

THE
MERRY
M A G A Z I N E

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No. 33

The MERRY MAGAZINE



2184

Scott - O'Connor
Chattopadhyaya
E. L. Shipman



August 17
1935

Albert A. Roland
— 'Nijinski' —
Private Joyfull

The Titans of New York
by Irani



The
MERRY
MAGAZINE

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Deisvi

The Misfortunes of
Meena

This great serial story is concluding next week. At last the dawn breaks for poor Meena.

Scott-O'Connor

The Octopus

Lunacy in excelsis!

Embusque

A Sacred Trust

A man knocks right round the world to carry out a trust. The irony of it all!

Ram

The Man who Lost His
Image

And something else!

Also 'Kaiser' 'Mea' and all features.

Next Week: Joyfull fights Malaria.

SPARKS FROM OUR ANVIL

One of the articles announced by a contemporary is entitled: 'Will war come to Europe?'

It'll be more topical to know if Europe will go to war.

The *Sunday Times* declares that the India Act represents 'an immense act of faith translated into deeds.'

We are ourselves more impressed with the paraphrase than the translation.

Says Sir Hari Singh Gour: 'If the new constitution is unworkable with all the good-will on the part of the Indians, England will readily alter it; but evidence of the good-will must be forthcoming.'

Or, alternatively, of the unworkability of the constitution.

Addressing the Europeans on the need for organising themselves, Mr. F. E. James declared that the Europeans had not got all that they wanted.

Nor all that they deserve!

Referring to Mrs. Lakshmiopathi's criticisms of allotments for Government House furniture, the Home Member wondered if she represented the womanhood of India.

We hasten to inform the Hon'ble Member that she represents only the city of Madras!

At a Salem meeting, the Hon'ble Mr. P. T. Rajan admitted that the defeats of the Justice Party in the Assembly elections were a blessing in disguise.

The electorate is prepared to bless them as often as may be necessary!



Reuter reports that Mr. Ramsay Macdonald will be acting Prime Minister during Mr. Baldwin's holiday on the continent.

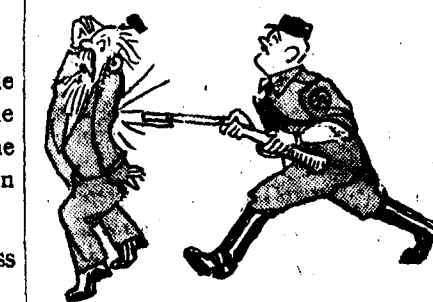
It is not however expected that he will be a speaking Prime Minister.

A speaker says: 'Hollywood is as respectable as Adyar—possibly no more respectable than Adyar!'

This has whetted our curiosity to know more about—Adyar.

Speaking at a Nazi Rally, Dr. Ley, leader of the Labour Front, said that what united them with Hitler was the love of God which would and could move mountains.

It is at present manifested in moving the Jews!



In the course of an after-dinner speech, H. E. Lord Erskine said: 'The spirit in which the 1919 Act has been worked in this Presidency has enabled the letter of the law to be put aside, in order that the constitution may function successfully.'

And His Excellency gave a striking proof of it by extending the life of the present Council for another year.

Presiding over the jubilee celebrations of a bank at Pudukotah, the Rt. Hon'ble Mr. Sastri gave sound advice to—teachers.

This is a novel departure from his usual practice of giving sound advice to teachers on—politics!

In the course of a statement, H.H. the Pope is reported to have said: 'We have every faith that nothing will take place that is not according to truth and justice.'

Mussolini cannot complain afterwards that he was not warned betimes.

From a description of the Allison-Austin encounter in the Davis Cup Final: 'Austin grit his teeth and won the last two sets. Some of the credit is no doubt due to Mrs. Austin who sat rapt in the front row willing him to win.'

The rest apparently goes to Austin's grit!

It is pointed out that our Viceroy-designate, Lord Linlithgow, is a great farmer.

We may therefore expect him not to take our grumbling seriously!



A Feast of Reason—

IT is generally unsafe to look for much wisdom in after-dinner speeches.

Their highest function is to amuse.

The reason is obvious; people dine, not wisely, but only too well. But the Englishman, with that obstinate conservatism which is ingrained in him, still continues to use the occasion for what he thinks are his more momentous utterances.

We therefore perused with some interest the account of a dinner given to His Excellency the Governor by Sir Alladi Krishna-swamy Aiyar. Sir Alladi's speech on Dominion Status was an epitome of the Law—and the prophets. It has not even an academic interest for us. But we were somewhat taken aback by His Excellency's ingenious explanation for the failure of democracy in Europe. He contended that in Germany, Italy, and possibly Russia, the franchise was widened before the population were fit to exercise the vote. It is a good stick with which to beat the supporters of adult franchise in this country.

But on closer examination of His Excellency's statement, it is found to be a broken reed. It cannot be seriously contended that Germany before the war, was less educated than England. On the other hand, it is a notorious fact that Germany set the pace for educational experiment and advance for the whole of Europe. Taking next, the property qualifications of voters, they were at least as high as in England; and even if they were not, the prosperity of Germany

before the war was the envy of the other powers—England not excluded. His Excellency ought to know perfectly well that the moral responsibility for the promotion of autocracy in Europe must be laid at the doors of those who were guilty of imposing a treaty, the provisions of which were conceived in a spirit of calculated brutality and childish fear. Autocracy in Europe is the answer, and 'Direct Action' its technique to nullify the poisonous effects of that treaty. It was not a calamity brought about by the enfranchisement of the illiterate masses, but an expression of despair to which defeated countries were reduced.

We do not wish ill of England; indeed we admire her institutions. But she perfected them because she has been singularly fortunate in enjoying a long period of peace and prosperity. She went slow, because she could afford to go slow; but her struggles were as poignant as any elsewhere. It is easy to moralise after the event, and humble us into meek silence by flourishing her example before us. But let it not be forgotten that, under pressure of necessity, England has been as indifferent to tradition, as Germany or Italy. A continental observer of England in the seventeenth century might have honestly congratulated himself that he was not in England, even as, now H. E. does, on the fact that he is not in Germany. We don't grudge His Excellency his self-satisfaction. But we wish it were backed by sounder reasons!



Mr. Merry: Well, how do you do your Excellency.

Mr. Mitsushima: Quite well—you know the idea 'Asia for Asiatics' is distinctly gaining ground in Japan!

Mr. Merry: So happy to hear it, your Excellency—we wish it were not also gaining ground for Japan!

The Letters of Private Joyfull

62. Officers Versus Sergeants

Reading time • about 8 minutes

Illustrated by Pandia

Madras, 17th August, 1935.

DEAR MOTHER,

YOU will be delighted to hear that the Officers have won the Annual Football-Match, Officers *versus* Sergeants, after a terrific contest.

People who are not used to our ways, would suppose that the rank-and-file supported the Sergeants in this historic conflict. Quite the reverse is the case. The Sergeants' feats are greeted with critical applause, while the Officers are the subject of generous and sustained sympathy. The troops are always on the side of the down-trodden. When Sergeant Bullock charges Second-Lieutenant Haddock in the midriff, there are immediate cries of "Yah! Big bully! Kick him on the shins, Sir!" But when Sergeant Bullock is bowled over by Major Firebrace, the chorus is "Hurrah! Serve him right!"

The advice of the spectators is always full of horrifying suggestions, in flagrant violation of the rules of the game. You would imagine that we were a lot of blood-thirsty sadists watching a bull-fight. Actually, however, the behaviour of the players is watched by a thousand eagle eyes, and the slightest infraction of the rules is met by a great roar of "Foul!"

The match commemorates a famous battle of a hundred and eighty years ago, when all the Officers were killed, and the regiment was led to victory by the Sergeants. The Officers' widows presented the Sergeants' Mess with a fine piece of silver, with the stipulation that it was to be competed for every year.

Some time before the date of the match, there are always rumours that both sides have some great surprise to spring on their opponents. The Colonel is said to be indulging in private practice under a professional, and to have acquired a tricky kind of dribbling that will confound his adversaries. The Sergeants talk darkly of the new bandmaster, who is supposed to have played for Tottenham Hotspur. The Officers spread the rumour that Second-Lieutenant Haddock is a dark horse who was once tried for the Corinthians.

Both teams take the field with every mark of confidence in themselves, and contempt for their opponents. This year, the Officers' goal-keeper appeared in a sleeping-suit, and sat between the posts in a huge armchair, with a refreshing drink and a novel. Not to be out-done, the Sergeants' goal-keeper was disguised as a very decrepit old man, who amused himself by doing acrobatic feats on the posts. The Sergeants took down the net from



their goal, as they said one would not be necessary. However, the spectators considered the armchair a much more convincing piece of blarney, and the betting remained firm at five to two on the Officers.

The referee was the regimental schoolmaster, who turned out in cap and gown, and carrying a cane. The schoolmaster is always the referee, as he is supposed to be neutral, and the Officers and Sergeants are presumed to be equally in terror of him.

Our schoolmaster is called Fatty Stone. He had his left arm shattered in the battle of Loos, so he went to the Army School of Education for two years, and

studied for a teaching-diploma. He is the editor of the regimental magazine, the president of the Dramati Club, and the secretary of the Sports Committee. He is a very terrible man, who roundly satirises the little follies of regimental life in the magazine and on the stage, and conducts the battalion sports with a draconic impartiality. He has a breast covered with medals as evidence of his services in the field.

One day I was on fatigue-duty in the Sergeants' Mess, which is a very handsome place like a Club. The Sergeants were entertaining a Sergeant-Major of the cavalry, who was on a visit to the station. The visitor had just witnessed one of our parades, and he said it looked very fine, but perhaps was not as impressive as a parade of cavalrymen.

"Oh," said Fatty Stone, with deceptive humility, "what makes your parades more impressive?"

"You should see our squadrons wheeling into line!"



said the cavalryman. "It goes like this: 'Squadron, halt! Jingle, jingle!'"

"What are the jingles?" enquired the schoolmaster.

"Spurs, sir; spurs!" replied the cavalryman. "But what does a schoolmaster know of such things?"

"I think a parade of schoolmasters would produce an equivalent effect," said Fatty Stone.

"Who has ever heard of a parade of schoolmasters!" laughed the visitor.

"Such a thing has been known," replied Fatty. "It goes like this: 'Schoolmasters, halt! Jingle, jingle!'"

"And what are the jingles?"

"Medals, sir; medals!" replied Fatty Stone, gazing at the undecorated breast of the cavalryman.

"Good morning, gentlemen," concluded Fatty Stone, surveying the speechless circle, "I will now go and polish my sword."

Fatty Stone superintended the marking of the ground for the annual match. The lines were drawn in the orthodox manner, but on the touch-lines there were notice-boards conveying such warnings as: *No Loitering; Beware of the Centre-Forward; and Commit no Nuisance.*

The touch-lines were crowded with spectators. Even the water-carriers, tailors, and other non-combatants were present in full force, to cheer their favourite *sahibs*. The regimental followers are very keen on football, and have quite a respectable team of their own, which can give any of our company teams a good game. They turn out in their own colours, and are proud to uphold themselves against anyone.

A few minutes before the match, the ancient trophy was marched on to the ground under a guard of the Indian soldiers of the machine-gun platoon. We call it the Bahadur Guard, or the guard of brave men, because of an occasion when our Indian detachment behaved with steadiness and gallantry on the frontier, after their Officer was killed. Ever since then, our Indian platoon has had a share in the annual football-match, which is a celebration of the bravery of non-commissioned ranks. They appear in tremendously smart uniforms, grinning delightedly as they ceremoniously guard the sacred relic, and listen to the facetious remarks of their European comrades.

"Sham Lall!" cried someone, "you've got a hole in the seat of your pants, and your shirt is hanging out!" Sham Lall looks horrified in case he is really guilty of such an indecorum on the Bahadur Guard, and then realises that it is only the mysterious English custom of 'leg-pulling'. "Sham Lall!" cries someone else, "run home at once; one of the brutal English soldiers is making away with your wife!" Poor Sham Lall is torn between duty and anxiety, until some kinder-hearted spectator pushes the speaker head-over-heels on to the ground, and a regimental policeman indignantly pushes the offender back into his place, and Sham Lall heaves a sigh of relief, bursts into smiles again, and wonders at the extraordinary ways of British tommies.

Fatty Stone blew some blasts on his whistle, and the two teams trotted into the arena like gladiators, accompanied by a storm of cheering. The referee brought Colonel Bygadsby and Sergeant-Major Quirt into the centre of the field, and they tossed for ends. Fatty Stone detected the Sergeant-Major using a double-headed coin, so he made old Mossy-Face bend over and take a caning, to the immense delight of the crowd. Old Mossy-Face was ordered off the field in disgrace, and that ended his share in the match.

The referee now produced a coin of his own, which was as big as a dinner-plate. He declared the Officers to have won the kick-off, and the teams lined up. The

whistle blew, and the Colonel opened the match with a terrific kick at the ball. Fatty Stone immediately pronounced this a foul. The Colonel had to hold out his hand and take a caning, and then Fatty dramatically ordered him off the field for the offence of kicking too hard. The Colonel retired to the seat of honour beside the trophy, bursting with laughter.

These preliminaries made no difference to the game, as both sides had taken the precaution of fielding twelve men. The eleven-a-side now remaining were the real teams. The Officers' goalkeeper removed his armchair, the Sergeants' goalkeeper stopped his clowning, and the match began in earnest.

The match is always very exciting, because both the Officers' and Sergeants' teams are composed of an admixture of wily veterans and energetic youngsters. The play went on amid a continual roar, which rose to pandemonium as each goal was threatened in turn. At last, a few minutes before half-time, Major Firebrace netted a mighty shot almost from the half-way line, and the crowd went wild with jubilation. One of the regimental water-carriers howled, "Shahbask, Major Sahib!" and threw his companion's cap in the air. His companion happened to be supporting the Sergeants, so he retaliated with violence. Everybody in the vicinity took sides, and the regimental police had to come and separate the combatants. Paddy O'Hara was heard enquiring if it was a private fight, or could anyone join in.

These scenes of jubilation were repeated a few minutes later, when the whistle went for half-time, because one of the traditional rules of this quaint contest is that the serious football takes place in the first half. Whichever side is leading at half-time, must be the winners at the final whistle.

During the interval, the teams gathered in the middle of the field and gnashed their teeth. They were not registering annoyance, but eating the sandwiches thoughtfully provided by the committee.

The whistle blew for a resumption of the proceedings, and the whole aspect of the game was changed. The Officers' goalkeeper brought out his armchair. The players donned cricketing-pads, fencing-masks, and anything else that occurred to them. Some carried hockey-sticks,

some came on with roller-skates. The Sergeants provided themselves with a wheel-barrow, and their ancient goalkeeper mounted himself on a donkey.

A prodigious number of goals were scored. The Sergeants got the ball in their wheel-barrow, and charged down the field with it. The Officers retaliated by forming a rugby-scrum. The Sergeants' goalkeeper rescued the ball from the scrum, scored with it in his own goal, and then scampered down the field on his donkey, and registered two goals at the other end. The two centre-forwards started a boxing-match, with the referee as time-keeper. They knocked each other out, and were carried off the field.

Twenty minutes went by, and the score was seventeen-all. Now the referee began to get strict. Every few minutes he stopped the game, and ordered someone off in disgrace. At last he did some wholesale ordering-off, and only the two goalkeepers remained. He called them into the centre of the field for a consultation, and suddenly produced an enormous mallet, and felled the Sergeants' goalkeeper. Then he picked up the ball, ran with it to the Sergeants' goal, and scored a penalty-kick. That was the last goal of the match. The referee always has the privilege of scoring the final goal, so the Officers won the match with a score of eighteen goals to seventeen.

No sooner had the referee scored his goal, than the goalkeeper crept up behind him, and hit him on the head with the mallet. The two goalkeepers carried him off in a stretcher, and that was the end of the match.

We now crowded to the enclosure where the trophy stood under guard. Amid terrific cheering, the Colonel received the trophy from the Indian soldiers, and complimented them. He presented the trophy to the Captain of the Officers' team, who made a speech explaining the reason of the day's sport. The trophy was then handed to the Sergeants, with a request to keep it in safe custody for another year.

We gave three cheers for everybody, the band played, and the crowd slowly dispersed, talking of the excitements and the humours of the celebrated Annual Football Match.

Your Loving Son,
OBEAH JOYFULL.

THE END

Editor's Announcement

I regret to have to say that contributors to these pages, barring a few, have not co-operated with me in selecting the best story eligible for the Rs. 50 monthly prize offered. I am therefore suspending the prize from this month.

I find the two following stories printed in July of equal merit.

The Agent

(Printed in No. 27)

by 'Ram'

"De Profundis"

(Printed in No. 30) by T. P. Scott-O'Connor

The prize offered is therefore divided equally between these two contributors, each getting Rs. 25.

Editor.

The MISFORTUNES of Meena



In the Previous Twelve Instalments.

Ramathilakam, a pretty young woman of the labouring class alarmed at the depravity of her drunken husband, attempts to drown herself. Railway Police Head-Constable Rangaswamy Iyer rescues her and takes her over to Madras to restore her to her husband 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. 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 takes the baby, Meena, to his sister at Mayavaram. He cooks up a story about the parentage of the child.

Meena grows up in the Brahmin household, but, when she is ten years old, the Dikshidar family learns the truth about her parentage. Rangaswamy had perforce to take away his daughter from the Brahmin family. Rangaswamy Iyer finds that people have somehow become aware of Meena's parentage and are unwilling to entertain any proposals for her marriage. He finally agrees to give her away to Mr. Somayajulu, a Telugu Brahmin of a Native State. Meena's letters to her father written from her husband's village reveal an amazing state of affairs. Meena is the fourth wife. The three previous wives are reported to have come to grief owing to the monstrosity of the husband who has been choosing and marrying wives from all corners of the country mainly with a view to offer them to inspecting officers and thus curry their favour to cover and condone his maladministration of the village. Alarmed at the news contained in Meena's letters, Rangaswamy Iyer proceeds to the village where Meena resides.

His son-in-law waylays him and threatens to kill him if he should attempt to rescue Meena from the village. Rangaswamy has to return to Madras. With the help of the Intelligence Department he arranges to have a notorious dacoit by name Maruti sent to the Nizam's State to rescue Meena. Maruti manages to join a dramatic troupe which is scheduled to stage the Ramayana in the village. Many of his men are at work. On the stage, when Maruti as Hanuman sets fire to Lanka, his men set fire to a number of houses in the village. In the confusion, Maruti rescues Meena but without taking her away from the village he sends a cart as a decoy. The cart contains a female relative of Somayajulu bound hand and foot. The unsuspecting Somayajulu

Maruti cleverly manages to send Somayajulu on a wild goose chase, and his men pursue this cart and overtake it. Maruti takes Meena to her father who is waiting in a car at Khammapeth. Meena safely reaches Bezvada and travels to Madras.

Accident to Meena

DIRECTING Police constable 526 to take Etchi and Ella to Chingleput, Rangaswamy Iyer and Meena broke their journey at Madras and proceeded to the residence of Mr. Sivaswamy Iyer, Deputy Superintendent of Railway Police. On their way, Rangaswamy explained to Meena the part played by Mr. Sivaswamy Iyer in arranging for her rescue. "Though Maruti was the instrument, the brain behind the whole plan was Mr. Iyer's. I am very grateful to him," concluded Rangaswamy.

"And I too!" said Meena, while her hand involuntarily sought her father's and clasped it.

Mr. Iyer was in his study. An orderly in civil dress announced to him the visitor. "Ask him to come in!" said Mr. Iyer and laid aside the file of papers which he was perusing. Rangaswamy Iyer entered the room and saluted. Meena followed timidly and hesitated. "My daughter, Sir!" said Rangaswamy and Meena prostrated herself at the feet of Mr. Iyer.

"What is this!" exclaimed Mr. Iyer, rising from his chair and motioned Meena to stop. But Meena heeded him not, prostrated four times and rising, stood aside, with head bent down. There were tears in her eyes. Mr. Sivaswamy Iyer shouted for his servant and bade him call his wife. When that lady came in, he introduced Meena to her saying: "This is the girl about whose misfortunes I have been telling you, the other day. She comes straight from the Railway station. Take her inside please and attend to her comforts."

"Come *Amma*, I know everything about you," invited the lady and Meena left the room with her.

"Well, my dear fellow," said Mr. Sivaswamy Iyer, resuming his seat and looking at Rangaswamy quizzically, "you look mighty happy."

"Thanks to you, Sir, I have every reason to be happy."

"I am not sure about that. What about her future?"

"I haven't thought about it."

"I am not surprised at that. I had a report saying that Maruti brought her from the village with jewels worth about Rupees 15,000."

"That's so."

"You can't do that! If her husband lodges a complaint, we would look silly. Make an inventory of the jewels and leave them with me. I shall somehow arrange for their return."

"Very good, Sir."

"I wonder if you have saved anything?"

"I have: about 4000 rupees, Sir."

"Good—and then, there is your pension?"

"Yes, Sir."

"That merely settles the problem of living. What about her emotions?"

"Sir?"

"You have made a fine mess of her life! What has that poor child done to be punished like this? Don't you realise that so long as there is that husband alive, she can't marry anyone? After his death, perhaps, we can have a legal marriage—if a man could be found to marry a widow who is the illegitimate issue of a Brahmin. And she may be old then! What a mess!"

"I never thought of these things, Sir."

"You are a fool! Your sins are being visited on this poor child!"

"I can only atone for them, Sir."

"Of what earthly use is your atonement? You deserve to be horse-whipped! Where are you taking her now?"

"To Chingleput."

"What for?"

"I am sorry, Sir, but I have no definite plans for her."

"How old is she?"

"Fifteen, Sir."

"And pretty as a doll. What a mess!—Sit down!"

Rangaswamy sat gingerly on the edge of a chair, while Mr. Sivaswamy Iyer sat silent, with his back to Rangaswamy, absorbed in thought and looking out of the window into the garden beyond.

Rangaswamy was going through hell. Every word of what the officer said was true. The future of Meena was bleak, barren, and bereft of hope.

"I want to din into your stupid head!" said Mr. Sivaswamy Iyer, turning in his swivel seat and facing Rangaswamy, "the necessity of training the girl in such a manner as would enable her to earn a living and make her feel independent. There is no point in shutting her up inside a house and making her brood over her misfortunes. A school-mistress? Why not? A mid-wife? Something—anything—to keep her engaged."

"I shall do so, Sir."

"And shift to Madras. You have no facilities for giving her any sort of training at Chingleput."

"Very good, Sir."

"And report to me as often as possible what progress is being made. It is funny, but I am terribly interested in her and I wish I had a daughter like her."

Mrs. Iyer came into the room smiling. "I have persuaded Meena to stay with us for a couple of days if her father has no objection. What little clothes she has are simply atrocious. She must buy a lot in Madras and I am taking her out shopping in the afternoon. May I have the car?"

"Certainly. And Meena's father would be staying with us too."

"Thank you, Sir."

The future of Meena was the subject of constant thought and discussion at Chingleput. It was finally decided that the family should be shifted to the suburbs of Madras and a suitable vocation selected for Meena. Rangaswamy Iyer engaged a small house at Villivakkam, made enquiries in the city and decided to admit Meena into the Training School for Mistresses in the city. Deputy Superintendent Sivaswamy Iyer approved of the idea. Ella got a job at the Perambur Railway Work-shops and Etchi followed the family to Villivakkam where she was of much help to Meena in running the household.

They were a happy lot. The morning meal would be over by 8 a.m. Ella would leave early enough for the workshops. Rangaswamy would take Meena by train to the city and, at first, he found it difficult to spend the whole day in the city. Eventually, he secured a job as a bill-collector in a famous cloth-shop. His bill-collecting duties would be over by four in the afternoon, when he would proceed to the school and take Meena back by train to Villivakkam. Meena would cook the night-meal which was always a simple affair and after partaking of the meal, Etchi would wash-up, assisted by Ella, while Meena would read, write or do her home-work lessons. As the months advanced, Rangaswamy's bill-collecting work occasionally prevented him from acting as an escort to Meena, to and from her school. She assured him that she was capable and experienced enough to take care of herself and that the city with its whirling cars and clanging trams held no terrors for her. Little by little, Rangaswamy allowed her to go about all alone by herself. In the train, she always travelled in the ladies' compartment, while in the tram, she invariably occupied the seats set apart for ladies.

In the village of Villivakkam, there were all sorts of rumours about Meena. Since neither she, nor her father had the time or inclination to cultivate the acquaintance of their neighbours, the rumours gained in circulation what they lacked in truth. Meena was said to be a widow who had poisoned her husband, whispered some. Others said that she had been driven out by her husband owing to her immoral conduct: and so on and so forth.

To the young men who had either avocations in the city to pursue or colleges there to attend, Meena was the cause of much intriguing attraction. The bolder ones among them made frantic efforts to attract her attention, but Meena ignored them and went about as if she was not conscious of their very existence.

Six months after Meena came to stay at Villivakkam on one Saturday morning, her father told her that he wasn't going to the city that day to attend to his bill-collecting duties as he was feeling unwell. He assured Meena that there was nothing seriously wrong with him, that the day before, he had stepped on a piece of glass and that there was some discomfort in his foot.

After seeing Meena off to the Station and after taking the morning meal, Rangaswamy was thinking of having a mid-day nap, when a car drew up in front of his house. Deputy Superintendent Sivaswamy Iyer was inside the car. Rangaswamy hurried to the road, saluted and invited the visitor to come in.

"Where is Meena?" asked Mr. Iyer.

"Gone to the school, Sir."

"Well, I have some news for her, but I don't know how she will take it. Her husband is dead."

Rangaswamy was silent.

"Personally I am not sorry for the incident," said Mr. Sivaswamy Iyer. "It gives her the legal right to re-marry."

"How did he die?" asked Rangaswamy.

"It's terrible. Don't tell Meena. One of his men killed him. Maruti, the dare-devil is still in the State. The Bezvada police don't like him. I am afraid they may not be able to put up with his vagaries. There is a lot of acrimonious correspondence going on between the State and our Government, regarding Maruti and more especially his exploits connected with the rescue of Meena. We got the news about Somayajulu through Maruti. Now, have you any idea of preferring a claim against his estate on behalf of Meena?"

"Phew, we don't want a pie of his money."

"I agree. I'll send round the car to-morrow. My wife wants to see Meena. Bring her, will you?"

"With pleasure, Sir."

When earlier in the morning Meena started to the city as usual, she found the train over-crowded and understood from the conversation 'going on in the ladies' compartment that the over-crowding was due to the influx of pilgrims into the city from Trivellore where the new-moon festival was on. When the engine steamed into the Central Station, Meena found that contrary to routine, the train was being received into a departure platform, as the arrival platform was already occupied by a special. She alighted from the train and was surprised at the enormous crowd of pilgrims which the train had disgorged. Carefully picking her way and keeping herself to the edge of the platform, she made for the exit. The Engine had halted about twenty yards in front of the buffer stop. As Meena passed the Engine, there were cries and shouts behind her, and in the commotion, the crowd swayed madly to and fro. "Thief! Thief! Catch him!" shouted many voices; there was a rush and Meena found herself pushed to the very edge of the platform. She lost her balance and fell headmost on the rails, in front of the Engine. Two others who were in the same position as Meena, managed to clear the three feet drop between the platform and the rails and escaped unhurt. As Meena lay on the rails inert, several



".....Come on! Get up! I'll take
you home....."

people jumped down to investigate and render aid. In her fall, her head had crashed heavily on the rails and there was a gash in her temple which was bleeding. The shock had left her unconscious.

A young man, with a bag in his hand, emerged from the crowd and nimbly leaping on to the rails, lifted Meena and propped her up. He asked one of the men to open his bag; another was asked to fetch some water. The Engine crew furnished some hot-water and Meena's wound was washed and dressed. She opened her eyes and saw another pair smiling into hers.

"Feeling better?" a pleasant voice asked her.

She blinked. She was in the arms of a young man—a total stranger to her. With a jerk, she withdrew from his arms and sat bolt upright. Then, she remembered the accident.

"I am a doctor," the young man was saying. "I saw you fall but I never thought you would cut yourself so badly as all this," he pointed to the bandage round her head. "Where are your people or were you travelling alone?"

"I was going to school."

"That is now, of course, unthinkable. Where do you live?"

"Villivakkam."

"Come on then, I'll drop you at your place. My car must be somewhere outside."

"I would rather go home by train."

"Don't be silly. You have had a nasty shock and I can't think of letting you return home all alone by yourself. Have you any relatives in the city?"

"None."

"That settles it. Come on, get up, I'll take you home inside fifteen minutes."

Assisting Meena to get up, the young doctor helped her to climb and reach the platform. The crowd had thinned considerably and a few interested on-lookers saw the young doctor lead Meena to a two-seater. The doctor dismissed his chauffeur, helped Meena into the car and climbing in, switched the ignition.

"Feeling alright?" he enquired turning to Meena with a smile.

"Quite: thanks!" And Meena closed her eyes, resting her head on the cushion, as the car sped forward.

On their way to Villivakkam, Meena noticed that the young man was silent and grave. He was dressed like a European and sported a velour hat. She couldn't guess from his appearance, his caste. His Tamil had the accent of the west-coast Brahmin domiciled in the city. He was fair-complexioned, well-featured and a humorous smile always lingered around his lips and ever and anon rippled into subdued laughter.

On their way, once only, he asked her a question, and that too as an attempt at polite conversation.

"In what class are you reading?" he asked her, as the car ran into the Villivakkam-station compound.

"No class. I am in training as a school-mistress." The elevation of his left eye-brow indicated his surprise at the information. "Direct me, please, to your house," said he.

When the car drew up in front of her house, he climbed down and opened the door for Meena. Meena didn't notice that the velour hat had been removed from his head and held in his left hand. "Let me help you—," said the doctor and before he could do so, Rangaswamy was at his elbow, greatly excited. Seeing the bandage on Meena's head, he exclaimed, "What is the matter, Meena?"

"Oh, nothing. She had an accident, that's all," assured the doctor. "Take her in, please."

Meena was led in by Rangaswamy. The doctor followed. Etchi fussed over Meena, weeping all the while. She was asked to get a bed ready. From Meena Rangaswamy learnt all about the accident and the timely help of the young doctor. The doctor was supervising the arrangements for getting a bed ready. Rangaswamy decided that it wasn't the time to tell her about Somaya-julu's death.

"It is a kindly God, doctor, that brought you to help my child!" said Rangaswamy with gratitude. "May I know your name?"

"Here is my card. Now, don't allow her to get out of this bed all to-day. Put her on liquid diet. And to-morrow, get that wound dressed. I must be going now."

"Thank you, doctor!" said Rangaswamy.

"Thank you, doctor!" said Meena too.

Barely had the car turned the corner, when Etchi came running out of the house with the doctor's hat in her hand. "He forgot to take his hat with him!" said Etchi to Rangaswamy.

"We have his address," said Rangaswamy, "and I'll return it to him to-morrow." Rangaswamy picked up the doctor's visiting card. On it was printed:

Dr. B. Raghava Rau, M.B.C.M.
Tiruvateswaranpet, }
Madras. Phone: 9032.

During the day, on more than half-a-dozen occasions, Rangaswamy was about to break the news of Somaya-julu's death to Meena, but every time he checked the impulse and kept quiet. In the evening, Meena complained of excruciating pains and Rangaswamy noted that she had slight temperature. He soothed her and told her that Mr. Sivaswamy Iyer's car would arrive early in the morning and that he would then take her to Madras and put her under proper treatment. "Bear up till the morning, my dear!" he pleaded.

But the night was one of vigil. Meena tossed in her bed, moaned with pain and at about midnight, became delirious with high fever. Rangaswamy, Etchi and Ella hovered over her and did their best to soothe and calm her. At four in the morning, exhausted, Meena lapsed into slumber. The others sat near her and kept awake till day-break.

At seven in the morning, a car drew up in front of the house. Rangaswamy hurried to the road. It was the young doctor's car.

"Did I by any chance leave my hat here yesterday?" asked the doctor, smiling.

"Yes, doctor. It is here. I was thinking of taking it over to you this morning. Won't you come in?"

"How is she?—Your daughter?"

"Yes, doctor. She hasn't slept all night and she has fever."

"Fever?" exclaimed Dr. Raghava Rau and quickened his steps. Reaching Meena's bedside, he felt her pulse.

"My bag, please. It's in the car."

He took her temperature and frowned.

When the bag was brought, he opened it and took out wads of cotton, and several other dressing materials and a hypodermic syringe.

"Bring a basin, please! Get ready some hot-water! Open that window!" The orders came crisp and short and Rangaswamy guessed that something serious was afoot.

Meena's wound was dressed. The doctor gave her an injection and wrote out a prescription. He took Rangaswamy aside and said:—

"I am afraid the wound is turning septic. We have got to take very good care of her. Do you know what a septic condition means?"

"I don't know, doctor."

"Well, it is a serious matter. I don't want to alarm you but anything might happen in her present condition. It is my duty to warn you. If I had not turned up this morning, what would you have done?"

"I was expecting a car. I was thinking of removing her to Madras."

"To her husband's place?"

"No, no. One Mr. Sivaswamy Iyer, Deputy Superintendent of Railway Police, is very much interested in her. We owe him even her very life. Mr. Iyer's car is expected here now."

"In her present condition, I wouldn't allow her to be disturbed. Moreover, I feel I have a responsibility in the matter. I tackled that wound at first. I don't want it to be said that I was responsible for the sepsis and that I shirked my duty of setting it right. You needn't pay me anything. Allow me to pull her through this."

"I can never hope to repay your kindness and timely help, doctor. But your services shall not go unremunerated. I don't know any doctor in Madras and I was looking forward to taking Mr. Sivaswamy Iyer's advice in the matter."

As Rangaswamy was saying this, another car drew up in front of the house. "There is his car!" said Rangaswamy.

"I think it would be better," said Dr. Raghava Rau, "if Mr. Sivaswamy Iyer learns the precise nature of her present condition. I'll go and see him and if he permits me, I hope you would have no objection to my attending to this case."

"Certainly not, doctor."

"Don't alarm her!"

"I won't, doctor: in fact, I have been keeping from her news that may upset her."

"That's right. I'll see Mr. Sivaswamy Iyer and come back in the afternoon. Is there a 'phone anywhere here?"

"No, doctor."

"What a hole! You have my address?"

"Yes, doctor."

"Ask that driver to take back the car to his master's bungalow. I'll follow it in mine."

"What did the doctor say?" asked Meena in a feeble voice.

"Oh! Nothing, dear," assured Rangaswamy. "You are alright."

"It pains terribly, father and the injection has cramped every nerve in my body. What about food for yourself?"

"Don't worry. I'll get it from the hotel."

At 11 a.m. Mr. Sivaswamy Iyer arrived in his car bringing with him Dr. Raghava Rau and another doctor. The first thing he did was to take Rangaswamy aside and ask him, "Did you tell her the news?"

"No, Sir. I did not."

"Good. Don't tell her until the doctors permit you. Let us see her."

"Well, Meena," said Mr. Sivaswamy Iyer in a bantering mood, "see what happens to young ladies who insist on doing things by themselves. This, my dear, is Dr. Pillai, our family doctor. My wife is greatly agitated over your accident and would have come here but for—" he whispered something in Meena's ear.

Meena smiled, a wan smile. Dr. Pillai made a thorough examination of her.

A consultation was held in the front pial.

"She is young and full of vitality and she will pull through," said Dr. Pillai. "Luckily, Dr. Raghava has been here and has taken all the precautions to arrest the spread of the infection. He may carry on."

"Thank you, doctor," said Dr. Raghava.

"Could we shift her to Madras?" asked Mr. Sivaswamy Iyer. "We can command greater conveniences in the city."

"Not just now. If the temperature goes down we will think about it," said Dr. Pillai.

Mr. Sivaswamy Iyer took Dr. Raghava aside and said, "Of course they are poor, but I shall make good all your expenses. Let her have the best of everything."

"That's alright, Sir."

Contrary to expectations, Meena's condition grew worse and Dr. Raghava was constantly at her bedside putting up a strong fight against the spread of the infection. The accident happened to Meena on a

Saturday. Saturday week was a crisis in her life. Dr. Raghava who came to see her at 4 p. m. had to remain till late in the night. He suggested to Rangaswamy the desirability of sending word to her husband, her husband's people, and to Mr. Sivaswamy Iyer.

"She has no husband," whispered Rangaswamy.

"What do you mean?"

"He is no more."

"But I don't understand. She wears the *Mangalyam* round her neck."

"I received the news of his death an hour before you brought her here last Saturday. I have not told her yet."

"You were wise. She can't bear the shock. What about his people? I suppose they wouldn't care now."

"Even otherwise it wouldn't have mattered very much. Oh, doctor, tell me please, is there any danger to her life?"

"I am not going to pretend that there isn't any danger. There are also very good chances of her pulling through."

"Hers has been a life of calamities. I am to be blamed for them."

"Poor girl. Did she lose her mother when she was young?"

"Practically an hour after she was born."

"It is sad. Well, we will live on hope."

Just as the day was dawning, Meena who was lying unconscious all night, stirred in her bed and opened her eyes. Etchi smiled at her encouragingly.

Rangaswamy bent over her and asked, "How are you feeling, my precious?"

She mutely asked for his hand and clasping it, she asked for water.

"Father! I had a dream!" she whispered.

"Hush, child! You are not to talk or to get excited. Those are the doctor's orders."

"Where is he?"

"He was here till late last night. He will be coming again at seven."

"We are giving him a lot of trouble, father. Would he charge too much?"

"It doesn't matter, dear. You shouldn't worry over these things. You know we have the money."

"Do you know what I dreamt?"

"Hush! I'll listen to it when you are better?"

"Am I very ill?"

"Yes: Yes. Not very; somewhat."

"I mustn't die. My dream must come true!"

"We will pray for it, my dear."

"Etchi, come here! close to me. Give me your ear."

When Etchi bent over her, Meena whispered, "I dreamt I had a baby. It was a boy with golden curls."

Etchi burst into a sob and withdrew. Rangaswamy who overheard the whisper turned his face to the wall and wept.

"Ella, why is everybody crying?" asked Meena and exhausted, she sank back again into unconsciousness.

[Concluding Instalment Next Week.]

The Ass...

Beside the wall a donkey took his ease,
And nonechalantly sucked a blade of grass.
He heeded not the bird's song in the trees,
But watched, with foolish, doleful eyes, me pass:
And I said softly to myself, "You poor ass!"

Into the brave new world I proudly ventured,
But all the prize I won was touched with gall.
My life proscribed, my very soul close-censored
So I returned. The donkey stood beside the wall.
And chewing, said, "Good fellow...aren't we brothers all?"

—By Alee

T.P's Holiday Press

by I. M. Holidaywallah, B.A.

Reading time • About 5 minutes

Illustrated by Rogers

ATOP and around the base of the Simla-Mussoorie hills, and an unavoidable listener to the sort of breezy passage which invariably reaches the heights of stormy volubility between an other-wise cuddling pair of females, I was perforce moved to muse philosophically on the 'soft answer that turneth away wrath'. Dwelling in the Sunny South for the moment, I've had to lend two unwilling ears to one such 'breezy passage' betwixt Tamil tongues both owned by the weaker sex. The RRR's are being rolled like the terror-inspiring roll of battle drums; the NNN's and the YYY's have acquired the shrill notes of a one-time army bugle; in a wordy 'Close-up', the not-five-minutes-ago affectionate couple have already worked their two respective selves up to cyclonic force. (I know now why cyclones visit the East Coast to sink ships and uproot churches.) But—and I say BUT most emphatically—every single sentence of this Tamilian duet ends in

AAA's that are charmingly rendered in sweet cadences and with a soothing musical lilt. QUERY:—How about the soft answer that turneth away wrath? ANSWER:—Say, which came first, the egg or the bird? Should you want to say the former, certainly no Mother Eve laid the original egg. R.I.P.

In the midst of Life we are in Death. In a gaily draped and beflagged pandal, made merry a wedding party to the deafening accompaniment of drums and cymbals. Next door, bewailing relatives sat around a bier which, open and encroaching on the road, bore one of their dear departed. Verily, a sad contrast. As I write, I am told of another incident providing yet another illustration in Life-cum-Death. The while members of a Dravidian family rejoiced in the stunning news that they had come in for Rs. 15,000, Rs. 450 and Rs. 450 respectively in an Indian Magazine Competition, telegraph wires flashed the news that a near and very dear relative was at the point of Death! A second wire placed the gloriously happy family in sorrowing bereavement.

I am here to 'do' Madras, not to 'do in' its residents, but I have been 'done in' by some who count among its trading (alias fleecing) fraternity. This laddie suffers from that fashionable complaint which goes by the high-brow name of—no, not Appendicitis, that's now out of fashion; neither is it High Blood Pressure, nor Dr. Consulting-Physician's group of non-diagnosible non-pronounceables, the lot requiring a complete course of Calcium injections; No! Sir: (or Madam) Mine is exclusively a complaint pinched from the Top of Top Society, a sort of Sindhi Silker's 'LATEST' in Indian silk creations, summed up in the one word PYORRHOEA; (pronounced Pay—Or—Hear—A) 'De Profundis' around your expired-self. The Weather Reports from Professor Lifebeyond not being quite so reliable as the Daily Forecasts from the Poona Observatory, I accepted medical advice to take a certain medical decoction which is a soluble, non-toxic iodine-compound. I may not appear so, but I am really much too tender-skinned to enjoy the glowing comfort of warmth, in known as well as unknown regions. Now about that widely-advertised cure after smelling the first dose; to be followed by internal doses for six months or six years, according to one's balance in the Bank. This million-unsolicited-testimonials Yankee Specific had cost me Rs. 2 on the borders of the Himalayas. An obliging Met-in-the-Tram friend directed me to a local firm of Wholly-respectable and wholesale Chemists where I paid, for same Rs. 1-14. A few days later I discovered, in my sight-seeing rambles, an equally respectable and wholesale '& Co.' Here I

(Continued on page 21)



Doing Madras

Reading time • About
12 minutes



Knight Errant

by 'Narak A. Nurak'

Illustrated by Rogers

SOME women, it is said, have only to look at a man once to make him turn a monkey and climb trees to pluck nuts for them. If Hansa had not been a girl of that type and Mohan, the ape that did her bidding, this story would not have clicked itself for your delectation. These two young things, both students, she in the Jubilee College and he in the Medical, were entangled in the callow crudities of love's young dream. She was a soft and cuddly peach, a thing of alluring lines with high tension sex-appeal. He was a young fop, a determined popinjay, who would, if he wanted, sell lingerie to Kangaroos and one piece swimming

costumes to crocodiles. They met almost every day and in addition exchanged soul-stirring love-notes through post.

They were at the beach as usual. But Mohan felt that Hansa was distraught and dull. Her usual effervescent joviality was not in evidence.

"Hansa, my girl," he asked, "what ails you? You are as entertaining as a mud turtle today."

Hansa sniffed and looked meltingly at him. She pouted her pretty lips.

"I am in great trouble, Mohan dear," she replied. "But I am afraid no one can help me."

Mohan stood upright and broadened his chest.

"You need not fret as long as I am here. I am prepared to give up my life for you," he assured her.

"All tall talk. You'll funk it when it comes to a real cave-man act," she teased.

"Make out the menu and you'll know if Mohan is a joy."

"But it is risky."

"Risky! There is no risk I wouldn't face for you. Now spill your troubles."

"Well, if you are so sure of yourself, I want you to get me—" she began.

"Oh! is that all?" interrupted Mohan. "I shall get you anything, the egg out of Egmore Station, the cent out of the Central and the sen out of the Senate House. I shall make you a spade out of the minute arm of the Corpora-

very strict. I am sure there will be a terrible furore. I shall be disgraced," wailed Hansa.

"Where is the book now?" asked Mohan.

"In her quarters, on the table in the study. You must somehow steal in and get the letter."

Mohan blinked. His *sang-froid* and knight errant attitude oozed out. He knew the lady concerned. She had more than once almost scorched him with fire-darting looks when he had loitered about the college to get a glimpse of his girl.

"But, how am I to get in?" spluttered Mohan.

"I knew you'll back out. If you are a real he-man you'll manage somehow. That is the bungalow. If you don't hand over the letter to me by 9 A. M. tomorrow, I shall never again meet you," said Hansa and left with a final wave of her hand.

Mohan was soft putty in Hansa's hands. He resolved to make the plunge and retrieve the letter. He realised that the venture bristled with dangers, but he left the matter of his safety to a kindly providence to fend off unpleasant complications.

He left his hostel at about 9 that night on the pretext of going home and proceeded to a lonely spot on the beach. There he disguised himself as a tramp and hid his palm-beach suit and other togs in a boat drawn up on the sands. With the aid of spirit gum and false hair he adorned his face with a bristling moustache. Thus made up and armed with an electric torch, he prowled near the quarters of the lady professor.

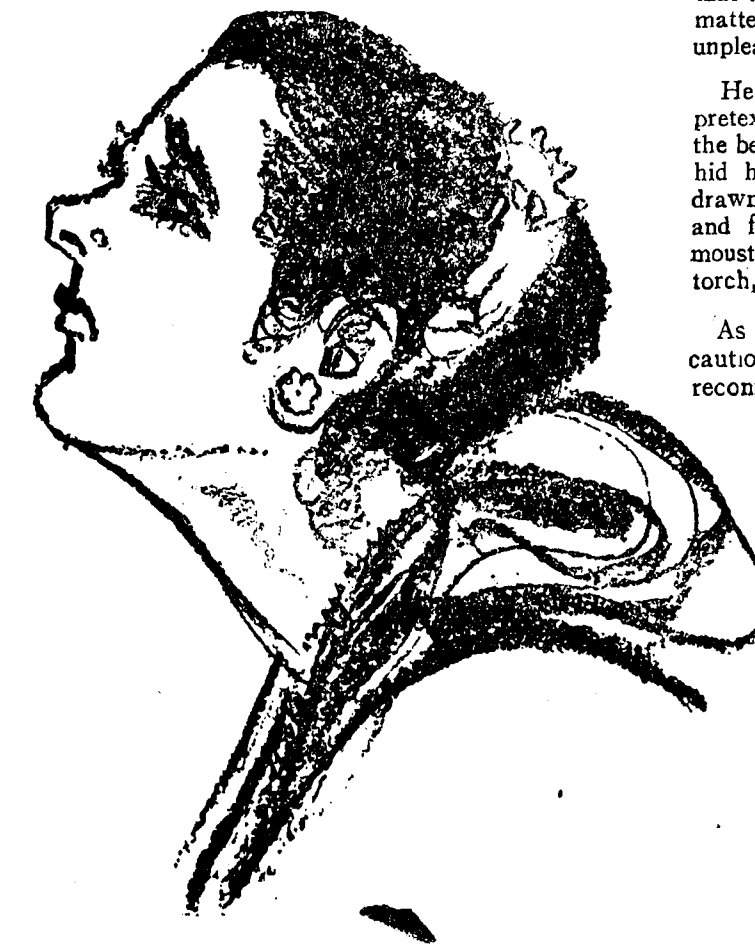
As a distant clock struck ten he opened the gate cautiously and approached the portico. He reconnoitred and spotted the study. The room could be entered only from the hall. But as the intruder was wondering if he could make a dash for it and get into the room, he heard footsteps. Being a novice in the hazardous art of house-breaking, Mohan was flustered. His heart beat a tattoo against his ribs. He hid himself behind a croton bush near the verandah and hoped that he would not be found out. As he sat huddled up, a gentleman and a lady and the professor came from inside and stood near the portico. The professor was seeing her friends off. As they stood talking, the gentleman threw the burning stump of his cigarette into the croton bush Mohan was hiding under. The glowing stump trickling down through the leaves landed on the collar of the refugee's shirt. It slowly burnt its way in and notified its red-hot presence to its temporary resting place by a stinging burn on the nape of the neck. Mohan gulped a shout,

not knowing what had stung him. He put his hand with a slow motion action to the blistered region and burnt his fingers too. He grovelled with searing pain but dared not move in his hiding place. He cursed himself for being a braggart and disloyally cursed Hansa too. He wished that she had been still-born and added her quota to infant mortality. Just then, a car swept into the portico. The visitors left and the professor retired into the house. But Mohan had to continue his uncomfortable tenancy of the bush as a chokra boy

tion Clock and a hen-coop out of the aerials of the wireless station."

Hansa patted Mohan on the back.

"Your safety as well as mine is involved. Your last letter to me was put into my hands as I was writing the English Composition and after reading it I thoughtlessly left it open in my exercise book. The book is now with the professor and she is sure to see it when she corrects the homework tomorrow. You know she is



remained in the verandah. He had to wait till the coast was clear.

The interfering menial sat on the door-step humming a song without the tune coming anywhere near its usual lilt. Mohan gnashed his teeth. He was getting cramps and his back was aching with the tension of the uncomfortable pose. He wanted to throw caution to the winds and raid the room openly by sending the boy to his belated sleep with a furious punch between his eyes. But soon the lights in the rooms were switched off and the boy, after putting out the verandah light, went in, still in the throes of tuneless musical ventures.

Now or never, thought Mohan, and darted with benumbed legs to the hall and thence to the study. He closed the door from inside and groped his way towards the table. He switched his torch on it and saw the heap of exercise books. With every nerve tense and panting with fright he picked out Hansa's book. But the letter, the darned letter, the cause of his hazardous venture, was nowhere within its bosom. It was certainly not nestling in the exercise book. He cursed Hansa again for the wild goose chase he was put on to. He made up his mind not to have anything to do with mischief-making, thoughtless, crazy flowers with the face of women, again. He tip-toed to the door to escape into freedom and open air. But as he touched the door-knob, he heard footsteps in the hall. His heart skipped a beat or two and stopped altogether for a second. He crouched behind the book-case and prayed, as he had never prayed before, that the night-walker may not enter the room. He listened intently with high-strung nerves. He heard the front door being bolted from inside and then the study door was also locked from the hall.

Cold shivers ran up his spine as it was borne in upon him that he was locked in. He groaned. Wild despair had him by the throat. He rushed to the bay window and tried to twist the iron bars out. But he might as well have tried to push the walls down. The bars seemed to mock at him with stolid complacency. Helpless, the prisoner flopped on a chair and meditated on the utter foolishness of his venture. He repented for not obeying the warning voice of wisdom.

A hopeful thought suddenly tinkled in his brain-pan. The other door of the study might not be secured and he might worm his way out. He pushed the door gently. It opened and Mohan hardly daring to breathe, peeped in. It was a bed room. A person was sleeping on a cot. A tiny night-light was burning in the room and a door leading to some other room was ajar. Mohan made a bee-line for that door and in doing so overturned an ottoman by the bed. It crashed with a resounding rattle mingled with the sound of broken glass-ware. The light in the room was suddenly switched on. A night-gowned figure emerged from under the bed-clothes and seeing the intruder, screamed like a siren. But Mohan scuttled out. In the confused flight, he was caught by a servant. Desperate Mohan with mad fury shook himself free and somehow reached the gate which he crossed and continued his flight in the dim light with such elusiveness that a wraith would have envied his speed and lightness. He had gone over a mile through roads which he did not care to note when he felt that he must either stop or burst. Panting painfully and reeling with

the nausea of concentrated effort, he stopped under a shady tree. He wiped the stream of perspiration on his face and sat on the ground looking back to see if he was being followed.

Disgusted with himself and in utter confusion, he pulled off his false moustache and tied his turban at a more rakish angle. He took a cigarette from his shirt pocket and smoked disconsolately. Welcome tobacco fumes cleared his whirling brain. He started for the beach and eventually reached there after losing his way more than once. He approached the boat for his temporarily discarded apparel.

But on looking into it, his face blanched. His togs were not there. They had vanished. He looked round. He looked into all the boats. They were nowhere to be found. He was in a frenzy. He lay himself down on the sands and took stock of his desperate position.

He could not go to the hostel in his disguise and what was more, as he had come out under the pretext of going home, he could not go back till next evening without arousing suspicion. He had to face the world next day literally in a thin shirt, but even that was not possible as he might be spotted in his dilapidated apparel by his many friends and acquaintances. He felt in his pocket and was thankful that he had the foresight to keep all the cash with him. He may have to beg, borrow or steal a suit of clothes. He remembered his tailor at Bandol Street and resolved to borrow a suit from him before the break of day.

After a fitful sleep on the sands he proceeded to the tailor's house before day-break. The tailor, hearing his curious request, was at first suspicious. But when his palm was greased persuasively, he gave an old suit which was given to him by one of his customers as a pattern for a new one. Mohan was enjoined to send it back the next day. A cheap pair of shoes was bought with the help of the tailor, and thus rigged out, Mohan faced the world with confidence. He resolved to spend the day somewhere and go to the hostel in the evening. Relieved in mind, he began to feel the pangs of hunger. He felt that his stomach was almost touching his back. He gorged himself at a restaurant and went to the park to kill time till the evening. As he sat on one of the benches, smoking innumerable cigarettes, a young man approached him with a queer, inquiring look. Mohan eyed him with hostility. The young man sat by him on the bench and cleared his throat.

"This suit yours?" he asked with a wry smile.

"Sure!" answered Mohan intrigued.

"But I am not sure," said the young man. "It's mine."

"Shut up!" snapped Mohan. "It is mine."

"Did you steal it or borrow it?" inquired the young man with persistent cheek.

"You clear off," fumed Mohan, looking round to see if he could beat a hasty retreat.

"This suit," insisted the man, "is certainly mine. The ink mark on the coat declares it. I gave it as a pattern to my tailor only yesterday. You have stolen it."

The series of mishaps he had gone through made Mohan cautious. It would not help him to carry on this conversation of cross purposes. He resolved to spout out the truth.

"I borrowed it for a day from my tailor," informed Mohan.

"Borrowed! Gosh! Why do you go about in borrowed dress? No, you have stolen it. We shall go to your tailor. If you do not come, I shall hand you over to the nearest policeman. Do you know, my initials are on the inside of the coat."

Mohan knew when the dice was loaded against him.

"Righto! Come on," said Mohan.

The tailor, seeing the owner and the borrower of the suit getting into his shop together and noting the grim look on the face of the former, played up to save his skin.

"So you have caught the thief, sir," he greeted the young man.

"It was stolen from you?" asked the man with a voice edged with spiteful triumph.

Mohan almost sagged to the ground. His mouth was dry. His tongue was a bit of wood. He reeled with disgust.

"Yes, sir. Last night. I found it out only now. Window-theft," said the tailor.

"You—you—you—lent it to me!" bleated Mohan.

"Lent! Oh! Who will lend? A fine story," croaked the tailor.

"Come, we shall take him to the police station," said the young man.

So they went. Mohan shrivelled mentally at the thought of the racket that would follow. His mind was burnt with shame and remorse. He longed for prussic acid, to do away with himself. He just wanted to curl up and die.

At the station the tailor went in to lodge his complaint. Mohan and his escort were then called in. The Sub-Inspector looked at Mohan and Mohan looked at the Sub-Inspector. Mohan gulped and the Sub-Inspector's eyes widened. Mohan and the police officer were classmates and friends.

"You!" said the Sub-Inspector.

Mohan smiled weakly. He shook himself into his usual *sang-froid*. He told the Sub-Inspector all the mishaps he had gone through since the previous night. The matter was squared up, the tailor getting a warning for his duplicity.

Mohan rushed to the hostel in the evening. He changed into his own togs and went to meet Hansa. She was waiting for him as usual.

"Good evening, Mohan," she greeted. "It is sometimes good to be a funk."

"Funk indeed!" rasped Mohan petulantly.

"What I mean is—the letter was not in the exercise book. I got it from my desk this morning. It is wise that you did not raid the professor's study."

"Did not raid! I funkied it! Oh! Hansa, if only you knew what I have gone through!" protested Mohan.

He narrated his escapades. He drew gruesome pictures of the unpleasant situations he was in. Hansa listened wide-eyed.

"My poor darling!" consoled the girl, and stroked his hair.

Do you think Mohan would do Hansa's bidding again? I rather think he will.

THE END

T.P.'s HOLIDAY PRESS—(Continued from page 17)

was Cash-Memoed, for a bottle of medical decoction identically similar in name and contents, the sum of Rs. 1-7-0 only! And the bunch of lotions, patent medicines and mixtures, all repeat doses, was also paid for on this 'Prices at Ports' scale. As for the Wholesalers where I had been diddled out of much of the precious proceeds of 'sweated labour', I do cherish a pious hope that these may be treated with injections which would eject all the Calcium in their corrupt bodies.

* * * *

The last week-end, when I had alighted at Vizagapatam Town and was passing out from the Station precincts, a squelching noise and the gurgle of disturbed waters upset my care-free equilibrium. I fancied I had stepped dreamily into the gray back-waters of the New Harbour. My lily-white shoes and pantaloons had assumed the hue of I don't know what.

A-1 (Indian paints) colour-card of all imaginable and unimaginable shades, consulted for purposes of identification, drew a complete blank. Soon, very soon, to this objectionable aspect of the human form divine was added an even more objectionable odour. After an un-iced and sun-boiled Cold Drink at Seaview Shanty, I had ambled down to the late Hotel Majestic site on the Vizag beach to drink in its exhilarating Ozone and, instead, I drank in the 101 stinks of Vizag on the first and second Beach-Lines. This grand Promenade of Golden Sands, this Great Lung of Andhra's Premier City (whereon came crowding the city-folk of a ghastly area of garbage and foul air) is a popular rendezvous of sand-land flowing with the milk-and-honey of uncovered Sewers of Vizagapatam Town! Thereupon I decided that I should prefer the somewhat softer smells of the Main-Road bazaar. Walking leisurely and observing the while the flow of life that was to me, a Northern Indian, fresh and intriguing, I was hit in the eyes by an arresting sign-board dangling over a largish shop. I read, *inter alia*, "UNDER THE DIRECTION OF A RETIRED POLICE OFFICER" or words to that effect. I seemed to hear a bugle call sounding the 'Retreat'. I did a rightabout-turn and a pretty quick march. Policemen on Duty I could pass ALMOST unconcernedly: but a Policeman Retired and a *Shopkeeper*! The war-disabled writer of these holiday-travel jottings was taking no risks.

Vizagapatam Town, in common with other towns in the Smiling South, has its brighter side which makes a holiday visit a thing of joy and laughter.

Everybody Was So Kind—

by 'Embusque'

Illustrated by Bahadurje

Reading time •
About 8 minutes



EVEN the old Colonel, who had the reputation of being a martinet, was very kind.

He rose and shook hands with Joe as they brought him in. "So you are going to be with us a little while," he said. "I am sure we will do all in our power to make you comfortable. If there is anything you want, don't forget to let Squires know and I will see to it personally."

"Thank you, Colonel," said Joe, "you are being very good to me."

"I am glad to find you regarding me as a friend," replied the Colonel. "It makes things easier for all of us. Now, if you don't mind, Squires will take you along to your apartment."

Squires was very kind. He chatted with Joe almost deferentially as they walked along. The apartment was a cosy one, though very simply furnished. There was a glowing electric fire, and shaded lamps. "If

"Thanks, Joe, we greatly appreciate your civility."



Evans was very kind. He produced a box of cigarettes, and asked what brand Joe preferred. "Right, old man," he said, making a note of it. "I'll get in a supply for you. Better still, I will phone down for Jones to bring up some now."

Jones was very kind. Besides the cigarettes, he brought up a pack of cards, and when Evans returned, they started a hand of whist. Joe was very fond of whist, and played an excellent game. The others were admiring in their comments.

"Well," said Joe modestly, "I've had a lot of practice. I used to take my wife to a whist-drive every week."

Jones and Evans looked uneasy, and Squires changed the subject. "By the way, old man," he said, "what would you like for breakfast?"

"I'm very partial to a kipper," said Joe, skilfully finessing the queen of trumps.

"Would nine o'clock suit you?" asked Squires solicitously. "Of course, you can have it later if you like, but nine o'clock is most convenient for the kitchen staff."

"Don't let me upset the routine of the place," said Joe. "I wouldn't like to think I was being a nuisance."

"That's a sentiment that does you credit," put in Evans. "I'm sure we all appreciate your attitude."

"Oh, don't mention it," said Joe.

Towards midnight, Joe began to yawn. "Shall we make this the last rubber?" suggested Squires, with observant tact.

"Well, thanks, I think I could do with a good sleep now," replied Joe.

"That's right," said Squires approvingly. "You want to sleep all you can. Getting nervy and wakeful soon pulls a man down. I'm sure you'll find the bed very comfortable. The last guest was very pleased with it."

Jones and Evans coughed warningly, and Squires rose to his feet. "Good-night, Joe," he said, "I hope you sleep well."

"Don't you worry," said Joe, yawning again, "I'll sleep like a top."

After breakfast the next morning, the Colonel looked in for a chat. "This is the Reverend Harris," he said, introducing a gentleman in clerical attire. "I thought he might come along and keep you company."

The Reverend Harris was most kind. "Shall I read to you?" he suggested.

you have any pictures you would like to put on the walls—" suggested Squires.

"No, thank you. The only picture I ever had was one of my wife."

Squires coughed in embarrassment. "Perhaps some flowers? What are your favourite flowers?"

"I would like some flowers," said Joe. "I was always fond of flowers. I always used to say I would like to have some lilies on my grave."

Squires turned the colour of a beetroot. "Do you want some lilies?" he stuttered.

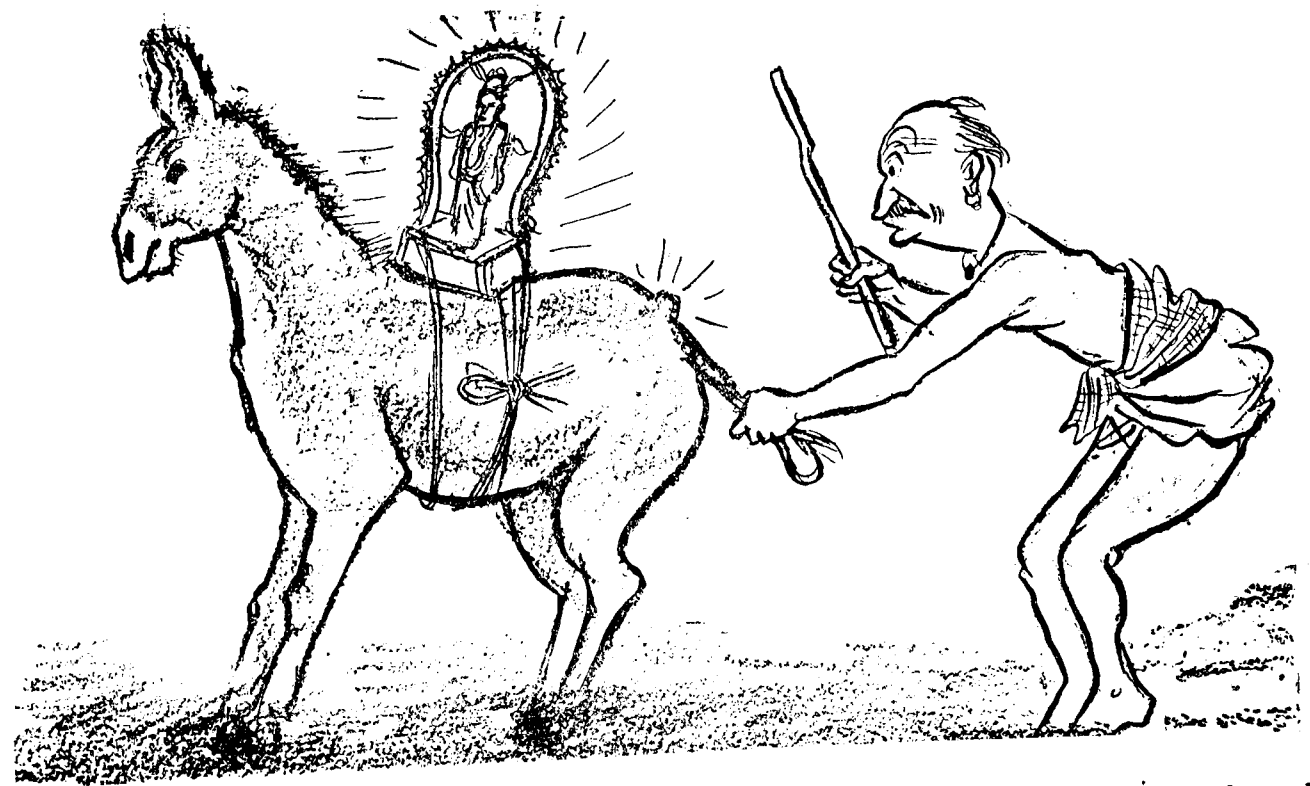
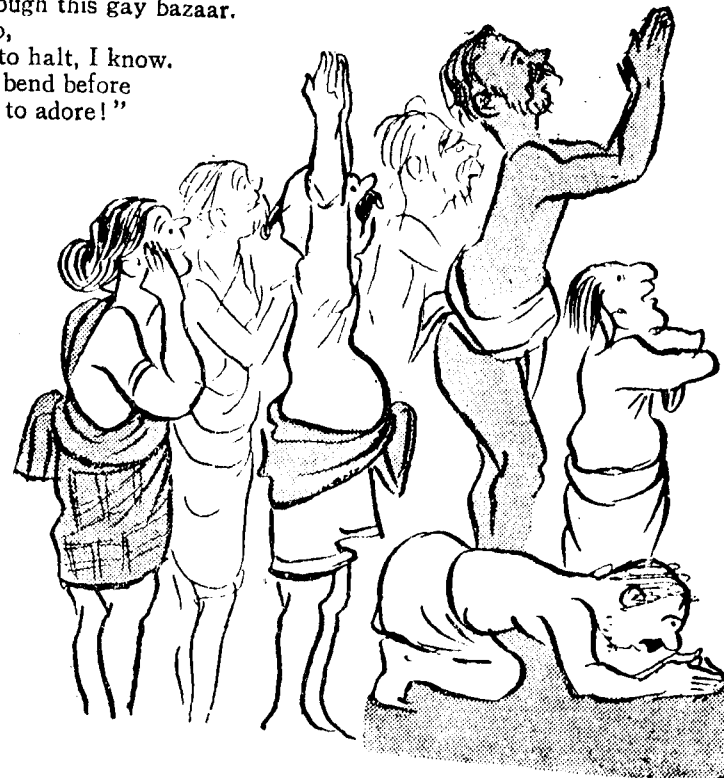
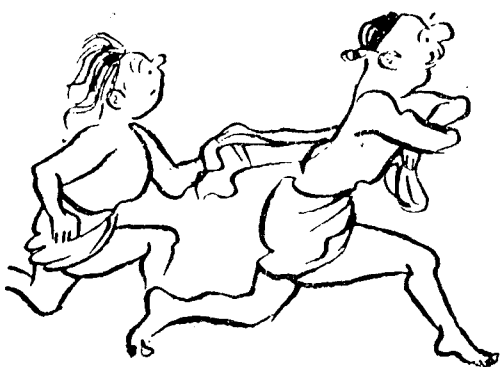
"Ah, no doubt you are right," said Joe. "Lilies would be rather morbid. Let us have in some nice cheerful flowers. They will brighten up the place."

"I want you to meet Evans," said Squires. "You will be seeing a good deal of him in the next few days. He will entertain you now, while I bring the flowers."

An Ass After All

Reading time • About 4 minutes

A donkey, bearing on its back, a holy image made of gold
Was passing by a bright bazaar where several things are bought and sold;
The owner of the donkey was a most religious sort of fellow,
He bought the image at the fair, an image that was shining yellow;
A most attractive idol, too, with body all of gold, but feet
Of quiet silver, and its eyes were rubies carved strange and sweet.
That day the owner drove his ass mile upon mile, league upon league,
Attracting crowds of worshippers,—the donkey clean forgot fatigue.
The donkey with the idol on his back was being lead, it seemed,
Towards a holy place afar of which its owner dreamed and dreamed.
But then the donkey hardly knew of that which on his back did ride,
He only saw the people crowd around his steps from every side.
The stupid beast was unaware of its divine and precious load,
He only noticed crowds of worshippers a-bending on the road.
Around him and about him, women, children, men who seemed to fall
About his feet. The donkey thought, "I am somebody after all!"
Then in his heart he wondered as to what sweet donkey's lucky face
He had that morning looked upon, which brought him so much real grace!
"See how they bend before my feet, what multitude unknown and strange!
Or is it all because my form has undergone some sort of change?
I wonder if my donkey ears have shrunk to a lesser size
Than usual, or is there some sort of human wonder in mine eyes?
Or it may be that there's some sort of new-born music in my bray
Or has my tail put on a length unknown before? But who can say?
Or has the colour of my coat,—a dirty rotten greyish-brown,
Become transformed to silver-gold while walking through this crowded town?
Whatever reason it may be, it certainly is growing clear
That I've begun to breathe around some sort of holy atmosphere.
See how a hundred hands have brought large precious golden plates of price
Bearing the sandal-paste beside red kumkuma and coloured rice!
From buildings many storeys high I see such lovely women peep
While I go passing by below. Am I awake? Am I asleep?
For sure, I am more wide-awake than I have ever been before,
In fact the way they're worshipping, I may not slumber any more.
Yea, I am more than wide awake, more wide-awake than been so far,
I'm feeling quite important now while passing through this gay bazaar.
But it is most unfair of me to be forever on the go,
While thousands are so anxiously waiting for me to halt, I know.
I'll give them all a real chance to worship me and bend before
My holy image, for its clear that they are wanting to adore!"



These were the crowded thoughts that thronged the donkey's mind, and ran and passed,
Until, through sheerest courtesy at the cross-roads he stood at last
Stock still and stony still he stood and did not move another pace.
And while he stood, the donkey seemed to feel a light upon his face.
The donkey-owner wondered why the ass had of a sudden slowed
And stopped and stood and stared and stared, a stupid image on the road.
"Surely," the owner thought, "the crowds can bend and heartfelt worship prove
To yonder image even while the stupid ass is on the move?"
"Gee-haw," he clacked his tongue and thought the magic words would make him go,
"Gee-haw!" he clacked a second time and then a third,—but no, ah no!
The donkey in his heart of hearts was quite convinced that while he trod
The worshippers could not secure the chance of worshipping their god,—
"Besides," he thought that, "being a god it would be far more godly if
He could without the slightest stir, stand like an image cold and stiff."
And in his heart of hearts also he thought his owner was a dunce
Because he could not see the truth the multitudes had seen at once,
Namely that he was as a god, and—would he never realise?
Well, then, perhaps he's not to blame, something has happened to his eyes!
The owner's sole misfortune was he couldn't read a donkey's mind.
"Gee-haw!" clacked once more and cracked his whip and shocked him from behind.
Then in an undertone he seemed to whisper to his owner, "Rude
And silly man! can you not see I'm worshipped by the multitude?"
The owner heard and understood, and in a moment was revealed
The working of the donkey's mind—his laughter like a thunder pealed:
"It is not you, O idiot thing! to whom they offer heartfelt prayer,
But the image made of gold which on your donkey back you bear!
Ah now I clearly understand why in the world men, as a rule,
Call any man a stupid ass when he turns out to be a fool!"
The day that had begun for him so goldenly had somehow met
With a pathetic crash and soon his sun of golden hope was set.
But yet he could not understand the witty words his owner spoke,
Within his heart of hearts he thought, "Perhaps he's only playing a joke,
Or, it may be that he can't bear to see me worshipped as I go,
His heart is jealous," in a while the ass decided it was so.
But he was helpless all the same, for he had met with deep disgrace,
"Yes, now I do remember clear! This morn I saw this ass's face!"

—Harindranath Chattopadhyaya

"Don't brother, old man," said Joe. "I would like to tell me how the dog-racing is getting on. Did Fancy Boy win the Waterloo Cup?"

"Er—I fear I do not follow dog-racing," said the clergyman, in some distress. "I am very sorry. I will ask Squires to get you a sporting paper. And now, do you mind if I offer up a prayer?"

"Go ahead, parson," said Joe. "Don't mind me, if it will make you feel happier. I suppose you'll feel more at home after a prayer or two. My wife was always one for praying."

The clergyman paled, but knelt, and offered up a prayer. As he rose, he looked at Joe wistfully, and said, "Er—is there nothing you would like to get off your mind? Would it comfort you to receive absolution?"

"No; thanks all the same," said Joe cheerfully. "Good morning, parson. Thank you for calling."

A day or two later, Squires came along the passage, and beckoned to Joe. "Excuse me, old man," he said, "there are some gentlemen of the press outside. Would you like to see them? Just as you wish, of course."

"Show them in, by all means," said Joe. "They have to earn their living, like the rest of us."

The gentlemen of the press were most kind. They wondered if Joe would oblige them with an account of his life. Everyone was so interested, they said.

"Well, gentleman," said Joe, "I don't know that there is much to tell. I lived a very ordinary sort of life. I used to go to the dog-races fairly often. Mind you, I admit I drank rather a lot. I had a good wife, but she could never abide the drink. That was what the quarrel was about. It all happened very suddenly."

The reporters deferentially plied Joe with questions, and gradually elicited the story of his life. "Thanks, Joe," they said, as they took their departure, "we greatly appreciate your civility."

"Not at all," said Joe. "Give my good wishes to your readers."

Joe had no more visitors for some days. He passed the time with the three cronies, and beat them at whist, draughts, and dominoes. He began to get a little restless. "The time hangs heavily on my hands," he complained.

"Are you bored with these games?" asked Squires sympathetically. "Would you like to try something else?"

"To tell you the truth," said Joe, "there's one thing I've always wanted to do. I wanted to learn to play the mandoline."

Evans sighed with relief. "I'll teach you," he volunteered. "I'm a bit of a hand at it myself. I play the mandoline in our glee Club."

The succeeding days passed swiftly and contentedly at lessons on the mandoline. Joe made good progress, and could pick out several tunes passably well.

"Hullo, Joe, how are the lessons going?" enquired Squires, as he entered one evening.

"I've got the trill in now, now. This is a head, Mr. Ketch."

Mr. Ketch was most kind. He was a little fellow, carefully dressed in the fashion of a small tradesman. He sat and talked affably with the company, and the conversation turned to weight-guessing competitions.

"How heavy are you, Joe?" asked Mr. Ketch off-handedly, at a pause in the conversation.

"Nine stone twelve," said Joe promptly.

"I'd have guessed a few pounds more," said Mr. Ketch. "You are very stocky for your height. About five foot seven, I would say."

"Five foot seven and a half," said Joe.

The pleasant little discussion continued for some while, and then Mr. Ketch took his leave, excusing himself on the ground of some business he had to arrange.

"Nice chap," remarked Squires. "By the way, Joe, early breakfast to-morrow. Seven o'clock."

"Right," said Joe. "I'll be ready. Bacon and eggs, isn't it?"

"Yes," said Squires. "Good night, Joe. Evans is sitting up with you."

"Good night, old man," said Joe.

After the early breakfast, Joe prepared for visitors. "I shan't need a collar and tie, shall I?" he asked.

"No need, Joe," replied Squires, gruffly.

The clergyman came in. Joe greeted him. Good morning, Mr. Hattris," he cried. "Cheer up. You look a bit upset."

"Sit down, my friend," said the clergyman. They sat together on the bed, and conversed in low tones for a long time.

The door opened to admit Mr. Ketch. Joe rose to his feet. "Good-bye, you fellows," he said, shaking hands with the cronies. "Thank you for the nice time you've given me."

"Don't mention it," muttered Jones.

"Turn round, old chap," said Mr. Ketch. "Put your hands behind you. That's right. Thank you. Now we are ready."

They stepped across the passage and through the door opposite. The Colonel and some more gentlemen were waiting there. The bell began to toll the hour of eight.

"Is there anything you would like to say?" asked the Colonel in a low voice.

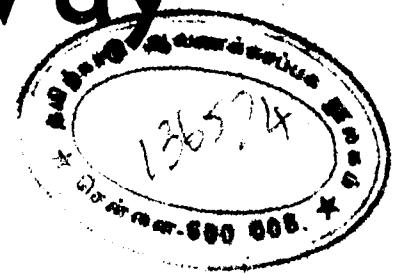
"Nothing, thank you," said Joe. "Everybody has been so kind."

Mr. Ketch took a pace backward, and released the trap.

A Taking Way

by S. I. Rasool

Reading time • About 3 minutes



NOT long ago, finding myself in a nothing-to-do mood, I joined the crowd which was thronging the doors of a cinema in eagerness to see a film which was described as an 'expose' of modern society. It turned out to be the story of a girl, full of life and innocence, who was caught in the whirlpool of what is commonly called the 'gay life', and found a great deal of trouble. You know the kind of thing.

It certainly was an expose of something—if only one of the dorsal parts of the lively ladies whose agility at the dance and whose thirst at the buffet provided much of the background of the story! Modern society surely is not like that!

The hall was crowded. I was deep in my thoughts. And then, quite suddenly, and at a very exciting part of the story, the amusing thought occurred to me that perhaps the fellow who sub-titled that film 'an expose of modern society' was an ironical genius who understood very well that the exposure would not be in the film but in the crowds who would come to see it! The rascal! Why were we there, young ladies, shop assistants, business men, myself and all? Why had we been willing to stand in a queue to see this film? Something interested us, drew us; in other words, there was something in us to which that sort of thing appealed more or less.

I tried to imagine what the dear little lady on my left was thinking about it. She had the eyes of Shearer, the naive innocence of Gaynor, and the sweet cuddlesomeness of Dorothy Lee. She had very taking ways. And the picture held her in breathless spell.

As the principal picture began, which, by the way, was *Mata Hari*, and Greta Garbo performed her exquisite Eastern dance before Shiva, the girl's eyes shone with a strange brilliance. The rhythmic beat of the Oriental

music seemed to stir her blood, for her little hand moved restlessly, and at last snuggled down within mine.

I stole a glance at her; she appeared quite oblivious of my presence or the fact that my hand was close around her own. The genius of Garbo had hypnotised her.

As the plot unfolded, the girl grew enraptured. At the clip-clop-clip-clop of the club-footed man advancing to kill Karen Morley, her breath came hard and sharp, and she leaned towards me as if it were she herself threatened with the horrible death.

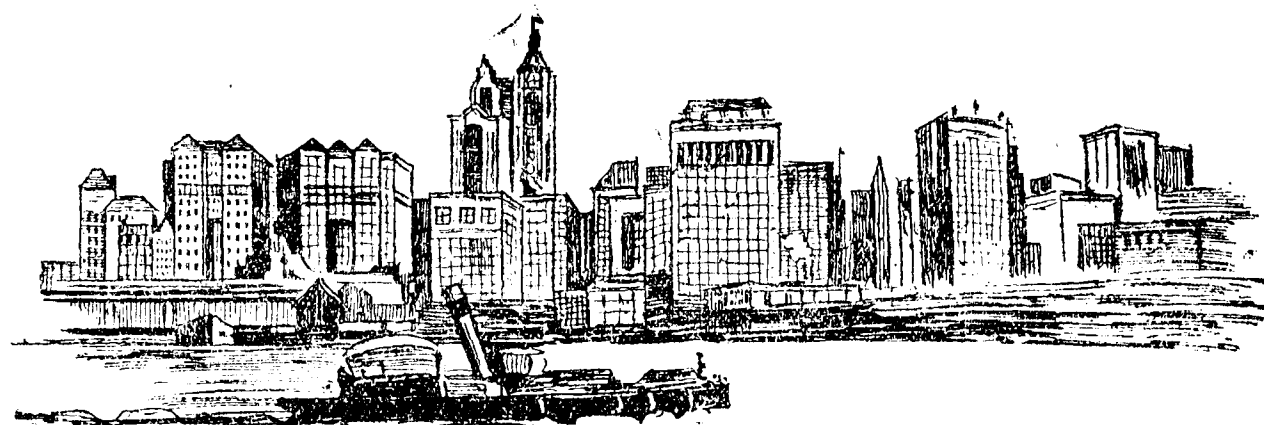
Somehow, after the terrific scene where Garbo shoots Lionel Barrymore, I found the girl's arm crooked within mine, her fingers locked against my fingers. Following Lewis Stone's suave threats to Greta, her shingled head was on my shoulder, a tendril of hair brushing against my cheek.

She sat breathlessly through the court scene, and with my free hand I searched for my handkerchief, for I felt that she would need it for the moving scene at the end, where Greta Garbo goes out to meet the firing squad. But as the last foot of the film was unreeled, the girl, with a muffled sob, rose abruptly and left the cinema.

I sat the film out; then we rose *en masse*, drew on our gloves, buttoned up our coats, got our umbrellas ready, allowed traces of pain to shadow our faces for others to see, now that the lights were up, and stood still for a moment when the last strip of the film played 'God Save the King'.

And then I turned round to follow the sympathetic soul with very taking ways. The extent of her taking ways was realised when I found that my little purse, containing five pounds, was missing!





The Titans of New York

by Timursha D. Irani

Reading time • About 5 minutes

THE elements started a wild hula when the giant liner carrying some seven hundred souls was one day out at sea. The noble ship which looked pretty sure of itself in confined waters at the port of embarkation, was tossed about like nobody's business in the boiling, raging, seething hell of the Atlantic. Thunder beating time, lightning in all its crooked brilliance lighting up the foaming inferno, the winds of limitless space whistling and shrieking a deafening concert, Nature danced incessantly in all its nude, barbarous beauty.

Thus for two days.

I crawled up to deck as the liner sneaked into the Hudson. Not a soul of the gay party aboard was about: each was busy in his or her cabin packing and, between whiles, nursing their bruises—the heritage left by the storm. I leaned over the rail. I looked down the side into the dull waters eddying by. All the while I had an oppressive feeling that some undefined monster was looking down at me from the sky. I chuckled at this neurasthenic after-effect of the two-day scare at sea, shook myself straight and sneaked a look at the sky to starboard. I gasped. Involuntarily, I raised my hand, to ward off I knew not what.

The memory of the thrill I got at that sight will remain with me to my last day. I have read much, seen much in print, on the screen, of the sky-line of New York. But the reality at close quarters, *in propria persona* as it were, that gives you a bouncing welcome, as your ship ambles by Lower Manhattan, far transcends the image conjured by word or picture or celluloid—a noble sight worthy of a nobler creature than man.

Rising sheer from the ground hundreds of feet into the sky, these Titans and King Kongs in brick, stone, concrete and steel, throw a weird, gigantic, geometrical line across the uncharted expanse of the sky, a mammoth graph indicating the ascent of the Almighty Dollar, the triumph of a new civilisation, the glorious culmination of the idea started with the Boston Tea Party, the unrecorded dream of Washington come true.

Not too near each other to stump the effect, no two piles having any appreciable point of contact to neutralise that structural grandeur to the level of mediocrity, each with a colour-scheme all its own, each striking an 'individual' note, each noble in its sheer, neck-breaking altitude, each with a look of gentle restfulness, these skyscrapers appear to your imagination as if they heralded the advent of Time and are destined to outlive

Time. But the ever-expanding American soul would but give them a century, maybe a little more, of life and pull them down to give 'concrete' shape to its ever creative thought.

I landed in New York.

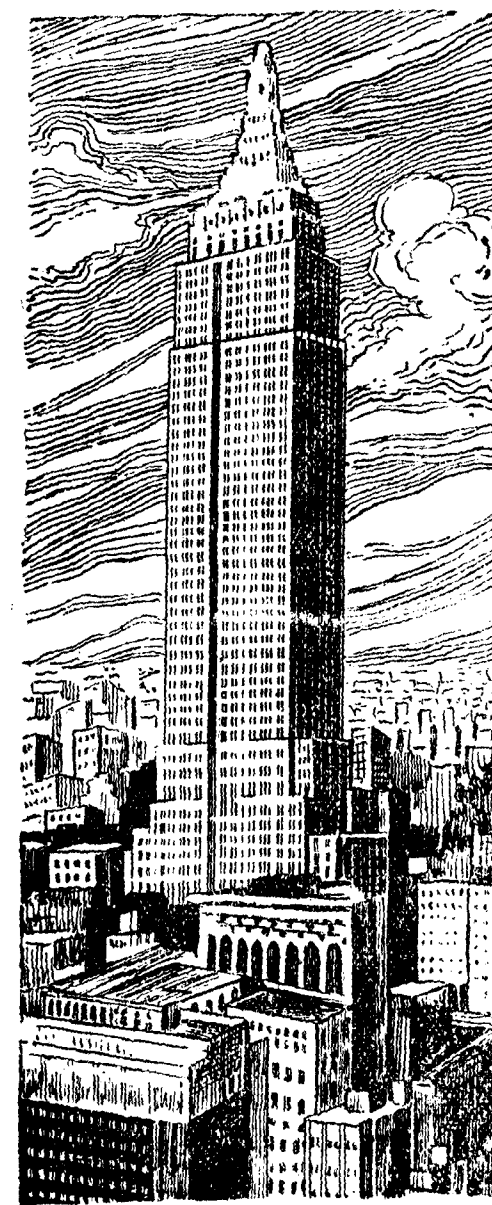
If you have travelled through Continental and English cities, there comes to you a sense of something utterly, delightfully new, as your auto whisks you by Madison Avenue, Park Avenue, Broadway, Fifth Avenue, Riverside Drive. There in Europe the art pundits cling to a mummified humbug—as their political priests are hugging that other monumental humbug, the League of Nations—the archaic forms of the Renaissance, glorifying a dead past, instead of glorying in a lusty present and a lustier future. Leaving the dead past to bury its dead across the Atlantic, these children of the Pilgrim Fathers have planned with a liberal hand, planned daringly, on a gigantic scale, avoiding mediocrity, disdaining that festishism to which Europe has succumbed.

Park Avenue harmonising the regal width of its highway running ahead in an untrammelled perspective with an emerald streak of lawn in its centre—and the noble height of its buildings, is hard to beat in beauty or design. Broadway by night is a fairyland of riotous colour, stimulating, intoxicating, the tremendous mass of buildings absorbing a possible strain of vulgarity to the point of utter annihilation: Broadway is a bit of hell let loose; but an enjoyable hell. From this madness to a quiet promenade along Riverside Drive is a startling transition. The gentle swish

of the river is felt, not seen, lights bob up and down in the far distance, you feel you are on another, and a better, planet. Bare of all curved, crooked architectural inanities, its grand simplicity relieved by pink and blue, Radio City is probably the most beautiful building in all America.

The tallest of these giants is the Empire State Building. You step into the elevator: you are shot up twelve hundred feet and delivered on the terrace. The infernal din made by man and machine at the basement is replaced by a calm that is uncanny. From this awful height, the great houses of Park Avenue are a despicable undergrowth; Central park, a whisp of green; its lovely lakes, little puddles; the rivers, lines of serpentine silver. Around you the great skyscrapers stand out like children around their mother. Twelve hundred feet below, life crawls on in its variegated phases, philanthropic, stingy, indifferent, hectic, ugly, beautiful.

Perched here with all that dollar-chasing frenzy below, a Gandhi might, undisturbed, meditate on the possibilities of the soul and the boundless power of Ahimsa which Christ had preached and practised in vain; an Arabindo commune with the Universal Mother and go into samadhi over his country's deliverance; a Tagore perfect his postulates of a new world order and a new social dispensation. So peaceful, so restful is that place, the terrace of the Empire State, which the clouds seem to kiss, around which mists play prismatic bo-peep. Its peace is the peace of the Himalayas, its beauty the beauty of the Infinite, its promise, the promise of man's deliverance from himself.



The Empire State



Silas Sweetbread (before fortune smiled on him).

“OH no!” emphatically stated Silas Sweetbread, in the course of a chat with an intimate friend. “Oh no, old boy, we don’t intend having any children. Can’t afford to raise a family on my income!”

And—

“Yes, darling,” vowed Belinda Buggs to her sister, one day, “we’ve quite made up our minds on the subject. No children for us. Not at any rate until Silas gets a substantial rise.”

Now, how two persons with such highly respectable names as Silas Sweetbread and Belinda Buggs could descend to untruthfulness is quite beyond our comprehension.

But the deplorable fact remains that they *did* descend to it. For, barely ten months from the memorable day that Belinda Buggs became Belinda Sweetbread, she presented her astounded spouse with—triplets!

It was not, we admit, the fact of his paternity that startled Silas. Of such impending fate he naturally had sufficient warning. But not in his wildest dreams or ghastliest nightmares had he ever reckoned on such a contingency as—triplets.

However, what was done could not, particularly in this instance, be undone. So Silas philosophically tried to make the best of it. He affected a grin and used it extravagantly. A ‘proud-father’ yet ‘bright-in-the-face-of-all-tribulation’ kind of grin.

But his courage and patience were sorely tried at times. Other people, it seemed to him, didn’t appreciate his difficulties. There was an aggravating tendency on their part to treat the whole affair too lightly.

Take, for instance, the parson of his parish. When Silas called on him for solace, and anxiously asked how ever was he going to provide for so large a family, the clergyman told him with a soothing smile: “Don’t you know that when God sent the rabbits he sent the grasses, too?”

Sweetbread Harvest

by Albert A. Roland

Illustrations by the Author

Reading time • About 8 minutes

“Yes,” objected Silas, “but these triplets won’t eat the grasses!”

The parson had thought this amusing and had laughed unrestrainedly. But Silas had had the laugh on him at the christening.

There is said to be an affinity between twins or triplets. What one feels the others feel. What one does the others do. Well, it happened that the parson, holding the eldest triplet in his arms, was in the act of baptizing him Eustace, when he (Eustace) felt, and obeyed, the call of nature.

The padre bore his discomfiture in dignified silence. Then the second triplet proved the theory of affinity. The padre still preserved a lofty silence on the matter. But when the third infant also offended, the good man could not help exclaiming: “Tut! Tut! Who do they think’s being baptized, anyway?”

After the christening, Brown, a friend of the Sweetbreads, called to see the triplets for the first time. And when Silas proudly asked him: “Well, old boy, what d’you think of ‘em eh?”

Old Brown considered a moment whilst he critically looked the infants over. Then he answered absent-



Belinda Buggs (before winning fame and fortune).



Eustace Sweetbread



Agrippa Sweetbread



Justus Sweetbread

mindedly: “If I were you, Silas, I’d keep the one in the middle, and drown the rest.” (Brown was a dog fancier.)

The horrified expression on Silas’ face made him realize his mistake, and he apologised profusely. Accepting the apology with his customary graciousness, Silas brightened up and said: “Fine kids they are really, eh? Do you think they’ll grow up like their father, old boy?”

Brown ran an eye over the triplets again. Then fixing an appraising eye on Silas:

“I sincerely hope not!” said he. (Brown was a truthful soul.)

Silas’ troubles began in earnest in the days that followed. The triplets developed a habit of crying at nights, and Silas was the only one in the house who could keep them quiet. Poor Belinda did her best. She fed them at all times and all hours. She reminded Silas of Mrs. Mickawber. David Copperfield had said of that lady that he never saw her at any time of day or night without one or other of her twins partaking of liquid nourishment. Even when she fainted under the table one day, a twin remained attached.

But poor Belinda’s best was not enough to bring peace to their household. After all, she was only



Belinda Sweetbread (after winning fame and fortune).

equipped to pacify two of the babies at the most. So it fell to Silas’ lot to soothe the third, and sometimes he was given charge of two. Many miles he walked at nights. And strange to say he kept the infants quiet. He had tried singing at first. But they only cried the more lustily—Belinda said because they must have inherited her ear for music.

Then he discovered a simple but effective remedy. It was this method, or rather Silas’ refusal to continue with it, that caused their first serious quarrel.

Silas was a little man with a weak mouth and chin, to counteract which he had cultivated a strong beard and flourishing moustaches. In the earlier days of their courtship, she had often tried to coax him to remove the beard and cut down the moustaches by at least 50%. But he was proud of his face-fungus, and was adamant on the question of trifling with it.

Yet, when the triplets were a few months old, he came home one day shorn of the beard and wearing the dinkiest Ronald Colman moustache. Was Belinda delighted? She was not. She was, in fact, furious. Such was the contrariness of women, grumbled Silas. But she justified her anger thus:

“You must admit you’re a selfish brute. You know how Eustace, Justus and Agrippa loved pulling your whiskers. You know it was the only thing that would keep them amused for hours.”

After this, the babies cried more than ever. They missed those fascinating whiskers. Silas was made to promise he would grow them again. Meanwhile, at the suggestion of the ayah, they tried small doses of laudanum to keep the children quiet. At times Silas, disturbed for hours, would tell Belinda: “Here, dear, you pour it out—I can’t trust myself!”



Silas Sweetbread (after fortune smiled on him).



Ophelia Sweetbread



Ginger Sweetbread



Roly Sweetbread



Iona Sweetbread



Ivan Sweetbread



Buster Sweetbread

One night, when the triplets were sleeping soundly, Silas suggested taking Belinda to the pictures. She hadn't been out for months. And as the babies had been unusually good, they decided to leave the *ayah* in charge and cheer themselves up with a little entertainment.

When they returned home and enquired how the triplets had behaved, the *ayah* replied:

"Agrippa missie got up and was very cross. She got convulsions and went into a faint. But I pulled her round, memsahib, with that medicine in the pantry."

"Medicine in the pantry," shrieked Belinda. "What medicine? We don't keep any there!"

"Oh yes, Mamsahib," the *ayah* assured her, "I'll show you."

And she went away and returned with a bottle labelled: 'Kid Reviver'!

Fortunately, no harm ensued. But for some time Silas had been distinctly nervous. Had he not, that very night at the pictures, drawn a certain weight card from a weighing machine? And, together with his weight (now much reduced because of the triplets and the loss of his facial decorations), had it not borne the inscription: 'An unexpected stroke of luck will shortly wipe out all your troubles'? What if the *ayah* had administered the 'Kid Reviver' to all three infants, with fatal results!

The weeks passed, and with the triplets waxing sturdier and hungrier, Silas' resources grew strained. (Belinda's had already given out.) The gradual reapper-

ance of Silas' whiskers eased the situation somewhat, though the triplets' increasing strength caused him much discomfort.

Time flew, and still no sign of a rise for Silas. Still no indication of that lucky stroke which was to wipe out all his troubles. Silas had to be very careful when crossing roads, careful to ascertain that there were no creditors on the other side. He learned to use the back entrance, sometimes climbing in by means of the rain-water pipe through the first floor window. He out-Mickawbered Micawber in these respects.

Life was becoming more and more intolerable when the unexpected happened. The lucky stroke materialised.

A successful Derby ticket? Silas couldn't afford to buy one. A wealthy relative's decease? Silas had none. A millionaire's life saved by Silas? Or an heiress in love with him? Nothing so romantic as that!

A producer desirous of featuring the triplets on the films? Ah, dear reader! You're getting warmer!

Belinda had already told Silas that she was 'that way' again, and months of depression followed. Then came the incredible climax—*sextuplets!*

The next few weeks were a kaleidoscope of colourful events. Life seemed to be crowded with nothing but Press reporters, Photographors, Circus proprietors, Baby-food testimonial hunters, Wet nurses, Birth-control advisors, Biographers, Tourists and ordinary 'rubber necks'.

Overnight, Silas and Belinda became national hero and heroine respectively, and even the triplets basked in their reflected glory. Funds were started. Questions were asked in the Legislative Assembly. The repercussions were felt in Parliament.

A grateful nation showed its gratitude without stint.

It fully appreciated the great service the Sweetbreads had done to the State. The Dionne quintuplets of Canada paled into insignificance. The Sweetbread sextuplets helped to put the country on the map. The increase in tourist traffic alone added thousands to the national coffers. The trade revival was the greatest in years.

The affair became appropriately and universally known as 'The Sweetbread Harvest'. You'll read all about it one day in *Who's Who* and the monumental works of 'Ripley'.

THE END



A Earnest nephew writes to Auntie, propounding problems in business ethics, worldly probity, and spiritual destiny. Gather round, boys and girls, and let us see what we can do about it.

"I left school eight years ago, and have held several jobs. In each place I came into contact with corrupt methods, which my conscience would not tolerate. As a consequence, I have been unemployed on an average for six months every year.

"I would like to give up everything and turn to the ascetic life, and thus prove the existence of something more valuable than money. But I am hampered by the debts which I have accumulated during my periods of unemployment. What can I do in the circumstances?"

My dears, this young man has reached a stage that many of us come to in time. We desire to free ourselves from the dross of the world and the stress of everyday life. The desire expresses itself in different forms, according to one's antecedents and temperament. Some of us want to retire to a country cottage and grow roses. Others wish the leisure to write a book—a noble book, the message of experience and riper years. Others seek a cave in the Himalayas.

The subject is one about which there must be great differences of opinion. Auntie's personal point of view is that contemplative seclusion is something that must be earned. When a young man in his twenties turns his thoughts to the ascetic life, Auntie is not sure that the phenomenon is a healthy one.

Young men of all races have forsaken the world and achieved sainthood, but in such cases the young men received a definite and unmistakable spiritual call. They were inspired to further a great idea, or to redress a crying evil. Has our nephew such an inspiration, or is he merely weary of misfortune?

New-born India is struggling in its birth-pangs, and making quite a lively fuss about it! There is work awaiting millions of earnest young men like Auntie's correspondent. In the matter of corruption alone, India needs educated young men who will set their faces against dishonesty. Every time our nephew registers his protest and gets the sack, he has struck a blow for purity in national life.

Our educated young men can give us a lead by creating a force of public opinion. Corruption withers before

the active contempt of the intelligent section of the community. Our educated young men are failing in their duty when they connive at bad old customs. They are being untrue to themselves when they tolerate corruption out of a sense of cynical self-interest. Let our nephew stay in the world and fight these things, rather than cover himself with ashes and contemplate the Nature of Abstract Evil.

Many of us would like to retire from the world, but our responsibilities prohibit us from doing so. It is not a very spiritual act to run away from one's liabilities. Our nephew is bound to the world by debt. Most of us are bound to the world by something.

Some readers are sure to disagree with Auntie's point of view. Well, ladies and gentlemen, the Editor has provided you with a forum, in which you are perfectly free to up and say that Auntie is a nasty old materialist. While awaiting the brickbats, Auntie wishes her earnest nephew all good things. Her advice is, keep a stiff upper lip, and go in and win.

And now, my dears, we must attend to the more facetious portion of our correspondence.

Miss Fi Fo Fum (Far East). "I often wonder what you think of the people who ask silly questions." And then you ask me no less than ten questions! As none of them are of pressing urgency, Auntie will answer a few at a time, otherwise the remaining nephews and nieces will grumble. By the way, do you like the pen-name I have chosen for you? First question: "I once spent a holiday staying with a gentleman. A missionary asked me whether there were any women in the house. I said 'No.' She nearly fainted. Why was she so upset?" Well, my dear, if you were a missionary with horse's teeth, horn-rimmed goggles, and flat feet, wouldn't you be overcome with envy?

Auntie Fan (Srivasthantam). "In spite of your entertaining description of Auntie's humour-factory in the issue of June 29th, I don't think you have explained the marvel of how you keep it up, week after week. Pray enlighten us further." Auntie fears, dear boy, that she cannot explain how she keeps it up. Auntie is like Mr. Hilaire Belloc's water-beetle. You can read about the water-beetle in a book called 'Rhymes for a Bad Boy', or similar title:

The water-beetle here, may teach
A sermon far beyond our reach.
He glides upon the water's face
With ease, celerity, and grace.
But if the fellow stopped to think
Of how he did it, he would sink.

Auntie, however, does not glide over the deeps of the cosmic duck-pond. She contents herself with skating over the thin ice round the margin.

Class-Conscious (Bombay). "None of the present political parties really caters for the under-dog. There are the Black Shirts, the Brown Shirts, the Red Shirts, the Green Shirts, and the Blue Shirts, but they are organisations which really represent vested interests. I want a party that will be truly proletarian." Well, dear boy, what about starting a party of No Shirts?

Hill Parrot (Simla). "This is my first visit, and what impressed me most was the magnificent tunnels on the railway from Kalka. Beyond Dhurrampore the line goes right under a huge mountain." Auntie remembers the tunnel, dear girl; but the last time she went through it, she saw nothing in it.

Tomato-grower (U.P.). "A parasite is attacking the monsoon crop, and I have been told that if the tomatoes are sprayed with kerosene, the insects will not eat them. Is this correct?" Quite correct, dear sir; but unless the tomatoes are sprayed carefully, your customers won't eat them, either.

Hiker (Sandur). "I want to go on a walking-tour to some of the chief places in the north. What things do you advise me take?" It is a matter of taste, dear boy, but the two things you mustn't forget are a wallet containing some currency, and a railway time-table.

Spectator (Vaniambadi). "After the accident, the owner of the car took copious notes in a dog-eared student's note-book." It must have been thrilling, dear boy. Did he remember to call the dog-eared student as a witness?

Renovation (Delhi). To raise the nap of your worn tweed trousers, and to smarten them up by removing the dust, take them out into the sun, and give them a good beating. Remove the trousers before beating them.

Patriotic Singalese (Colombo). "I consider this verse is an insult to the people of Ceylon, and should be removed from the Christian prayer-book." Auntie agrees with you, dear boy. The offending verse was written by Bishop Heber, one-time Bishop of Calcutta. He is still

remembered as the *Padre Lat* who travelled in state all over the country, riding on an elephant. Before coming to India, Heber was a chaplain in Java, and it is there that he wrote the original verse. It went as follows:

What though the spicy breezes
Blow soft o'er Java's isle,
Where every prospect pleases,
And nature wears a smile.

The bishop liked Java, and the verse is quite laudatory, as you see. But when Heber landed at Colombo, some dock-thieves stole all his luggage. The indignant prelate got out his manuscript and altered the verse to its present form:

What though the spicy breezes
Blow soft o'er Ceylon's isle,
Where every prospect pleases,
And only man is vile!

In his anger, the reverend gentleman overlooked the fact that 'Ceylon' will not scan in the second line, so he not only committed a piece of atrocious bad manners, but spoiled a perfectly good poem.

Enterprising (Madras). "There is great scope for anyone who will meet the modern demand for exclusively feminine sales. I am shortly going to open a double-fronted ladies shop." Yes, dear boy; but do you think the double-fronted ladies will patronise it?

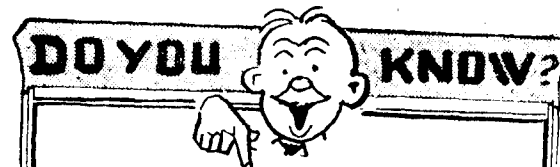
Recluse (Nagpur). "I have a very long, very strong beard, and at last my wife has persuaded me to get rid of it. I called in the barber, but it blunted his scissors and broke his clippers, so he refused to go on with the

operation. What had I better do?" In the circumstances, Auntie thinks you had better employ a reaping-machine.

Mystic (Orattanad). "People imagine I am a light-hearted person, but actually there is a side of me that nobody ever sees." How interesting, dear girl. Do you never turn your back on any one, or do you remain permanently seated?

Reader (Mannargudi). "Who is Ibid? I was studying a work of reference the other day, and in the footnotes almost every quotation was attributed to Ibid. I have never heard of this author." Why, dear boy, Ibid the author is a close relative of Alibi the lawyer.

Politician (Triplicane). "What does the average harassed citizen stand for?" Because there are no vacant seats in the tram, dear sir.



1. What is a 'Glong Hole' aboard ship?
2. What does it signify when a swallow flies low?
3. How soon after a decree nisi may divorced couples marry again?
4. Why do we say we catch a wrong-doer 'red-handed'?

(Answers on page 37)

The Tribe of Werrypinklers—II

by 'Nijinski'

Illustrated by Sekar

Reading time • About 8 minutes

AT a well-known college in England—where he was educated—they'd cut his name short and contented themselves with calling him 'Mooka'.

Hence, on his return to his native land, he had ordered all his people to address him as 'Mooka, the King'. He prided himself immensely on the change from 'Chief' to 'King'. He taught his subjects to say 'Your Majesty' instead of 'Chief'. The difference to them was a mere matter of phraseology.

Mooka, happy during his sojourn in England, on the sudden death of his father, had been recalled to his native land.

'Tis sad to relate (but truth will out) that Mooka, after reading the decree of God Winkle, obeyed the cannibalistic injunctions thereof.

Save for that fault, Mooka might have been a likeable companion.

The diet, aforesaid, unfortunately, agreed with Mooka and he developed an almost insatiable liking therefor. Missionaries, explorers, adventurers or what-not, they all came alike to him.

This way we now meet Mooka. His breakfast was on the table and he called his (at that moment) pet concubine to join him and partake of the viands. We'll call that lady 'Kittu', although her full name was much nearer a complete alphabet.

"What's the food?" Kittu enquired.

"Delicious, that you can be sure," replied Mooka. He became reminiscent. "You know that fat old Johnny who wandered in here a few days ago?"

"Yes!"

"He was a tutor in my college. He always had a bee in his bonnet and many times told me he'd come out to Africa and make all the people Christians and civilised."

"And now?"

Mooka chuckled. "There's nothing," he replied, "better than feet and hands well boiled. They're far superior to cows' heels and pigs' feet and—"

"I'm hungry," interrupted Kittu, "let us eat."

Diffidently we have to record the fact that they not only ate, but, incidentally, relished their repast.

Mooka sat alone later—ruminating. He felt the pang of conscience, but—there was the decree of Winkle. How could he disobey and incur Winkle's wrath?

He inspected his larders; his 'Icyball' Refrigerators (Mooka was up-to-date in this respect) were practically empty. Summoning his Head Hunter he issued orders.

"Go," he said, "and bring me back some 'white' tit-bits. At all cost return today; my larder needs replenishment."

The Head Hunter, accompanied by a select fifty of the tribe, sallied forth. So successful did they prove that only a few hours elapsed before they returned with a string of captives.

At this juncture Mooka, I think, deserves a measure of description. He was of short stature and—due to a lazy life—almost as fat as he was long, in fact, a 54 gallon hogshead almost describes him perfectly.

He was not like that in England, but—in the land of the Werrypinklers—he had waxed and grown fat. He had also allowed his hirsute adornments to run riot and had long hair and a comely beard. His moustache he wore *a-la-Kaiser*.

Mooka secretly considered himself 'impressive' and 'dignified'.

Captives—seven in all—were paraded before him. Mooka was a good judge.

"Three of those gospel people, two explorers, one adventurer and one sailor," was his summing up. "Well," he thought, "not a bad contribution to the cooking pots."

Mooka had certain vanities—acquired in England—one of which was the use of a monocle. He fished one out of his pocket and proceeded to survey his game. He also undertook a tour of inspection.

"Um," he was thinking, "two or three want fattening up." He playfully bestowed a dig in the ribs here and there and took a pinch at biceps.

There was a fat old priest—number two in the line—Mooka mentally decided he should be the first for the table.

"Head Hunter!" he instructed, speaking in the Werrypinkler language, "take this one and get him shaved. Also have him medically examined and bring me a report." Mooka had certain characteristic idiosyncrasies—he was careful in his choice of food.

The fat priest was deported, innocent in regard to what awaited him.

Last in the line came the sailor. Previously, Mooka had only given him a cursory glance. The sailor's shirt was torn away from one shoulder and his deltoid and biceps had free play. They fascinated Mooka.

The sailor had a shaven head, but for that fact he must have been six feet tall.

He was almost as wide as the poles are apart; there was enough hair on his chest to have stocked an upholsterer's shop.

"He'll want a lot of boiling to become tender," Mooka was thinking. "Fifteen stone and all damned muscle! I wonder—"

What Mooka wondered escapes record. The sailor, until now complacently chewing a 'quid' of tobacco, suddenly spat on the floor—right in front of Mooka.

Mooka felt affronted. "Don't do that here again!" he roared. "I'll—I'll—"

The sailor roared back and the roof groaned overhead. "Who in hell d'yer think you are, giving me orders You'll what?"

Momentarily Mooka was speechless with rage. In the meantime, the sailor was weighing things up. He may have entertained suspicions—who knows?

About two yards in front of the captives was a raised platform strewn with costly carpets and, on the platform was Mooka's 'throne'.

The sailor's hands were pinioned behind his back; but he knew he could snap the grass ropes like rotten threads any moment he cared to do so.



"No tricks," he advised.

Mooka recovered his powers of speech. He turned to the Head Hunter, who had returned. "Confine these others in the cells and put a strong guard upon them."

That happened to be the moment the sailor chose to be free. He snapped his cords of bondage, seized Mooka in his arms and sprang upon the platform.

"Tell all your satellites to keep back," the sailor counselled, "otherwise I'll snap your neck like a carrot!"

Mooka valued his life. He issued appropriate orders to his henchmen. The sailor, keeping Mooka captive by simply holding one of his ears, calmly seated himself on Mooka's throne.

"This," he said, "is where I call the tune." He twitched Mooka's ear. "What's your name?"

"I'm Mooka, King of the Werrypinklers."

"And I'm," commented the sailor, "Tookey, King of the Cookless, the Mussels and the Periwinkles and—" he added, "they're all alive!" His humour was lost on Mooka—this, despite the sojourn in England.

"Such a big King," queried Mooka, "and you travel like this?"

"I'm *incognito*."

"But, you said you were Tookey?"

"Tookey, *incognito*—guess it's all the same to you. However, I'm forgetting etiquette. Tell your squad there to release those other gents and bring in some chairs. Then, call your *chef* and order refreshments. You call yourself a King and treat guests in this way! And," the sailor suddenly remembered, "send for that fat priest you despatched to get shaved and given the once-over by the doctors."

Inwardly Mooka groaned. He had been hoping there might be an oversight in respect of that fat priest. However, he obeyed Tookey's orders meekly.

(To be concluded next week.)

"If you wouldn't mind," he ventured, "releasing my ear, I'd be glad. It's aching."

"I'll put you on parole. D'you agree?"

"Sure!"

Tookey produced an automatic from under one of his armpits.

"No tricks," he advised. "Otherwise—"

At that moment the fat priest was brought back. Tookey briefly explained the situation. The priest had certainly changed. His head was bare, his beard had gone.

He whispered confidentially to Tookey. "They shaved me everywhere. I don't yet understand their motive."

Tookey whispered back: "No one cooks birds with their feathers!" There was a wealth of meaning in his words and the priest understood.

Chairs had been brought in and Tookey and his companions had partaken of refreshments. Mooka, cognisant of the powers of an automatic, sat as mute as Sphinx.

The fat priest addressed Tookey.

"What do you suggest next, Mr. Tookey?"

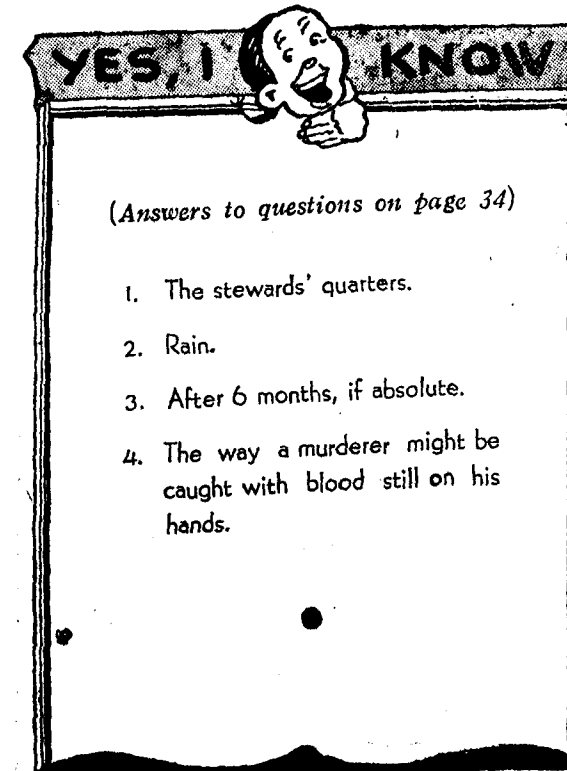
"The balance of power," Tookey answered, "being now in our favour, a 'fade-out' on our part is, naturally, the advisable thing. However, personally, I've a mind to do a little investigation before I leave."

"In that case," interposed one of the explorers, "we all stick with you—that's sure."

"Thanks! But I am playing a lone hand."

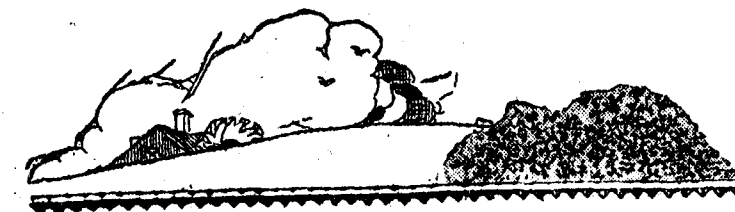
Tookey was adamant in spite of all protestations.

Carried in the nearest approach to palanquins which Mooka could produce, the released six were conveyed to their respective camps at dusk that evening.



(Answers to questions on page 34)

1. The stewards' quarters.
2. Rain.
3. After 6 months, if absolute.
4. The way a murderer might be caught with blood still on his hands.





Louis

Reading time
• About 11 minutes

.....constantly belching forth fumes.....

SOME months ago I decided to visit the Plaza Cinema which was showing *The Thief of Bagdad*, 'starring' Douglas Fairbanks.

I decided also to go alone. So many troubles arise when you go with another. When two of my friends once visited the Colombo Museum, one expressed his desire to have a look at the remains of ancient Sinhalese sculpture and art, while the other expressed his equally great desire to see the remains of the modern Sinhalese fish mart—the backbones of the finny folk. They were nearly entering upon a loud and noisy debate when they both simultaneously heard a man relating to another the pranks of the monkeys in the museum menagerie. "Let us see the live specimens," they both said, and set off. When they had arrived at the menagerie, they debated as to which cage they should first approach. Mr. One, who loved monkeys, tried to persuade Mr. Other to go to the monkey cage first—using all the flowery language he was capable of. But Mr. Other, treacherous and disloyal to his mimicking ancestors, remained adamant, and brought forward as his arguments the majesty and grace of the magnificent leopard.

Every moment the debate was becoming more noisy, until at last the constable on guard at the Museum gate cut it short. This messenger of fate approached them, and almost before they were aware of it, Mr. One and Mr. Other were standing on the road outside the Museum premises.

But I digress. As I was saying, I decided to adventure alone. When I had arrived at the Plaza premises, I found that there was going on a life and death struggle for tickets.

Suddenly, amidst the mad struggle there came out a cry composed of 70% pain and 30% anger, followed close at the heels by a series of oaths and lurid Billingsgate and a blood-thirsty demand why the—what's-his-name had the impudence to stick a pin in the small of the speaker's back. Straightaway I rushed into the struggling mass of human bodies. I fought on towards the small aperture—big enough to thrust in an arm—but again I was repelled. Surely, it is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a poor man to enter the Kingdom of the Booking Offices.

But at last I had reached the eye of the needle, and if I could not enter it myself, yet with much trouble and pain I sent my arm right in, gasping at the same time, "A gallery ticket please."

At this critical moment, when I was almost sure of the ticket, when I was almost sure of a comfortable seat in the gallery, a man, unshaven for weeks, pressed his face against my neck. Pacific overtures being impolitic at this moment, I commanded him, with all the dignity and imperiousness I could muster, to leave me alone. His mouth spoke not a word, but he pleaded with his eyes that the perpetrator of the crime was not he, and that

Peris Visits the Cinema

by Louis Peris

Illustrated by Mali

the pressure from behind was to blame. But I had to push his face away with all the civility (and force) that the circumstances left me possessed of.

The next moment I felt strong hands tightening round my neck, first slowly, but becoming tighter with the slightest movement of my head, until the point of suffocation was almost reached, and I thought that I was really about to obtain a ticket to the Kingdom of Heaven instead. "Murder, murder!" I shouted, but my vocal apparatus having been put out of gear by the stranglehold on my neck, no one came to the rescue. But that moment I felt the ticket in my palm.

When I was seated at last, there came to me suddenly the conviction that I was being gassed, not by the gas that was used in the last war, but by some other more unbearable and stinking fumes. Convinced that this was another contrivance of the Devil to drive me out of my seat and into despair, I looked about to see whence the gas emanated.

Then my attention was directed to a curious personage seated on my right. His head, which was crowned by a large mass of dirty uncombed hair was extremely large compared to the rest of his body. The sanitary condition of his face was such as urgently needed a thick application of the lather of soap, and another thing noticeable in his face was its hairiness. His eyes, set deep within the sockets were gloomy and sleepy, and one eye kept an eternal and vigilant watch over its fellow—for he was squint-eyed. A copious growth of hair adorned that part of his face lying between the nasal protuberance and the orifice that leads to the lower regions.

Tucked away in that orifice was a dark, short, cylindrical object, constantly belching forth fumes—the ubiquitous Jaffna Cigar. He sat, puffing away at his cigar, in a posture suggesting that he felt he was 'the lord of all he surveyed', but alas! the irony of fate; his rights, there was at least one to dispute, as I shall presently describe. Clouds of the nauseating gas—with the treacherous connivance of the whirling electric fan above me—blew past me and covered my head in a sea of blue smoke and nearly suffocated me.

I leaned forward; bent backward; moved sideways; performed about half a score of the movements prescribed in the 'daily dozen' to grow thin, but the pungent smell tracked me down like an acute police blood-hound.

"Look here!" I said,—whereupon he turned towards me and puffed out right into my face a large mass of the miserable stench, driving me nearly mad—"won't you find

some other object on whom to test the irritative properties of your gas?"

He tried to comply with my request—he sent the products of the combustion in all directions—but the electric fan shipped them back to me. "Can't you throw that stump away?" I suggested rather meekly. He smiled—disclosing the teeth discoloured by daily doses of the dope—and replied with the air of an Epicurean discoursing on table delicacies and choice wines, "Just a minute, mister, for it is the almost burnt-out stump of the cigar that provides maximum pleasure."

Whether it is because (since the cigar tapers towards the end held between the lips) a maximum of tobacco is compressed into a minimum of space or because the prolonged passage of the smoke through it drenches it with nicotine, I cannot decide—but you have the word of an authority that the stump gives maximum delight.

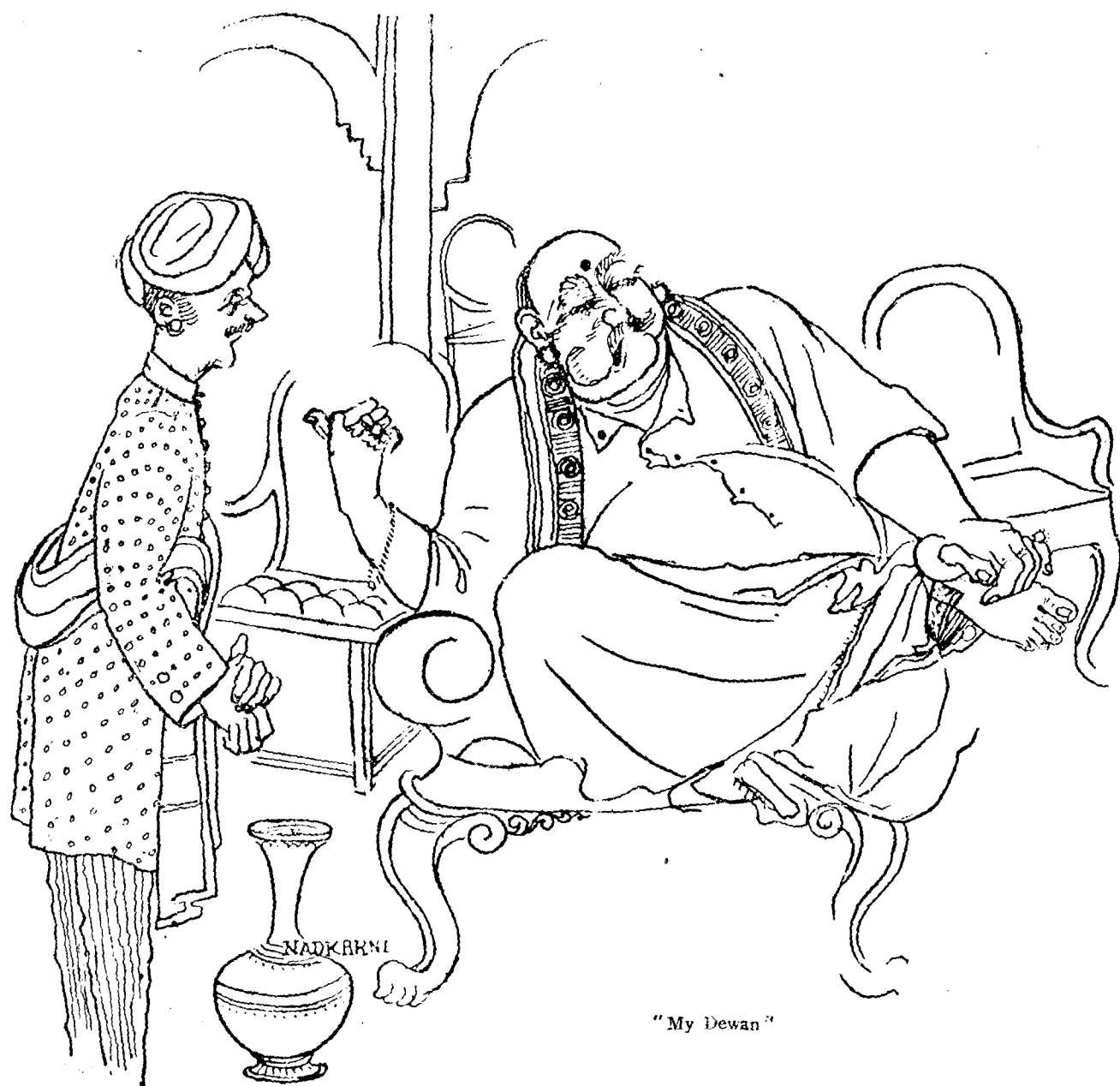
It was some minutes before the stump had dwindled to an uncomfortable size, whereupon somewhat reluctantly, he threw it away. The population of the gallery had now increased, and there arose a discussion in which our friend of the cigar-stump was the initiator and authority, the theme being 'Cinema Actors'. In all cases of doubt he pronounced judgment with the air of an authority and without any hesitation in spite of the fact that what he said was 'manufactured' on the spot and lacked the slightest trace of veracity.

"Duggalas Pairbanks is simply a wonder," our friend told his open-mouthed audience. "He has married several princesses, one in *Robin Hood*, one in *Black Pirate*, one in *Theep of Bagdad*. See how he terrorizes the kings."

"But," interposed a heretic (there are heretics even among these fellows) "can he not be gaoled or shot by the kings of the world to-day?"

"Certainly not," our friend hotly exclaimed, annoyed by such pitiful ignorance of Duggalas' prowess, "certainly not. The kings fear him. Do you think kings can execute jumps like Duggalas or prove so dangerous with the sword?"

So the talk went on and by the time he had done, I had gathered that Duggalas was just a little short of Almighty Jove; that Eddie Polo with his fist was the best fighter in the world; that Polo was the only man to knock down Sweeney, the notorious villain; that William Desmond was not a whit inferior to Eddie Polo; and so on and so on.



Snapshots—

by T. P. Scott-O'Connor

Illustrated by Nadkarni

The Zamindar.

Reading Time • About 7 minutes

LEAVING the car at the foot of a flight of much used, dented steps, one lingers to look at the lone figure which stands in suppliant attitude, hands palm-to-palm in front of the face, knees bent, a wisp of uncertain-coloured cloth on his head, body bare to the waist, below which a further uncertain-coloured

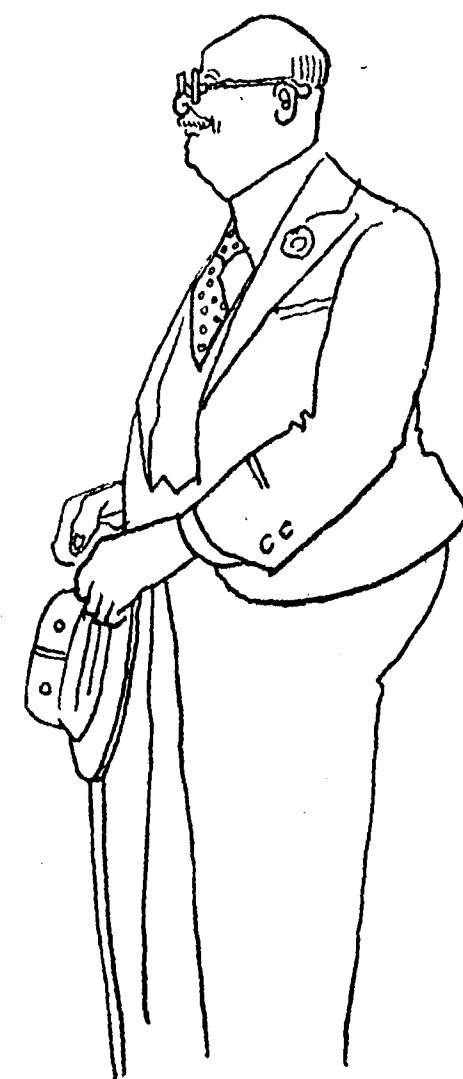
cloth descends to his splayed feet. The eyes have a glassy, fixed stare. They move neither to the right nor to the left. The figure is wholly immobile and it is only by extending a finger and poking the statue in the ribs that one is aware that it lives and breathes. Who is it and what does it want? Simple. It has come to pray a request, or again, may be, to pay homage to the lord of his lands. And in that rigid position he will remain,

come what may, until one or the other is done. Nobody takes the slightest notice of him. In time he merges into the surrounding pillars of the portico and becomes even as one of them.

And so up the steps, passing between peons in multi-coloured belts, badges, and turbans, through a door before which a beaded curtain tinkles in the slight breeze, and into a large room overcrowded with furniture of every description, shape and age.

In the subdued light it is at first difficult to see the figure which rises languidly at one's entrance, holds out

a moist, limp hand, enfolding one's fingers in a clammy clasp, motioning with his other hand to a seat beside him upon the couch. As one sinks upon its brittle surface, one is aware of another figure which stands in the shadows, but now comes forward with a smart, elastic step. The large man upon the couch, with a wave of the hand, introduces this person with the words: "My Dewan," at the same time inflating his chest and cunningly shifting the pan in his mouth from one side to the other with an ease born of much practice. The Dewan sits upon a small chair near his august master, the breeze blows warm



through the room, and a silence falls upon everything. The Dewan gazes upon the Zamindar; the Zamindar under heavy-lidded, sleepy eyes, stares at the caller ruminatingly, his jaws working ever so slightly but in perfect time. One is reminded of that saying 'The mills of God grind slowly, but they grind exceeding small.' Only now it is 'the jaws grind slowly, but they grind exceeding well.' A low murmur comes from the courtyard, a lizard falls with a sickening plop upon the verandah floor, then, perceiving the awful situation in which it finds itself, namely, in the neighbourhood of the

all highest, scurries up the wall and promptly swallows a moth in its eagerness to demonstrate its loyalty.

The following illuminating conversation then takes place:—

ZAMINDAR: Ah! Yes, of course. (*Pause: addressing guest*) You are from—? (*To Dewan*) where does he come from? Eh?

DEWAN (*Conscious that his appointment hangs by a hair's breadth upon his swift answer*): From—(*Looks appealingly at guest*).

GUEST (*To Zamindar*): From—(*Names place*).

ZAMINDAR (*Drawing his legs under him and caressing his fat toes*): Ah! Yes, of course. I knew it. Didn't I, Dewan Sahib?

DEWAN: Of course, Raja Sahib. (*Here the guest starts slightly. Rajah? He must have been misinformed.*)

GUEST: Well, er—Zamindar—I mean Raja Sahib, and how are the crops? Doing well, I hope?

ZAMINDAR (*To Dewan*): How are the crops?

DEWAN: Er—Quite well, Your Highness. (*Guest starts again. 'Highness'?*)

ZAMINDAR (*To Dewan*): Maybe I think you are a big fool. How can crops be well? They cannot be ill, so how can they be well? (*After which brilliant reasoning he expectorates in a crimson stream, narrowly missing the Dewan who closes his eyes and breathes heavily.*)

GUEST (*To Zamindar*): Er—Zamindar Sahib, I mean Highness,—how are the—er—well, yourself, in fact? You look well.

ZAMINDAR (*Casting up his eyes and beholding magnificently*): Oh, yes, I am well. I married again the other day. I have a new car. (*To Dewan*) How much?

DEWAN (*Opening his eyes with an audible click*): Three.

ZAMINDAR (*Surveying him with loathing*): My God! I said how much, not how many. And I have not three cars. (*To guest*) I have seventeen.

GUEST (*Politely interested*): Indeed?

ZAMINDAR: And—

DEWAN: Maharajah Sahib—

ZAMINDAR: Be quiet! (*Guest starts. 'Maharajah'?*)

DEWAN: I thought, most honourable one, you referred to your wives.

ZAMINDAR: They are my wives—not yours. The whole business is mine, not yours. (*Dewan,—sotto voce, 'Thank God!'*) Why you interfere in my business? Eh? (*Suddenly bawling*) I say, listen to me—eh? (*Chews furiously.*)

GUEST (*Hurriedly intervening*): Er—Highness, I mean Maharajah Sahib, any shooting round about here? I heard there was.

ZAMINDAR (*Slowly*): Yes, Yes—shooting. I myself used to shoot once upon a time. (*To Dewan, who is*)

(Continued on page 48)



Merry-Magus

The free offer of character-reading which I made on 6-7-1935, and am continuing, proved very popular with readers. Merry-Magus free readings will be published in these pages every week. Announcement and free character-reading coupon, elsewhere—Ed.

M. V. Gayachari (Sangli). What are you dreaming about wide-awake? Thinking of an utopian land and home, having been tired of your tangible and permanent home? What if you change? You will get tired even of the new place. Why are you so cold? Don't be too sensitive but develop your will-power to carry out your aim in spite of opposition. You are liable to be attacked by inflammatory diseases and watery ailments.

★

S. N. N. (Trichy). It is better to be independent but it is no reason why you should care little for the society of others and often dislike them. I am glad you are patient and tireless but don't be so slow; try to put on some briskness. It is good to be prudent, but do not carry it too far and become a miser. Doubt not others' sincerity. Your fault is you are very easily discouraged. Take care of your teeth and ears.

★

Alfred Bernard Boother. Are you not able to invent some time and imitate often with admirable skill and ability? You are ardent but not constant. You understand everything clearly and logically. Your weak point is your outspokenness. Your good-natured laxity is rather abused by the opposite sex. You cannot be malicious. Be careful about your associates. Don't give room for morbidness. Take good care of your eyes and do not go near fire.

44

R. Venkateswarlu. Your originality and inventive faculty help you much in life. Don't leave anything half-done. Conquer the speculative tendency to earn quick money; you are a failure there. Then only will your life be smooth. You are not demonstrative of your affection. I cannot rely on you; you make a promise but never keep it. Destroy that selfishness. You cannot stand hard work and prolonged exertion.

★

Krishnaswamy. You cannot get on if you are so easily discouraged and lack self-confidence. What is the use of exciting opposition and then bearing the brunt of it with resignation! Root out the cause. It is good you do not interfere in the matters of others nor stand interference in yours from others. Your fault is you feel the responsibility of life too much. Gout and rheumatism are your enemies.

★

R. Rajagopal (Dadar). You are warm-hearted and charitably disposed. Loving peace, you hate deceit. The fault in you is you are easily pleased and consequently misled. Don't jump to conclusions; you will regret it afterwards. Admit your error; there is nothing demeaning in it. It is good you are honourable and well principled but do not show your independence too much. You are prone to acid complaints.

K. S. Srinivasan. You are criminally frank. Don't imagine extreme honesty and truth are assets always, as on account of this temperament you will be dreadfully deceived. Don't marry young; your nature changes at every stage of your life. What is the big plan you are now evolving in your dream-land? Have you got the capacity to carry it through? Then plan or otherwise abandon it and come to this world. Beware of diarrhoea and tumours.

★

Umar. Do you know how you get over your troubles? It is due to your cheerful disposition. Being the soul of kindness you pardon easily and without any restriction. That is where you are at fault. You are a good host and an excellent manager of house. Extreme frankness is not going to help you; it forewarns your foe and consequently you will be defeated in your plans. Avoid all disagreeable surroundings. Think and decide anything for yourself. Sore throat and nasal catarrh are your enemies.

★

M. C. Balasundaram (Perambur). In spite of the fact you talk of religion, you lack reverence. Your fault is you are suspicious of everything and everybody. You are slow but patient and tireless. It is true you hate to be restrained but don't carry the spirit of independence too far. Mix with society; don't hate it. Why do you worry yourself into

Replies

bad health? You talk plainly and it is good for you to do so. You are liable to meet with accidents in legs and ankles.

★

Surnar. You are apt to spend money too freely. You are a chosen favourite of luck. You can concentrate well on the thing you do but the fault is you have your own way of doing things but not by the usual trodden path. You are emotional. Procrastination is a sin in you. Care not for the opinions of others, you cannot please everybody. Do what you think is right. It will never mislead you. Do not over-strain your heart.

★

Sceptic. In one word, by your nom-de-plume, you have given me the key to your character. With a predominant over-sensitiveness and high-strung nerves you are a born Sceptic. Do not lose control of yourself, saying or doing things which you bitterly regret afterwards in your calm moments. Why do you think you are alone in life? Try to like others and you will not feel lonely. Develop your will-power, you will succeed well. Beware of jaundice.

★

Ramdoss (Mahall). Are you not fond of convivial reunion and boisterous merriment? Of course you succeed by your daring ways but it is no reason why you should act so impudently; consider the feelings of others. You can only be managed by kindness and tact; any coercion will only result in the explosion of your dormant temper. Your fault is you lack self-control by being impulsive. Avoid all stimulants, and try to sleep more.

Tiarus. Why do you show your selfish ambition too plainly and arouse opposition by being impulsive? Think twice before you change your opinions. Though you are not easily tired physically, you should reserve your mental energy and do everything calmly, as otherwise you will exhaust your efforts and change your work suddenly and become a sloth. Beware of boils and other skin diseases.

★

Antho. Your fault is you are too unyielding and tyrannical in spite of the fact you are hospitable and generous. You can endure any amount of strain provided the excitement to see the thing through lasts. As you are liable to be misled by your emotions or sensations, think for yourself well before you act. There is no use of being jealous for nothing; it is bad for you. Do not live in damp places and wet climates.

★

B. D. Burji (Laxmipuri). You can instinctively understand the character of others. There is no use of waiting for an opportunity to present itself before you. Create opportunities. Your argument is sound. You are inclined towards science especially like electricity. You are a public worker but to be successful overcome that over-sensitiveness. Don't feel lonely while you have so many friends around you. Beware of jaundice.

★

Goldwyn. (Calcutta). You want companionship in soul and not physically. Don't go corrupt, this tendency will spoil your life. Let your motto be 'give and take' even in family affairs. Being exacting will not help you at all. You can

speculate successfully. Gifted with intuition, it is better you act according to your first impressions. What are you now? Studying for law or medicines? If so, accept my congratulations. Don't allow that headache to become chronic.

★

C. T. Gopalan. Why do you wound the feelings of others? You do not know what amount of pain you cause to others on account of your dare-devil actions. Though you are profited by doing so, you must have some consideration for others as you are very young. Don't be unreasonable. Are you not fond of good dishes. You do everything in your own way, spurning all criticisms in a rather impulsive manner. Avoid all dampness and have plenty of outdoor exercise.

★

Thiru. I am not going to rely on you. You are cold, a bit selfish and fickle. Don't day dream. With a slow and phlegmatic tendency you are not going to carry out your plans cast out in the dream-land unless you improve in decisions and quickness. You are a hater of conventions. Do not enter into any binding partnership. Shake off that melancholia, and have courage to face the world at all costs. Beware of gastric troubles.

★

S. V. Amirtham. Do you know 'George Eliot' was born on 22nd November! Be ambitious and do not be dilatory. This tendency will cost you much. Care not too much for the opinion of the world or else you will become a victim of the freebooters of the earth at large. Don't incline towards selfishness. Consider well your actions and your associates

45

as you are liable to be connected with some scandal or other. Don't overstrain your body.

★

Desirous (Bombay). Yes! You are desirous of social intercourse, desirous to please and to be liked by all. You hate all kinds of quarrels and strife and you are an incarnation of kindness. Don't be jealous, you will have to regret it at leisure. You are generous to a fault. It is bad to be criminally plain which creates many enemies. Opposite sex plays a great part in your life. Take good care of your lungs and heart.

★

Limboondal. Your fault is you are too proud and fond of showy things. You are not viciously inclined though amorous by nature. You are subtle mentally. You are a peace-maker but you have as many enemies as you have friends. You should select your surroundings carefully. You are very impressionable and so you should always associate with good company. Keep perversity at a distance. Your stomach and digestive organs will need attention often.

★

Samvarnoy. You are amatorial in your tendencies, and inclined towards corruption. Don't miss your opportunities by unnecessary argument and asking for positive proof. Exacting nature is a fault, the result will be a disaster. This tendency you should avoid much in married life. You have intuition and presentiments and have much desire for knowledge. Your senses are inclined to be spiritual rather than sensual. You will have pains in the back and kidneys.

★

T. V. Venkateswaralu. You belong to the elite of mankind. The pleasing expression of your face shows how unselfish you are and how you want to please and be pleased by everybody. You can memorise well. You lack 'money sense'. Are you not doing

doltish things on account of your extreme kindness. Your ambitious nature is seen only mildly. Don't live under uncongenial surroundings. The upper part of the lungs will have troubles often.

★

V. E. S. Gupta. Your affections are more mental than physical. You have a thirst for knowledge and you like to study hidden sciences. Don't hesitate. Act on your first impressions. Hesitation will cost you much in your love-affairs. You hesitate and miss your opportunities. You have a large circle of friends and you are sought after as companion by many. Your thoughts and actions are decisive. You can make a pious theosophist. You are liable to suffer most from nerves and headaches.

★

Swamy. You are mentally ambitious but unless and until you try to overcome your sensitiveness and have self-confidence, you will not be able to fulfil your plans. Why do you recoil from coming before the public? By doing so, you let others take the credit which is actually due to you. You are generous by nature but why do you worry yourself about money matters? Care not for the future. God will provide you sufficiently. Don't go back on promises. Don't be broody and push yourself forward if you want to be successful. You will have disorders of the blood, poor circulation and anaemia.

★

N. K. Iyer. Quick in thought and action, you manifest your mental and physical alertness. You are scheming with tireless activity and are an excellent businessman. You are affectionate and not vicious and amorous. You are rather sarcastic while you dislike the mannerisms in others. Be constant and do everything with interest and with continuity of purpose. Illness in you is only a mental suggestion. If you think you are ill, you are ill; if you think you are cured, you are cured.

Firoji, Kavastri Mistri (Bombay). Do you know Mr. Merry Magus was born on 31st May. You are an excellent businessman. How many ingenious new ways have you discovered for making money? Your argument is full of facts and not fancies and backed by clean logic. You have the gift of divination. Are you not fond of travelling? Develop sufficient amount of will-power and fixity of purpose if you will attain success. You delight in oratorical contests, don't you? You are susceptible to troubles of throat and bronchial tubes.

★

Ramaji. With a strong will-power and tenacity of purpose, you are a good organiser. I will advise you to do everything in your own way as you cannot tolerate any control from others. Though good-natured and munificent, you are impulsive in your actions. Don't become a swelled head by flattery and purchase your ruin by arrogant actions. Don't be tyrannical. You are prone to fevers and diseases of the blood.

★

Chitra. Being a successful speculator, you will have many ups and downs in life. If you are going to be so severe how can you ask for peace and happiness in family? Grip the first opportunity thrown in your way by Fate and don't be vacillating. Are you not religiously inclined? Corruption will be your ruin. You spoil all your gifts by your reasoning faculties. You lack physical strength and will suffer from exhaustion of the nerves.

★

Nala. You are absolutely mundane in your views and argue everything in your own way. Industrious and steady, you will be successful in business. Either in good or evil you are liable to go to extremes. Drugs and drinks have an attraction for you. Don't become the proverbial 'Nala' and leave your family because you are liable to change your views, both religious and worldly, half-way through your life. If you are conventional, it will take no time to be the reverse. Don't imagine that you have any illness.

Sauce For The Ganders

by E. L. Shipman

Reading Time • About 7 Minutes

FLAREUP-on-the-Mire, in the height of its super-abundant pride, had recently constructed for itself, regardless of expense, a new Townhall. There being little or no business of a civic nature warranting the legitimately frequent use of this noble building, the leaders of the community had put their heads together and had, by so doing, arrived at the decision to hire out the hall for lectures or as a theatre whenever and if ever occasion should offer. A stage had been constructed at one end of the hall and, since Flareup could boast of a band of sorts, a space railed off for the orchestra. To one of their number had then been allotted the task of setting the ball rolling and as it were, advertising one of the uses to which the hall could be put by getting into touch with and arranging the advent of some theatrical show such as might seem to him likely to elevate the minds of himself and his fellow townsmen. With the connivance of—not to say at the suggestion of—the local Lord of the Manor, the No. 3 Road Company of Barratry Operatic Productions Limited had been invited to open the season at Flareup-on-the-Mire with that well known and popular play *A Miss Insists*. There had, it is true, been considerable suspicion on the part of the manager of the said No. 3 Road Company as to the probable box-office receipts, but this suspicion had been finally allayed by the town's guarantee of a minimum compensation in return for an undertaking on the part of the theatrical company to play nightly for one week, with two matinees thrown in.

Although the No. 3 Road Company of the Barratry Operatic Productions Limited could hardly be said to amount to a crowd, lodgings had been a little difficult to find in Flareup. The Lord of the Manor had certainly strolled down to the station (the pub at which the bus stopped on its arrival from meeting the train was always known as the station) to meet them on their arrival, but, after one appraising look at the ladies of the company, he had utterly refused to do any entertaining so far as they were concerned. The vicar had moral scruples, or, what is more important, his wife had them for him, and the only other important member of the community—the doctor—was a bachelor, a curmudgeon, a misanthrope and a misogynist, with a decided preference for looking at the insides of people rather than at their outsides. However, a couple of more or less weatherproof barns had finally been secured, tittivated up as far as tittivation would go and commissariat arranged for, and, having thus pleasantly passed the intervening hours, the company were now in the theatre, preparing for their opening performance.

"That orchestra," remarked Fred Flipper, the Comedian, listening from the stage, "is stealing my thunder. How could anyone hope to put a laugh across against such competition?"

To this no one seemed to pay any attention, but:

"Say," called out Marie Misfit, the leading lady, from her vantage point of a peephole in the screen, "the house seems to be fairly full all right."

Further conversation was now put a stop to by the ringing of the bell, and those whose services were not in immediate request hurried off to the wings, while the screen rose slowly on the opening scene.

It is not our place to criticise, nor even to describe the play itself or the performance of it, whether good, bad or indifferent. We are more concerned with the reactions of the audience, many of whom, doubtless, had never in their lives before, witnessed a theatrical performance.

During the first evening all seemed to go off as well as could be expected, which is to say that, although applause was conspicuous by its absence, there appeared to be no adverse criticism, and the final curtain dropped on a not too disgruntled troupe.

The second evening opened with more aplomb. The orchestra had livened up considerably, and the audience had apparently got over some of its initial shyness, for sundry comments—mainly unfavourable, be it said—were tossed from front to rear of the hall and back again.

The third evening produced a still more crowded house, if possible, than the two previous evenings had done, and the criticism had now developed into occasional catcalls, booes and whistles from sundry parts of the house, though these were all still somewhat tentative and, to a certain extent, restrained.

The matinee of the fourth day calls for little remark, the audience being confined chiefly to children and their nurses who appeared to enjoy the show. In the evening, however, matters changed in right earnest. From the start, a packed house vociferated vigorously, and the advent of Fred Flipper, the Comedian, was the signal for a bombardment of missiles, chiefly in the form of eggs, though ultra soft tomatoes were only beaten by a short head. Fortunately, the local inhabitants lacked practice in this form of warfare and the scenery was all that suffered from their ministrations, for, at the end of the evening, the performers were still unscathed.

Early the following morning, Fred Flipper aroused his friend, Herbert Heavyside, the Tragedian.

"Come along," he said, "and let's do some marketing."

"What on earth for?"

"Come and see."

"Oh, all right," said the Tragedian wearily, and got out of bed.

Sometime later:

"What do you want with all those eggs?" enquired Herbert. "You're not *that* hungry, are you?"

"No, but the audience might be."

"Heavens, man!" protested the Tragedian, "you're not thinking of standing on the stage and chucking eggs at them? There'll be a riot."

"Quite so," replied Fred gaily, "but don't you forget that it takes two sides to make a perfect riot."

In the evening the performance had barely commenced when missiles from the audience began to fly in considerable numbers, fortunately again missing their objective, at least in the early stages of the bombardment. During the second act, when his presence was no longer, for the time being, required on the stage, Fred Flipper strolled casually round to the back of the drop scene, picking up his basket of eggs on the way. Shortly thereafter the fun commenced.

Firstly, the leading lady, during a fervently impassioned scene, was surprised into lurid profanity by an exceedingly rotten egg which took her in the back of the ear, and quickly spread itself down her neck and back. The prompter, with commendable presence of mind, cut out a number of cues and called for the next performer, thus allowing the leading lady to retire to a bath. The gunner at the back of the stage had, however, after this one contretemps, found his proper range, and eggs, rotten and otherwise, commenced to sail out into the auditorium, an occasional one or two meeting the opposing barrage and breaking over the orchestra. After a few further practice shots, some really good work was put in from the back of the stage, and the first few rows of spectators speedily showed signs of the battle on their faces and shirt fronts. Ere many minutes of this retaliatory bombardment had been in progress, the audience apparently became peeved with up-to-the-moment results, and the majority of its members now commenced to take a hand. This was more than the players, on their part, could stand, especially with such encouragement in their rear, and both sides were very soon fiercely engaged, the actors deployed behind sundry movable pieces of scenery which they pushed in front of them on to the stage, and the audience in mass formation, while relays of messengers were dispatched to procure ammunition for both armies. Long before the town's egg and vegetable supply had been exhausted (and some bright souls even dug up turnips in a nearby field), both the auditorium and the stage were decorated with a wildly vivid kaleidoscope of splashes. The heavy electroliers above the audience were gaily bedecked with yellow and red stalactites which dripped unceasingly on to the heads below. The orchestra, occupying the unenviable 'no man's land' had suffered fairly severely, and the Bassoon player could still be seen trying, with the inadequate pair of lungs which was all that nature had seen fit to provide him with, to blow out of the bell mouth of his instrument a horrible and cloying mixture of raw egg and tomato. The flutist, being an expert cricketer in his other hours, was ably defending himself with his flute, and, though his visage was yet unmarked, a number of empty shells floating around in a viscous pool at his feet testified to his skill with his improvised bat. The remainder of the musicians had left their instruments and had either joined the main body in the hall or had fled altogether. The appearance of the stage, and to a slightly lesser extent, that of the actors, since (despite their advantage of being under cover) scenery is but made of canvas, and canvas is by no means proof against the harder vegetables when well thrown—almost baffles description.

When, at last, no more ammunition was forthcoming for either side, Fred Flipper the Comedian, rushed forth to the front of the stage.

"Ladies and Gents," he shouted, "the result is a draw."

A burst of hilarious and happy laughter greeted this statement. Then the audience swarmed over the top and rushed the stage, trampling down the instruments in the orchestra *en route*. Players and audience now met in one last wild rally, and the night finally finished up with the singing of *Auld Lang Syne* and *For We are jolly good Fellows*.

"By-the-bye," enquired Herbert Heavyside of his friend Fred Flipper the following morning, "however did you manage to get your first egg across?"

"Through that hole in the drop scene, of course."

"But the hole is only a few inches wide, and you couldn't possibly see to throw an egg through it."

"Oh," replied Fred, "I used a catapult."

SNAPSHOTS—(Continued from page 43)

staring up at the ceiling, his lips moving as if in prayer) Eh? That's right, is it not?

DEWAN (*Lowering his eyes*): No, Maharajah Sahib, naturally not.

ZAMINDAR (*Releasing the big toe of his left foot and glaring at the Dewan*): My God! Positively I think you are a very big fool. (*Pointing dramatically to a stuffed pigeon in a glass case*) See that, eh? Did I not shoot that when it was sitting on a tree? Eh? (*To guest*) Yes, much shooting here, plenty.

GUEST: That's good. But I referred to, er,—slightly larger game; panther, or possibly a tiger or two.

ZAMINDAR (*Shifting uncomfortably*): No, no. Nothing like that. I permit nothing like that in my forests. (*To Dewan*) Do I?

DEWAN: Yes, Highness.

ZAMINDAR (*Giving him a withering glance*): My God, man! What you say? I tell you I do not permit, and you say, you blockhead—'Yes'.

DEWAN: No, your Highness. Certainly not. Such grand animals could not live with Your Highness. No, never. (*To Guest*) You wish to shoot? Well, now—(*considers*).

ZAMINDAR (*To Dewan*): Are you Maharajah to give permission, eh?

DEWAN: I was just thinking—

ZAMINDAR: Psh! (*Snaps fingers*.)

GUEST (*Hurriedly rising*): Well, Maharajah Sahib, I must be going. I have enjoyed my visit immensely. (*Liar!*) Good-bye. (*Extends his hand*.)

ZAMINDAR (*Uncoiling himself and rising in jerks*): Ah! Yes. Good-bye. (*Expectorates in a crimson stream, narrowly missing the guest, who walks quickly to door, down steps, and pauses in front of the rigid figure which stands with hands palm-to-palm, and knees bent. The guest raises his hat reverently to the figure, enters his car, and barks at the driver to leave rapidly.*)

All this was seven years ago. No doubt that figure is still there, with hands palm-to-palm, and knees bent. A few teeth, may be, lie on the ground at his splayed feet, the result of ageing years. Stand in peace, for that is the only peace he will find.



Do you know yourself?

WE know you will say you do. But ten to one you do not. It is a hard job, to weigh yourself, to be aware of your weakness and strength in their true proportions. We generally overestimate our abilities or sadly disparage them to ourselves. Have you seen yourself as others see you?

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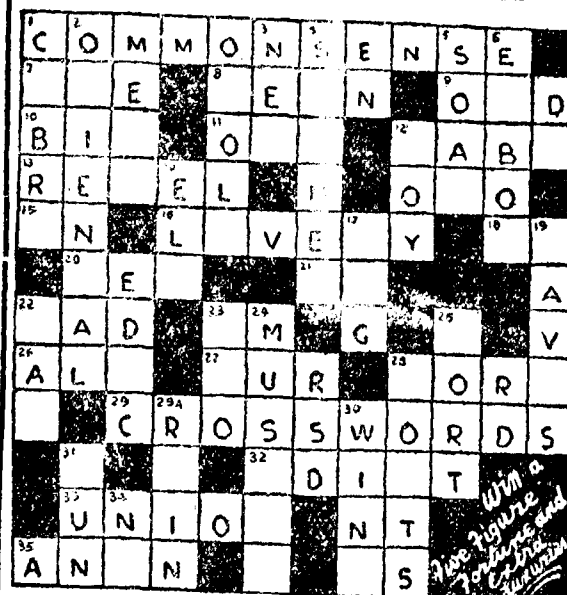
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USE INK OR TYPEWRITER ONLY

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SIMPLE COMMONSENSE CROSSWORDS



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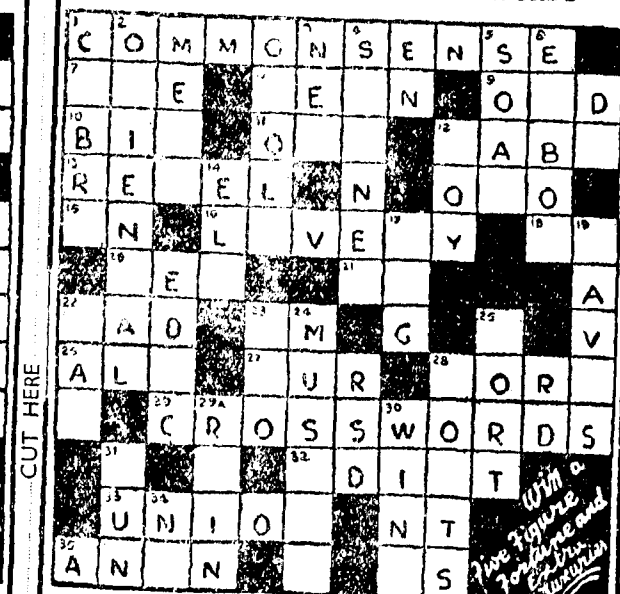
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Address

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Surname and Initials { Mr. Mrs. Miss

Address

POSTAL ORDER NO.

(A.V.) ENTRY NO.

CLUES ACROSS

1. What you have to use in solving this puzzle.
7. Metal is extracted from.
8. Branching ribs in a leaf.
9. Advanced in years.
10. Small piece.
11. Complete and add two letters. It means "Due"
12. Child.
13. Soldiers sometimes do this in war.
15. One.
16. Some women are attracted because they are this.
18. You and I.
20. India's popular beverage.
21. Act.
22. You do not wish to be this.
26. Liquor.
27. Belonging to us.
28. You will hate to be with this sort.
29. What you have to do to earn a fortune.
32. Fool.
33. Concord.
35. Immediately.

CLUES DOWN

1. Venomous snake.
2. Eastern.
3. Recent.
4. You may be committed if you have done this.
5. Very dirty clothes require the use of a good one.
6. To push with the elbow.
12. Native servant in India.
14. 26 across reversed.
17. Stupid person.
19. Projecting edge of roofs.
22. 22 across.
23. Collection of animals.
24. Meditating.
25. Place of safety.
28. Cover feet.
29. (A) Often follows storm.
30. Often encourages gambler.
31. Liked by children.
34. Negative.

Compiler's Sealed Solution lodged with THE IMPERIAL BANK OF INDIA, COCHIN.

Read Rules and Conditions very carefully.

The Entry Fee in this competition is One Rupee for each one entry. Competitors must write their surname only, in block capitals, on the back of the envelopes containing their Entries, stating number of Entries enclosed. Families having the same surname may send in their combined entries in one cover and pay for the same by one Money order or Postal order. The surname of the family and the total number of entries submitted must be written on the back of the cover containing the combined entries. The separate initials of each competing member of the family must be written on their entry coupons.

All entries must be filled in with ink (in block letter) or typewriter. Pencil entries will be disqualified.

All entries must be received by the last post of August 31st 1935. Local entrance fees (in cash only) may be handed over to the counter up to 5 P. M. on the closing date. An extension of three days is allowed to competitors in distant places in India. Any received later will be disqualified.

The first prize will be awarded to the competitor who sends in an all correct solution and which agrees with the compiler's sealed solution. Failing a correct solution, it will be awarded to the nearest correct entry. In case of tie or ties the prize money will be equally divided at the discretion of the Secretary. A winning competitor can receive only one prize in this contest.

Keep an exact copy, so that you can compare it with the correct solution, which will be published in "Madras Mail." on the 4th Sept. 1935. Each wrong word counts as one error. Thus one wrong letter which makes two words wrong counts as two errors, and so on. Any letter space left blank disqualifies the whole coupon.

No claims are required in this contest and the names and addresses of the winning competitors will be forwarded to all competitors who enclose an addressed and sufficiently stamped envelope with their entries. Entrance money must be sent by M. O. or Indian Postal Order only (stamps not accepted). M. O.s must be addressed to "Treasurer" Indo-European Club, Kottayam. Address of the sender must be filled in block capitals on the space for the same in it. M. O. coupon space must not be filled as they are being returned intact. Post office receipt for the M.O.s, (not the acknowledgment) must be affixed to the solutions. If more than one entry is submitted the entrance fees may be sent by one M. O. Indian Postal order remittances must be made payable to "Indo-European Club" and crossed. The postal order must be affixed to the solution and the counterfoil should be retained by the sender. Entrants who remit their entrance fee by postal order must write the official number of the postal order in the space provided on the entry coupons. Where M. O. s or I. P. O. s cannot be obtained, British Postal Orders of equivalent value will be accepted. The same condition applies to these as I. P. O. Employees of the Indo-European Club are not allowed to compete. No responsibility can be accepted for any entries lost, mislaid or delayed. No correspondence can be entered into or interviews granted. The decision of the secretary in all matters relating to this competition is absolutely final and legally binding and is an express condition of entry.

In no case can any entrance fee or monies sent with the entrance fees be refunded or credited to another competition on account. Coupons should be cut round the dotted line and must be sent intact. Plain paper entries similar to these coupons will be accepted. Extra Coupons can be had of "Publicity Dept., Indo-European Club," at annas two for every twenty-five coupons (postage extra) stamps accepted for this. No alterations or corrections whatever will be allowed. Mutilated answers will be disqualified. Competitors submitting more than one entry must number their entries serially.

Prize scheme is proportionate to the collection received. Any entry which does not comply with these rules and conditions will be disqualified. Entries will be acknowledged on receipt of a nine-pie stamp.

Any number of entries may be submitted.

Address all entries to: "SIMPLE COMMONSENSE CROSS WORDS,"

INDO-EUROPEAN CLUB, Club Buildings, KOTTAYAM, S. India.

RESULTS

“Who are they?” Competition

The Correct Solution :

- | | | |
|-------------|------------------|---------------|
| 1. TAGORE | 4. BUSTER KEATON | 7. SUBAS BOSE |
| 2. DICKENS | 5. M. A. ANSARI | 8. AMARSING |
| 3. TENNYSON | 6. NEHRU | |

The Following 12 Readers
share the First Prize of Rs. 250

each getting
Rs. 20/13

1. V. Govindachari, 8, Koregaon Road, Poona. 2. Dr. M. J. Pathak, Bordi P.O., (Thana Dt.). 3. J. M. Alfred, Chengalraopet, Vizagapatam. 4. T. Venkata-
lal, Kothapeta, Vizagapatam. 5. G. Radhakrishnan, Clerk, Construction
Audit, S. I. Ry., Trichy. 6. D. Srinivasaiyer, Kondiampet Agraharam, Tiru-
vanaikoil P. O., (Trichy). 7. B. Narayanaswami Iyer, B. N. P. House, Kumba-
konam. 8. K. Ramaswami s/o Sub-Warden, V. J. Hostel, Kumbakonam.
9. N. S. Sukumaran, c/o Headmaster, Nannilam. 10. C. R. Degaleesan,
44, North Car Street, Chidambaram. 11. P. Ramasami, 1/128, T. H. Road, Ton-
diarpet, (Madras). 12. K. R. Kamala, 1/133, Linga Chetty Street, G.T., Madras.

The following 111 readers
share the Second Prize of Rs. 150

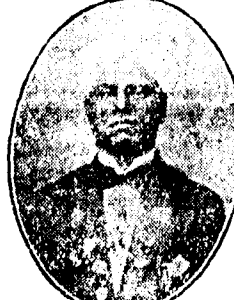
each getting
Rs. 1/6

(1-2) S. Nagarathnam, Lahore. (3) Mrs. B. A. Phillips, Choulakhi. (4) D. G. Sarma, Lohanipur. (5) R. B. Thakor, Ahmedabad. (6) N. D'Mellow, Kaiserganj. (7) S. L. Samidurai, Ramna-Decca. (8) B. Krishna-
murthy, Hyderabad. (9) P. Narasimha Rao, Hyderabad. (10) S. K. Chelliah, Bancelalpet. (11-12) G. V. Gupta, Bombay 14. (13) Dr. D. C. Dhas, Poona City. (14) R. Ramasubbu, Latur. (15) Mohamed Nooruddin, Ichcha-

puram. (16-22) J. M. Alfred, Chengalraopet. (23) S. V. Raghavaiyengar, Bezwada. (24) Dr. M. E. Ananta-
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maran, Nannilam. (71-76) K. Ramaswami, Kumba-
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The Prize amounts will be remitted on 23-8-35.

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LAST DATE FOR POSTING ENTRIES:—31st AUGUST 1935.

ENTRANCE FEE: Re. 1 per entry or Rs. 2 for every 3 entries by M.O. or Indian Postal Orders crossed.

SUBSTITUTE ONE LETTER FOR EACH DASH TO GET THE GIVEN MEANINGS.

Nos.	WORDS.	MEANINGS.	Nos.	WORDS.	MEANINGS.
1	F—R—E—	Unnatural	5	FE—E	One of the.....
2	FAM—	Rumour	6	FR—	A Married Woman
3	F—LE	Trifle	7	FO—	Enemies
4	FL—ER	Flutter			

Rules and Conditions: Sole Reference, Chambers XXth Century Dictionary. Bracketted words are not used. An entrance fee of Rupee One per entry or Rupees Two for every Three entries is payable by M. O. or by Indian postal Orders, crossed. M. O. Receipts must be enclosed along with the entries. Entries on plain paper, with your name and address in Block Letters. Write your name and address and also the number of entries submitted, on the M. O. coupon and also on the reverse of the envelope containing the entries. Any number of entries may be sent at the requisite fee. In the case of larger number of entries, it is enough if the alternatives themselves are shown side by side. The first prize will be awarded to the all-Correct solution agreeing with the sealed key solution kept in safe custody with the Calicut Bank Ltd., Madras, and the second prize to the solution with one-error. In case of ties the prizes will be divided, but every correct solution will receive Rs. 500, whatever may be the number of correct solutions received by us. The results will be published in "THE COMMERCIAL TIT-BITS OF INDIA" on the 10th of September 1935, and copies of the same will be posted only to those enclosing 4 quarter anna stamps along with the entries. The decision of the Competition Editor is final and legally binding and is an express condition of entry. Address all entries and fees to:—

The Contest Editor,

The Commercial Tit-Bits of India, 17 & 18, Broadway, Madras.

WIN Rs. 500 GUARANTEED

IN

The Egeria Missing Letters Competition No. 52.

Easy to Solve! Easier to Win!! Just Try and See!!!

Last Date for RECEIVING Entries:—28th August, 1935.

ENTRANCE FEE: ONLY FOUR ANNAS PER ENTRY

HOW TO WIN

Below you will find 7 incomplete words and in each of them, only one letter is missing, and is marked by a dash. Against each word there is a clue. What all you have to do is to substitute one letter for each dash to get the corresponding meanings. For example, No 1. is DEAR. Similarly, you will have to solve the others. Chambers' XX Century Dictionary (without bracketted or hidden words) is the sole reference to this puzzle.

No.	WORDS.	CLUES	No.	WORDS.	CLUES
1	D—AR	Beloved	5	DO—CE	Sweet
2	D—KE	Ditch	6	DES—RT	Wilderness
3	DRES—	Put on clothes	7	DA—D	Knock
4	DO—SE	Strikes			

Rules:—Those sending single entries can send the entrance fee in quarter anna stamps. Others should send the fee either by M. O. or crossed Indian Postal Orders. In the former case, P. O. receipts for M. O's must be attached to entries. Rupees 450 will be awarded to the senders of correct or nearest correct solutions; Rs. 25 for the first five correct solutions received and Rs. 25 for the sender of largest number of entries. The correct solution is kept sealed with The Calicut Bank, Ltd., Madras. The results will be announced in *The Merry Magazine* of the 7th September. The Manageress' decision is final and legally binding and is an express condition of entry. Entries may be submitted on plain paper in any readable form. The Prize amounts will not be reduced under any circumstances. Address all your entries and fees to:—

The Manageress,

THE EGERIA COMPETITIONS,
Washermanpetta, MADRAS.

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1st Prize (all correct) 2nd Prize (1 error) 3rd Prize (2 errors)
Rs. 3,000. Rs. 2,000. Rs. 1,000.
Last Posting Date 30-8-35. Result after ten days.

Special Prizes:—Rs. 150 and Rs. 100 to the first and second sender of an all correct solution. Rs. 50 each to the first and second sender of one error. Rs. 100 and Rs. 50 to the sender of largest number of entries. Entrance Fee Re. 1 per entry.

HOW TO WIN.—Below you will find the names of seven motor cars with some letters omitted. All you have to do is to substitute one letter for each dash to get the name of motor car. For example, No. 1 is BUICK. Similarly solve the others.

1. — I —
2. R — — —
3. A — — — N
4. — AL — OT
5. M — — —
6. PA — — ARD
7. — O — — —

Rules.—Correct solution is that which agrees with the sealed correct solution deposited with our BANKERS (P. S. Rathod Contractors, PURNA, N. S. Rly.). Money order receipt must be attached to entries. Entries on plain paper accepted. No responsibility accepted as to entries mislaid, lost or delayed. Any numbers of entries may be sent with the requisite fees. Please enclose a self addressed stamped envelope with entries. The prize amount may vary in proportion to ten thousand entries. In case of ties, prize will be divided. Manager's decision is final, legally binding and express condition of entries. Any competitor not complying with any of the above rules will be disqualified.

Address all Entries and M. O. to the Manager:

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NEAR STATION,
PARBHANI, N. S. Rly., (Nizam State).

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Puzzle No. 12

Only three words to solve.

Rs. 1000 Guaranteed in Prizes.

Rs. 750 All Correct

Rs. 250 to the sender of the largest number of sets (Minimum ten)

Entrance fee Re. 1 per entry or Rs. 5 for any number of entries.

Last Posting Date 27-8-35.

Result 10-9-35.

COMPLETE THE WORDS TO FIT WITH THE CLUES

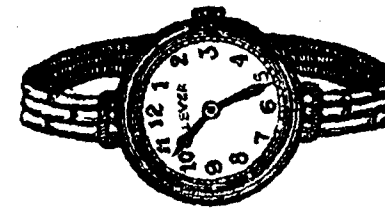
No.	Words.	Clues.
1.	ARM —	Necessary in war.
2.	L — AD	Strong men Can carry this.
3.	SK — LL	Archaeologists reveal this.

Plain paper entries accepted. Sealed solutions with the people's Bank Ltd. Other rules as usual. Book is being sold at Re. 1-8-0 Postal orders will be accepted. Address your entries and fees to

The Manager,

INTELLIGENT COMPETITION BUREAU,
VIRAMBAM ; : (B. B. C. I. Ry.)

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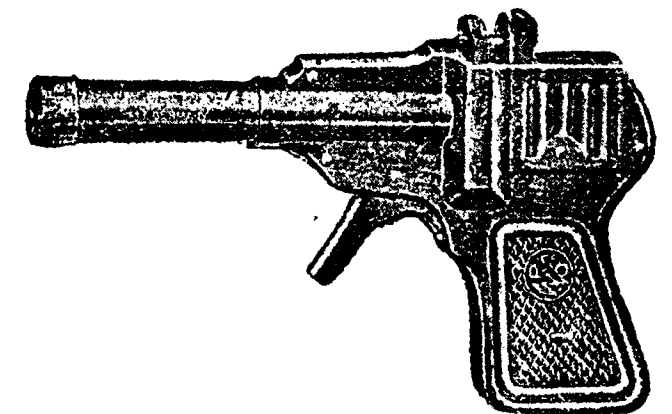
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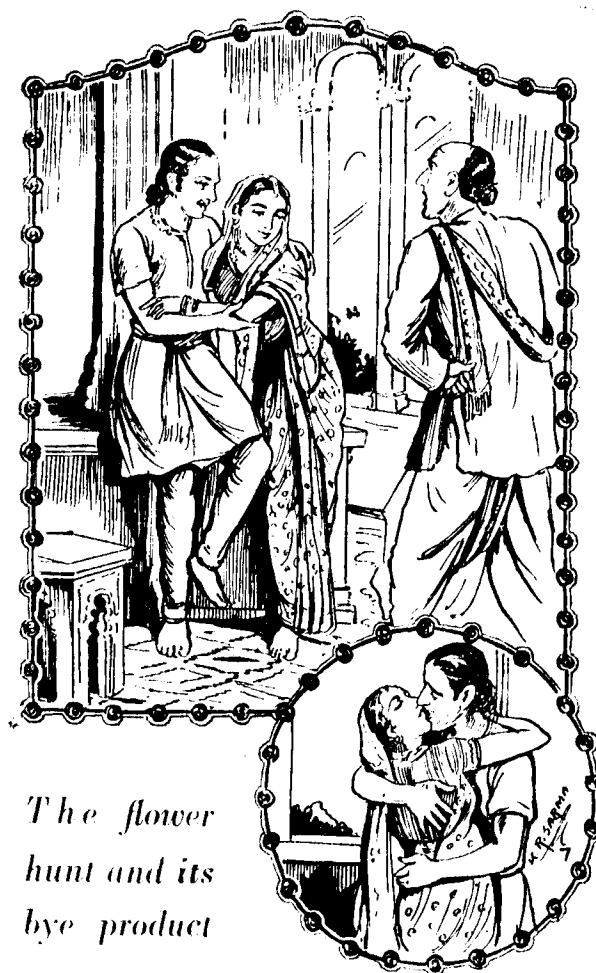
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