had fallen for the plausible Mr. French, (but his name was Isaacstein then) and discovered in due course that he had no intention of, as she delicately put it, 'making an honest woman of her'. There had been some unpleasantness over this affair, and the lady threatened to write a pamphlet *re* Mr. Isaacstein's activities, which were both numerous and various. Mr. Isaacstein pacified her, for he was a very



modest man and did not desire recognition, but the next day she disappeared, and as the nursery rhyme has it, 'no one could find her'. Baghdad is a bad place in which to look for people who have disappeared.

"Good morning, De," said the visitor.

"Good morning, Mr. French. Won't you sit down?"

"A cigarette?" It was one of Mr. De's maxims that politeness cost very little, and in any case paid for itself.

"No, thanks. I'm here on business. What did you mean by that preposterous note you sent me yesterday?"

De opened his cigarette case, extracted and lit a Virginia before replying.

"My note? But it explains itself! You are a fence in a very big way, Mr. French. Three establishments in the dockyard area; a higher class one in Chowringhee; and a fifth, the most select, in Lansdowne Road. This is not a foolish accusation—I sent you proofs in the letter. Your income is approximately Rs. 50,000/—a month. Turn over half that every month for a year, or a lakh and half in cash, and I'll keep my mouth shut. Otherwise, I'll have to do my duty and inform the police."

French laughed. One would have surmised, correctly, from his laugh that he did not think much of the proposition and that he disagreed with Browning about 'all being right with the world'.

"Are you crazy, man? I could crush you like that," with a vicious snap of his fingers, "in a day's time."

"Let us not talk of danger," said De airily. "I'll give you a week."

For an instant the veil was lifted from French's face. "You're a damned blackmailer, that's what you are! You scum! You cheap hog!"

The other's voice was cool, drawling, in utter contrast.

"I'm rather tired of listening to what you are saying. It has been said so often, and so much better....."

The Armenian controlled himself with an effort.

"You'll be sorry for this, De." He got up and walked to the door. "Remember," he shot over his shoulder.

"A week," was De's unperturbed reply. The door closed silently on rubber cushions.

The hand that was in the drawer came out, holding a silver-plated Smith and Wesson automatic, for which a licence had been duly procured. He smiled at it.

He pressed the buzzer at this elbow, and Chatterjee entered. Chatterjee was the clerk.

"Did you get a cheque, yesterday?"

"Yes, sir. For Rs. 3,000/- from Mr. Bracken, with a covering letter, saying it was for services rendered."

"Tactful of the man. I'd have said it was for services not rendered myself," which was true, considering Bracken paid because he was too shy to have his purely business connection with certain cocaine smugglers revealed. "If there were no sinners, saints would never make a living, Chatterjee."

"Yes, sir. Are you a saint, sir?"

"Not quite, Chatterjee, but I have hopes, I have hopes. 'Tis a wicked, wicked world—if that's not Shakespeare, it sounds like him. That 'll do.' The clerk disappeared—privately he thought his employer a little mad.

People who liked Mr. De attributed his success to his versatility, and his versatility to a Bangali father and a Scotch mother. People who did not like him—and they were numerous—attributed it to the benign influence of the Devil.

Exactly twenty four hours later, Ezra French struck. The blow was extremely well disguised, because it came in the form of an invitation to an 'At Home' from a prominent business man who was just an acquaintance of De's.

"Now why," he mused, "should this fellow Jagadis be so anxious for my company?" But all the same he went.

The guest of the evening was Miss Nalini Ghose. If you haven't heard of Miss Nalini Ghose, the Dancer, the Artiste, the Eastern Pavlova, you have never been in even faintly theatrical circles. She is known in Paris, in Vienna, in every capital on the Continent. Impoverished Dukes, *ci-devant* Russian aristocrats and ex-members of Royalty kiss their fingers when her name is mentioned; but for such as these she has no time. Her line is more immediately profitable.....young men who have come into money, or who will come into money, even old men who have made their money.

One 'At Home' is very much like another. Nalini put herself out to be gracious to Mr. De and he paid her

extravagant compliments in that absolutely toneless voice of his. At the close of the evening he accepted, deliberately, the lure she was throwing out to him, and offered to see her home.

In the car she grew direct. "You're the first man who's ever made me want to capture him. Probably because in spite of your gallant lies you're so immensely indifferent." But they talked of art and Berlin, were he had been the previous year, until the car stopped at her place. A clever girl, this Nalini Ghose, as Armand-de-Champigny and a dozen others would have told you. It would be perhaps a little difficult to ask Armand—he shot himself last year.

The colour scheme of her bungalow was deliberately chosen to accentuate her personality; the rich green and jasper of everything seemed to set her off as some exotic and gorgeous bird of paradise.

There was a piano in the room. Her fingers rippled over the keys and she sang for him, it seemed *at* him. There was the wisdom of all the ages in her eyes, and the spell of languorous music in her voice. A small Budha sat cross-legged on a short shrine-like table. She dropped a few grains of incense in the brazier before it, and a sensuous mist of impalpable smoke drifted slowly to the open window.

"Not one of my gods," she said, "but who can tell—all the gods are a little human, they like to be propitiated."

"The gods of Paris, Miss Ghose?" he asked, his voice deliberately flippant.

"That was cruel," she protested. "Let's talk of the present. You must come and see me dance to-morrow night. And afterwards, you can take me home."

His thanks was verbally effusive, but his mind was trying to discover why in the name of all un-reason she had brought him here.

At last it came out. "Do you know Ezra French, Mr. De?"

"Yes, I've met him once."

"Well, I've got a message from Mr. French for you."

"He has chosen a very charming messenger," murmured De, conventionally.

"Mr. French asked me to tell you that he was prepared to come to terms."

"Terms? What terms, dear lady? I have had no business dealings with him."

"Oh, you know very well what I mean. Let's stop playing at cross purposes, Mr. De. French has a hold on me, and you have a hold on him. If you let him off, I shall be eternally grateful. Am I not worth the paltry sum you are going to make from him?—Others have reckoned my value at more."

"I'm sorry, Miss Ghose. Let's change the subject. What you suggest is quite impossible."

She glanced up, but he could not read the expression in her eyes.

"So you—refuse?"

"Yes, I refuse."

A point blank question and a point blank answer. She had offered herself as a sacrifice for the erring Mr. French, and the sacrifice had not been accepted. In fact it had been rejected in a manner that was fraught with insult to one of her profession. She looked at him expressionlessly for a second and when she spoke her voice was very cold.

"A hundred years ago, Mr. De, if you had spoken to me like that, I would probably have had you flayed alive. Fifty years ago, you would merely have been whipped with raw-hide till your skin hung from you in strips. Even twenty years ago something might have been done. But now—all I can do is to ask if you would care to see some of my poor curios garnered from the four corners of the earth, in, shall we say, the exercise of my business?" She was being deliberately, bitterly, ironical.

"I shall be very pleased," he said. She rose to lead the way and he followed her.



They entered a small room, hung with heavy plush curtains and lit by a single dim oil-lamp burning some queerly scented fuel. As they crossed the threshold, she stepped swiftly to one side, and he, who had been expecting something of the sort from the moment he accepted her invitation, took an equally quick step backwards, at the same time feeling silently for the wicked little knife strapped inside his sleeve. The dim

light flickered for a moment, then disappeared. Pitch black darkness. He felt for the wall and slithered silently sideways, till he was well inside the room with his back against the plaster.

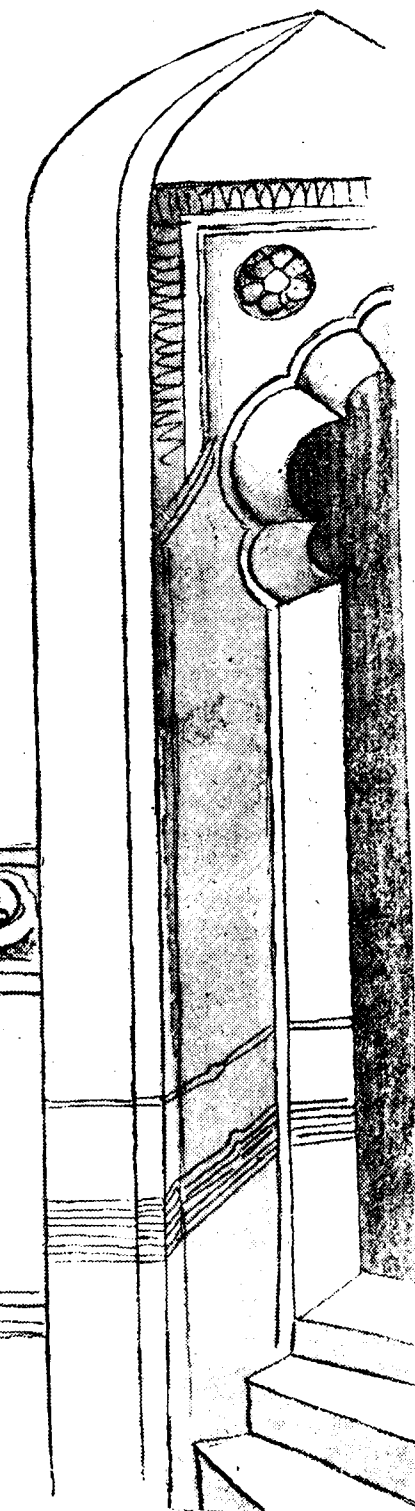
Someone was breathing as quietly as possible near him. He reached out an arm—a heavy weight smacked viciously past his head—and at the same time he felt a mop of greasy hair in his left hand that was groping in front. He gripped and hauled the head in towards him, then stabbed efficiently upwards with his thumb along the blade, Corsican fashion, at the place where he judged a crouching man's fifth intercostal space would be. He felt the head sag on his hand, and heard a grunt which rapidly turned to a gurgle. And that was emphatically that.



".....all I can do is to ask if you would care to see some of my poor curios garnered from the four corners of the earth....."

Again the smack. This time it just missed him, perhaps by a quarter of an inch. He dropped to his knees, not making a sound, and crawled cautiously along the wall. Some one had got his approximate range and was using a lethal sandbag with the assurance that sooner or later it would connect. It was up to him to change this so-dangerous environment.

He got barely two feet away from his former position when a torch blazed on him, and three figures sprang



more or less simultaneously. He was off his balance; there was a brief fracas—then a weighty and yielding object thudded on the back of his skull, and he dived into a great void.

A couple of Eternities passed with uncommon slowness. He opened his eyes and was conscious of two predominant impressions—a brackish taste in his mouth (that was blood) and a most damnable ache in his head, as if his skull were in Hamlet's hand with the Prince, grimly jocular, rattling marbles in it. His surroundings seemed vaguely familiar; as his brain cleared he realised he was in his own flat.

There was something asprawl on a chair near him. Something dreadfully twisted with its head hanging on one side. Blood on the floor, blood on the chair, on his hands and his clothes. He did not particularly object to blood as blood, but he objected to its presence, most unauthorised, in his rooms. He staggered to his feet and went in search of water.

A quick wash and a stiff brandy cleared his thoughts considerably, and he returned to the sitting room much refreshed. The dead man in his Oxford chair was the individual whose greasy hair had been in his hand, because the wound below his heart was just in the place he had tried for.

Philosophically he decided that the first thing to do was to get rid of the corpse. He carried it into the little lumber room and spread a carpet over the grotesque heap that had once been a man. He then fetched water, and under the light of a dimmed reading lamp, painstakingly cleaned out every stain in the room. Finally he wiped the knife he found under the chair (indubitably it was his) and restored it to the sheath on his arm. Then going to bed, slept soundly for four hours, which may have been due either to the Bengali father (who had been extremely irreligious, but very fatalistic), or the Scotch mother, who was a red-hot Non-Conformist and clung to obsolete beliefs about Original Sin and Pre-destination and the Whore of Babylon.

At eight o'clock his subconscious alarm awoke him, and after a brisk tub, he found to his surprise that only faint traces of a headache remained. Thereafter he sat immersed in intricate thought for an hour, at the end of which he arose and wrote out two copies of a curious document in the curious purple ink he affected. But, strangely enough, there were two fountain pens on the table by the time he finished. Strangely, because he took an empty one (the second) out of the desk-drawer and filled it from a separate bottle before writing. He breakfasted with unimpaired appetite and awaited the coming of Mr. French. For he was very sure that Mr. French would come.

He came at ten o'clock, perfectly dressed with a flower in his button-hole to honour the occasion. Neither man wasted much time in greetings. French spoke first: "Well, De, you've realised, I suppose, just how dangerous I am. I intended to adopt other methods, but you were obliging enough to kill Sadik last night. We took certain liberties with your flat when we brought you back—five of us including myself and the corpse—for which I hope you'll excuse me. One of my men, made up to represent the deceased, staggered up the stairs with you; you seemed perhaps a little drunk,

possibly because you were being half-dragged, half-carried. The lift attendant seeing your condition asked you to use the lift, but your companion declined because he wanted 'exercise'. There was a realistic and noisy imitation of a fight in your rooms and no one returned downstairs. Meanwhile we smuggled Sadik's body into your flat and the pseudo Sadik out of it—a neat bit of work, that—and told the lift attendant we couldn't wait any longer, that your friend was probably staying the night with you after making up his disagreement. And now I'm come, officially to find out what's happened to my dear friend, Mr. Ahmed Sadik. If I don't get a satisfactory explanation, I call the police, they search your flat, the body, which you haven't had a chance to get rid of yet, is found and you are accused of murder. Finish. A very complete frame-up."

Mr. Chandra Sekhar De sat dreamily nibbling a pencil throughout this long recital. At the end of it he said:

"You win, French. What are your terms?" There was absolutely no trace of feeling in his voice.

French gloated. There is no other word for it; he gloated. "My terms? All right, here they are. Hand over all the evidence you've got against me. And I'll take the body away from your flat. I've brought a packing case, ostensibly to buy the Turkish carpets you so luckily advertised in yesterday's *Salesman*. We'll do the Cleopatra stunt with poor Sadik."

"All right," said Mr. De, "but you'll have to modify your proposals a bit. I trust you, pardon my bluntness, about as far as I can throw you. So you'll sign both copies of this—er—confession which I typed out in anticipation of some such eventuality. It states that both of us were implicated in the murder of one Ahmed Sadik—the name I'll fill in now—and I've signed already. You keep a copy and I'll keep one—just in case you decide to double-cross me later on."

"But—" "Just a moment. I haven't finished yet. Secondly, you'll give me a cheque for two hundred rupees, being the amount due for three Turkish carpets, in the event of police enquiries later on. You'll have the carpets and they are worth double the amount, so you'll not be the loser."

French considered the matter for a while, stealing glances at De, trying to read his motives. But the Bengali's face was inscrutable. In the end he made up his mind.

"I'll sign. First, the evidence—where's it?"

De handed over a bundle of papers in a sealed envelope which the other feverishly examined for a second and then crumpled into his pocket. He accepted the pen he was offered and signed both copies of the queer confession. Last of all, De filled in a cheque for Rs. 200/- (with the second fountain-pen) and gave it to him to sign. He did so with the first pen.

"I suppose you'll have the money in the bank? Because I'm going to cash this to-morrow."

"French smiled. "My 'daskath's good for a couple of lakhs in the Imperial Bank."

Half an hour later the body was safe in French's car under a pile of carpets in the packing case, and the two men parted for ever.

That afternoon at one o'clock De took out his copy of the confession. It was blank; the second fountain-pen had been filled with vanishing ink. The cheque also was blank except for Mr. French's bold and very legible signature.

De pulled a Remington from its cover and commenced filling in the letter.

"The Agent,
Imperial Bank of India,
CALCUTTA.

Sir,

I shall be obliged if you would kindly facilitate cashing of the enclosed cheque in favour of

THE END

Mr. Chandra Sekhar De, for Rs. 1,50,000/- only. The amount is due for an important deal, and you may pay it on the authority of this letter. I shall see you personally on my return from Cawnpore in a week."

And it was neatly ended with Ezra French's characteristic signature. The cheque took less time to fill in. It was cashed immediately without trouble, on the strength of the letter. Besides, Mr. De was well known to the bank as a man of substance.

Next morning Ezra French received a stamped receipt for rupees one lakh and fifty thousand only (Rs. 1,50,000/-). It was signed Chandra Sekhar De.

A WISE HOUSEWIFE

SHE HAS BEEN
SAVING TIME
MONEY & LABOUR
by using

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ALLUMINIUM
COPPER - - -
BRASS - - -
GERMAN SILVER -
UTENSILS



Look out for our
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[We also deal in Velvet, Pictures and Artistic Picture-Frames]



XXXVII

RALLY round, dear boys and girls, and let us place our combined information at the service of a needy nephew who wants to make an all-India cycle tour. As you know, there are enterprising young men who paddle round the world in canoes, roll round the world in barrels, and walk round the world on their flat feet. It should therefore be comparatively simple for a young man to pedal round India on a bicycle.

The needy nephew wants to know if there is any organisation that would afford encouragement and facilities for such a tour. Auntie doubts if there is a cyclists' organisation in India prepared to sponsor the trip, and would welcome information on the point.

Many young men making these adventurous journeys, finance themselves by contributing articles and photographs to the press. They make themselves known to editors of newspapers, mayors of cities, and patrons of athletic enterprise. One way and another, they manage to earn their keep from city to city. They sell literature, appear at local cinemas, and undertake all kinds of ventures to help pay their way. Our needy nephew thus requires to be possessed of some saleable art or talent, to assist him on his travels.

If the young man possesses some such gift, Auntie suggests that he sets out with a reserve of cash sufficient to support himself for two months, and to augment the sum by whatever income he can gather en route.

Auntie was much impressed by the story, appearing in the papers a few months ago, of an unemployed Anglo-Indian who invested

his last rupees in a bullock-cart, and began to travel India with it, accompanied by his wife. They supported themselves by the practice of handicrafts. Of course, we cannot all tour India in bullock-carts, but the story illustrates that there are more ways of solving the unemployment-problem than by sitting down and deploring the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune.

Auntie once encountered a young man who was cycling from India to Europe. He was pedalling manfully up the Khyber Pass, when he was intercepted by a band of outlaws. Undaunted, the hardy tourist said to himself, "Now's my chance!" He dismounted from his cycle, opened his saddle-bag, and began selling picture-post-cards to the astonished brigands! As you see, my dears, cycle-touring is an occupation demanding hardihood and resource.

Widower (Madras). Auntie deeply regrets, dear sir, that she is unable to deal with matrimonial applications. Your qualifications are clearly and modestly stated, and the proposals are sensible and attractive: I am sure you will be able to make some girl a happy woman. Unfortunately, Auntie cannot take the responsibility of introducing to each other, parties who are personally unknown to her. Auntie would have liked to send some suggestions by post, but was unable to do so, as you did not enclose your address. I am afraid you will have given up hope of an answer by the time this appears in print!



...began selling picture-postcards to the astonished brigands!

Curiosity (Penang). Here you are again, dear boy! Yes, I know why you are laughing in your sleeve—it is because you are a girl, and not a boy at all! However, Auntie likes you far too much to spoil your fun, so please do continue to affect a saucy masculine style. Why did 'Teddy

Bear' omit to give a Jubilee prize to Private Joyfull and to Auntie? Well, you know, these awards can hardly be distributed within the office. We are not one of those magazines whose magnificent thousand-rupee prizes are invariably won by the Editor and his relations. Besides, if our friend Joyfull accepted one of Teddy's putty medals, he would be put in the guard-room for wearing unauthorised insignia. So Joyfull continues in undecorated eminence, and Auntie's bosom remains as bare as the dictates of fashion permit. It is unnecessary to answer your question regarding what Scotchmen wear under their kilts, as a saucy young man like you must be quite familiar with such details.

Charitable (Madura). "Dear Auntie, will you please assist a young man who is coming to Madras in search of employment. He is the only son of a widow who died childless, and his earnings maintain his aged father and infant brothers, whose sole support he is." Send the young man along, dear sir. Auntie will be interested to see the offspring of so ingenious a family.

Sportsman (Naini Tal). "I raised my gun and pressed the trigger, and there at my feet lay a dead panther." Indeed, dear boy; how long had it been dead?

Devoted Wife (Pudupalayam). "When I am angry with my husband, I heap coals of fire on his head." The coals are unnecessary, my dear; you will find the empty shovel just as effective.

Blemish (Velappad). "It is a pity that this girl has a slight squint. Is there any remedy?" Only a few types of squint are remediable by spectacles or by operation, dear girl. But cheer up; at least your friend has the advantage of always being able to see when her nose is shiny.

Intrepid (Barrackpore). "I am thinking of making an expedition through the Shan country and thence by the valley of the San-Po into Tibet. On arrival I will study the quaint Tibetan entertainments." There is hardly the need to go to all that trouble, dear boy. The cinemas in Tibet show just the same pictures as the ones in Calcutta.

Amateur Carpenters (Puthennadakavu). "My brother and I are anxious to make various carvings as examples of South Indian work. For this we need some solid wood, firm and yet soft. What do you suggest?" Why don't you put your heads together, dear boys?

Farewell Dinner (Komal). "My speech was most kindly received. I concluded by saying that I hoped soon to be looking at their faces again. At this there were murmurs of dissent." Why, dear boy, are you a dentist?

Teacher of Music (Bombay). "I am tired of all these foolish creatures who come to me, and imagine that they can sing." Yes, my dear, Auntie understands. You play on the white notes, and you play on the black notes; but the pupils sing in the cracks.

Temperance (Nannilam). "Tell me this: if you were offered a bottle of whiskey and a bottle of poison,

how would you distinguish one from the other?" By the price, dear sir.

Bioscope (N. India). "It is a long time since I have seen a decent American film." No doubt, dear boy; but the kind they show are more interesting, don't you think?

Dejected (Tanjore). "I am in a most miserable condition. I haven't a shirt to my back." How unfortunate, dear boy. What do you use as a hole for your collar-stud?

Up-To-Date (Egmore). "Would you advise me to buy a vacuum-cleaner?" Certainly, my dear, assuming that you have some vacuums in need of cleaning.

Curious (Gooty). "Why is it that when a rich man is ill, he has several doctors? Surely one would be sufficient?" Well, dear sir, when a rich man is ill, the doctor immediately perceives that he is suffering from congestion of the purse. The more colleagues he calls in, the more the patient is relieved.

Determination (Lahore). "It is push that gets a person along life's road." Yes, dear boy, Auntie used to own that kind of car, too.

Loquacious (Vizagapatam). "To say the right thing at the right moment is one of the secrets of success. I always measure my words." Tell me, dear boy, what do you use, a bucket or a bushel-basket?

A. S. S. (Colombo). "Someone told me that there was a terrible quagmire at the fair. I tramped round everywhere in the mud, but did not catch a single glimpse of this unique animal." The quagmire always follows the monsoon, dear boy. It is now making an appearance on the Bombay cricket-ground.

Gratified (Cuddalore). "I have the most attentive husband in the world." Congratulations, my dear. Which lady is he being attentive to at present?

Circus Proprietor (On Tour). "You are always making jokes about our business, but actually a circus proprietor has to be a shrewd man. He has to keep one jump ahead of his rivals." And, of course, two jumps ahead of his lions.

Perturbed (Benares). "My son has been selected to run in the quarter-mile team for his college. He was always a delicate boy. Do you think the strain of running races will be harmful to him?" Oh no, dear madam. Just tell him that he must be careful not to run too fast.

Back-Chat (Trichur). "What should I say when my wife calls me a perfect fool?" Don't say anything, dear boy. Congratulate yourself that at last you have reached perfection in something.

K. V. A. (Ranchi). "I refuse to be fooled any longer. I am going to speak to her to-night, and I'll tell her that if she turns me down, I shall never ask her to be my wife again." That is the spirit, dear boy. By the way, how many times has she been your wife already?

THE END

Friday



“THIS is a case,” said the young advocate, “in which a loyal, devoted wife, and her children, have been deprived of their just heritage by the machinations of a scheming adventuress.”

“I object!” cried Mr. Boomer, the renowned leader of the local bar.

“Sustained!” droned the judge, shifting his cud of chewing-gum from one cheek to the other.

“Unfortunately,” continued the young advocate, when the expression ‘scheming adventuress’ had been expunged from the record, “the laws of this State do not compel a husband to make testamentary provision for his wife and offspring. He may leave his family to starve, and bequeath his property to a home for lost cats, or to a chance-met wanton. The deceased, Thomas Wilson, appears to have taken the latter course.”

“Object!” howled Mr. Boomer.

the Thirteenth

by ‘Embusque’

Illustrated by Mali



Already her coy glances had won the interest of the worthy occupants of the jury-box.

“Sustained!” chanted the judge. “The jury will dismiss the words ‘chance-met wanton’ from their minds.”

In order that the words might be firmly dismissed from their minds, the jury wrote them down.

The young advocate called Mrs. Wilson.

“I married Mr. Wilson fifteen years ago,” said the widow, “and bore him three children. My married life was happy. My husband made a will in which I was named as sole executrix and residuary legatee.”

"Early this year, the doctor said that Mr. Wilson must go on a long sea voyage. He decided to take the round trip from San Francisco to Yokohama and back. On the twenty-third of March, I got a cable announcing that my husband had been killed that morning in an earthquake in Japan.

"I was about to settle my husband's estate, when the defendant arrived. She produced a will dated the thirteenth of March—ten days before my husband's death. In it, everything he possessed was bequeathed to her. With my poor children, I was turned neck-and-crop out of my own house, and left penniless by that—creature."

"Object!" cried Mr. Boomer.

"Over-ruled," remarked the judge, smoothly champing his Spearmint. "The court holds that the defendant is a creature."

The jury gazed at Mrs. Dorothy Delisle, the defendant, and made a note that she was a creature. Some of them went further, and made a note that she was a handsome creature.

Mrs. Dorothy Delisle was a modish lady in the thirties, with 'adventuress' written all over her. Already her coy glances had won the interest of the worthy occupants of the jury-box. They were under the impression that Mrs. Delisle was anxious to meet them, individually, as soon as the proceedings were over.

The young advocate called for Henry Shifter, an uneasy-looking individual in semi-nautical garb.

"I am a steward on the *Queen of the Pacific*," said the witness. "On the afternoon of Friday, the thirteenth of March, I was called to Mr. Wilson's cabin. He asked me to witness a will. Yes, that is the will. Yes, that is Mr. Wilson's signature. Yes, that is my own signature."

"Are you certain this took place on Friday, the thirteenth of March?" asked the young advocate.

"I am positive," replied Henry Shifter. "I am not likely to forget such a thing. I noticed the day and date written in the will, and it was correct."

"Thank you," said the young advocate, waving the witness towards the counsel for the defendant.

"No questions!" replied Mr. Boomer, smirking contemptuously at the inexperience of his colleague.

Mr. Dexter Mally next took the stand. He was an obvious swell-mobsmen, immaculately over-dressed. He identified the document and the signatures on it, and stated how it came to be prepared. "I occupied the cabin next to Mr. Wilson," he testified. "On the afternoon of Friday, the thirteenth of March, the deceased gentleman asked me to witness a will. I did so. That is the will. I signed it in the presence of Mr. Wilson and the steward, Henry Shifter."

"There can be no possible doubt about the date of the will?"

"None whatever. It was Friday, the thirteenth of March. As I might be called upon, years later, to give evidence about the signing of the will, I took particular care to enter the day and the date in my diary."

"Thank you," said the young advocate again; and "No questions!" said Mr. Boomer once more, scarcely troubling to conceal his contempt.

Mrs. Dorothy Delisle gave evidence. She described herself as an actress. She said she took the ocean trip for pleasure. Yes, her cabin was adjoining that of Mr. Wilson.

"He seemed a lonely gentleman," continued the lady. "He was starving for feminine sympathy. I gave him a woman's tender ministrations." The creature swelled her magnificent torso, and gazed down at the insignificant black-clad widow, who sat huddled at the back of the court, weeping silently. The jury nodded understandingly.

"The poor gentleman overcame my modest scruples, and prevailed upon me to surrender woman's precious jewel to him." The witness bowed her head, and the jury sighed.

"Afterwards, he was smitten with remorse. He begged to be allowed to make reparation. On the afternoon of Friday, the thirteenth of March, he brought me his will, newly signed and attested. It made me heir to all his possessions. He begged me to accept the sacrifice as some compensation for the ruin he had wreaked upon my womanly weakness. I told him that nothing could repair what he had done. However, he prevailed upon me to accept the arrangement, and I promised faithfully to carry out his wishes in case of his death."

"And you are positive that this took place on Friday, the thirteenth of March?" asked the young advocate.

"I am. Everything connected with the occasion is clearly fixed in my mind."

"That is all," said the young man. Mr. Boomer came solicitously forward, and assisted his distressed client back to her place.

The judge leaned forward. "I am loath to interfere with the procedure of counsel," he said, addressing the young advocate. "But I am bound to point out that the method you have adopted, has destroyed any small chance of your client establishing her case. You have called the witnesses of the will as your own witnesses, and thus denied yourself the opportunity of cross-examining them and testing their story. You have failed to adduce evidence of insanity, undue influence, or any of the factors which are usually held to upset a will. As the case now stands, we have the unshaken testimony of three witnesses that Mr. Wilson made this will while of sound mind, and of his own accord, ten days before his death. There seems to be no recourse but to find for the defendant."

Mr. Boomer patted his tie. Mrs. Dorothy Delisle preened herself, and caught the eye of the foreman of the jury. The homeless widow broke into renewed tears, and drew her fatherless children more closely about her.

"One moment, your Honour," said the young man. "My case is that the deceased was of sound mind—of far too sound a mind to indulge in the intrigue which the defendant has described. My case is that he did not speak to Mrs. Delisle during the entire voyage, knew nothing of her, and landed in Japan ignorant of her existence."

(Continued on page 40)



Hull—Lon Chaney's

THE most moving characterization of any part I have seen this year was that of Henry Hull's Magwitch in *Great Expectations*. Henry Hull is Broadway's gift to the films. This is a remarkable actor and perhaps the long-needed successor to Lon Chaney. In Broadway, he has played in all of A. A. Milne's plays for the past fifteen years.

His father was a dramatic critic of the *Louisville Courier-Journal*. The family, when Henry was young, shifted to New York. But his brothers got into the theatre. Henry attended Columbia University to study engineering. But he decided to become an actor when his brother Shelley made a name for himself on Broadway. By study, practice and constant watching of his speech, Henry learned to speak plain, understandable English with no clippy, staccato affectations.

He stood out from the pictures because his first efforts were not successful. Further, he had to consider his three children. Now his two boys are at College and the daughter at school in Washington. His bank store is not much:

"You see, I didn't care a fig about the money, I've lived too long and seen too much not to realize the futility of material things. But this is a new experience. I'm not a star now, but a character actor. I've come out to Hollywood with my fingers crossed and a prayer in my heart. I am, heaven help me, an actor. Whether that will be a handicap or a help, I can't say. I came out to learn. The men who direct film destiny are clever. They have been at it a long time. It is not for me, a novice, to sneer at pictures."

The film moghuls have done everything in their power to make *Great Expectations* live up to its title.

Reconstruction of twenty years of Victorian era—in eleven months of research, collecting and building, on land and sea—was completed at Universal City and Gladys Unger, who adapted the novel to the screen found Dickens his own best scenarist. Faithful to the Dickens' original, very few changes have been introduced. Throughout the 17 sequences and 476 scenes comprising the completed script, Dickens' own dialogue has been used with remarkably few exceptions. The nineteen

Natural Successor

characters in the book all appear on the screen unchanged. Henry Hull, with the assistance of Universal's make-up specialist Jack Pierce, and

director Stuart Walker, evolved the three changes in make-up for Magwitch to cover the three periods of his life shown in the film: his first appearance, his stay in Australia, and his return. Fifty-nine sets, thirty-two of them erected indoors on four sound stages, were built. They represented interior and exterior scenes in England and France. Additional shots off the coast of England near Portsmouth and the shores of the Isle of Wight for the convict ship sequence were developed in England and shipped to Universal City to be fitted into the picture.

Francis Sullivan, as the lawyer Jaggers: Phillips Holmes as Pip and Jane Wyatt as Estella, take the major parts. George Breakston is the boy Pip.

Hull began life as a coal miner. He has seen life in its most unmerciful aspect. He is now seeing happy days. With a good break in the pictures, and his ambition achieved to portray such roles as little sneak, lusty, dirty thief *Villon* and *The Damnation of the Theron Ware*, Henry looks very much as the if he is going to disguise his affable features permanently. I am quite sure that this powerfully compelling actor is worthy in every respect to don Chaney's mantle.

Buddy and Mary to Wed?

The rumour is running wild, Mary Pickford and Buddy Rogers are to marry. After all, these two have made no bones about this fact. They have liked each other for a long time. Ever since Doug left on his first trip without Mary, Buddy has always been seated on Mary's right, when Pickfair gave a dinner. This is a natural corollary to a long conducted romance.

May Robson's Mighty Record

May Robson had a big time this month. Her achievements are great. After celebrating her 70th birthday—a rare happening in the life of an actress—she has completed her fifty-second year as an actress, a formidable record in itself. This also marks her third year in pictures and it has been crowned with a long-term contract from M. G. M.

The Letters



Madras,
6th July, 1935.

Dear Mother,

It was very kind of old Major Cole to give you the address of his daughter to be forwarded to me; but although the lady lives in these parts, it will not be easy for me to visit her. You see, Miss Cole

married a clerk, and out here a European clerk is no end of a big noise; in fact he is not called a clerk at all, but has some high-sounding title.

I went to the address you gave me, and was met by a big fat servant. He had a turban a yard high, with a great coloured ribbon on it like the label of a jam-jar; and round his middle was an enormous belly-band as big as the girth of a dray-horse.

"Good afternoon, *Abjar*," I said. "Please tell Mrs. Robinson that I've come to visit her."

The servant went away, and came back with a little brass tray, such as is used for cooking out here.

"Give card," he said, quite rudely.

"I haven't any card," I replied. "Tell the lady it is Obeah Joyfull."

"No card, no tell lady," remarked the servant, off-handedly.

"Very well," I said, keeping my temper, "I will wait here till she comes." And I sat in a chair on the verandah.

The servant contemplated me in an outraged manner, and went into the house, muttering. Presently he returned, and said, "*Memsahib* not at home. Go away."

At this moment I saw a lady peeping from behind a curtain, and I was delighted to recognise Mary Cole, who is now Mrs. Robinson. "Hullo, Mary!" I cried, going and stretching out my hand, "Your fool of a servant said you were not at home."

To my astonishment, Mary gave me only one finger to shake. This is a surprising sensation, if unexpected. "I am not at home," she said.

"Then where are you—up in a balloon?" I asked, laughing.

"Kindly address me as Mrs. Robinson," said Mary.

"Ah, your father told me you had married some bloke called Robinson," I remarked.

"My husband is a Senior Mercantile Assistant," said Mary, drawing herself up.

"Yes, I heard he was a clerk," I agreed. "Well, aren't you going to show an old school-chum what sort of dump you've married into?"

Mary gave a sort of gasp, and shouted for the servant. "Take this soldier to the back verandah, and show him into the small sitting-room," she ordered.

I waited in the small sitting-room for some time, and then Mary came in. "I'm glad to see that you keep to our old simple customs," I said.

"What do you mean?" cried Mary.

"Showing me into the house by the back way," I replied cheerfully. "It's a proper old country custom, isn't it? Don't you remember, most people in our village never opened the front door, except for weddings and funerals? I think it is a nice neighbourly custom, to invite people to pop in by the back way."

"I have never approved of any such custom!" cried Mary.

of Private Joyfull

56. Memsahibs.

Illustrated by Mali

"Nonsense," I said. "Have you forgotten how you used to come looking for me by the kitchen door, and beg cakes from my mother, hot from the oven?"

"Really!" said Mary, "you seem to forget that my father was a Major."

"Oh, don't mention it," I cried, generously. "Of course, your father did not belong to any of our good yeoman families, but he gained an honourable rank in the Army. We always treated you as one of ourselves. Do you remember the day we played truant from school, and went down to the brook and made mud pies?"

"I am sure I never did anything of the kind," protested Mary. She was all hot and bothered, and kept fanning herself.

"Yes, you did," I cried eagerly. "Don't you remember how you flopped down into the mud, and dirtied your drawers?"

"How dare you allude to such matters?" replied Mary. "You must realise that my position is quite different out here."

"Yes," I said, quite nettled, "and you are different, too. You aren't like a human being any longer!"

"How dare you!" she replied. "I am not accustomed to have soldiers speak to me like that. I will thank you not to call here again. It is very embarrassing. We only associate with club-people."

"Then the club-people have my sympathy!" I

retorted. "Good gracious, won't the village people laugh when I tell them about this!" And I picked up my cap, and walked out, quite rudely.

Well, dear Mother, would you believe that poor Mary Cole has become so pinchbeck a fine lady? She used to be all right. It is the bad influence out here. It is pathetic how being the wife of a Senior Mercantile Assistant has given her delusions of grandeur. She has turned into a *Memsahib*.

Memsahibs are quite different persons to any females you meet in England. For instance, Mary Cole used to be a normal decent village girl, but now she belongs to the *Memsahib* species. This species is peculiar to India, and should form an interesting study for zoologists.

You will be astonished to hear what is an Indian's impression of a *memsahib*. The general idea out here is that European women are fussy, nerve-racking, interfering creatures, always gossiping and taking objection to everything, nagging everybody, and making themselves a nuisance.

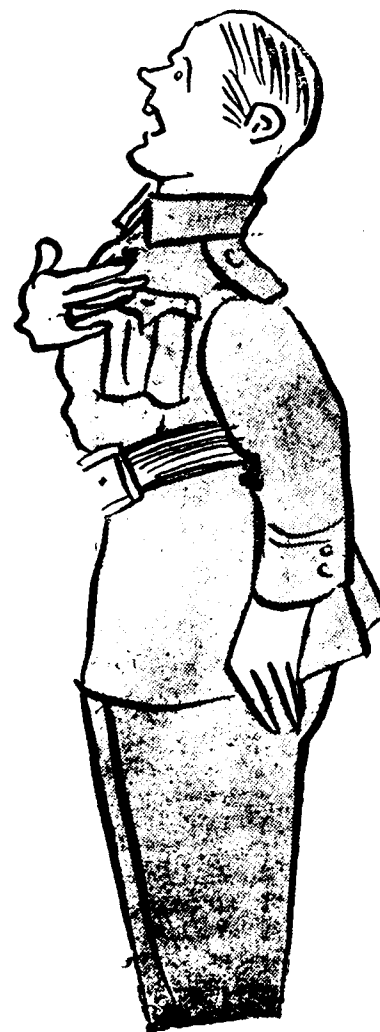
Of course, you won't recognise this as a picture of your country-women, yet it is quite a recognisable portrait of a *memsahib*. A *memsahib* is an artificial creature produced by trying climatic conditions, inconvenient households, unfamiliar customs, and a false sense of values.

The false sense of values is due to the increased importance that a European woman acquires out here. A girl at home is expected to do house-work and to earn her own living. She does not receive much attention from men, and is very glad to get an offer of marriage.

If the same girl comes to India, she is one of the few *miss sahibs* in the place, and the men treat her as something unique. She can get married as soon as she likes, even if she is fifty years old and has a wooden leg. In fact, India is the old maid's salvation, and one of the chief imports is old maids from England, who are presently re-exported as full-fledged *memsahibs*.

Even when a girl is married, she still gets a lot of flattery. Out here we don't say of a girl, "married and done for". Quite the reverse: a bride in India is only starting her career, and is besieged with invitations for as many dances, picnics, and parties as her husband will allow her to attend. But it is not all honey. The poor girl has to manage a rambling old insect-ridden bungalow, with the doubtful help of insolent, lazy, dirty servants.

If *memsahibs* are a special race unrepresentative of ordinary Englishwomen, servants are a special race unrepresentative of ordinary Indians. Unfortunately, Europeans get their idea of Indians from scoundrelly servants; just as Indians get their idea of Europeans from ill-bred upstarts. Both impressions are, of course, unjust.



"I haven't any card."

Nikku's Awakening—

by R. Jagannathan

Illustrated by Mali

THOUGH Nikku was awake, he was not inclined to get up. Not because he lay on a bed of roses. Far from it. His couch was the naked earth and his pillow was a rough stone covered by a rag. Above him there was no roof but the blue vault of the wide heavens. Even so, Nikku felt no urge to get up. He was a beggar by profession and the rosy-tinted morn held no promise to him of a day better than the last.

But the summer sun seemed to envy the little luxury which he clung to. There was no longer any comfort in bed when the sunshine was full upon his face, pricking his eyes. So Nikku lazily stretched his limbs and yawned. Doing this was breakfast. It prepared him for the day's task.

Nikku got up and clad his nakedness with a dirty and ragged overall. Then he took his empty bowl and his staff and set out towards the city. To him the city was dear as his own mother. It made things easier for him even though it was only to beg. There were so many folks he knew. There was safety in its multitude and in its bazaars. Moreover, he knew also its rough and hard-hearted citizens and could avoid them and their insults.

It was a flourishing city, teeming with life. There were numerous *mohallas* in it, and Nikku had only to select a portion every day. It would suffice. That was why he felt no need to work and waste his energies. When living was so cheap and easy, why complicate it with a desire to toil and accumulate? So, he never took to work to earn his living.

The locality that Nikku elected on this particular morning was Gulabi Mohalla. No man (or postman for the matter of that) would be able to say where that mohalla was. Its name in the municipal records was something different. But, to Nikku it was Gulabi Mohalla. It was there that he discovered Gulabi two years ago. She was then a child of three. Her parents were humble and honest folk. When Nikku went there to beg, he chanced to sight Gulabi who came to him with a smile. Sweet little child. Was she not transported by his song?

Other folk used to accord him a mixed reception. Some used to cut him off in the middle of the song. To them his hackneyed rhyme was insufferable jargon.

"Shut up and wait quietly. You'll get *atta* (wheat flour) in due course," said one.

"Don't disturb me with your infernal song!" exploded another.

"You are already a nuisance, why add to it by your song?" asked an impatient third.

Not so Gulabi. Even as a child of three, she was interested in him. So soft-hearted and sympathetic.

"Who are you?"

"I am Nikku, the beggar."

"Why do you beg?"

"For food."

"Why don't you ask your mother for food?"

"I have no mother."

"Where is she?"

"She died long ago."

"What's death?"

"You don't need to know, my child."

By that time Gulabi's mother fetched him some *atta*. Since that day Gulabi was to him a sweet and sacred name. Wasn't she the little girl with rosy cheeks and smiling lips? She to whom his hackneyed and meaningless song was a thing of keen delight? So, he named the mohalla after Gulabi and made it his turn for begging.



The turn had come again, and to Gulabi Mohalla he went with a light heart. As usual Gulabi was playing with her mates. As soon as she saw him, she ran to him with all her playmates.

"Sing a song, Nikku," she urged him. Nikku swelled with pride and intoned his song. The children were transported with delight.



"Encore," commanded Gulabi.

"Queen of my heart," murmured Nikku and sang again. Gulabi bubbled with laughter. Then she went in and fetched him *atta*.

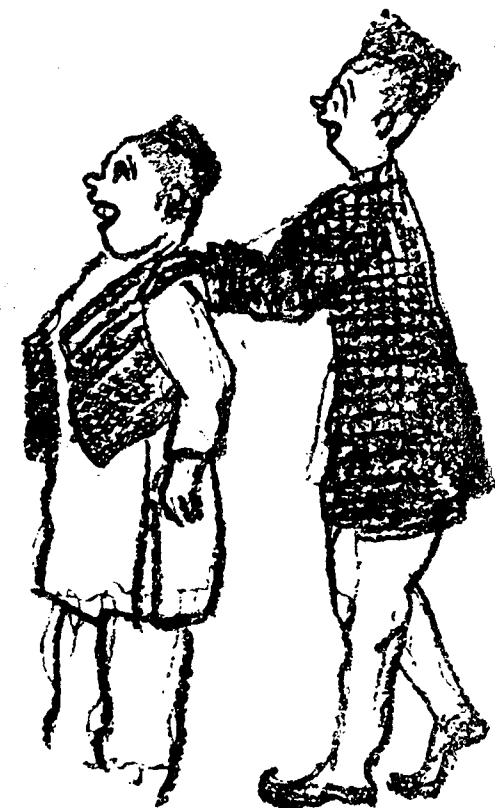
A few more houses and the day's task was over for Nikku. He roamed in the bazaar and mixed with the throng. At evenfall he returned to his abode under a tree and prepared his simple food.

"My city!" he exclaimed with joy and contentment as he looked at it looming in the distance.

"What would I do without it?" he asked himself. Beg, of course. But it was a different thing in his own city. It was part of his being; he was familiar with the kindnesses and rebuffs of those he knew. Whereas, in other places he would feel strange and find everything difficult; in fact, he would have to begin again, even though it was only begging.

Meanwhile, evening sank into the bosom of the night and all was still. The star-spangled sky was smiling from above. The cool summer breeze was soporific. Nikku was soon fast asleep.

Time had gone far deep into the night when Nikku felt disturbed and woke up. What was it? Whence that humming noise? Was it an aeroplane scouring



"Queen of my heart," murmured Nikku.

the skies at this unearthly hour? No, the sound seemed much nearer. Was any lorry passing by? He rubbed his eyes and saw—nothing. He could not keep himself steady. Why was he being tossed about? What was the matter?

Yes, the fact dawned on him. The patient and solid earth was in a tremor; yes, shaking and shivering in her seismic dance.

"It's an earthquake," he cried aloud as the tremors passed.

"Wonder if the city-folk felt it. They must be sound asleep in their beds under their comfortable roofs. I shall convey the great news to them in the morning; they may not believe me—dense folk."

Nikku woke up early in the morning and hurried to the city. But ere he reached it, he stood aghast. "My God," he asked, "where is the city?"

Indeed, there was no city. Wherever he went, he saw ruins and broken columns. Houses, buildings and everything that stood on the ground yesterday were flattened. Those people who were alive, were pictures of woe. As he went further and examined, he found that whole families had been wiped out of existence. The disaster was appalling. Everything had been demolished. What remained of Nikku's darling city was debris, debris and debris.

Nikku stood fixed in thought. Where were they, the safe and secure multitude? The great, kind-hearted and charitable citizens on whose generosity he was living. Gone without a trace.

"I cannot be lazy, henceforth," he said, "I cannot afford to beg when these poor souls are dead. Let me work and retrieve whoever may lie with some spark of life under the debris. God, I find that I, too, can be useful."

Then a flashing thought took him to Gulabi.

"Gulabi, Gulabi, where is my Gulabi?" he shouted like a madman. Then he ran as fast as he could to what was once Gulabi Mohalla. But he could fix or find nothing there. Debris, there was nothing but debris there.

"My little child, where are you?" he shouted. There was no response. After some search he was able to spot the house.

"Come on, give me a helping hand, my child is caught inside," he cried.

Some came to assist him. The debris was slowly cleared. All the while Nikku kept on shouting, "Gulabi, where are you?"

A muffled moan issued from one of the rooms. Nikku rushed to the spot, but found everything covered with debris. As he removed it, he found two cots on which lay a man and a woman.

"Gulabi's father and mother," muttered Nikku and found them both dead.

The muffled moan issued from beneath a cot. Nikku bent down and discovered Gulabi, choked and struggling for breath. He took her out of the ghastly place and brought her out into the open.

Yes, the little child was alive and breathing. Poor thing, she should not understand what it all was.

"Where are my father and mother?" she asked weeping.

"Dead," replied Nikku, as he wiped the copious tears from her eyes. "Don't feel afraid, my child, I shall restore you to your relatives."

From that day Nikku never begged.

THE END

Scared Away—(Continued from page 41)

Jal returned to his adored one. "Thanks for calling my attention to the scoundrel," he said. "If he hadn't gone off, I'd have thrashed him within an inch of his life. As it was, I spoke pretty sternly to him. I don't think he'll trouble you again."

"My hero!" she murmured, linking her arm in his.

You want to know what it was that Jal said that caused the man to depart so hurriedly? It hardly seems worth telling. He simply remarked:

"Look here, Khan Bai, I'm sorry I haven't the money to pay you, but it's really too bad to follow me about like this. Wait a little longer, there's a good fellow, and you'll get your money, and an order for the finest wedding breakfast."

THE END

Are You a Film-fan?

by 'Caper'

IT is no use merely telling me that you are an ardent film-fan. You have got to prove it. And here is how I want you to satisfy me:

I set the following exam-paper (Time: 3 hours as usual) and ask you to answer it. Mind you, if you don't get at least 60 per cent, you get ploughed and will be excluded from any decent Film-fans' Society. And please also remember that you cannot fool a pass out of me by giving me silly details which you have stolen from news-magazines about the heel of Helen Twelvetrees or the back of Bebe Daniels.

But not to take you entirely by surprise, I shall give you one model question and its answer (thereby following the tremendous S.S.L.C. tradition).

Question: Which lady has a lot of talk in her?

Answer: Ruth Chatterton i.e., Ruth Ton of Chatter. Sounds simple, doesn't it? There you are!

Warning: This is not a competition and no prizes are offered. Your examiner himself is rather hard up for cash. Answers for checking up will be found elsewhere—not for checking up straightaway! If you think you have popped over successfully, write to me. I will deal with you strictly according to communal rotation. Now let us get started.

1. What comedian offers you a smart bargain?
Say! You there, buck up, you shouldn't be so easily floored!
2. Which character actor is always dead drunk?
You say this is better? But then you haven't yet compared your answer with mine!
3. Which girl sounds all right when you call her?
Everyone got it right? Good.
4. Which girl is devilish cunning?
Oh well, this must be easy.
5. "A little sleep for the good girl." Who is the good girl?
Tough one, this?
6. "You do not light a candle to put it under a star." Which star is it?
Same as the last, eh, what?
7. "Tell everything but the truth." To which gentleman do you address this?
Dashed easy, I should say.
8. What girl's name when pronounced makes you go to a court of law for a mere song?
The answer is obvious.
9. Which little young thing is wholly white?
If you cannot answer this, well, I suggest Pot. Cyanide.
10. Which lovely lady's name is a luxurious repast?
A revolver may be used in case of despair.
11. He wrecks homes with a little snap of his fingers. Who?
Surely, my man, you are not wrecked on this little piece of rock?

12. You can get no 'yes' from this girl if you propose to her.

Hard nut—as the man said when his teeth splintered!

13. Who is the heavenly girl who is neither sorry nor glad?

Oh, I see you are unlucky on the 13th. Condo-lences and prussic acid.

14. The king whose name is a long distance howl. Do you know your history?

15. The man from the land of the jackals.

16. "The Red-Cross Knight strove for a bit of her." You know your Spencer?

17. "My comedian is sun-burnt." Who is he?

Handsome men are said to be slightly sun-burnt—though this statement may not help you in the present instance. In fact it may be positively misleading.

18. "One wreath to the funny bloke." "Of wreaths and laurels," as the poet—

It has no reference to your general conduct.

19. Which grand lady is a keen cutter in the films?

If you do not know this, then the question of sterilising you, in the interests of the race, will become an imminent though not necessarily a serious question. So beware!

20. "You could read her as you would an open book." Who is she?

Remember only a few more questions are left, and God knows how you are going to make up the remaining 58 marks for a pass!

21. Which Bruce owns the jolliest mountain in the world? Scotchmen even in an exam-paper, you say?

22. Who is the most voluble scribe in Hollywood?

Not a woman, though you may think so.

23. Who is the million-volt girl of Hollywood?

Electrocution is a quick relief, if you are thinking of quitting this vale of tears.

24. Who is the Ace undertaker of Hollywood?

The undertaker here has already an eye on you!

25. Which girl is the boy of a bird?

No—I am not mad.

26. Which gentleman owns a stream both sides of which are sunny and bright?

This is plain enough—you—

27. "Shocks man, don't touch him." Whom?

Don't give it up—only two more coming.

28. "The grand miner and cave-man of Hollywood." Who is he?

You can begin adding your marks. What! No marks? Well, I am sorry!

29. Which excellent lady is it who understands all of you but whom none of you quite understand?

N. B. (This is slightly different from the foregoing questions, and is given here as a consolation problem to enable each examinee to score at least one mark.)

(Answers on next page)

Are You A Film-fan?

A N S W E R S

1. Chas. Chic sale. chic sale—smart bargain.
2. Wallace Beer(y).
3. Kay Francis. O kay--O. K.
4. Sidney Fox.
5. Evelyn Knapp.
6. Anthony Bushnell.
7. Ben Lyon.
8. Sue Carol.
9. Alice White. Alice —All is.
10. Marlene Dietrich.
11. Phillips Holmes — Phillips Homes.
12. Rosita Moreno
13. Janet Gaynor.
14. Charles Farrell. Farrell—Far Yell.
15. Olin Howland.
16. Una Merkel.
17. Joe E. Brown—Joe. e. Brown.
18. Stan Laurel.
19. Norma Shearer.
20. Anita Page.
21. Robert Montgomery.
22. Clark Gable—Gable Clerk—Volatile Scribe
23. Leila Hyams, Hyams—High Amps.
24. Ralph Graves.
25. Gloria Swanson—Swan Son.
26. Douglas Fairbanks.
27. Ned Sparks.
28. Ronald Colman.
29. Greta Garbo.

Results of this Examination:

APPEARED:	All
FAILED	Do.

Competitors Please Note

The last date for receiving entries:—

Rs. 300 FREE

'Give & Take' Competition, published in the *Merry* dated 22-6-35, closes on 10-7-35;

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If you could not get copies of the issues containing the above competitions, you can get them by addressing The Subscription Manager.

Chewing Gum—

by 'Narak A. Nurak'

I needn't tell you that I have a long nose which I poke into all sorts of places. From the chin music that I produce, you may have judged that I have a long chin too. You are right. The abnormal length of both my chin and nose makes my face almost Punch-like—a cross between a hook and a swivel. That's me. Now hearken!

Have you read the recent Government order laying down the extent of the powers of the Commissioners of Municipalities? I have, and have made up my mind not to become the Chairman of my Municipality, because I hate being merely a figure-head. Local self-government indeed! Well, well, the bickerings in certain Municipalities may have led up to this impasse. But I am afraid, the tail is cut too short and even mild wagging is impossible.

Little Tommy Peppercorn
Was very fond of jam.
For worrying mummy one fine morn
Into the pantry she did slam
Poor Tommy!

In the pantry Tom did spy
A pot of jam so rich and nice
But e'en to touch it Tom didn't try
For round about were frightful mice.
Poor Tommy!

"A story with a moral appended," said someone, "is like the bill of a mosquito. It bores you and then injects a stinging drop to irritate your conscience." Narak is not a moralist, nor Nurak. Birth-control, Dietetics, Village Sanitation and other useful topics are attracting the attention of the public. Alcoholism also should be fought on the same lines. Do you know the stages through which a man passes while communing with

bottled spirits? Dr. J. Totten says there are five stages. At first, the man feels that he is a jolly good fellow (Jocose). Then he becomes very excitable, quarrelsome and argumentative (Bellicose). The depressive stage where he is sorry for himself comes next (Lachrymose). Further indulgence makes him incoherent without control of feet or tongue (Comatose). The last stage is called blotto (Moratose). Or as somebody else has deftly described it, the dry and decent man doping himself with damned drink becomes by turns delighted and duellist, delinquent and disgusting, dizzy and delirious, dazed and dejected, and finally dead drunk. And here is a poem which I have culled from somewhere:

"All you who are addicted to drink,
You stand upon the precipice's brink
You'll be wafted o'er the river
With cirrhosis of the liver
And a damned side quicker than you think."

A man reeling homewards—yes? You do not want me to embellish this with a drunkard story—Right oh! then. I know, it would be stale.

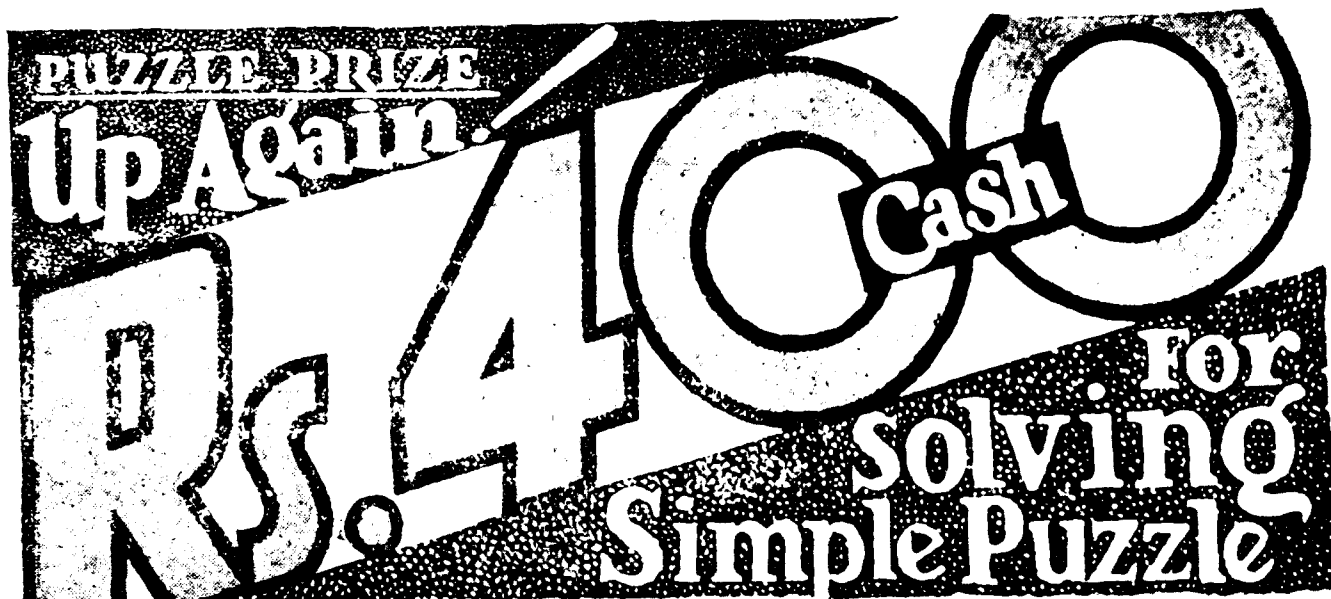
Even the benighted South is getting air-minded. Aerodromes are being opened in important towns and aviation is catching the attention of people. India with her vast open spaces and great distances between important towns, is the one country which would gain by extensive civil aviation.

Ever heard this? The professor was lecturing on the history of the Portuguese in India. "Francis Xavier," he said, "paid a flying visit to China."

A naughtily student: "Please, sir, were aeroplanes in vogue then?"

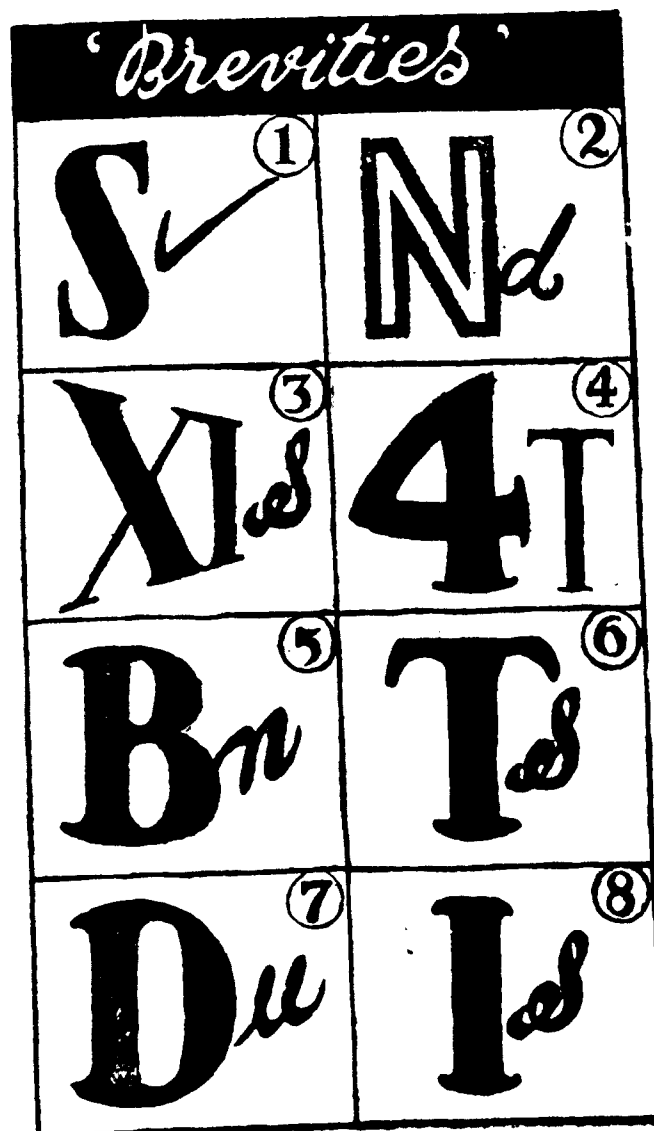
The professor: "No. Only the air of the plains and water from rains."

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MISFORTUNES OF MEENA—(Continued from page 16)

ran the cook. She said this in the heat of the moment on the Sunday morning. The cook immediately held her to her word. Two pans were got ready and while the rest of the refreshment-room staff looked-on, the cook and Meena set to work and began gathering the ingredients necessary to cook the dish. Trouble arose over the nomination of the person who should adjudicate between the two dishes and make the award.

"I tell you what," said Meena. "We will ask the first passenger whom we meet outside to decide. Are you game?"

"Quite," said the good-humoured cook.

Meena went out. The Conjeevaram Passenger had just then arrived and a man who looked like an Andhra was coming towards the refreshment-room. He had only a bag and a *kooja* in his hand.

Meena greeted him with the words, "You must do me a favour. There's a bet on here. There are two plates of *Uppumav* and you must taste both and tell us which one is the better of the two."

Meena was speaking in Tamil. The stranger didn't understand her.

"I can't understand Tamil," he said in Telugu.

Meena repeated her request in broken Telugu which she had picked-up in her childhood from her playmates in the *agraharam*. The stranger smiled and agreed to act as the judge.

"You take my dish and I'll take yours," said the cook by way of caution and Meena agreed. The two plates were brought and placed before the stranger. A crowd gathered—mostly railway servants—to hear the verdict. Meena stood with folded hands, as the stranger sampled the contents of one plate and another. He was slow, deliberate, and seemed to enjoy great fun out of the role imposed on him. He looked at Meena often, ran his eyes over her full form and took in the grace and symmetry of her lithe figure. Finally, he pushed one of the plates aside and taking the other said, "This one is better!"

"Thank you," said Meena. "I cooked that one!" And the crowd cheered her and gibed at the cook.

"Who is that girl?" asked the stranger of one of the refreshment-room staff, after it was all over.

"She is the Railway Police Head-Constable's daughter. A great favourite with all of us here. Poor girl, she is motherless."

"Is she married?"

"No. Are you a marriage broker?"

"No. I am thinking of marrying her, myself. That *Uppumav* was divine and so is she."

[In the next instalment read how the stranger eventually marries Meena?]

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'SPOT-THE-ERROR'

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6.
7.
8.

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Address.....

(Each entry must be filled in legibly.)

'Bring-Them-Round' Competition

RESULTS

The Correct Solution is :

- | | | |
|----------|---------|----------|
| 1. RABID | 4. FIT | 7. SET |
| 2. HORSE | 5. DIM | 8. SPIRE |
| 3. FIND | 6. LOSE | 9. VASE |

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