

III 1215 The
MERRY
MAGAZINE



'Ram' —
K. N. Swami

August 24
1935

— 'Kaiser'
'Embusque'

c t o p u s  by Scott-O'Connor

THE
MERRY
MAGAZINE

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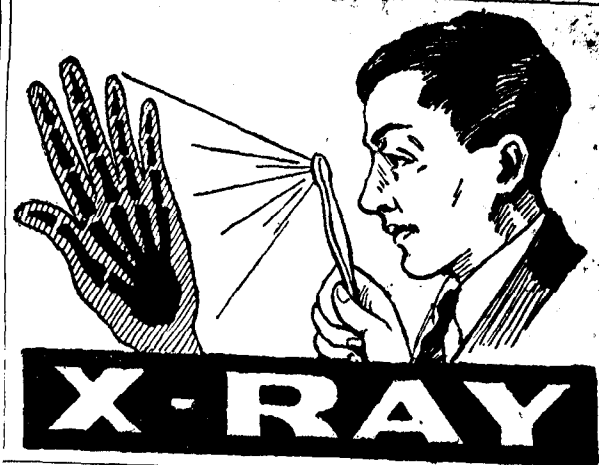
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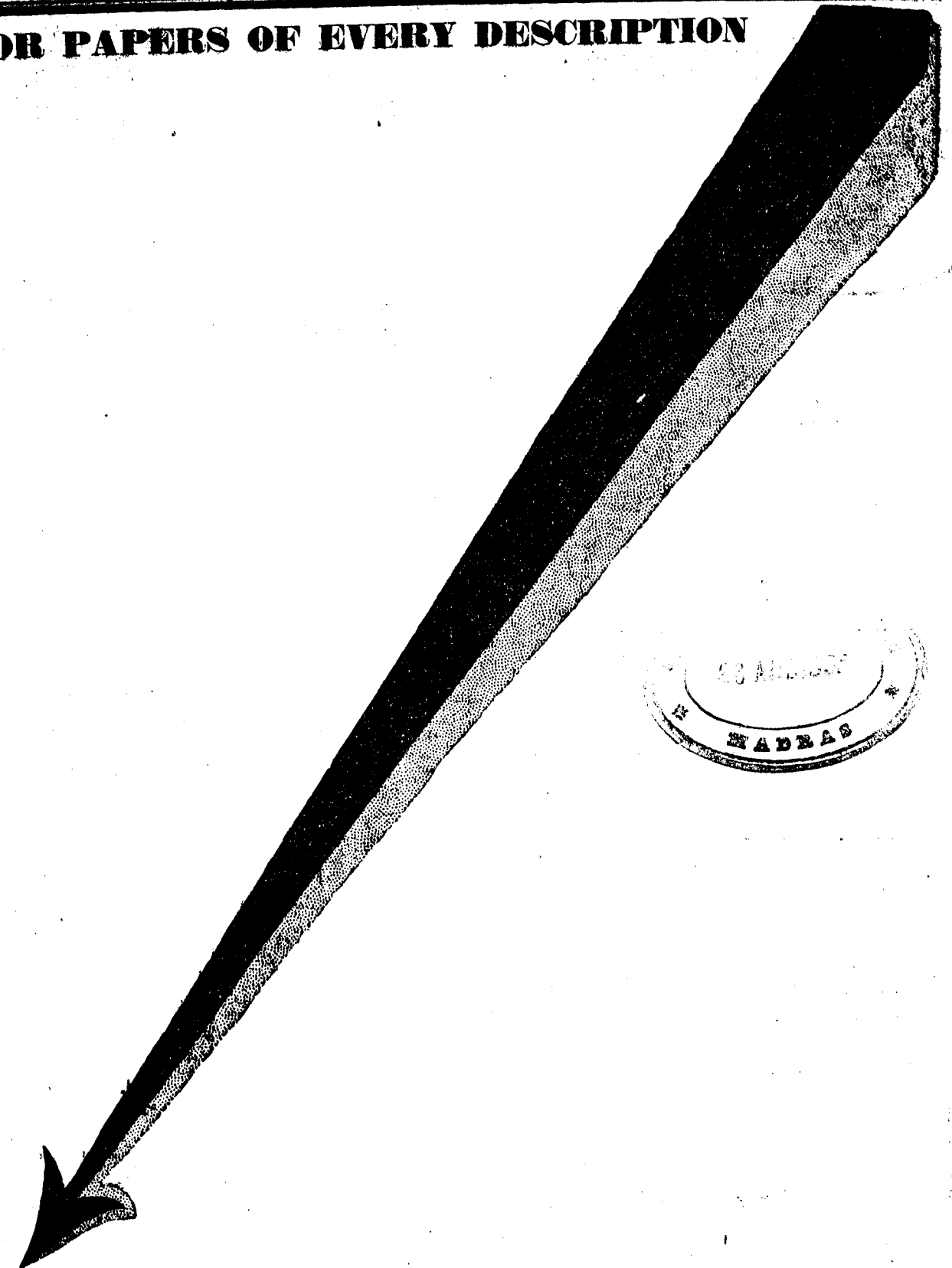
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The MERRY MAGAZINE

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Next Week: On Wasting Time—Ram



Embusque

At the Old Rest House

A manufactured ghost, with a trail of tragedy in its wake.

John A. Henry

Shadows

The story of a cad and his vendetta.

H. V. Collett

On Parrots

It will never do to get fresh with parrots.

R. Jagannathan

Madame Resourceful

From underdog to topdog, all through madame's resourcefulness.

J. J. Sando

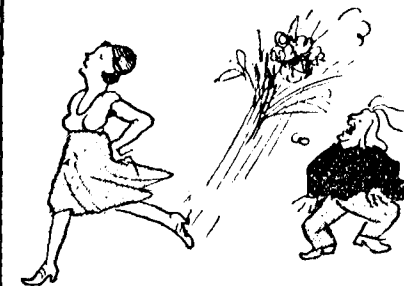
Paralysis

Don't scratch the other fellow's head!

Also

MacNaughton Thomas, Rasool, Ramani and usual features.

SPARKS FROM OUR ANVIL



It is understood that the Labour Party has turned down a proposal to join forces with Mr. Lloyd George in fighting the next elections.

The New Deal seems to be undergoing a re-deal!

Speaking at an anti-Jewish demonstration, Herr Streicher referred to the foreign press and said: 'I know of no lower profession than making a business out of lies.'

Unlike the Nazis who practise them for mere pleasure!

Herr Goebbels has nominated Herr Hitler for this year's Nobel Peace Prize.

In the event of the award going to him, there is every likelihood of the prize money being devoted to further cleaning-up of Jews from Germany.

A cricket writer recalls that in a former England-Australia test match, all the eleven English players bowled.

This can only be paralleled by recent matches in which all the eleven English players have *batted*!

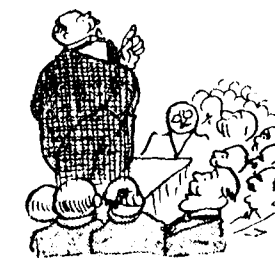
In the course of a tribute to Lord Willingdon at the Planters' annual conference, Mr. F. E. James is reported to have said: 'In the economic sphere he has had to face a severe economic crisis.'

After all, the 5% cut lasted only a short time!

Says a fashion-note: 'The recent heat-wave has produced something new in head-wear.'

At other times, the credit generally goes to the brain-wave.

Addressing a London meeting to promote an 'all peoples' peace conference', Lord Allen of Hurtwood is reported to have said: 'Because we have been the chief robber, we must be the chief initiator.'



Exactly what Mussolini wants England to be!

Referring to the future programme of the Justice Party, the hon'ble Mr. P. T. Rajan declared that it was too early to formulate it.

By and by, it will be too late!

From an account of the proceedings of a special Corporation meeting: 'Mr. Ramaswamy Mudaliar asked Mr. Venkatachalam Chetty not to see things below the horizon, even if they were transparent to his eyes.'

That was why Mr. Venkatachalam Chetty saw *through* them!

A young Justicite League has been formed, pledged to the oaths of secrecy and allegiance to the Rajah of Bobbili.

We are unable to determine how it is different from the old Justice Party.

As a gesture of good-will, the Burma Council wants Burma's debts to India to be paid by Britain.

If Britain pays, it cannot be with a good-will!

Another resolution claims that Burma owes no debt to India on account of the Burma Railways.

We didn't know that we owned the Burma Railways!

The Ripon Club, Bombay, gave a party to Sir H. P. Mody to congratulate him on the knighthood conferred on him.

And yet, foreigners say that we, Indians, have no sense of humour!

Sir Cowasji Jehangir has been telling people in Scotland that 12 supermen are required to look after India.

In sending out Lord Linlithgow as our next viceroy, Britain seems to think it's enough to send *one* Scotchman.



He added further: 'One mistake made in the next year or two will spell disaster not only for India but for the mother-country.'

This has caused us to wonder what is Sir Cowasji's mother-country!



Melancholy Meanness

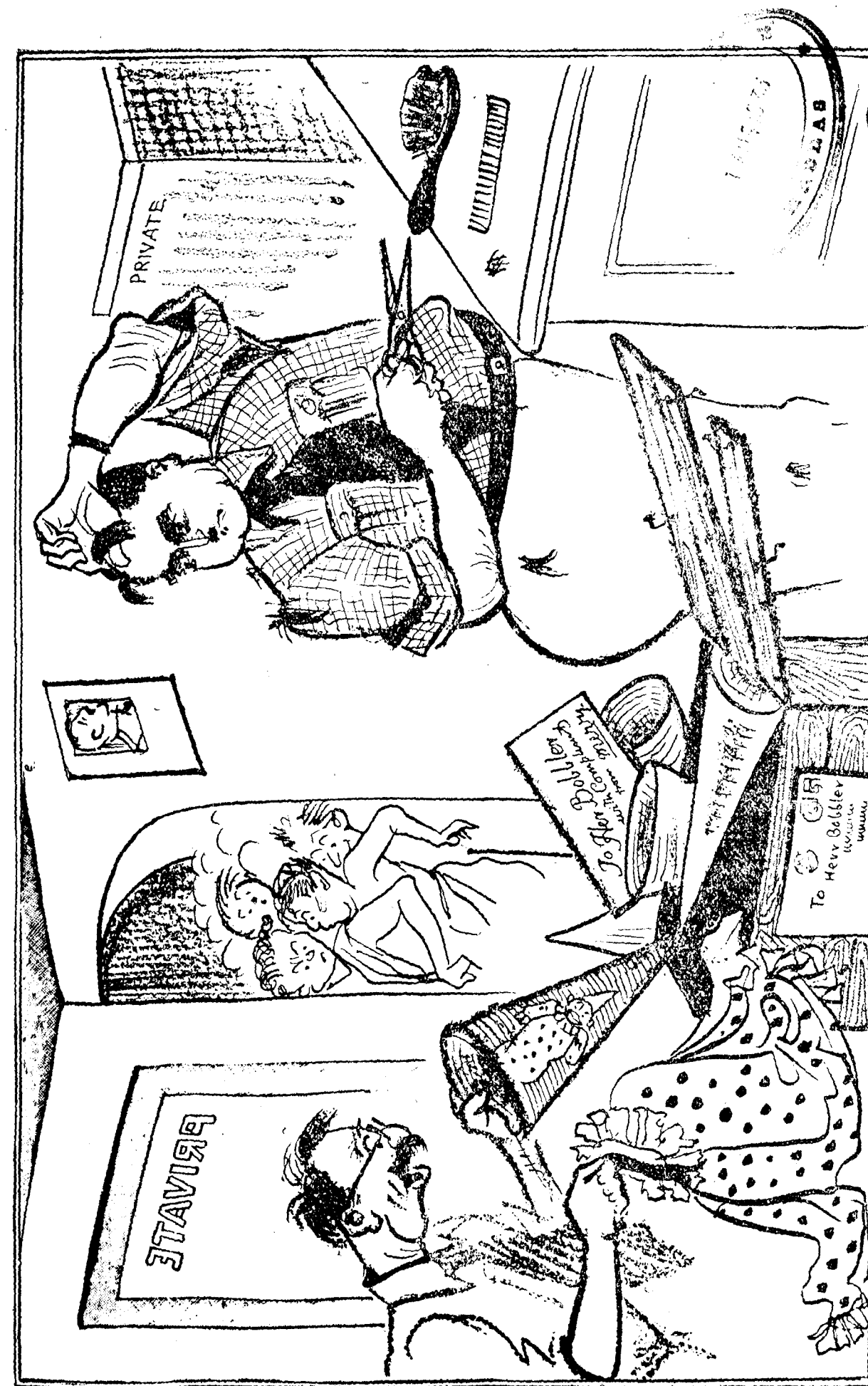
A famous judge once defined a corporation as having neither a body to be kicked, nor a soul to be damned. Animated, no doubt, by some such encouraging thought, the Justice councillors of the city have turned down a proposal to accord a civic welcome to the President of the Indian National Congress. A civic welcome is an expression of corporate civility shown to distinguished men for services rendered to the community or the country. Politicians have monopolised this kind of honour in the west; and the grace of the compliment has often-times been enhanced by its being bestowed on political opponents. It commits nobody, but is a pleasing amenity that serves to promote mutual esteem among political opponents. But the Justice councillors were inspired by the Sakuni-like malignity of Mr. Ramaswamy Mudaliar into committing an act of bad manners for which there can be no excuse. One of Burke's famous exhortations to politicians is to 'sacrifice to the Graces.' The reasons advanced by the Dewan Bahadur serve only to put him and his party instantly out of court. To say that Mr. Rajendra Prasad comes to fight his party is to advertise an inveterate and suicidal hatred of Congress, as also to admit that the interests of his party cannot be served except at the cost of the interests of the country as a whole! This cannot fail to be noted by the electorate; and the



Congress will not cease to be national for exploiting this exhibition by the Justices of a melancholy meanness. Incidentally, it should serve to open the eyes of the rest of India to the existence of a definitely antinational, but indigenous element in the south; and to discredit in advance its possibility of being heard in the councils of the country. A political party cannot hope to thrive by methods reminiscent of an Italian Vendetta. Incidents like the present one are a reminder of the old warning: 'Whom the gods would destroy, they first enrage.'

A Sense of Humour

The announcement of the formation of a Young Justicite League has coincided with a discussion in the press on the subject: Do Indians have a sense of humour? Judging from the rules and conditions, the Young Justicites League seems to be a terrible indictment of our lack of it! It seems to be an uncertain dilution of the Nazi ritual of the worship of Hitler. We do not know if the Rajah Saheb is anxious to star forth as a 'pinchbeck' Hitler. That would seem to depend entirely on the momentous question of whether the Rajah Saheb has not or has a sense of humour. Since the shirt as a distinguishing emblem has been somewhat over-worked, may we suggest to the young crusaders something striking by way of head-dress, to wit, a foolscap?



HEIL BOBBLER!

A Young Justicite League owing undivided allegiance to the Rajah of Bobbili is formed. Mr. Merry is doing his bit to make it a grand affair. He sent to their headquarters a boxful (free) of distinctive uniforms for the noble band, as the coloured shirt idea has now become effete.

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The Trap—

by John A. Henry

Reading Time • About 7 Minutes

“SHYNESS,” said Hilda, “is a crime. It also shows that one has bad manners. It is a devastating, destructive habit!”

She was very emphatic, and Ronald squirmed. His blush turned into something even stronger than a blush. His face blazed red in the moonlight.

“It is,” went on Hilda severely, “worse than having pneumonia. Young men these days shouldn’t possess the awful disease.”

“B—but, I don’t possess pneumonia,” Ronald stammered, fidgeting with his tie.

“I meant shyness, silly.”

No reply from Ronald. The balcony of his small flat was bathed in moonlight. He could see Hilda’s exquisite face dimly outlined in its silvery radiance. And he decided that she was a wonderful girl. He had decided the same thing some six months previously. But he had always been afraid to say anything about it.

“Isn’t the moonlight marvellous?” Hilda’s voice was softly inviting.

“Er—yes, er—but they s—say that it drives some people mad,” said Ronald.

Hilda looked justly disappointed. How could she get him to come out of his shell and hold her hand and tell her all the sweet things she wanted to hear? She racked her pretty head for a solution, but it eluded her.

“I suppose,” she went on, “that there are hundreds of boys and girls in Bombay out in this glorious moonlight to-night.”

“Yes,” from Ronald. “Er—I suppose so. Yes.”

“And I suppose most of them are holding hands and whispering sweet nothings to each other,” Hilda’s voice was even softer now.

Ronald shifted uneasily in his chair.

“And I suppose,” he said desperately, “that there are a lot of ice-creams being eaten too. Will you have one?” He half rose from his chair.

Hilda stamped a tiny, pretty foot.

“You—you make me tired,” she said. “Oh you—you—oh you Ronald!” She was pouting, but Ronald didn’t see the pout.

“B—but why?” he sounded hurt.

“Never mind why. Did you invite me here to-night merely to discuss ice-creams with me?”

“N—no,” he sounded absolutely distressed now. “I invited you here for supper.”

Hilda clapped a hand to her head.

“Oh!” she wailed, “was there ever such a foolish man?”

She was silent for a moment. Then:

“Do you love me, Ronnie?” her voice was soft again. Ronnie’s heart beat faster.

“Well—er—well,” but he could get no further. His speech sort of collapsed. He really *couldn’t* chance telling this exquisite girl that she maddened him and that she meant more to him than the whole of the world put together in one heap. He felt sure that if he did, she would merely laugh him to scorn.

Hilda’s heart went out to this good-looking, shy boy before her. But she had decided long ago that she wasn’t going to throw herself at any man’s head.

“Do you?” she repeated.

“Er—er, let’s go in and have a bit of supper now,” said Ronnie. And they left the balcony and went inside where a small table was neatly laid for two. A white clad servant hung deferentially about in the background.

Hilda and Ronnie seated themselves.

“How old are you?” she asked abruptly.

“Twenty-six,” was the shy reply.

“Good Heavens! What you want is a girl to look after you! Look at the dust on this chair!”

“My servants are usually pretty good, but—but well—er—you know.”

“I don’t. And I repeat, you should be married. Just think of it! Children—happiness—”

She broke off as she saw Ronnie go a bright crimson. She felt like throwing her arms round his neck and cuddling his curly head on her soft shoulder. She had thought, on dozens of occasions, that this boy she loved was going to be sensible and propose. And on each

(Continued on page 8)

Announcement

IN this issue Deisvi’s great serial story, “The Misfortunes of Meena,” comes to a happy ending. Readers may be aware that Meena is the third creation of Deisvi. It has been usual to elicit readers’ opinions on Deisvi’s serial stories, and the Editor, in conformity with this policy, has now pleasure in inviting readers’ opinions on Deisvi’s serial story, “The Misfortunes of Meena.” A prize of ten rupees is offered for the best review or opinion given by readers. Such opinions or reviews should not exceed 1500 words in length and the Editor’s decision is final.

THE TRAP—(Continued from page 6)

occasion he had stammered and stuttered and shut up like an oyster. She had decided long ago that it must be some dreadful, nerve-numbing type of shyness.

She left that night with the touch of his hand still burning in her own. He had shyly asked her to call round again the next evening for another comfortable supper.

In the quiet of her own little room she schemed great schemes. She was determined to set a happy snare for Ronnie. A snare that would at last make him realise that she loved him.

"John," she said next day to a young friend of hers, "I want you to do me a favour." And then she told

him about Ronnie and her failure to make him speak.

"I'll do anything for you, old girl," he said when she had finished.

"You know Ronnie well?" she asked, and he nodded.

"At school together," he said.

"Well," Hilda went on, "I want you to come along to his flat to-night without him noticing you. Bring a camera with you. And some of that—what do you call it?—magnesium powder. Get on to the balcony somehow and hide yourself. Don't, for heaven's sake, let Ronnie know you're there. There are some palms on

(Continued on page 41)



There was a sudden blinding flash.....

The New Pied Piper

by 'Kaiser'

Reading Time • About 6 Minutes

LET no one think that I write this as a skit or in a humorous vein. We ought not to be humorous about humour. Humour talks lightly about serious things. So we must talk seriously about humorous things. That is one reason for the serious tone of this article. The other reason is that I have little or no humour in me today. I had some humour in me or rather had many humours in me. But that was long ago. I took to a serious profession and so had to profess seriousness. What humour can there be in a plaint or in a judgment? Humour always goes with the care-free life of a bachelor. Adam must have been a genuine humourist before he lost his rib and his humour. I am sure that Eve as a spinster had bubbling humour in her while yet she was a spinster. Probably both continued to be incarnations of laughter, holding their sides until Eve heard the voice of the wise serpent. It is Learning that kills Laughter. Added to this depressant was the supreme depressant—the cares of family life. One Cain is enough to murder not only Abel but all the joyousness in the hearts of Adam and Eve. If one issue could effect such a result, what would happen to lawyers and judges who have to get on with many issues day after day? Besides this, you know that a judge should not joke. Though both begin with J they are not allowed to have any other affinity.

No wonder that the incubus of learning and the heavier incubus of job-hunting and the awful sight of the flaming sword and of the angelic cohorts combined to banish humour from the ancient world. Whatever spare time a man could get after filling his granary and beheading his enemy was spent by him in trying to walk with God, or in imagining that he was doing so. Till he could extort plenty from the grudging earth, every man was to him a potential foe. In fact there could be but little humour until the belly is full and the head is light (but not empty) and the heart has not only the life-giving blood but also the joy-giving milk of human kindness and the honey of affection. I do not think that the medicos who revel in Anatomy and other gruesome sciences will by ripping open the heart find any milk or honey there. Even an X-Ray photograph will show nothing. Only a joy-ray photograph will reveal it. The solitary humorist was possibly the priestess at Delphi, who told both Greeks and Romans that "The Greeks the Romans shall conquer." Even there the point of the joke was lost altogether on the too serious war-lords of those days. You see the war-lords are always too martial to be jovial. It requires detachment as well as supremacy to feel the joy of life. Poor Alexander sighed that there were no more worlds to conquer, forgetting that by conquering the world he had lost it while he would have kept it by laughing at it.

Ancient Indian humour was like the snakes in Iceland and existed as much as they existed i. e., not at all. Man was looking too often and too far beyond the clouds to know the happenings on the earth. Whenever fire or flood or wild animals turned his attention to the earth with a sudden shock or when the almighty urges of food and sex tended in the same direction, he fled or snarled or hit or he snared or caught. Where then had he the time for laughter? If at all there was a time for that fair visitant whose visits were few and far between, it was when some other caveman was carried off by a tiger or wrestled with an attack of colic ere yet the doctors were born and shut him up and added the new horrors of medicine to the old horrors of disease. And even in later times when a settled life based on agriculture had come, there was not a rich variety of incongruity and a richer incongruity of variety of life. The trivial peccadilloes behind the purdha of shut-up women, the fat ascetics starving in public and gorging themselves behind their purdah, and such other broadly farcical aspects of life caught the eye and became stereotyped in literature. The *Prahasanas* were only grins and not comedy at all.

When did real genuine humour originate? It originated only after man mastered agriculture sufficiently and so was not vexed by food problems, after he got tired of knowledge of which he was once very proud, and after he ceased to strain his eyes in thinking of the back of the beyond. I have read much about the comic muse and her birth and growth but I have no faith in what the theorists—from Aristotle to Meredith and Bergson—say about the subject. They all walk backwards like crabs. Humour is not due to joy in another's misfortune or to personal elation or to the superiority complex or any of the other imaginary causes at all. It is as much an overflow of personality as love or anger or fear or pity. The Indian theory of *Rasa* is correct so far as it goes. But there also the theorist's hand is too obvious. Life is too compressed into a theory. Puck making Titania clasp Bottom, Pickwick observing human nature and noting down the cabman's observations, and getting punched for his ardent study of human and even equine nature, and Pickwick in pursuit of his hat during the military manoeuvres are laughable incongruities of life.

We have heard much about "What a piece of work is Man!" Let us go and hear "What a piece of waste is Man!"

It was only in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries that the Pied Piper humour came to rid us of the vermin of variety and pride and self-righteousness. Humour then came into its own in Europe. It was only in the

(Continued on page 16)

The MISFORTUNES of Meena



STORY BY
DEEVI
ILLUSTRATED BY
SEKAR

The Story so Far.

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

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

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

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

Kamakshi, Rangaswamy's sister, writes to him and he comes to Mayavaram with a forged document purporting to be the last will and testament of Meena's fictitious father. This document somewhat reassures the Dikshidar family about the origin of Meena's birth. But through a *Sudra* woman. As Meena grows up, she notices the way in which the *Agraharam* people behave towards her.

rumour had gone round the *Agraharam* to the effect that Meena was born to Brahmin Rangaswamy Iyer and his wife and even the young doctor Raghava

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

Rangaswamy had perforce to take away his daughter from the Brahmin family. He takes Meena with him to Chingleput where she is trained by an old Brahmin widow to cook and learn other household duties. She is also a great favourite with the Railway staff at the junction. She takes a wager with the cook at the Railway Refreshment Room that she would cook a better dish of *Uppumav* than the cook. The wager is accepted and a stranger—a railway passenger—is called in to adjudge and make the award. He decides that Meena's dish is the better of the two and—to marry her.

His offer of marriage is rejected at first. But Rangaswamy Iyer finds that people had somehow become aware of Meena's parentage and are unwilling to entertain any proposals for her marriage. He finally agrees to the original proposer, Mr. Somayajulu, a Telugu Brahmin of a Native State. On the evening of the marriage Mr. Somayajulu threatens to take Meena with him and insults Rangaswamy. Hot words are exchanged and to Rangaswamy's mortification Somayajulu says that he knows Meena to be the daughter of Ramathilakam whose husband is serving a term in the Penitentiary. Meena overhears this and Rangaswamy hastens to put her at ease.

Meena decides to follow her husband. 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. He had been choosing and marrying wives from all corners of the country mainly with a view to offering 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. A gang of men under instructions from his son-in-law waylay him and take him into a grove at dusk. Rangaswamy is threatened with death. A pit is ready and he is told by his son-in-law that he will be buried alive.

Rangaswamy undertakes not to enter the State and returns to Madras. With the help of the Intelligence Department he arranges to have a notorious dacoit, Maruti, sent to the Nizam's State to rescue Meena. The dacoit, under the guise of tamer of bear, conveys a message of hope to 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 and his men pursue this cart and overtake it.

After sending Somayajulu on a wild-goose-chase Maruti cleverly manages to escort Meena to her father who is waiting with a car according to pre-meditated plans. Meena safely arrives at Bezvada and arrangements are being made for her return to Madras.

Rangaswamy shifts his residence to Villivakkam and Meena is admitted into the training school for mistresses in the city. One day, on her way to the city, Meena has an accident at the Central Station. A doctor who was among the crowd renders first-aid and takes her home in his car. The wound caused during the accident turns septic and Meena hovers between life and death for a fortnight. A night of crisis is passed and dawn breaks.

The Story Concluded

Her Dream Come True

MEENA was sleeping when the doctor arrived in the morning. He felt her pulse, saw the beads of perspiration on her forehead and tip-toed out of the room. There was an easy-chair in the verandah. Dr. Raghava sank into the chair, took out his handkerchief and mopped his brow.

"Thank God, it is over!" he said fervently.

"Is she out of danger, doctor?" asked Rangaswamy anxiously.

"The worst is over. But there is a lot of work ahead. She must be nursed very carefully."

"You have taken a great deal of trouble over her, doctor. You have given her a new life. I don't know how I can ever hope to repay your kindness."

"Never mind about that now. Don't run away with the impression that she would be alright in a couple of days. For a fortnight or even a month, perhaps, we must not relax our vigil."

It was during the convalescent period of her illness that Meena realised how much those around her loved her. Her father Rangaswamy, Etchi and Ella, Mr. Sivaswamy Iyer and his wife and even the young doctor Raghava

Rao, all were overjoyed at Meena's recovery from her serious illness. Meena could not help thinking of the young doctor often. He was taking more interest in her than any doctor would take in a patient and that too, in a patient who couldn't be expected to pay amply for the doctor's services. She learnt from her father that nothing had been paid to the young doctor and that there was some arrangement between Mr. Sivaswamy Iyer and the doctor about the settlement of the doctor's bills. Meena found herself wondering if the doctor had any children. He was handsome and his children would certainly be pretty, little tots. And then, her mind dwelt on the dream she had. She sighed. How could she ever even dream of having a baby with golden curls? Thank God she was rescued from Warkal and alive to-day! She ought to be thankful for that much and ought not to grumble or dream impossible pleasant dreams.

A month after her accident, one Thursday evening, Dr. Raghava permitted Meena to take an oil-bath the next-day and also to take rice and such dishes as she was accustomed to.

"My work is over and there won't be any necessity for me from to-morrow to visit you," Dr. Raghava was saying sadly. "I want you to keep in mind a few hints. Light exercise, that is, walking both in the morning and evening is necessary. If your father could manage to give you a change of place—say to Bangalore—it would be excellent. As regards food, I have already given you a list of what to eat and what not to eat. Don't forget the daily orange and the dose of tonic. Watch your bowels. And that is all, I think, for the present."

"I'll remember everything, doctor. When may we expect your bill?"

"Mr. Sivaswamy Iyer said that I should send it to him. I have an appointment with him to-morrow morning."

"He has been very kind to me, doctor. And you too! I want you to know that I feel that money cannot recompense all the trouble you have taken."

"That's a pretty speech. Thank you. I am afraid that on the day of the accident, when I dressed that wound, I wasn't careful enough. I have been feeling, all along, that the sepsis was due to my carelessness. Now that you are alright, a load is off my mind. Where is your father?"

"He is in the back-yard. I shall call him."

"Don't trouble yourself. I merely want to say good-bye to him."

The Friday was a day of rejoicing. Meena had an oil-bath. A cook who had been engaged temporarily during Meena's illness prepared her favourite dishes. In the evening, she asked Etchi to comb and plait her hair. Robing herself in a light *saree* and adorning her hair with flowers, she asked Ella to remove the easy-chair to the back-yard verandah. Lounging in the chair and with Tamil novels to while away the time, she was in a gay mood. Her father Rangaswamy, who had left for the city in the afternoon, returned earlier than usual. When he saw her in the back-yard, lounging in the chair, an enthralling vision of pale ethereal beauty, her large eyes

still bearing traces of the pangs of her serious illness—he had not the heart to tell her news of the calamity which he had been keeping away from her and which gave her no right to wear flowers or other marks of a married Hindu woman.

"What's wrong, father?" she asked him, noting the grave expression on his face.

"Nothing, my dear."

"But you look very serious. Ill?"

"Yes: somewhat: it's a cold."

"You ought to see Dr. Raghava about it."

A laugh was heard behind her. Meena turned and saw Dr. Raghava standing, framed by the door.

"Who ought to see me and why?" asked he, smiling.

Meena was about to rise from the chair, when Dr. Raghava came to her side and motioned her not to disturb herself. Rangaswamy brought a chair and offered it to the doctor.

"You are looking very well to-day," said Dr. Raghava and looked up at Rangaswamy and asked, "don't you think so?"

"Yes, doctor, thanks to you."

"Bring another chair and sit down. I want to talk to both of you."

Ella came running. "Iyer's car has come! The driver wants you!" said he to Rangaswamy. Rangaswamy hurried to the street.

"You are looking very serious, doctor," remarked Meena.

"I see I am no good at concealing my feelings. I haven't had a wink of sleep all last night. I have such a load on my mind. Yesterday, I took leave of you. You may think it strange that I should turn-up so soon as to-day. In fact, I felt that I should see you and your father—"

Rangaswamy came and apologised:

"Mr. Iyer wants me and I have got to see him. Meena, there is some *palakaram* and coffee ready. See that the doctor is served. See you later, doctor." And Rangaswamy left the back-yard in haste.

Meena was puzzled. "What's worrying you, doctor?" she asked, sincerely anxious to understand his troubles.

The doctor looked her straight in the face and said, "You!"

Meena knitted her brows. "Am I not quite alright, doctor?"

"Yes: so far as you are concerned."

"Then?"

"Meena! Have you no eyes? Don't you see, my dear, that I love you?"

Meena sank back in the chair and closed her eyes. After what seemed to Dr. Raghava an eternity, she opened them full of tears. "I am sorry, doctor," was all that she said.

"Sorry for what, my dear?"



"When she was barely an hour o'd, her mother placed this hand in mine"

"For you and me. You know I am another man's wife. I know how noble, kind and large-hearted you are. I hope I haven't unconsciously given you any hope to think that I could ever return your affections. Aren't you married, doctor?"

"Good Lord, no! What sort of cad would I be.....never mind! Listen to me, Meena! I know all about you and your family. If you weren't another man's wife, if you had the freedom to choose a mate for yourself, would you, could you, bring yourself to think kindly of me?"

"It's a difficult question to answer, doctor. I wish it were given to me to live my life once again in the manner in which I should like to shape it and live."

"In such an eventuality, I ask, would there be any hope for me?"

"To be perfectly frank with you, if such a thing were possible, the affections of a man like you would be my dream come true."

"Thank you, my dear. May I have some more frank answers? Excuse this inquisition; but it is necessary for the peace of my mind. Did you love your husband very much?"

"I hate him. I've hated him always!"

"That'll do, my dear. Let us not think ill of men who are no more!"

"What?"

"Yes: he is dead!"

"When? How?"

"I don't know the details. On the day when you had the accident, your father got the news. Under my advice, he was prevented from communicating the news to you. May I proceed?"

Meena indicated by a nod that he may.

"Your first objection, my dear, of being another man's wife is therefore of no consequence. I don't know what ideas you have of love, marriage, widowhood and all the rest of them. When I took you in my arms, after the accident, to render you first-aid, I knew you were the one girl in the world I would care for. Call it instinct, intuition, whatever you like. And when immediately I saw the *Mangalyam* round your neck, my sense of elation sank to the lowest depths of torturing hell. Later, when I learnt from your father that even when I was holding you in my arms, you were free, my joy knew no bounds. You say your life has been one of misery. I pray you, give me the chance to make it happy. Try me, test me, and see for yourself how selfless my love is and can be."

Meena hung down her head and her hands clutched at the arms of the chair in her effort to steady herself. After a silence that seemed an eternity to the doctor, she said;

"Let me tell you, doctor, that I have always thought of you as a married man with a pretty wife and lovely little children. If I have any respect for your status, for your family, for your noble nature, I would be a vile woman if I allowed you even to touch me. I am tainted:

born of sin: a refuse. Would you offer a putrid carcass to the Sun-God?"

"Hush! You are too precious, my dear. Why do you say such things?"

"You don't know the story of my life."

"I know."

"Who told you?"

"If you must know, Mrs. Sivaswamy Iyer."

"Knowing that this wretched body has been abused by that monster of a husband, you still want me, contrary to custom, convention, and common-sense?"

"I want you, Meena, the precious gem, the pure being, which men and things cannot defile or tarnish. I love you—you the real Meena."

"This is too good to be true. I am sure I must be dreaming."

"Give me your hand and let us both, hand-in-hand, explore this dream-land. See! A little cottage with ivy clinging to its gables and fragrant jasmine in bloom. Look, in yonder garden a golden-curved, chubby-little-rascal is playing with a pup. Let's call him in one voice! Let's call him 'Rama!'Hush, my dear, why do weep?"

"It's my dream come true! And even Maruti asked me, 'How about a Rama?'"

"There, there! Rest your head on my shoulder. God! How fragrant the flowers on your hair are! Come, let me kiss those tears away."

"No, doctor. Do not kiss me—do not pet me. I am unworthy. I have no right to such happiness."

"Why, my darling?"

"Oh, I don't know. I wish I were eleven and not sixteen. And my father? And Mr. Sivaswamy Iyer? And the people? What will they say?"

"Leave people alone, my dear. This morning I saw Mr. and Mrs. Sivaswamy Iyer and told them frankly of my feelings towards you. It was their suggestion that I should speak to you. I think by now your father, who has gone there, would have been told of my desire to marry you. I do hope he would consent. But, as you know, the decision to make my life happy or miserable rests with you."

"Happiness!—Misery! My father did something unconventional, and the suffering has been mine! I have no doubt that you and I, if we set our hearts to it, could make life radiant with happiness. But have we the right, in the pursuit of our happiness, to leave behind a legacy of misery to our children?"

"Times are changing, Meena. There would be no legacy of misery, I assure you."

"I am afraid!"

"Have you no faith in me?"

"As a doctor, I have."

"As a lover?"

Meena hung her head bashfully and toyed with the fringe of her *saree*.

Dr. Raghava tilted her chin and pleaded, "Look me in the eyes! I love you. I want you. Say you are mine."

"I am yours—ever!"

When Rangaswamy returned after seven in the evening, Etchi and Ella warned him not to go into the back-yard.

"Why, what is the matter?"

"The doctor is there!" said Etchi.

"What if?"

Etchi smote her head at the density of Rangaswamy's head.

"Ella says," she whispered, "that he overheard the doctor saying to Meenamma that he will marry her. Can it be done?"

"It can be done!"

Rangaswamy coughed discreetly and entered the back-yard. There was no need for the precaution. Meena and Raghava, holding hands, were lost in looking at the starry sky, while their thoughts were far away in dream-land.

"Hallo, doctor, what's all this romantic story I hear from Sivaswamy Iyer?" asked Rangaswamy.

"I want you to give me Meena," said Dr. Raghava, simply.

"Come here, Meena!" Rangaswamy took Meena's hand and placed it in Raghava's. Then his voice failed him.

"When she was barely an hour old, her mother placed this hand in mine. She hadn't the strength to speak. It was a trust. I have bungled the trust and faith of that poor woman. You are better fitted to look after this sacred trust. Here it is! And my work is over. God bless you both and bless you with a boy soon!"

Etchi blew her nose: Ella executed a war-dance: the cook put an additional pan on the fire, for, the occasion certainly called for *payasam*.

Destiny chooses strange instruments to serve its purpose. It has already been indicated that Maruti didn't hold with modern contraptions such as motor-cars and the like. Nevertheless, when he received an invitation to attend Meena's marriage to Dr. Raghava he was persuaded to board a car at an outpost in the State which was 36 miles from the nearest Railway-station. As the car was speeding along a jungle avenue, something fitted across the road. Maruti heard cries of a creature

in distress and promptly stopped the car to investigate. He found on the road, a monkey besplattered with blood, its limbs crushed and in the throes of unspeakable agony. He stooped down and picking up the bruised creature, attempted to soothe it. The driver of the car came up, grinned and said, "Come on, let's go! It's just a monkey after all!" To the amazement of the driver Maruti's free hand shot out, caught the driver neatly on the jaw and laid him flat on the road.

Tenderly enfolding the monkey in his clothes, Maruti kicked back the driver into consciousness. Changing his plans and abandoning his idea of attending Meena's marriage, he stopped at the next town and sought a doctor.

"This poor thing has got to be made hale and healthy. Money is of no consequence!" said Maruti with tears in his eyes and the doctor wondered if the stranger wasn't fit for a mental hospital.

That marked a turning point in Maruti's life. The monkey was restored to health minus a hand. Maruti turned ascetic, put on saffron robes, and with the monkey as his mascot, created a sensation wherever he went, followed by a band of disciples singing *Ram-nam* and its glory.

Four years later, when Maruti had come to be known as Bhaktha Maruti throughout the length and breadth of the land, it was destiny again that brought him to Bangalore. Bhaktha Maruti and his *ghoshti*, followed by a huge crowd, were going round the city singing the *Ram-nam*. As they approached a cottage which had ivy clinging to its gables and fragrant jasmine in bloom, a young boy of about three came toddling out, pulling his mother with him, eager to see the crowd in the street.

The mother took the boy in her arms and raised him shoulder-high so that he may see better.

"Monkey! Monkey! Look, Amma!" lisped the boy with delight.

Meena turned to look. The leader of the *ghoshti* was Maruti and a monkey was perched on his neck.

Two days later, Maruti was invited to the cottage. He brought for the little boy a present. It was a pup. When Maruti and the boy were playing in the garden with the pup, two voices with one accord called, "Rama!"

Maruti whistled softly to himself. "So, you are Rama, are you?" said he and joined his hands in mute salutation to the divinity that remains unveiled in children.

THE END



nineteenth century that humour came into its own in America. And now in this most wonderful century of all—what a piece of work is it, what a piece of waste is it!—the materials for a humorous outlook are infinitely abundant. The Great War has brought out the pettiness and inconsistencies and incongruities of human nature as abundantly as Science increased Man's power over Nature, and universal education planted eyes in Man and refined his sensibilities, and political democracy made Man in all strata realise his dignity, and economic democracy raised serfs into human beings and enabled them to demand the inter-linkedness of life and love and learning and laughter. Whoever could have thought that the currencies of the world would cease to be current and would be jumping up and down like mad monkeys? Whoever could have expected that modernity would add the sight of group-humour to individual humour? It seems that a few years ago when the Hungarian Government was asked to pay some millions of indemnity it wired asking what colour of notes was preferred and asking also that the necessary paper might be sent for printing such notes! Have we heard of a grimmer or a more grotesque piece of international humour than the system of mandates?

But of all places in the world India is the richest in humorous situations and funny individuals. It had already a funny agglomeration of types and tongues, of climates and cultures, of liberties and inhibitions. There were already all varieties of clean-shavenness, and hirsute fierceness above the upper lip and below the chin. There existed also every variety of colour and curve in respect of every variety of dress. Into all this confusion has butted in modern western civilisation like a bull in a China shop. The gilet and the lipstick have come to stay. Cosmetics are more attended to than diabetics, and are regarded as more important than metaphysics. I have seen Brahmins without the sacred thread and married ladies without the *Tilaka*—some in a spirit of bravado and others in a spirit of sublime unawareness. Money is become the sole measure of things and is the greatest in a country where it was the least. We find odd jumbles everywhere. The motor car and the aeroplane are found along with the palanquin and the bullock-cart. Frock-coats and ochre-coloured garments, shirts and shorts and swathing purdha-dress, and other incompatibilities, exist and try to be compatible. We find every brand of politics from Bolshevism to the right divine of kings to govern wrong. We meet with every variety of post-obit expectations from *Apsaras* (nymphs) to absorption in the Infinite. India may be painted red but it is really multi-chrome. But why concentrate upon humour to-day? Man has been and is and will ever be the funniest creature in the world. Laughter like Eve was fashioned out of his essence. He laughs because he is so laughable. Animals are not laughable and do not laugh.

"We look before and after
And pine for what is not.
Our deepest pain with some laughter is fraught;
Our brightest words are those that tell of gayest thoughts."

Man's unceasing mental somersaults are the source of the increasing Artesian fountain of laughter surging up

from within himself. At one time the Universe was geo-centric but later on we propounded the geo-centric theory. Man was all important for some time and Nature was regarded as existing for his sake. It is all now the other way. Only to-day I saw a dog running to and fro aimlessly in a market where there was a busy crowd. It was in everybody's way and was barking at every one and making itself a nuisance. Soon afterwards, a child toddled in front of a bus and the brainless and heartless bus stood still till the laughing child went on its way. This is a most inscrutable and inexplicable and inconsistent world. God bless it!

THE END

Jays of Life

When I was ten, great joy I took
Pressing flowers in a book.

At fifteen I filed away
Dance cards for a danceless day.

And at twenty I began
Flourishing letters from a man.

At twenty-five I saved the curls
That had been my little girl's.

At thirty clippings from the press
Keep my bureau in a mess.

At thirty-five, receipted bills
May be the foremost of my ills.

At forty, though my attic's vast
I vow I'll go iconoclast

And destroy each worshipped treasure
Hoarded for old age's pleasure.

Souvenirs are after waste,
Each year brings a different taste

Teaching us that buried meat
Loses all that made it sweet—

Every season brings its own
Succulent, appropriate bone!



A nephew with a long memory has been asking about Auntie's balloon. "Do you still make ascents in the early morning from the *Merry Magazine* office?" he asks. "Do you still take up cheeky correspondents, and use them as ballast? What do you make of the Universe nowadays, as viewed from your famous balloon? And why don't you invest in an aeroplane?"

The last question demands a certain amount of explanation, my dears. You may remember that last year an Air Pageant visited the neighbourhood, and adventurous-minded citizens were invited to go for a ride. There was a particular pilot who indulged in all sorts of hair-raising aerobatics, and you could go for a ride with him if you liked.

Uncle Ghastly and his wife took Auntie to the display, and felt the urge to go up with the aerobatic gentleman. My dears, he was such a handsome Daedalus, and reminded Auntie of the person in the song:

*He sails through the air with the greatest of ease,
The daring young man on the flying trapeze!
His movements are graceful; all girls he doth please—*

My love he hath stolen away!

Uncle Ghastly, however, brought his legal mind to bear on the sordid question of payment. He wanted the three of us to be taken at a reduced rate, but the airman was adamant. At last the young man grinned, showing his beautiful teeth, and said, "All right; I'll take you up for the five o'clock stunting-show. If you can go through with it, and not make a murmur, you will pay me nothing; but if you give a single howl, you must pay full fares."

Uncle Ghastly agreed, and warned us that as we valued our lives we must not make a sound all the time we were in the machine. When the time came, we clambered into the cockpit, and away rushed the 'plane. It suddenly soared upward at an angle that made Auntie fear that the bottom was dropping out of herself. Only the remembrance of the terrible threats of Uncle Ghastly prevented her from crying out.

The pilot climbed to two thousand feet, and started to do his worst. He swooped about the sky in dizzy circles, while the world below us went backwards and

sideways, and finally stood on its head and twisted like a kaleidoscope. The 'plane looped the loop, fluttered like a falling leaf, descended tail-first, and span on one wing and upside-down.

All the time, Uncle Ghastly sat holding on tight, with a deathly look on his face. Auntie does not remember all the incidents of the flight, as after a while she mercifully fainted. When she came-to, the 'plane had just reached the ground in safety.

"Congratulations!" said the pilot. "You have won. You must be a remarkable family, possessed of iron wills. None of you cried out even once."

"Yes, I managed to keep my mouth shut," said Uncle Ghastly feebly. "I remembered it would cost me thirty rupees if I didn't. And my poor loyal wife was faithful to the end. When she fell out, she did not even murmur."

Well, my dears, I think you will understand why Auntie considers her balloon a vehicle better suited to an old lady of placid temperament.

Miss *Fi Fo Fum (Far East)*. Now, my dear, for your second batch of questions.

(1) "Is Private Joyfull a soldier or a writer?" Both.
(2) "Is Joyfull married or single?" Yes.
(3) "What do you do for a living?" Answer questions, dearie.

Ambitious (West Mambalam). "I have just seen the advertisement of a book, 'How to become a millionaire in three months'. I would like to become a millionaire, so do you advise me to buy the book?" Don't buy the book, dear boy; borrow a copy from the author. You can return it with thanks at the end of the three months.

Modernist (Orattanad). "I want to see our women making progress. Women should be given every freedom. Let husbands give their wives enough rope, and they will leap upwards." Well, dear boy, Auntie knew a husband who gave his wife enough rope, and she skipped.

Point of Order (Choolai). "What is the correct way for a speaker to address a mixed gathering?" Presuming that the gathering is a public meeting, one starts with, 'Mr. Chairman, Ladies, and Gentlemen'. This is because no one ever regards the chairman as a gentleman. He is simply a target for votes of no-confidence.

(Continued on page 21)

Octopus—

by T. P. Scott-O'Connor

Reading Time • About 12 minutes

Sketches by Rogers

CARUTHERS of the *Weekly Star* was summoned to the presence one morning of a foggy November in London. One of the best of the reporters on the staff, he had the reputation of a pushing personality without the tendency to exasperate which often goes with it. He stood now opposite the large glass-topped table with its costly cuttings, manuscripts, and proof sheets, facing the thin, somewhat grim-faced editor, Summerly by name, who regarded the young man under sleepy, heavy-lidded eyes.

"You sent for me, sir?" Caruthers said.

"Yes." The Editor drummed upon the glass with his fingers. "I want you to go down and interview Sir Anthony Roscoe. You have heard of him of course."

"Who hasn't?" Caruthers replied dolefully. Summerly smiled thinly. Indeed, who hadn't heard of the famous explorer, geologist, big-game hunter, and author. The very name was one to conjure with.

"Well," continued the Editor, "you will go down to his place—'The Gables', in Devonshire, and get a full account of his recent explorations in the Caucasus. There is a very good train which leaves Paddington at 11.47. You have thirty-five minutes to catch it in. I shall expect you back the day after to-morrow. You will be expected, as I have written to Sir Anthony to the effect that I am sending you down to interview him. That is all, thank you." The sleepy eyes dropped to a paper upon the blotting pad, blue markings appeared upon the proof sheet; the interview was at an end.

At a little after five that evening Caruthers found himself seated in a luxurious limousine, the property of Sir Anthony Roscoe, which a liveried chauffeur had driven to the local station to meet his train. The road curved between high hedges of sweet-smelling flowers. In the fields upon either side, fat, sleek cows browsed lazily; a thin spiral of smoke from some outlying homestead shot up straight into the calm air. The change from fog-ridden London to this peaceful, red and green countryside, bathed in the mellow rays of the setting sun, affected Caruthers' spirits like wine.

The car turned in between wrought-iron gates, and proceeded smoothly up a curving drive to the imposing portico of a large, red-brick house. Upon the top step

was standing a portly, whiskered individual, who descended slowly and somewhat majestically as the car drew up, and bowed Caruthers out, up the steps, through a hall hung with the sporting trophies of a quarter of a century, and into a panelled room which overlooked trim lawns and great trees.

"Sir Anthony will be with you in a moment, sir," murmured the butler. "Can I bring you a whiskey and soda, sir?"

"Yes, thank you," replied Caruthers, sinking into a comfortable leather chair near the wide fireplace, and stretching out his hands to the cheerful blaze. The butler left the room, and Caruthers glanced around with envy at the rich appointments, the shaded lights, and then through the window at the twilight-lit lawns and trees. This man had wealth, he said to himself. The gorgeous limousine, the liveried servants, the vast house and well-kept garden, the trim lawns and costly furniture all pointed to immense riches. He sighed involuntarily as he compared it all with

his hard-earned and by no means large income, and rose to his feet as a small chubby-faced man in the late fifties entered the room, one smooth, plump white hand outstretched in greeting.

"So here you are!" exclaimed Sir Anthony, his eyes beaming behind gold-rimmed pince-nez. "I am delighted to receive you. I trust you had a pleasant journey down? And now, what about a drink? Ah," he went on as the butler appeared with a tray upon which were two tall, exquisitely cut glass goblets and decanter, and a syphon of soda. "Now then, say when."

The two men raised their tumblers and drank, Caruthers with an unspoken wish to the success of his interview.

"And what do you think of my little place?" asked Sir Anthony, as they sat down on either side of the fire. "Of course, it wasn't like this when I bought it. There was a crumbling old gate; all weeds and no garden; and the house needed repair badly. But that is all a thing of the past now. Well, I have travelled over the world, my boy, and I've seen a great many beautiful places, but believe an old man, there is nothing like good old Devonshire with its cider and its cream. Eh, what?" He smiled until his eyes disappeared between creases of fat.

Caruthers studied the face of the man opposite him. A bald head with the exception of a fringe of white upon

either side; small light blue eyes beneath tufts of eyebrow; a large, predatory nose; thin lips, and a heavy double chin. On the whole it was a pleasant face, and yet there was something about it—some possibility of latent cruelty of which Caruthers became suddenly aware; perhaps it was in the glitter of the eyes behind the glasses, or again in the slit of a mouth, in the round, smooth face or in a combination of both.

"It is very kind of you, Sir Anthony, to give me this interview," he began, but the other waived away his thanks with his hand.

"Not at all, my dear fellow, not at all," he said. "To tell you the truth, I don't see much company down here and I'm only too pleased to tell you all you wish to know. I suppose it will mean a leg up for you in your profession, eh? Well, well, it's all in the day's work. Now, no doubt you would like to wash and change. Come along and I'll show you to your room. Barrymore, that is the butler, has orders to get you anything you require." He proceeded Caruthers up the carpeted stairs and into a comfortable bed-room furnished in blue and white. "Come into the study when you're ready," he said, and left the other to his own reflections.

After a bath and a change, Caruthers went down to a small room off the drawing room, where he found his host seated before the fire, a green shaded lamp throwing its yellow rays upon the pages of a leather volume in his hand. Sir Anthony nodded to the Tantalus with a "help yourself and sit down." Caruthers mixed a whiskey and soda and stood warming himself at the fire. There was a nip of frost in the air and the stars shone crisp and bright in the violet sky.

Sir Anthony laid down his book upon a small table near his chair. "By the way," he said, "I'm by way of being an animal collector in a small way. Do you care for animals?"

"In a general way, yes," replied Caruthers. "I've a fairly good Sealyham and a couple of spaniels at home."

The other nodded. "Quite. Well, I think I can show you something to-morrow which will astonish you." He rubbed his hands together and chuckled. There was something sinister in that chuckle.

"And what is that?" inquired Caruthers, but Sir Anthony shook his head.

"No, no," he said. "Surprise is the secret of life. Anticipation, they say, is better than realisation; well, perhaps, it is. And yet—" The muffled booming of a gong resounded through the house, and the butler appeared in the door-way.

"Dinner is served, sir," he said, and stood aside as the two men passed on their way to the dining-room.

The sun was shining brightly in at the high window of the room when Caruthers woke the following morning.

He rose, bathed, dressed, went into the garden, and came upon his host talking with the head gardener.

"Good-morning. Beautiful morning, isn't it?" Sir Anthony cried. "We have just time before breakfast, so come along and I'll show you the surprise I was talking about last night." He set off briskly to the back of the house, down a gravel path, and turned in the direction of what appeared to be a walled-in enclosure of some considerable size. They ascended stone steps and came out upon a kind of balcony which ran round the four sides of the wall. Caruthers looked down into a tank of dark green water which was about forty feet below him. The sides of the wall between the level of the water and the balcony appeared covered with a green slime. He looked from the water to the face of his host. The latter read the puzzle in his eyes and smiled. "The surprise," said he, pointing to the water, "is in there." He suddenly gave a peculiar bell-like cry, and instantly the surface of the water was disturbed; a vast, barrel-shaped body heaved itself out; a fifteen-foot tentacle shot up towards them in a shower of spray, felt from side to side in the air, then splashed back into the water. Caruthers was aware of two fixed, staring eyes, a thing like a beak which moved as if beckoning, and the creature sank again to the bottom, leaving behind it an eddy and swirl which lapped up against the sides of the tank.



Sir Anthony Roscoe

"Beauty, isn't he?" said Sir Anthony. "I've had him sometime now."

"What do you feed it on?" queried Caruthers. "It's an enormous octopus. How on earth did you get him?"

"Oh!" said his host, turning and descending the steps. "We give him crabs and other fish. I must say he has an extremely large appetite. I got him when he was quite small and had this tank constructed specially to keep him in. He's a devil to look at, and I have no doubt a devil to tackle." He broke out into a high-pitched laugh, shaking with mirth like some monstrous jelly.

Caruthers shuddered. He could see nothing amusing in being in the grasp of those writhing tentacles. "I certainly should not care to tackle it," he said with conviction.

"Well, well," said his host, leading the way back to the house, "and now for some breakfast. I trust what we have seen has not impaired *your* appetite." And still chuckling he laid a hand on Caruthers' arm and drew him into the building.

It was a little after four o'clock that evening and Caruthers was strolling about the lawn, thinking of his nearly filled note-book, the congratulations of his editor, smoking one of his host's expensive cigars. Sir Anthony had given him a long and detailed interview and Caruthers was in turn very grateful for it and for the

excellent hospitality which had been shown him. He turned as his name was called, and beheld his host carrying a large basket.

"Would you care to come and see him fed?" he cried.

"I certainly would," replied Caruthers, following the other in the direction of the tank. The sun was low down in the sky and the interior of the tank was all shrouded in gloom. Sir Anthony laid down the basket and repeated the cry of the morning. The creature rose to the surface and this time a couple of tentacles shot up towards them so rapidly that Caruthers stepped back hurriedly.

"He can't reach you," Sir Anthony reassured him. He opened the lid of the basket and tilted its contents into the water. Its surface became a writhing mass of tentacles and Caruthers leaned over and gazed fascinated at the spectacle below him. He was so absorbed that he did not see the change which came over his companion's features. The usual benevolent light in the smiling, tiny eyes had given place to a cold, murderous glare. The thin lips had writhed back from the pink gums. Caruthers felt a tremendous push in the middle of his back, and the next instant there was a loud crack as the wooden railing of the balcony snapped like a pistol shot, and he was falling towards that dreadful upheaval in the water.

Fortunately for him, the creature was at the other end of the tank, and this gave him time, when he rose to the surface, to clutch an iron ring let into the wall about a foot from the water. And then he noticed for the first time that similar rings, each about a couple of feet from the other, led up to the top of the wall. Obviously, this was the means by which workmen had descended and ascended. He drew himself out of the water and up the succession of rings until he was twenty feet up. A stone flashed past his head and struck the Octopus, which was now immediately beneath him. A tentacle like a whip lash struck the wall five feet below him. Another followed and another. He looked up and saw the grinning face of his host above him. The man was insane, there was no doubt of that. Even as he gazed, Sir Anthony suddenly disappeared from view, to reappear immediately with a stone in both hands which he let fall. It struck a projection a little way above Caruthers' head and bounded off into the water, the splash of its fall reaching the man clinging to the ring. Sir Anthony shrieked with rage and shook his face at the white upturned one below him.

"You damned reporter!" he yelled. "I'll teach you! You can't remain there much longer, and you shan't

come up." To ensure against the other's possible attempt at any such thing, he again disappeared, reappearing with a larger stone which he balanced on the edge of the broken rail.

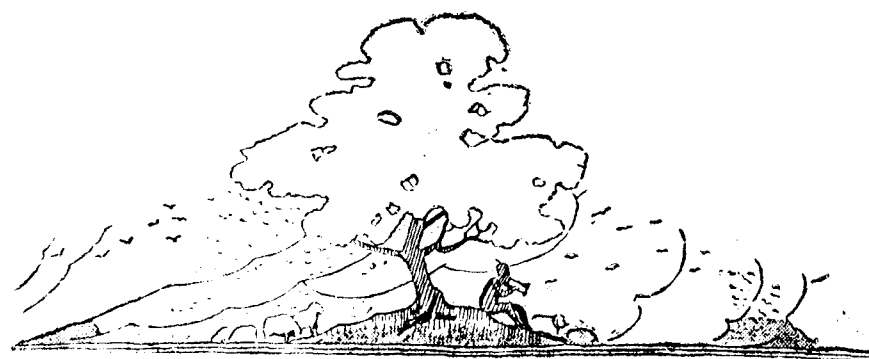
The creature in the water, enraged at the blow it had received from the stone, and at its unsuccessful attempts to reach the man above it, heaved its back against the wall and tried to climb its slippery surface. It fell back disappointed and flung another tenacle, which fell into one of the rings below Caruthers' feet, and grew taut. It had now a lever, though a slender one for so immense a weight. Another tentacle followed and gripped the ring, followed by a third. This time it managed by pulling on the ring, to raise itself three feet from the water. There was a rending sound followed by the iron ring being pulled out of the wall, dislodging at the same time a portion of the masonry; a shriek of rage from Sir Anthony and a sob of gratitude from Caruthers. The baronet raised the stone above his head with both hands, his feet shot from under him, and with a terrible cry he flashed past Caruthers and into the embrace of the creature which awaited him. The reporter summoned up every ounce of his flagging energy and gasping, panting and dishevelled, drew himself up onto the balcony. The water below was still except for an occasional ripple on its surface. Then, for the first and last time in his life, Caruthers fainted.

* * * *

When he came to, he was in his bed. A tall, thin man sat upon a chair at his side, and smiled when he met the frightened eyes of his patient.

"You are quite safe now," he murmured. "You will drink this and then go to sleep." He held a glass to the other's lips, and Caruthers slipped back into unconsciousness.

It was only many days later that he learnt how Barrymore, disturbed at the non-appearance of his master and of his guest, had proceeded towards the tank; how he had been horrified to find the body of Caruthers, lying face down upon the flags of the balcony, his dripping clothing making a pool of water which trickled over the edge into the, by then, black water below. He had guessed that his master had slipped and fallen in, and Caruthers had, of course, come to his aid, but could do nothing. The butler, together with the rest of the servants and the people around, still hold that opinion, and Caruthers has not said anything to disprove it. He was always an extremely tactful person. He has also given up the somewhat doubtful life of a reporter.



AUNTIE AWFUL—(Continued from page 17)

Church Member (Kirkee). "My neighbour is very strict. Is there any ground for her statement that a Christian must eat fish on a Friday if she wishes to go to Heaven?" It is quite feasible, my dear. Select a fish with a phosphorescent appearance and a deep-sea smell, and eat it on a Friday. You should be in Heaven by Saturday or Sunday.

Artist (Laxmipur). "I am preparing a masterpiece for the forthcoming exhibition. I intend to paint a portrait of a man with a cigar." It is an excellent idea, my boy; but surely it would be easier to use a brush?

Batchelor (Nigmore). "I do not like clubs and public places of amusement. My way of spending an evening is in a domestic environment. I have a friend who is a widowed lady, and I spend every evening at her place. I am wondering if I should marry her. Please tell me what you think." Well, dear boy, has it occurred to you that if you marry the lady, you will have to find somewhere else to spend your evenings?

Bibliophile (Ichchapuram). "Knowing that you will be interested in the subject, I have much pleasure in forwarding a copy of 'A Dissertation on Fiscal Policy, with Some Notes on Regulated Bimetallism', in one large volume. I would be glad to have your criticism of this monumental work." Auntie has only one criticism to offer, dear sir. The covers of the book are too far apart.

Commercial Man (Madras). "I have a friend who deals in dry goods. Quite often, I take him to the beach and we sit on the sand together. Although always willing to accompany me, he says that it gives him a vaguely uncomfortable feeling. He seems to imagine that there is something incongruous in the environment. What is the cause of this strange complex?" It is the sand, dear sir. Give your friend a packet of sugar to mix with the sand, and he will feel quite at home.

Beauty Culture (Laheria Sarai). "You seem to know all the secrets of the ages, so I wonder if you could tell me the secret of the kings' favourites and other lovely women of history. What does a lady do to have pretty, soft, white hands?" Yes, Auntie knows that one, my dear. All that you have to do is—nothing.

Forward (Udgir). "I have reluctantly decided to accept the general principles of the India Bill, but remain strongly opposed to the undue weightage at the centre." Well, dear sir, Auntie is at a loss to see how the weightage can be reduced. You cannot have failed

to notice how these all-India politicians achieve their prominence chiefly at the waistline.

Bridegroom (Dungri). "Please tell me the correct way to compose a report of my marriage for insertion in the press." There are traditions in these matters, dear boy. It is the custom for reporters to say that a joyful event has 'taken place'. Calamities, on the other hand, always 'occur'. A good way to commence your report would be as follows: 'A wedding has just occurred—'

Tippler (Lohanipur). "Of late, I have been troubled by a snake which follows me everywhere, and suddenly raises its head from all sorts of unexpected corners. My friend says it is the result of taking a few pags every evening; but of course he is suffering from delusions. Will you please advise me how to scotch this snake? Every time I attack the reptile, it disappears." Auntie thinks you had better get a small basket, and carry it wherever you go. In the basket you can keep an imaginary mongoose. When you see the snake, you have only to lift the lid of the basket, and the mongoose will jump out and make short work of your troublesome visitor.

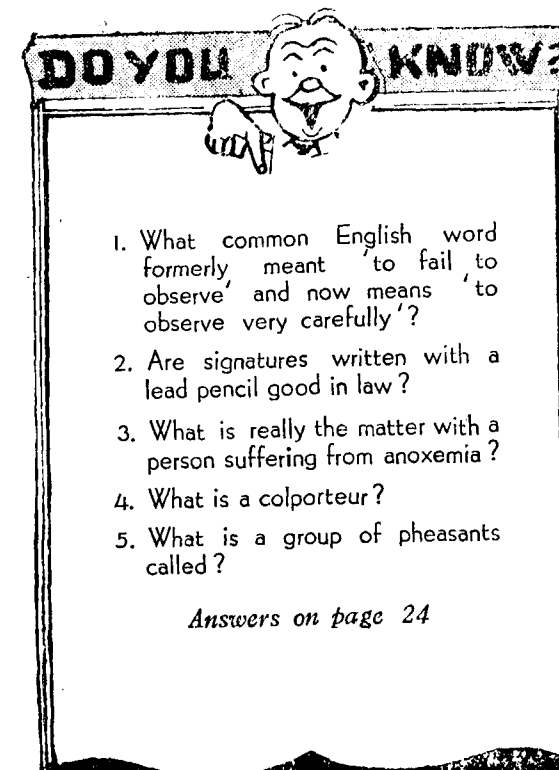
Remarkable Fact (Kais-pura). "Dear Madam, I have a son six months old who, when placed in his cot, makes intelligible noises. Is this a record?" Dear sir, Auntie has a black serrated disc six years old which, when placed on a gramophone, makes intelligible noises. Is this a record?

Energy (Kasaragod). "I have no patience with the supine attitude of some of my associates. Push will get a man through anywhere." Except, dear boy, through a door with 'Pull' marked on it.

Seer (Chandragiri). "Beware of false prophets. I have consulted the stars, and can assure you that the world will not come to an end until February 29th, 1938. Please inform all your readers." Well, there you are, dear boys and girls; now you know. Auntie doesn't so much mind the event coming off; what worries her is the way these gentlemen keep on changing the date.

Economic (Kalladaikurichi). "I see much cause for optimism in the economic sphere. Now that the cost of living has gone down, one can get much more for a rupee than formerly." Quite so, dear boy. What bad luck, that hardly any of us have a rupee!

Astounded (Peshawar). "When I read of the matrimonial adventures of film-stars, words fail me. Can there be anything less permanent than a Hollywood husband?" Yes, dear boy; a French Prime Minister.



Answers on page 24

The Letters of Private

63. A Matter of Statistics

Reading Time • About 8 minutes

Illustrated by Nadkarni

Madras, 24th August, 1935.

DEAR MOTHER,

I have been away again for the last few days, taking part in anti-malaria work. We maintain an anti-malaria squad in our company, and we learn how to deal with a kind of mosquito called *anopheles*, which is the cause of all the trouble.

When recruits join us, we tell them that the *anopheles* are the ones that are striped like tigers and bite like lions; but of course this is only a legend. Actually, you can tell an *anopheles* by the way he sits. An ordinary mosquito rests with his body parallel to the surface on which he alights, but an *anopheles* sits on his tail, like a gentleman about to have a hearty dinner.

It appears there was quite a commotion in the district where we were sent. It all started over statistics, which are a favourite pastime in India. For instance, if a man gets bitten by a snake, he becomes a statistic. He gets entered on all kinds of forms. Some experts collect the forms, and add them up, and extract the square root, and divide by the number they first thought of, and the answer is a lemon.

After all these processes, the statistics get printed in a big book, and the book is used by the clerks to sit on, because the typewriter-stools supplied by the government are not high enough. Hence the value of statistics.

There are two ways not to have malaria. One is to prevent the mosquitoes from biting you. The other is to have no mosquitoes. The second scheme is the more difficult, but it produces results.

A difficulty about the second scheme is that the inhabitants do not like to destroy living things, except in riots and other special circumstances. A mosquito is created by God, and is entitled to sustenance and the pleasures of family-life, the same as we are. We have therefore hit upon a compromise. We do not kill mosquitoes, but we encourage the birth-control movement among them. We dry up the small breeding-pools, and cover the large ones with a thin film of oil. In these circumstances, the mosquitoes at once start practising birth-control.

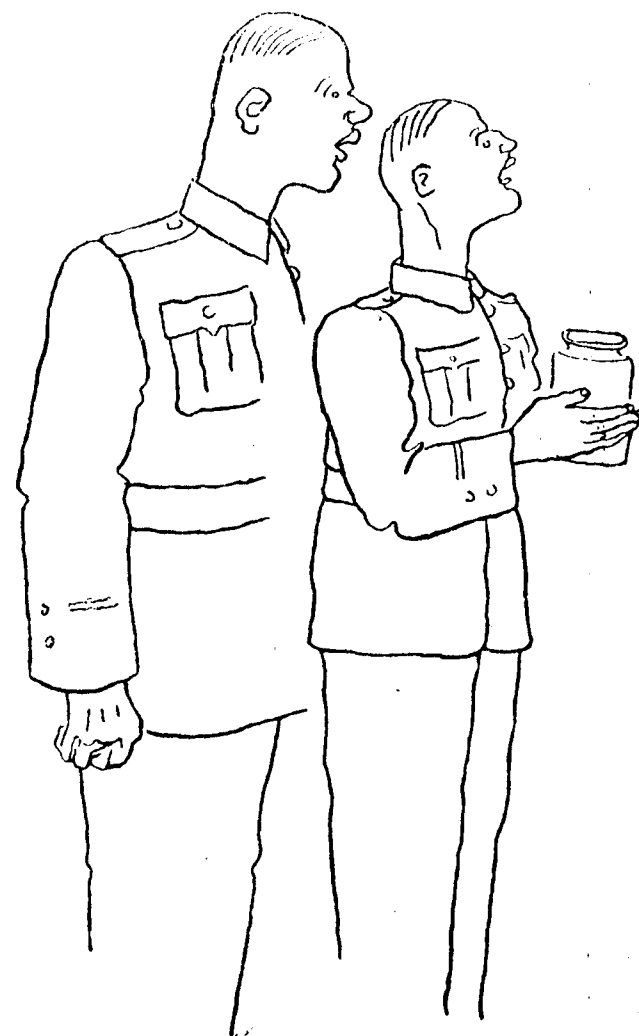
In this particular district, the trouble started when the annual malaria statistics reached the office of the Big Noise in malaria topics. The Big Noise noted with pain that whereas the incidence of malarial infection was 15.63 per thousand in the previous year, it was reported as 152.9 in the year under review. The Big Noise invited an explanation by return of post.

The District Officer had a consultation with Doctor Purge, the medical officer of health, and a confabulation

with Babu Chairshiner, the office superintendent. His name sounded something like Chairshiner, so that is what we called him when eventually we made his acquaintance.

It transpired that the increase in the incidence of malaria was due to the defective mathematics of the returns-clerk, who was always shaky with decimal fractions. The correct calculation was 15.29 per thousand, a slight diminution on the figures of the previous year.

The entire staff went into conclave, to decide what explanation to render to the Big Noise. It was felt it would be impolitic to allude to the weakness of the



"The farmer got very

Joyfull

returns-clerk in the matter of decimal fractions, as his calculations had been passed, and presumably checked, by superiors who had taken their M. Sc. in higher mathematics. Babu Chairshiner came to the rescue. He drafted a subtle and carefully-worded letter to the effect that the increase in the incidence of malaria was due to the fact that the mosquitoes were biting harder than usual.

The Big Noise was an obstinate man. He said that mosquitoes always bit at a uniform rate and with a

predetermined velocity. The increase could not be due to any exceptional energy on the part of the normal *anopheles* population there must be more of them than usual. He invited the district authorities to try and wriggle out of that.

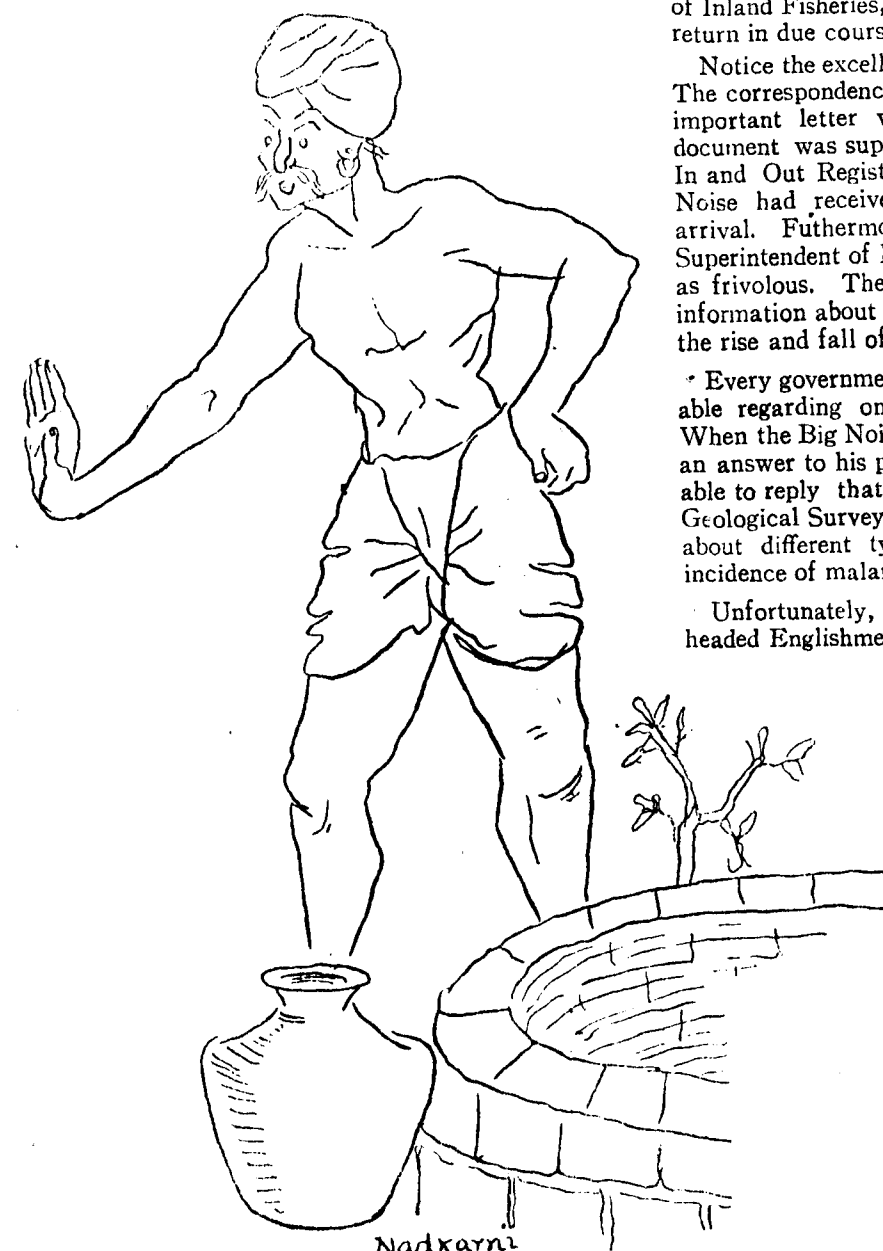
Babu Chairshiner saw there was nothing for it but to retreat behind a smokescreen. He took out an old and tried friend, a Government directory, and ticked off the first entry that came to his eye. It happened to be the address of the Superintendent of Inland Fisheries. He passed the letter of the Big Noise to the Superintendent of Inland Fisheries, for the favour of his remarks and return in due course.

Notice the excellence of the device of the worthy Babu. The correspondence was not delayed in his office; no important letter was lost in the files; no awkward document was suppressed or concealed. His blameless In and Out Register showed that the letter of the Big Noise had received attention on the very day of its arrival. Furthermore, the passing of the file to the Superintendent of Inland Fisheries could not be described as frivolous. The Superintendent could offer valuable information about the part played by larva-eating fish in the rise and fall of the malaria-rate.

Every government department was similarly approachable regarding one aspect or another of the subject. When the Big Noise sent a peremptory postcard requiring an answer to his previous communication, the Babu was able to reply that the file was with the Director of the Geological Survey, with a view to eliciting information about different types of soil, and their effect on the incidence of malaria.

Unfortunately, the Big Noise was one of those bull-headed Englishmen who refuse to play the circumlocution-game according to the rules. His retort was swift and nasty. He declared the district to be a malaria infested area, and wired to the military for an anti-malaria squad. So off we went, armed with the implements of the trade.

We spent the first few days mapping-out the locality, marking-down likely breeding-places, and taking samples. We worked in pairs, and Boggins and I were the sample-takers. We went out with a lot of jam-jars, and a supply of greased paper, sealing-wax, string, and similar materials. As we went through the bazaar, looking like a couple of out-of-season Father Christmases, quite a lot of children gathered round us. When they saw what we were carrying, they came running with bottles and jam-jars, and offered them for sale at a *price* each.



Nadkarni

excited and waved his hands.

Rather than disappoint the kids, we bought a selection of jars, and hurried on before all the jars in the place could be produced to us. The jars we bought were an encumbrance, so we gave them away to a man in the bazaar who dealt in second-hand bottles. In consequence, the word went round that we were insane, and the dealer in second-hand bottles had all his stock snapped up by eager speculators. Our subsequent refusal to buy any more bottles created a lot of dissatisfaction.

Our first place of call was a farmer's well. We explained to the farmer that we wanted some water, and he nodded, and fetched a brass pot. We shook our heads, showed our jam-jars, and started to go down the steps. The farmer got very excited, and waved his hands. We stopped, and tried to explain the idea; but it was no use.

"Oh, come on," said Boggins, "it is no good arguing with him. Push him out of the way, and take the sample. He doesn't understand."

"Wait a minute," I replied.

"Perhaps we don't understand."

It might be holy water, or something. Look how angry and suspicious the man is."

So I kept on parleying and making signs, while the farmer tried to understand. At last, doubtfully, the farmer filled his pot at the well, and brought it hesitatingly towards us. We nodded and showed pleasure, and pointed to a jam-jar. The farmer poured some water into the jam-jar, and looked at us enquiringly. We nodded and showed pleasure. The farmer was overcome with amazement, and gradually began to smile.

He watched us seal and label the jar, and then search for more water. After a while, he grasped the idea, and got quite enthusiastic. He showed us every pond and drain-hole in the locality, and delighted in giving his friends an explanation of our mysterious activities. I wished I could understand his explanation; I am sure it was a remarkable one. I think he connected our morbid interest in water with some form of hydrophobia.

Although we cultivated our samples of water with the greatest care, we were unable to breed any mosquitoes from them. We went to Doctor Purge and announced our lack of success.

"Quite so," replied the doctor. "There are very few mosquitoes in the district at this time of the year."

"Then why are we employed in looking for them?" we demanded.

"Ah!" said the doctor; and began to open a letter which the peon and just brought. "Good heavens!" he ejaculated, "the Big Noise is coming here to inspect our anti-malaria measures! What shall we do?"

"Sir," replied the ingenious Babu Chairshiner, "if there are no mosquitoes in the locality, we may report that since the inception of the campaign they are all dead."

"No," replied the doctor. "Merely negative results like that give no pleasure to inspecting personages. They want to see something active in operation."

Boggins had an idea. He possessed a pamphlet on malaria-prevention, which he was studying, and it was written by the Big Noise himself. The Big Noise considered that the danger lay, not in big and obvious collections of water, but in the innumerable small pools, stagnant gullies, and domestic reservoirs surrounding dwelling-houses. His remedy was the institution of a Dry Day. Once a week, every domestic collection of water was dried up, every pool, drain, and gully was emptied, and allowed to dry in the sun. Thus all breeding in the vicinity of houses was prevented.

"Good!" said the doctor. "We will have a Dry Day. When we attribute the absence of mosquitoes to the Dry Day idea, the Big Noise will be delighted, and will call off the emergency-squad."

Intensive propaganda commenced forthwith. On a certain day, to coincide with the visit of the Big Noise, every source of domestic dampness was to be dried up. We went round inspecting and advising with the utmost energy. Everyone knew that on the Dry Day, no bath water was to flow in the gutters, no outlets were to drip, no stagnant water was to stand, and no pools or wet patches of earth were to exist anywhere.

The Big Noise was due to arrive one afternoon. We spent the morning going round inspecting the perfection of our arrangements, and all reports were of the most reassuring nature. Towards mid-day, Doctor Purge came to our little camp, and thanked us for our efforts.

"It will be a great show," he said. "The Big Noise will be delighted, especially as the Dry Day is his own pet idea. Well, I must be off. I am due to meet the Big Noise at the station in an hour's time. I am most grateful to you all; the thing is a great success. At this very moment, the whole district is as dry as a bone. The Big Noise will be terrifically impressed."

As the doctor spoke, there was a drumming noise on the canvas roof.

"What's that?" said someone. We all went to the door and looked. It was pouring with rain.

Your Loving Son,
OBEAH JOYFULL.

YES, I KNOW

Answers to Questions on page 21.

1. Oversee.
2. Yes, if otherwise in proper form.
3. Air sickness or mountain sickness.
4. A person who distributes or sells religious books or tracts.
5. A nide.



And knowing all the right answers is only half the battle. Nowadays you also need a louder voice than the men who know all the wrong answers.

Right now the world seems to be divided into two big groups of people. There are the people who want something for nothing and the people who don't want to give it to them.

Somu and Chari were business enemies but chance had placed them both on the same board of directorate.

One day, after a meeting, Somu was holding forth. "There are ways and ways of making money," he said, tauntingly.

"Yes," put in Chari, "but only one honest way."

"What is that wonderful way?" asked Somu sharply.

"There," reposted Chari, "I thought you wouldn't know it."

I came across this definition of a gentleman recently: "A man that's clean inside and outside, who neither looks up to the rich nor down on the poor, who can lose without squabbling and can win without bragging; who is considerate to women, children and old people; who is too brave to lie, too generous to cheat and too sensible to loaf; one who takes his share of the world's goods and lets other people have theirs."

In short, too perfect to exist.

Mark Twain once played golf with an American bishop who was devoted to the game. At the eighteenth hole they were all square. The bishop, who had the 'honour', teed his ball carefully, took a couple of practice swings, then made a mighty swipe—and missed the ball completely. He said nothing.

"Bishop," said Mark Twain, "that was the most profane silence I ever heard."

Scientists prove that the human jaw has dropped two inches. The Income-tax department is to blame for this.

A registrar says fine weather means more marriages. A premonition of what is round the corner.

"A horse is capable of standing perfectly still for an exceedingly long time," says a veterinary surgeon. Especially when I back it.

"Slim while you smile," a heading. Laugh and you are flat.

A notice board in a cross-road: "Bear right ahead. This kept the wayfarers, I fancy, on a sharp look-out."

"I hear your wife always obeys you?"

"Yes. I ask her to do what she likes and she does it immediately!"

She (Dreamily):—Your shoulder is so delightfully soft, dear!

He (Ever gallant):—So is your head, darling—so is your head!

Art Master (to New Student):—What you need to do, young man, is to acquire a knowledge of anatomy, then forget it.

Student:—I have studied anatomy, sir.

Art Master:—Well then, tell me, where is the clavicle?

Student:—I have forgotten, sir!

"I've come to pay the last instalment on the perambulator."

"Thank you, sir, and how is the baby?"

"Fine—he is getting married next week."

"Pay your taxes with a smile."

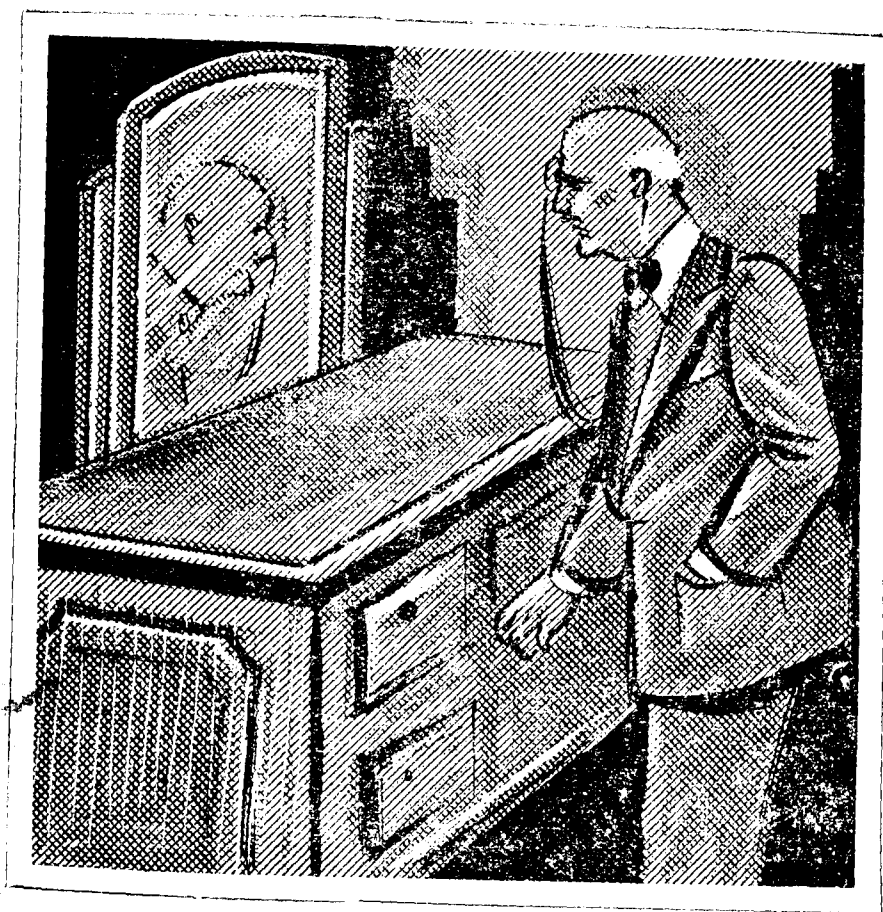
All right but they want cash.

"The worst feature your post offices is the ink!" Albeit the pens have their bad points too.

"Why can't the man who plays the drunkard's part go on?"

"He's drunk!"

Well, a bore is a guy who never tries to make a long story short.



Reading Time

About 8 minutes

The Man Who Lost His Image—

by 'Ram'

Illustrated by Rogers

Dr. Francis Stratton was nearly a great man. His theories would have been wonderful, if they had been original, but it was his misfortune to unknowingly plagiarise his way through life. He thought of things a hundred years or so after they had first been thought of, without having the faintest notice that his ideas were not exactly novel. This involved him in unpleasant scenes with the Patents Office, Publishers, and Inventors.

Today he was feeling quite happy, because the Great Idea had struck him. As he pressed his collar stud into place and stepped away from the dressing-table mirror, he elaborated it. The image of a man was distinct from the man. There it was: simple as the law of conservation of Energy and as stupendous. And now to prove it. The only effectual proof would be to disconnect the image, or the shadow and make the object of experimental

demonstration stand in front of a mirror, which should then remain as blank as ever.

For months he worked on this, subjecting himself to all the rays in creation—Röntgen Rays, Gamma Rays, and what-not rays. Weird and wonderful machines were constructed to bombard him with queer follicles of light, like the poor unresisting atom, but his faithful (or faithless) cheval glass remained obdurate—the image would not go. And yet he was sure he could detach it—why, every time you went from a mirror you could feel the image pulling you back; that accounted for the reluctance all women evinced when leaving one. Being feminine they are more susceptible to delicate forces, and have literally to tear the image apart from the surface on which it has become visible.

So his experiments continued. Fortune, that perverse jade, had endowed him with a theory and obstinately

withheld the proof of it. Men laughed at him; he became the butt of all scientists; but still he persevered, for this faith in his Great Idea had become positively an obsession. He made practically a religion of his Image-belief, with its dogmas and its commandments, remaining in solitary grandeur its Founder, High Priest, and Worshipper rolled into one, for no one else, after a couple of years, cared to waste time on it.

One day he went to a meeting of anarchists; of anarchists, because they alone, being of a notoriously disruptive tendency, still listened to his meanderings, his plaintive expositions. The meeting had been convened to examine the merits of a new type of bomb which a member had recently completed. It was an ingenious contrivance, immensely powerful, capable of being set to go off either by contact, or time. The explosive used was entirely novel, making the bomb able to achieve the same results as any of the older and much larger ones. Like an innocent tennis ball it lay casually on the table.

Anarchists resemble lawyers in one respect; they like to talk. Today they talked of nitro-glycerine and trinitrotoluol with gusto, debating the rival claims of poison-gas and vitriol, using a multitude of technical terms and never ceasing for an instant even to listen to some one else. The Doctor got annoyed, disgusted, and finally bored. He had come to talk and no one would stop talking. Idly his fingers played with the inoffensive looking ball on the table. He rolled it speculatively along the edge, and as a Bolshevik gentleman of his acquaintance passed, turned to address him leaving the bomb to take care of itself.

It rolled off the table and being set to explode by concussion, it exploded. Also in exploding, it made good all the claims of its constructor. The Doctor, in company with the Bolshevik gentleman's left arm and part of his appendix was blown neatly through the door, miraculously uninjured, like the circus candle that is fired through a plank. The rest of the anarchists came out in sections, but with them we are no longer concerned. Before the police could make an obstreperous entrance on the scene, the Doctor being wise in his generation, entered a passing taxi, unnoticed by the crowd of spectators who had immediately gathered, and went home, much shaken up and a little bruised but otherwise unhurt.

The next morning, after his bath, he walked to the mirror, wrestling with a refractory stud. He was not there! Exactly that; according to the mirror's testimony he was not there; it retained perfectly its pristine blankness. For one stunned moment he stood, unable to grasp this stupendous thing that had at last occurred; then he capered madly downstairs in his underpants only, shouting "Eureka!" after the best tradition of scientific discoverers, before two parlour-maids and a scandalised house-keeper.

For all the jeering he had suffered during the last two years he had now his revenge. The whole world fell figuratively at his feet; he became in a week the New Galileo with a more dauntless 'Eppur sie muove', the Man without an Image, the Shadowless Man, the King of Scientists, according to the tastes of the various newspapers. But all united in boosting him, and he remained a headline figure for nearly a month, at the end of which

a peer who advocated dancing in Hyde Park without clothes as a universal panacea, dethroned him.

The Scientists made, however, handsome amends for their cruelty. He was elected a Fellow of innumerable societies and Bertram Mills, Mr. Cochrane, and seven Picture Corporations from Hollywood offered him enormous sums for his services—offers which he kept under consideration. Meanwhile, of course, he received proposals of marriage from 1738 lovely women, and invitations to At Homes, Garden Parties, Fetes, and Balls galore.

He was perfectly visible to human sight, but mirrors and cameras refused to see him. It was a little inconvenient at first, this lack of an image. The Doctor had to hire a valet to tie his bows, and could never be sure when his hair was correctly parted. But otherwise life was very much the same.

In the Club he became a sort of Hyperion Jove, a miracle-worker, suspected of secreting thunderbolts about his person. Members deliberately brought small mirrors with them and proved his entire lack of a reflection when he was not looking. The peak of his importance came when the Nation insured him as a National treasure; there was even some talk of providing him with a body-guard and a salute like Foreign Royalty, but this fell through chiefly because he vetoed the suggestion.

And then Dr. Francis Stratton got engaged to a charming young lady of the screen; her charms were very public—in fact they captivated the Doctor first in a languorous close-up which approximately half a million people eyed with varying degrees of approval. Allied to her charms was her temperament—or, as the dresser called it, her temper. One month after his engagement the Doctor realised that every rose has its thorns; also that this particular rose was most abundantly gifted with them. To be shamelessly un-reticent, they quarrelled and she threatened to shoot him, but it passed off, like all gin-and-absinthe actuated tempers—er—temperaments.

One week later, in her dressing room again:
SHE: "Darling, I do wish you'd take yourself off."
HE: "I dare say! What about that lounge-lizard who's always hanging about you? You never find him in way."

That started it again. The end came when she hit him playfully with a chair and he was knocked clean through a beautiful Venetian Mirror.

The nurse in his ward at the hospital did not recognise him as the Man without an Image, and brought a glass for him to see how he looked after being unconscious for 48 hours. He started at the reflection—for there was a reflection—with a vague sense of something being wrong. Suddenly he sat bolt upright and screamed, "My God! The image has come back." And so it had.

Once more Dr. Francis Stratton leapt into the news. He was now the Man Who Had Recovered His Image, and the Scientists again fawned on him. But he himself was sad, for he realised that this popularity, this fame was ephemeral. In a week they would forget him; no one would notice the man who recovered his image; after all he was just an ordinary being, like the rest of mankind.

(Continued on page 29)

Burglar and a Scorpion

by R. K. Narayan Swami

Reading Time • About 6 minutes

BURGLAR Ranga in his reconnoitering outing in the evening singled out the third house in the middle street of Lakshmipuram Extension for trying his luck that night. No-one can claim to be able to speak with certainty of the workings of a burglar's mind; all the same I roughly guess the following were the reasons for the choice:—

(1) The windows had an encouraging appearance. The bars were lightly fixed—not protected with a cross strip of iron run into the wall.

(2) The front part of the house spread out in wings and concealed the rear section of the house, so that one could safely work at any of the windows in the rear part of the house—so to say, snugly under wings.

(3) There were no dogs in the house. This he understood by the fact that a street mongrel was sleeping at the gate, which would not be possible if there were another dog in the house. He found out that it was a

street dog by throwing a stone at it, at which the dog ran away from the house and not into it.

(4) A glimpse he had of the interior of the house satisfied him that a visit would be fruitful.

He passed down the street.

He returned at a little after twelve, pulled out the bars of a window at the back of the house, and opened a way for himself. He stepped into a dark room and struck a match. It was a boy's room full of books, ink bottles, hockey sticks etc. Ranga passed into the adjoining hall. A mixed noise of snoring and breathing emanated from it.



".....Let me not catch you again at....."

His well-attuned ears took the understood that five persons were in the hall. Moving in such a room is different notes apart and he There is always the danger of stepping sleeping in the dark. A couple of years before Ranga had had a risky proposition by the master of a house and was later on the sleepers. the police. It was risky to strike a match, left foot bitten awoken a sensitive sleeper. Ranga pressed himself over to to the wall and edged along it and glided into the It might room, which was unoccupied, and in which there were close trunks and almirahs. All of them were locked of course, next but Ranga produced from somewhere a neat piece of iron were and gashed out all the locks.

Presently he slipped out of the house, carrying a small bundle. He was not the clumsy kind that lifts big cooking utensils and clothes. He specialized in coins, jewellery, and silver vessels. He had now in his bundle the cream of the possessions in that house.

Outside the town he sat under a tamarind tree in the cremation ground. He needed rest. He had still two hours of tramping before him to reach his village. There could be no better place than the cremation ground for resting—one could be certain of not meeting anyone, not even a policeman.

He was satisfied with his work that night. There were rupees and rings and silver vessels in his bundle, worth at least six hundred rupees, though he was sure that the goldsmith in the town was not going to give him more than three hundred rupees for the lot. Even that was not a bad amount. He could keep away from work for at least three months, and that meant that he could find time to sleep at nights for three months..

It was at this stage that a ghost appeared before him and made his hairs stand on end. He tried to get up and run, but his legs twined round each other. The ghost said, "Look here my boy, I have seen you here many times before, but I didn't wish to disturb you. To-night I feel that I ought to tell you what I think of you. You must give up this profession. It leads you nowhere. I was a master of this art in my time, but now they won't admit me into the next world and I am not wanted in this world. It is a dreadful position. All the gold and silver I collected in my time cannot save me now!.....Go to that house and put those things back in the trunk my boy. Let me not catch you again at it...." The ghost dissolved in the shadow of the tamarind tree.

Ranga walked back to Lakshmipuram as fast as he could. He resolved that this should be his last visit, uninvited, to a stranger's house. He would put the bundle back in the trunk and then start a new life. By birth he was a blacksmith. He decided to return to that calling now. He moved as fast as his legs (weakened at the knees by the sight of the ghost) could carry him. He wanted to reach the house before the cock crew.

He slipped through the old window, crossed the boy's room, and paused for a moment at the threshold of the dark hall, listening intently to the throaty and nasal noises that the sleepers were making. He pressed himself

close to the wall and edged along to the trunk room, where he would throw the valuable bundle and start life anew.

He was edging along cautiously, holding his breath, with his body pressed to the wall, when he felt a sudden burning sensation on his back. He tried to feel the spot and got the same sensation on his hand also. A burning needle was exploring his flesh. He checked a howl that welled up to his lips. Now several red-hot screws were being driven into his flesh. He gritted his teeth and swallowed a scream. In a moment the red-hot screws were doubled in number.....He felt giddy.

He let out a howl and sank to the floor.

Five persons scrambled out of their blankets and switched on the light. "Burglar! Catch him!" "Police!" "Here is a scorpion on the wall!" "Burglar! Burglar!" "Somebody kill the scorpion!" "Don't go near the wall!" "Somebody kill the scorpion!" "Police! Police!" "Burglar! Ah, he has a bundle!"

Ranga lay groaning on the floor. He said faintly, "The scorpion has stung me. Give me some medicine."

"Don't go near him," somebody screamed.

Ranga said, "I am not here to steal your things. I have come to put them back."

Even before the magistrate Ranga persisted in saying "But for a cursed scorpion I should have put the bundle back and started the clean life of a blacksmith." But magistrates don't easily believe things that you say. Hence Ranga's blacksmithy plans were deferred for eighteen months, at the end of which time he had forgotten that he wanted to be a blacksmith. And the ghost too lost all interest in his career and future.

THE END

The Man Who Lost His Image—
(Continued from page 27)

He started his experiments to detach his image, without success. At last he had a brain-wave; another explosion would do the trick! An instrument was designed to blow him through a carefully constructed door, and he stepped into the chamber provided, with an optimistic heart.

The explosion occurred; the doctor was blown to bits by an unforeseen predominance of gun-cotton in the explosive; and only a leg still encased in its neat Oxford shoe was salvaged from the wreckage. A clever gentleman who was present, held the leg up before a mirror and was delighted to perceive that it was not reflected at all.

For the third and last time Dr. Francis Stratton achieved fame. His experiment had been a success in the scientific sense. The image had disappeared, together, unfortunately, with most of his body. His leg is now preserved in spirits in the British Museum, and pilgrimages are made to it by the Servants of Science, once and sometimes twice a year, with mirrors in their hands.

The Tribe of Werrypinklers

(Concluded)

by 'Nijinski'

Reading Time • About 8 minutes

Illustrated by Seker

TOOKEY, privately closeted with Mooka, playfully twisted the latter's beard. Mooka wanted to protest but was mortally afraid and scared of the big, powerful sailor.

"Mooka," Tookey commented, "you're a nice lad as things go. But—"

"What?"

"Oh! I've tumbled to certain things. You've a penchant for—er—consult your conscience, Jaddie, and take my tip—out with the straight dope."

It took time, but Tookey cajoled and threatened and, eventually, elicited the full truth from Mooka.

The decree of Winkle was laid upon the table.

"How did this come into existence?" Tookey queried.

Mooka didn't know—in that respect his knowledge was not even equivalent to a pin point. They found out from old tribal records. It goes without saying that they—living in enlightened days—both agreed that the whole thing had been faked.

"But," remarked Mooka, "my subjects will not believe. They've implicit faith in God Winkle."

"And you?"

"I'd never had doubts until now."

"Well, I'll think matters over. A way has to be found to undo the wickedness of the old Werrypinkler Chief. D'you agree?"

"Absolutely. I'm, in fact, mad to think I was so easily deceived. I've been a fool."

"Tut! Tut! Jaddie. Don't take such a thing to heart—the sins of the fathers—you know the rest." Tookey, sitting on Mooka's throne, laughed long and loudly.

"That ancestor of yours, Mooka," he remarked, "had brains. If he were alive now—" Tookey yawned.

"He'd cope with our present problem," Mooka suggested.

"Exactly! Anyway, we'll sleep and, may be, find inspiration."

Tookey gathered a number of cushions from chairs in the room, arranged them on the platform and lay down. He was tired.

"Good night, Mooka!"

"Where shall I sleep?" meekly enquired Mooka.

"Good Lord, sonny, it's your house. Sleep anywhere you like."

"But, aren't you holding me as a kind of hostage?"

Tookey sat up. "You're on parole! Can't you let a fellow sleep? Anyway, your parole's cancelled—go to—"

Tookey, having consigned Mooka to an exceedingly hot place, laid down again and was soon fast asleep.

Mooka, for a time, sat thoughtful.

"I believe," he muttered, "he's God Winkle in disguise!"

Presently, Mooka also made a bed of cushions and slept by the sailor's side.

Mooka woke once during the night. His arm had dropped across Tookey's chest, his hand nestled in the mass of hair which grew thereon, from which, coupled may be with the fat priest's beard, he had, secretly, thought to make a pillow.

He turned over and God Morpheus again embraced him.

* * * * *

Tookey was up betimes the next morning. Mooka was still sleeping peacefully.

The sailor ruminated. "It was always said I was a good judge of—"

Mooka rubbed his eyes and sat up. It took him a few moments to get a grasp on events, and he got it all wrong.

"God Winkle," he started saying.

"To blazes," interrupted Tookey, "with your Winkle, your Jingle or your Tinkle."

Mooka got a full clutch on his wandering ideas.

"Sorry," he apologised, "I was not quite myself."

"O. K. Chief—now?"

Mooka gave a stentorian shout, his *chef* appeared upon the scene.

"Coffee, toast and butter,—bloater paste—well—do your best."

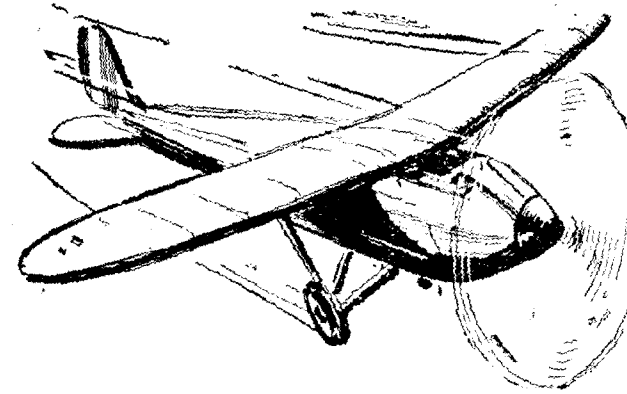
"Any ideas?" enquired Mooka, after they had finished breakfast.

In the result they spent a few days together, investigating the history, records and beliefs of the tribe of the Werrypinklers.

A plan was evolved.

* * * * *

There came a day, when Mooka, King of the Werrypinklers, assembled his tribe at the place of worship which has been previously described.



On the top of the temple of Winkle was a ball of gold. The Werrypinklers had not gone off the gold standard.

Not being particularly hot at that season, Mooka had for his head-dress, a lion's tail (wound turban-wise), a few peacock's feathers and a galaxy of turnip-tops, with a solitary cauliflower nestling—like a bunch of pearls—in the centre.

On the whole, he looked regal! An aeroplane whirred overhead for the first time in the history of the Werrypinklers.

"God Winkle!" Mooka's subjects ejaculated spontaneously.

A paper fluttered down from the plane. It descended and, almost miraculously, landed at Mooka's feet. The plane disappeared.

"God Winkle!" wailed the tribe as they bowed their heads.



"God Winkle!"

to the ground. That ground, as in bygone ages, did not fail to respond with generous doses of lung-choker.

Mooka, watching his steps, allowed time for his subjects to clear their breathing apparatus. That took time and allowed him to collect his thoughts. He didn't want to make a *faux-pas*. Tookey's instructions required careful following.

Mooka puffed out his chest like a pouter pigeon. He addressed the Werrypinkler commoners.

In his hand he held the message of Winkle—dropped from the 'plane. He commanded the Chief Scribe of the tribe to come forward.

"Read," he said, "the message of God Winkle."

It was brief, its instructions were precise: "Open up the ball of gold on the top of the temple."

"Steeplejacks of the Werrypinklers," shouted Mooka, "come forward." Two or three bright young sparks pushed their way to the front. Mooka simply did 'thumbs-up' to the gold ball and they went about the business.

The ball was cut open. It was filled with sand. Amongst the sand the Chief Scribe found a number of decrees from God Winkle, mostly mellowed with age.

"These," he remarked, "must have been suppressed by someone."

"What matter," replied Mooka, "Winkle, in his wisdom, knows all. We have them now, read on and afterwards register the documents at the Court."

The cannibalistic diet of the Werrypinkler Chief was, of course, cancelled, but there were so many other injunctions of greater interest, that it was scarcely noticed.

A host of new privileges were accorded to the commoners. We mention a few of the more important.

A licensed toddy shop should be established to stop the activities of bootleggers.

They could establish a 'bucket-shop' and bet on the horses or dogs, limit 2'81 pice on one horse or dog.

Marbles, ping-pong, ludo, snap-dragon, kite-flying and dice-throwing were there, after legalised.

Sweepstakes (with a limit imposed) were sanctioned.

Musical chairs and kissing under the mistletoe were permitted (under licence—each kiss taxed) on festive occasions.

Mooka had the ball of gold replaced with one of putty,—the tribal glaziers had to scrape scraps out of their

finger-nails to get the correct size. They covered it with gold-leaf. Up-to-date lads, those!

There was a great whoopee that day and all were happy.

Two days later, Mooka appointed the Chief Scribe acting King, took a clean shave, dug out his wardrobe of English kit and sailed for London.

He had promised to buy the musical chairs, the mistletoe and the other *etceteras* which the tribe now clamoured for.

Mooka met Tookey in London and they divided the spoils from the sale of the real ball of gold.

"When are you returning?" Tookey enquired.

"Well, first I intend seeing that Bradman fellow bat, then I've a fancy to stay for the Football final and—"

"After that?"

"Oh! I suppose I'll find other attractions. My supply of funds from the Werrypinkler 'gold standard' will last a long time."

The tribe of the Werrypinklers is still waiting for the marbles, the ping-pong sets etc. The Chief Scribe runs the toddy shop, the racing tote, the sweepstakes—he's quite happy and not sorry that Mooka is absent.

I don't think Mooka really intends to go back.

THE END

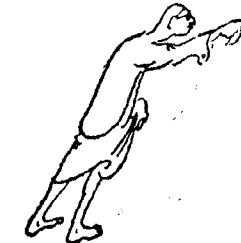


MAGISTRATE:—You are accused of stealing handkerchiefs. Have you any extenuating circumstances to put forward.
ACCUSED:—Yes, your worship. I had such a bad cold that day. I lost my turban in the morning and my dhoti was too dirty to use on my face!

The Roughnecks

THE FIGHT

"DIAL"



"Don't act funny now"



"you don't act funny"



acting gassy - eh?



want to fight - eh?



"hit and see" - "you hit and see"



you'd better look out - you know?

A Sacred Trust

by 'Embusque'

Reading Time • About 11 minutes.

"COMRADE," said the dying man, "what in the world do you hold most sacred?"

"When a fellow has descended to footslogging in the Sabara," said Bob Ackroyd, "there is very little for him to hold sacred."

"But you were once an officer—a gentleman?"

"I made a muck of things."

"Nevertheless, I know you are honourable. I, too, once held a commission. I was Von Meyerdoff, Captain in the Third Regiment of Guards."

"You'll get the same biscuit-tin memorial as your jail-bird companions."

"Yes, I know I am dying. That is why I want to trust you. Will you undertake a mission for me?"

"I'll do what a poor Legionary can. What is it?"

"First you must swear by Almighty God that you will be faithful to your trust."

"Nothing doing, old man. I'm no longer on swearing terms with celestial circles. I'll give you my word, if you like."

Von Meyerdoff looked at his companion searchingly. "That will do," he gasped; and paused to gather his strength.

"When I held a different position to the one I hold now," began the wounded Legionary, "I paid a visit to England. In England I did something that has weighed on my conscience ever since. I was a guest at Hurlingham Castle. There was a chambermaid—"

"All right, old boy," interposed Ackroyd. "I understand. It was the usual story."

"I was a blackguard. It was not the usual story. She was a good girl, very charming, with gifts unusual to one in her station of life. She could have made a marriage above herself. Like a thoughtless cad, I ruined her."

"It may not have been as bad as that, old man."

"It was. You do not know the girl. She was superior and sensitive, and the shame must have driven her to the gutter."

"What do you want me to do?"

"Listen. When I began a new life, I saved something from the wreck of the old. Sewn into my cholera-belt, you will find an oilskin package. It contains gold-certificates for fifty thousand francs."

Ackroyd gently opened the tunic of the dying Legionary, and at last drew out the small, flat package. "Well?" he said.

"I die friendless and unhonoured. There is no one to care. I want this money to be given as reparation to the girl I ruined. Promise you will seek her out, and give it to her."

"Well—"

"You must promise! Scour the slums of the great cities till you find her, and rescue her from degradation."

Ackroyd made a sudden resolution. "All right, Fritz, I give you my word," he said. "I'm sick of this dog's life, anyhow."

"Take care of yourself," whispered Von Meyerdoff. "You must not fail, for her sake." His head fell back, and the death-rattle began in his throat.

"Fritz! Fritz!" cried his companion. "Quick! What was her name?"

"Nellie Mellon," whispered the man, and died.

The same night, Legionary Bob Ackroyd slipped over the perimeter-wall, and began his lone march across the desert. He was facing death by thirst, and death at the hands of the Arabs. His chance was not one in a hundred.

Three weeks later, a ghastly scarecrow staggered into Tangier. His feet were masses of bandages, his lips were cruelly cracked, and his eyes burned with fever. He just had the strength to ask for the British Consul.

When Bob Ackroyd came out of hospital, the Consul shipped him to England. Bob landed at Southampton with his health fairly restored, but almost without resources. He possessed the clothes given to him in Tangier, and a few shillings subscribed by the ship's crew. He immediately set off for Hurlingham Castle. Friendly lorry-drivers helped him on his way, and roadside coffee-stalls gave him of their fare. In a day or two, Bob found himself ringing the bell at the gates of Hurlingham Castle.

A puffy butler looked out, and inspected the stranger. "No tramps!" he said, and turned on his heel.

"Wait a minute!" cried Bob desperately. "I don't want anything—at least, only information."

The butler started at the gentlemanly intonation of the wastrel. "Perhaps, sir, you will come along to the pantry, and explain your business. And, if you will pardon the allusion, perhaps you would like something to eat."

Over a grateful meal, Bob Ackroyd gave some account of his quest. "Nellie Mellon?" cried the butler. "Nobody would forget her." He winked. "But she is no longer here. She went away to better herself. A colonel's lady took a fancy to her, and she went with the family to India as a nurse-maid."

So Von Meyerdoff had not dragged his Nellie down to the gutter. She had even bettered herself. Still, fifty thousand gold francs would be a nice windfall for a nurse-maid. Obtaining the name of her employer from the obliging butler, Bob Ackroyd tramped back towards London, his few shillings augmented by a donation apologetically offered by the lordly man-servant. "I can see, sir, that you have known better times, if you will permit me to mention it."

Eight months later, Ordinary Seaman Bob Ackroyd came ashore at Calcutta from the Finnish barque *Storjungen*. Only on coffin-built sailing-vessels may a piece of human flotsam work his passage to the East. With the pay of the voyage, Bob now had two hundred rupees. He bought a ticket to Rawalpindi, where he hoped to find Miss Mellon's present employer.

Dubiously, the *abdar* showed the shabby European on to the verandah. The Colonel's lady took in his soiled *dungarees* and battered *topie* at a glance. "Sit down," she said. "Are you an ex-service man? *Abdar*, bring tea."

Bob Ackroyd told his story. "Miss Mellon?" said the Colonel's lady, "I am afraid she has left us. A Mrs. Cruise begged to take her as a lady's maid. Of course, I did not stand in the young person's way, when she had a chance to better herself."

"Where can I find this Mrs. Cruise?"

"She was on a tour round the world. She sailed for Brisbane in Australia."

"Thank you," said Bob Ackroyd, rising.

"Pardon me," said the Colonel's lady, looking curiously at her visitor. "There used to be a Captain Bob Ackroyd at Aldershot. Are you any relation?"

"He is dead," said Bob briefly, and departed.

He was ill and penniless by the time he got back to Calcutta. The manager of the Seamen's Home communicated with the authorities. The derelict appeared to have nothing but a bundle of old papers, sealed in an oilskin packet.

"Where is your home?" asked the investigating officer.

"Brisbane, Australia," said Bob.

So Bob Ackroyd, destitute European, was deported to Australia.

At Brisbane, Bob had no difficulty in getting information about the elusive Nellie Mellon. He calculated, that a globe-trotter like Mrs. Cruise would put up at the Grand Hotel on the water front. Australia is a democratic country, and no one batted an eyelid when a

haggard, ragged, unshaven man entered the magnificent lounge of the hotel.

"Yes, sir? Miss Mellon, lady's maid to Mrs. Cruise? I remember her perfectly." The desk-clerk smirked at the cashier. "No, Miss Mellon did not go on with Mrs. Cruise. She was offered a post as lady-companion to the Honourable Mrs. Hemmings, wife of the American Consul at Shanghai. Yes, Miss Mellon accompanied Mrs. Hemmings to Shanghai. Good morning, sir."

There was a filthy little Chinese coaster clearing for Shanghai, and Bob signed on as a deck-hand. For the first time, he really touched the bottom of degradation. The skipper was a drunken Dutchman, and the mate a bullying Eurasian from Bangkok. In due course the obnoxious little steamer dropped anchor in Soochow Creek, and Bob Ackroyd took his discharge.

As soon as he got ashore, he took a rickshaw to the office of the American Consul. He was interviewed by a Chinese clerk. This was the last time that Bob Ackroyd ever rode through a city in comparative respectability. He was steadily degenerating into a vagrant. People no longer looked curious at the sound of his voice, nor did they remark that he had seen better days.

"Lady Miss Mellon gone yesterday," announced the Chinese clerk. "She go in steam-yacht with Honourable Lady Hemmings and more ladies and gentlemen. They all going San Francisco for pleasure-ride. I think Lady Miss Mellon belong high family in England, yes?"

Bob took passage in an Island schooner that was going as far as Honolulu. As that exhausted the last of his small funds, he stowed-away at Honolulu in an American liner bound for the Golden Gate. More dead than alive, he was ignominiously hauled out of a coal-bunker after the liner had sailed. For the rest of the voyage he worked his way as a greaser.

When the Third Officer kicked him down the gang-plank at San Francisco, the first thing that met his eyes was the enormous placard of the *Examiner*: "Beef Baron Weds English Society Girl." The pavement round the kiosk was strewn with discarded sheets of earlier editions. Bob Ackroyd, inspired by an obscure curiosity, grovelled in the gutter until he found a sheet giving an account of the 'Sensational Yacht Romance'. He read that Mr. Fred Stutter, the cattle king, guest on Mrs. Hemmings' yacht *Fairy*, had wooed and won Miss Nellie Mellon, aristocratic English debutante, after a whirlwind courtship. The happy couple were united by the Cardinal Archbishop before a brilliant congregation, and were now on their way to New York for the honeymoon. "Miss Mellon," the report continued, "has played an intimate part in the home-life of the great in her own country. At Hurlingham Castle she frequently came in contact with royalty, and with distinguished foreign guests. She makes a fitting match for the coveted Stutter millions."

That night, a disreputable hobo dodged the guards at the San Francisco Goods Depot, and clambered aboard an east-bound freight-train, riding precariously on the brake-rods beneath one of the cars.

Bob Ackroyd was bludgeoned and dragged off the freight-train at St. Louis, and sentenced to a month's hard labour as a vagabond. On his release, he joined a navvying-gang that was being recruited for a job on Long Island. He deserted the gang at New York.

He was a few hours too late. The New York papers recorded the departure of Mr. Fred Stutter, the cattle king, on the *Mauretania*, "accompanied by his charming bride."

Bob secured the most abysmal of all jobs—that of steer-tender on one of Mr. Fred Stutter's cattle-boats. He rolled his miserable way across the North Atlantic in the 'tween-decks, tending the sick and frightened animals, living amid an eternal acrid stench, and running constant jeopardy from the sharp horns of the panic-stricken beasts. He was of less value than the animals he minded.

As the cattle-boat rolled its way to anchor in Southampton Water, Bob could see the stately funnels of the *Mauretania* rising from the docks. Waiting for no quittance, Bob crept down the gangway, and swam ashore. He shivered as his rags dried on him.

* * * *

The clerk at the Royal Hotel looked with disgust at the evil-smelling, bedraggled, degraded, unkempt visitor. "Mrs. Nellie Stutter, wife of the American cattle-owner? Yes, she is here. But you cannot see her."

"At last!" cried Bob Ackroyd. "I *must* see her! I have been all round the world after her. I started from this very town, three years ago."

The clerk considered. The filthy tramp seemed to be a maniac. It was better to humour him. He motioned to the hotel detective. "Take this fellow up to Mrs. Stutter's suite," he whispered. "Humour him. Keep an eye on him. I am sending for the police."

Mrs. Nellie Stutter consented to interview the strange caller. "What do you want?" she enquired, raising her lorgnette, with a well-bred air of concealing her disdain.

"Weren't you Miss Nellie Mellon?" cried Bob Ackroyd eagerly. "Do you remember a certain Captain Von Meyerdoff, at Hurlingham Castle?"

"Blackmail!" thought the wife of the cattle-king. "You may go," she said to the detective, and began to pat her jewels to hide her alarm.

"I was with Captain Von Meyerdoff when he died. He left something which he made me promise to give to you, wherever you were." From his rags Bob Ackroyd carefully detached a filthy package, wrapped in oilskin.

"Is that all?" said the lady. "I don't know what you are talking about."

"Weren't you a chambermaid at Hurlingham Castle, and didn't Von Meyerdoff—"

"Stop!" said the lady. "How dare you say I was ever a chambermaid? And this Von Meyerdoff. Really, I don't remember any Von Meyerdoff. A lady in my position meets so many gentlemen."

There was a knock at the door, and two policemen came in.

"Shall I remove him, madam?" asked one of them.

"Yes. Please take him away," said Mrs. Nellie Stutter. "But do not hurt him. He is harmless. Just order him to leave the town."

The policemen conducted him to the door of the hotel. "Get out!" said one of them. "Never let us find you in this town again, or daring to annoy the lady."

Bob Ackroyd shambled down the street. "Dirty wretch!" said the policeman to his companion. "That lady was kind to him, wasn't she? You can always tell a real lady when you see one. Did you notice? She gave him a shilling."

Bob Ackroyd halted at the outskirts of the town. He shivered as the wintry blast cut through his dreadful clothing. He coughed, and a terrible pain cut through his chest. "Pneumonia," he thought, his muddled brain striving to recapture some of its old clarity. "I am going to die."

He staggered to the edge of a high concrete bank enclosing a huge desolate waste. There was a notice-board. 'Sewage Farm', it said. 'Filth may be deposited here'.

He stood and considered. Through his tortured mind ran slow pictures of his life from the time he had taken the trust of his dead comrade, Von Meyerdoff. From his ragged pocket he drew the oilskin-covered packet, and with a last effort threw it into the midst of the odorous sludge.

THE END.

Diamond Cut Diamond

She took me to be a millionaire,
And I thought her a peach:
And sticking fast, we showed a flair
That would have shamed a leech.

But damn the day that drew our moans,
When Fate exposed our trick:
My millions grew from friendly loans,
Her peach from rouge an' lip-stick.

by C. H. Thakore.



Nudism and Beauty

by 'Mea'

Reading Time • About 7 minutes

"THE most beautiful object in the world, it will be allowed, is a beautiful woman," said Macaulay. Female beauty can be found more perfect than that of the male, and artists paint and carve it fearlessly, with all the right and natural qualities. The beauty of a naked woman is the highest type of beauty.

In ancient Egypt, and in all the adjacent lands, the musicians were women; they went naked from childhood on, so that nakedness in public did not embarrass them. In most countries, before Christianity had introduced its conception of nudity, the dance was executed by naked girls. In Persia, Turkey, Egypt, India, Burma, and other Oriental countries, dancing girls were either naked or only very lightly clad. The recent excavations at Mohenjo-daro have established the fact that during the period of the Indus Valley culture, dancing girls were completely naked.

Obviously the thin fabrics with which rich Egyptian ladies enveloped themselves were not worn from a desire to hide their bodies from sight but rather as veils to protect them from annoyance by gnats and flies. Juvenal speaks of the women of his day, who were so delicate that they became over-heated by wearing a silken veil, and who therefore had to go about naked. It is related of ancient Greek women that "if they had any particularly beautiful features of the body, they left them naked that they might be admired."

Women are well aware of the beauty of their bodies, and it is perhaps only natural that they should welcome any opportunity of showing this beauty. Recently a man and a girl were standing in front of a picture in which Venus was depicted newly risen from the sea. The man was heard to remark to the girl: "What would you do if you had a figure like that?" Without a moment's hesitation the girl replied: "I expect I'd bare it." A woman loves to be admired, but she knows she cannot expect much admiration—or at least not her full share—if most of her charms are concealed.

It is no doubt a consciousness of their bodily beauty, combined with a natural longing for admiration, that impels hundreds of women to offer themselves to take the part of lady Godiva in the pageant at Coventry. The same applies to the thousands of girls who are willing to appear on the stage in the minimum of clothing that the law permits, and when complete nudity is permitted

there is no dearth of applicants for the parts. When European fashions decree that women's clothing shall consist of the minimum that will conform to the standards of decency pertaining at the time, we find that women respond readily and with no protest about their outraged modesty. It may be argued that a professional dancer is paid to exhibit her body and that she does so in order to make a living, but this argument cannot be applied to wealthy society ladies who willingly uncover the whole of their backs, the greater part of their bosoms, their legs and thighs, for all and sundry to gaze on. They want their charms to be admired by all men, otherwise they would expose them only in the presence of their husbands.

We now come to the question as to whether men object to their womenfolk being seen in the nude. History shows that they do not. Nudism has existed throughout the ages in one country or another without men raising any objection to their womenfolk appearing in the nude. In fact in some countries it was only the women that were naked, while the men wore clothes.

It is usually married women who wear the most daring frocks, and if they are not actually encouraged to do so by their husbands, they are certainly not discouraged. There are many men who would welcome any opportunity of showing off the physical beauty of their wives and appreciation of that beauty. A woman likes to be admired, and a husband likes to know that his wife is admired. A man would rather feel the pangs of jealousy than think that his wife was unattractive in the eyes of other men.

Of course there are exceptions to the above general rule. A man appeared in a Berlin court a year or two ago to restrain his wife from walking about without any clothes. He said she had become an enthusiastic member of the Anti-Clothes Society, which had an estate on the outskirts of Berlin, where the wearing of clothes by members and their guests was strictly forbidden. She also went to the wave-bath at Luna Park on the nights when it was reserved for the society. His protests had failed, and she had simply told him that he ought to keep abreast of modern progress and that she considered it was healthier and more moral to go about as nature ordained than to wear clothes. The judge, beyond delivering a lecture on the duties of married persons, was unable to afford the husband any satisfaction.

Since a woman rejoices in the beauty of her body, it is only natural that she should try to preserve it. The maintenance of bodily beauty depends mainly on health. It has been proved that exposure of the body to sun and air contributes largely to health, therefore one of the greatest inducements a woman can have for adopting nudism is the preservation of her physical beauty combined with the enjoyment of good health.

It is not to be denied that some of the strongest opponents of nudism will be found in the ranks of women. Firstly there are those women who have been brought up in an atmosphere of prudery, and with whom the concealing of their bodies has become almost an instinctive impulse.

To such women the uncovering of bodies in public would appear nothing less than a sin, and even a husband's approval would fail to alter the deeply implanted idea of sinfulness. We have a classical example of this type of woman in the case of the wife of Candaules, a Lydian king, who lived about 1170 B.C.

Candaules had an exceedingly handsome wife of whose beauty he boasted to his chief minister, Gyge. The latter did not appear enthusiastic and Candaules thought that he doubted his word. He accordingly hid the minister in his room so that when the queen undressed, Gyge might see her beauty for himself. But when the minister attempted to steal from the room, the queen saw him, and he confessed how he came to be there. She was very angry and told him that either she would have him killed, or he should kill the king and become her husband, as it was not right that anyone should live who had seen her naked, except a husband. Not unnaturally, Gyge chose to become king.

The other type of woman from whom opposition is to be expected is those women who are only too well aware of their physical shortcomings and who rely on clothes for their attractiveness, but as the modern movement does not contemplate the abandonment of clothes at all times, these women will still have their opportunities, and, since nudism and physical culture go hand in hand, even these women may find that the advantages they will derive from the practice of nudism will more than outweigh the disadvantages.

A lady writes to me and says that she thinks the world will become a very ugly place if we all adopt nudism, because so much ugliness is hidden under clothes. This, of course, is only partly true. It is not every woman, or man either for that matter, who has the gift of dressing attractively. There is a great deal of beauty now hidden under ugly clothes. It is quite possible that the amount of beauty that would be revealed would equal the ugliness, and we should be no worse off than we are to-day.

The same lady suggests that we should cultivate physical beauty before we adopt nudism. Unfortunately so long as women are able to disguise their physical shortcomings by means of clothes, they are not going to the trouble and inconvenience of improving their figures by means of exercises and diet. Nudism will compel them to adopt these means of improving their figures, and consequently the standard of physical beauty will be raised all round. This is in itself a very strong argument in favour of nudism. It is one that applies to men as well as women.

The Greeks, who took an almost unbounded delight in bodily beauty were not slow to realize how much the body gained through complete nudity. In the history of the world no nation has studied the cultivation of physical beauty as much as the Greeks, whose classic beauty has become a byword. Beauty contests, physical culture, nudism, were all practised by the Greeks with the object of raising the standard of beauty of the race. It is very evident that there is a close relation between nudism and beauty.

Feeling Big—

by 'Teddy Bear'

Reading Time • About 8 minutes

I HAD just stepped into the Club when somebody thumped me on the back like a steam-hammer. I turned round to see who it was that presumed that I was made of stone and couldn't feel hurt. It was my friend Collins.

"Hello, boy!" he shouted, adding insult to injury, "got shocked eh?"

"Fact I did. Do you take me to be a baby Rhino, who feels a thump like the tickle of a crow riding on his back?"

By way of answer he motioned me into the drawing room, and we were soon seated comfortably. Collins was always ready with his gossip, which he collected from all over, and once you were seated comfortably you could always expect him to start off like a water-spout and develop into a geyser. But this time he seemed a bit backward to talk, in fact he wanted me to say something.

"Well, son, why so quiet to-day?" I asked him.

"When it comes to the boss in the office, the sergeant on parade, and the wife at home, life is little better here than on a convict settlement."

"Why, what's the trouble this time? Your wife's been consulting a fashion catalogue?"

"No, nothing in that direction, but every time I can't get off from the office earlier, she suspects that I have an affair with some girl in town."

"But why don't you explain things to her, take her to your boss and get your statements verified."

"That will do as much good as a dose of castor-oil to a whale. She is very silly that way, and truth or no truth, she maintains her own opinions. If I insist or argue, she loses her temper, throws things at me, curses and swears like ballyhoo, and makes an awful scene."

"But that's nothing to worry about, my dear fellow: every married man has these troubles. I occasionally fall out with my girl at home; these are the little troubles of life we have to put up with, these can't be avoided."

"Yes, but there should be a blooming limit to it. So much for the home; in the office the editor is after my blood; he curses and swears like hell, and says he doesn't know why I was ever born."

"Why you were ever born?"

"Yes."

"He should ask your parents."

"And moreover, he wants me to come to office at 11. a.m., and stay back till 5 p.m. I have protested but all of no avail. You might as well ask for Home Rule."

"Too bad, too bad, my boy. All this is too depressing let's get out of here and have a few wets at the bar."

"No, I am not feeling like it."

"Oh, come along, you'll forget all your troubles."

We adjourned to our little 'paradise', the Club bar at the back of the drawing-room, and soon had a double-peg each before us. We toasted each other's luck, and very soon had two empty glasses on hand to be refilled.

"You know, chum," said Collins, suddenly brightening up, "I have got an idea."

"You have?"

"Yes, listen, have you ever read Thomas Hood, a poet bloke he was."

"THOMAS HOOD? A poet? No, I don't recollect."

"Why, that's the fellow who wrote about a spaniel, a woman and a walnut tree becoming better by being beaten. He says the more you beat them the better they be."

"Thomas Hood said that?"

"Yes."

"Couldn't have been married then."

"Married or not married, we husbands are fools. Here's jolly good advice going cheap for all of us, and we don't even take it, or at least give it a trial."

The bar-boy took our glasses away, brought back two more with the finest whisky Scotland has produced. We poured some soda in each, and were soon on our way to the land of the happy Bacchuss."

"You mean to tell me, Collins, that you are going to try Hood's advice now?"

"Of course I am. What do you think I am, a coward?"

"I don't say so."

"Never was a coward born in our family, and if a any time one were to be born we'd murder him in cold blood."

blood. It's a tradition in our family, the Collins simply wouldn't stand for it."

"So you mean to say you are bent upon giving your wife a jolly tight hiding?"

"Of course I am, she has cowed me down altogether, she bosses me like a slave-driver. You see this cut behind the ear, no, not the one behind the right ear, yes—this one—feel it—see how deep it is."

"Pretty nasty, eh?"

"She gave me this with a nasty left, simply because I dropped some cigarette-ash on the carpet."

"Too bad."

"It is, but no more now, chum, no more now. I am not going to be bossed by her any more, from now on I am going to be the master of the house, and I bet you, you'll see it with your own eyes."

"And if she objects—reprimands—argues, or—ah—I mean—"

"You mean she thrashes me?"

"Ah—that—yes—if you please?"

"Those days are gone now, I am fully determined to put an end to all this now, and if she shows the slightest intention of assaulting me this time, I will give her a most unmerciful hiding, which will make her realise who is the master in the house."

"Well, let's wish you luck in your undertaking."

"Luck, you say? Luck is not required, its only courage you need. Once you show your courage any woman will become your slave. Courage is the word, boy, courage no wimman can bosh you henymore if youse got cour-aze, shee now, shee?"

"Yes, I do," I agreed. I called the bar-boy and asked him to replenish our glasses once more for the third time.

"Well, my boy, I am sure you'll succeed in your new experiment."

"Shuck-seed? Shure, I will, and I'll show you how it is done, all courage and cour-aze alone, and you know chum, I am going to tackle that bloke also, I'll see how he bosh-es me in future, I've had 'nuff of his bally nonsense from him lying down."

"Which bloke you mean?"

"The shame bloke, my bosh, the heditor, I'll teach him how to be nasty and abushive. Surely mate, youse know him, once he gets the better of you he knows no stopping, and now I'll put an end to all his nashtyness, you bet I will."

"How will you do that?"

"Do that? Why, I'll put my chest out and tell him to go to the Devil, I'll tell him I am no more the under-dog, and he needn't think he's Julius Ceaser born again to command the Roman army, and he needn't run away with the idea that I am his slave and he is the King Pharaoh, the blooming—the hic—what do you

call him—I'll teach him—the pop-eyed ballyhoo of a funny blistering lollypop."

"But don't you think if you turn too nasty with him he'll chuck you down the stairs."

"WHAT? Chuck me down the stairs? What madness! Do you think I am a nincompoop greenhorn? Couraze is what you need, nothing but couraze, and tomorrow you'll see me walk up to the offhish eggactly at 11.5 a.m. instead of 11 a.m., and come out of the offhish precisely at 4.58 p.m. instead of 5 p.m., and if he says anything I'll tell him what he really looks like, and whether he thinks he is a Ramon Colman, or a Ronald Novarro, and I'll tell him what I think of the likes of him, I'll tell him, the likes of him, you know chum, the likes of him, in London go picking up the drain-manholes to see if the sewage is running O.K., and now he comes out to Hindia, and thinks he is Sivaji the Great."

"So you are bent upon showing them the way, at home and at the office?"

"Bent upon? I am. Do they think I have no backbone, no couraze, no morality, they think I cannot stand on my own feet, leave alone that of others, in trams and buses? I am going to turn the corner, I am going to make good, and by gad, chum, I'll show them to-morrow!"

The cash was running short, and the whisky was running high and clouding the brain, so I thought of calling a halt. I called the bar-boy, asked him for the bill, and paid it. As I walked out I silently prayed for my friend's success in the dangerous task he had set himself, noting at the same time his approximate height, in case I may have to place an order with an undertaker, and may be asked my friend's height.

Next evening I was again going to the Club, when I met my friend Collins, coming from the station, walking towards home at a fast pace. He seemed worried, and had a bundle of papers under his arm.

"Hello son, why in such a hurry?" I asked him.

"Too much work, mate, I got detained at the office till 6 p.m., the boss was in a bad mood to-day, so I did not like to ask him to let me knock-off earlier."

"Too bad. Anyway, coming to the Club for a drink and a chat?"

"I am afraid, not, pal, I am already late, and the wife will be in an awful temper about it, so I better hurry up."

"What did your boss say when he saw you were detained?"

"Oh, he was cursing as usual, calling me all sorts of names, and when I could not get through the work, he gave me this large file of papers to attend to at home and report on them."

"I see, so you are sure you won't come along to the Club?"

"No, not today, the wife will cause trouble, otherwise. See some other day—"

"Right son, good night!"

"Good night, pal."

The Trap—(Continued from page 8)

both the left hand and right hand sides of the balcony, so you can get behind some of them. And don't budge an inch till you have got your photograph—no matter what happens."

"I get you," he smiled. "You want a photograph of both of you?"

"Yes. When you hear me say 'Ronnie darling!' pop your magnesium powder off and click your camera. Then disappear as fast as you can. Most probably I won't need the photograph after I've told Ronnie that some awful person has snapped us together in each other's arms. But, if I do, I'll call round for it."

"O. K.," said John, and they parted.

* * * *

The brightly moonlit balcony of Ronnie's flat again. Hilda had persuaded him to sit next her on the couch for the first time since she had met him. Once, she reflected, he knew someone had taken a photograph of them as she threw her arms round his neck, he would propose in a second.

While Ronnie went inside for cigarettes, John popped his head out from the right hand group of palms and whispered, "I'm here all right," and popped back again just as Ronnie reappeared.

"Do you think you could love me to eternity?" Hilda asked as he seated himself once more by her side. She knew that her voice must have reached her silent ally close by behind the palms.

"Er—er," began Ronnie, and then, quite suddenly, Hilda thrilled to the blaze in his eyes.

He caught her to him. His lips were on hers, warm and passionate. She shut her eyes with the surprise and sheer ecstasy of it all. And as she opened her eyes, he stopped kissing her and said:

"Hilda darling!"

There was a sudden blinding flash from the left hand group of palms, a click, and then a scuffle as somebody shot off down the stairs.

"W—what was that?" stammered Hilda, puzzled.

"Some blackmailer, I suppose," Ronnie's voice sounded jubilant. "And he's got a photograph of us together—in each other's arms! Hilda, we must—er—"

"Yes," she whispered softly, "we must get married!"

A kiss. Then:

"Ronnie darling!" said Hilda.

Another bright flash—from the right hand group of palms this time. A click, and a scuffle as somebody disappeared down the stairs.

Ronnie gasped.

"W—who was that?" he managed at last.

Hilda laughed softly, happily.

"You wicked boy!" she chided. "So you too thought of the same thing?"

"Er—er—there seemed to be nothing else to do," stammered Ronnie as he drew her sweet face down to his in a most determined manner.

Voyage

I'll make a little paper boat
And float it on a pond,
I'll steer it all alone, alone
And sail away beyond
The seven mountains, seven seas,
Beyond the seven skies,
Until I reach the kingdom where
The mares have ruby eyes!

I'll make a pretty paper boat
And float it on a stream,
My paper boat will sail away
As softly as a dream,
Beyond the seven waterfalls,
To the Kingdom of the Wise
Where dreamy drowsy elephants
Have emeralds for eyes.

I'll make a clean white paper boat
And float it on a lake;
Until I reach the distant shore
I will be wide-awake.
I'll pass beyond the seven worlds
To there where nothing dies
Because the King who ruleth
Has silence in his eyes.

—Harindranath Chattopadhyaya





THIS is not pure blarney. I had it from my wife's third cousin who, by the way, was once nearly hauled up for perjury. He came by the details from his neighbour who heard it from the clerk of the Ladies' Club. It has been vouched for to be the goods. If this preamble does not convince you and you are inclined to skip this, you can do so and repent at leisure.

The reel round which this yarn is wound is Narain, a young man of good credentials and not unbecoming features. He was an assistant in a commercial house and occupied a room on the third floor of a house in Gumadoss Street. From his small balcony he could survey all the buildings which lay huddled on the seaward side of his diggings. With a pair of powerful binoculars he could have pried into the interiors of many lodgings, but not being in possession of one, his unaided vision was restricted. Yet just opposite his billet, over two hundred yards away, was another three storied building with a balcony facing his. Narain's eyes, piercing the distance through the odd mixture of air, dust and gasoline gas which formed the healthy atmosphere of the City, were able to note the inmates of the top floor of this building. Among them was a figure in *saree* which, to Narain, appeared to be the essence of sweet youthful womanhood. She was trim and chic and modern too, for, she smoked innumerable cigarettes while lolling in a Club chair.

A Love

Reading time • about 12 minutes

Narain had high notions about his facial lay-out. He believed that he was one better than Rudolf Valentino or Ramon Novarro. To his self-centred imagination, he was an eyeful for any girl to give her a heartful of love-sickness. He expected all girls to fall for him. Constantly watching the girl of the opposite flat, in season and out of season, he fell under the spell of love. Whenever she of the other flat appeared to look in his direction, his heart opened out its throttle to increase his pulse from the normal to over a hundred. But not being able to bridge the murky distance between him and the accelerator of his heart, either by telepathy, telephone or at least by the vulgar method of ogling, this swain's *affaire de Coeur* remained disconcertedly unilateral. Therefore, he set about to think out a way to apprise the queen of his heart of the feelings he had for her.

Narain knew that to communicate with a girl without knowing who she was and what her lay was, was to court disaster. Therefore he dared not write to her, much less crash her gate and go wooing to her abode. He was in a fix. But one day, as he sat letting his eyes rest tenderly on her distant figure, he pulled out his handkerchief and waved it at her with the pretence of whisking away the flies that buzzed round his head. When a corresponding wave came unexpectedly from the opposite verandah, Narain's eyes grew wide. He waved again and the hanky at the other end answered back with a lusty flap. The handkerchief signalling caught on for about five minutes like two military pickets exchanging semaphore messages from two hills. Then Narain in his new-found joy grew bold and let fly a flying kiss. The lady responded with two gusty flying kisses. Narain did a Prince Albert bow and the lady bowed back amorously and withdrew behind the scenes. He was crazy with unexpected bliss. He went into his room and smiled at himself happily in the mirror.

The arrival of the postman at this juncture gave him a brain-wave. Pulling the man by the sleeve of his coat, he took him to the verandah and pointed out the flat where his charmer lived. The postman, not knowing the object of this unexpected excitement, grinned at Narain with a perplexed look.

"You see that building? Who lives on the top floor? A rupee if you tell me the name," said Narain.

The postman thought awhile.

"Gunga Bai," informed he. "A lady from the North,"

"Number and street?"

Knot

by 'Narak A. Nurak'

Illustrated by Verma

The postal messenger referred to some letters in his hand. "87, Barota Street."

"Thank you."

A rupee changed hands.

Narain rushed to his desk and wrote. He was a quick worker.

27, Gumadoss Street.

Dear Lady,

Thank you for the response. Your Cavalier has regained his life by this condescension. His heart is with you. May he meet you?

Your Cavalier,

Narain.

The letter was sent through a messenger boy and the reply came with promptness.

To night at 8 p. m. I wait for you.

Gunga.

Narain grinned at himself once more.

At the thought of the expected *tete a tete* with his lady love, his heart began to pound away at top speed. Full of hopes of a romantic evening he went up to the lady's flat. The verandah was deserted. He noted that the place was in a slovenly state and that it reeked of dirt. He wondered how a beautiful girl could be occupying such a dirty hole. It was like a jewel set in a muck heap. He tapped on the door and waited.

Immediately a Chinaman with very repulsive features came out and signed him to a chair. Narain felt ill at ease. The setting was queer and not to his liking. He sat on the edge of a chair, his mind seething with doubts. The Chinaman retreated inside as stealthily as he had come out. It was an intriguing situation.

As he sat in gloomy meditation he heard the swish of a woman's dress and the shuffling of slippers on bare floor.

"So you have come, my dear!" greeted a feminine voice, and an elderly lady, on the shady side of forty-five, a withered relic of a musty past, with sagging cheeks and a wrinkled face in spite of overdone make-up, came out and smiled on the visitor.

Narain let out a fidgetty cough.

"Miss Gunga Bai?" he queried.



"Mrs. Gung Bai," said the woman.

"The lady's mother?" asked Narain.

"No. I am Gunga Bai. You have come to meet me," informed the lady in a shrill disagreeable voice.

Narain's eyes swam. The distance had lent enchantment to the creature that now stood before him. He suppressed a groan.

"You are very shy," cooed the woman with the air of a caterpillar about to invade a plant. "I had thought you'd be a gay Lothario. Where shall we spend the evening?"

Narain felt like a man treading on shifting sands. His romance had developed into a nightmare. The nausea of sudden disappointment convulsed his features. He tried bluff.

"I am going," he said. "I just wanted to see you. I shall come again." He rose from the chair.

"A fine cavalier you are! Pray be seated," trilled the woman, her voice almost man-like in its timbre.

Narain was peeved.

"I had thought you were young and all that," he said bluntly.

The woman's face dusked slightly. She looked with ire at her visitor and then smiled.

"A poor compliment, my lad," she said. "But you cannot get away so soon."

"It was all due to a misunderstanding," parried Narain.

"Misunderstanding and bosh! You wrote a love note to me and you can't get out of it."

"Pardon me," pleaded the visitor. "I am sorry, but let me go."

"Pardon you! You poor fish! I shall have my lawyers on you for breach of promise." She looked crazy and callously calculating.

"I apologise," he whined. He was afraid of the law courts where his name would be dragged through mud.

"Ahem," said the hussy, "I shall release you provided you help me to night in an important matter."

Narain felt relieved.

"I am prepared to do anything to make amends," he promised hopefully.

"Not very cavalierly again. Yet I shall not be too exacting. The alternative is an easy job. You'll take this sealed attache case to Egmore Station and hand it over to the person who will note the initials on it and ask for it. He will be in a blue suit and a double terai hat."

She then explained that the man was taking the 10 P.M. to the South and Narain accompanied by the Chinaman should go there and hand over the bag. Neither she nor the Chinaman could do it for reasons which she was not prepared to divulge. If he gave trouble, the Chinaman had instructions to knife him to death.

"What does the bag contain?" asked Narain perplexed.

The lady pouted her lips and lifted her shoulders to the level of her ears. She smiled benevolently.

"Russian crown jewels, the peacock fan and Ali Baba's treasures. No questions, darling. You are getting off cheap."

"But if after giving the bag I squeal to the police?"

"By that time I shall be away. I had noted your monkey tricks all these days and had reserved you for the job. Now do it, you shrimp, or it will be the death of you. Look at that Chink. Murder is an art with him."

Narain blinked at the Chinaman who was standing immobile like a statue, with his arms crossed on his chest and the narrow slits of his eyes narrower with intent watching. At the sight of him cold shivers went through Narain's spine. But he was no jay and his brain worked at top-speed.

"Right oh! I know when to acknowledge defeat. I am your man for the job, my lady," he bluffed. But will you lay off me in case I do this?"

"Sure. If you snap into agenda without the slightest variation."

"O.K. then. But I have promised to meet a friend at 9 p.m. May I go down to the shop below and phone to him to go to the devil and not wait for me?" said Narain flippantly pretending to warm himself enthusiastically into his duties. "You can send the Chink with me to see that I do not run away." The woman thought with knitted brows.

"Yes. But remember, if you run away your carcase will be the subject matter of an inquest to-morrow."

"I know," he said as he went down.

The Chinaman examined the telephone box before Narain got in, to assure himself that there was no other way out. Narain finished a brief conversation and went up with his escort.

It was about 8-30 P.M. and Narain began to talk lightly with the woman who informed him that a taxi would come up at 9 P.M.

In about fifteen minutes, steps were heard coming up the stairs. The Chinaman furtively took his guard at the head of the stairs. A young man who appeared to be under the influence of drink was seen to wobble up the stairs.

"Narain, you bad egg, you are a blunderbuss," prattled the man. "I have been waiting for you. What are you doing here?"

"The programme is off. I have some business with this lady," railed Narain winking at the woman.

"But you must come. Nalini is waiting for us," lisped the young man and proceeded towards Narain.

The Chinaman barred his way. But a quick upper cut followed by a neat left to the pit of his stomach felled him neatly.

Gunga Bai drew out a revolver. But instantly Narain who was behind her grabbed a tumbler of water that was on a table and crashed it against her face and knocked down the revolver from her hand. He and the young man caught the woman and held her prisoner. In the struggle, the hairy equipment on her head worked loose and a wig fell down exposing a close cropped scalp.

"You'll suffer for this!" snarled the prisoner.

The young man now blew a whistle and six hefty constables came up and took both the prisoners in charge.

"I am Inspector Morgan of Boarcarp Station," said the young man to the prisoner. "My friend here was prompt in giving the telephone message. Well, Gunga Din, we were watching for you. What are you smuggling now?"

The prisoner looked murderously at Narain. They opened the sealed attache case and found a huge quantity of cocaine in it.

With this bag Narain and the Inspector rushed to Egmore Station where the former acted as decoy and the accomplice was also arrested. They found a lot of opium in his possession.

"A big haul, my boy! I congratulate you," said the Inspector. "We were watching for Gunga Din and his henchmen. Your reward will be big."

They celebrated their luck at the refreshment room.



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 over-estimate our abilities or sadly disparage them to ourselves. Have you seen yourself as others see you?

If Not—

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FREE CHARACTER - READING COUPON

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C/o The Merry Magazine,
Broadway, Madras.

Dear Sir, Please read my character and publish it in The Merry Magazine. It is understood that this puts me under no obligation to you.

Name (or Nom-de-plume).....(Mr. or Mrs.)

Correct date of birth (with time of birth if possible).....

Address.....



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 on page 45—Ed.

Merry Fan (atic). Is requested to give the correct date of birth according to the English Calendar. 'Merry Magus' has no time for cross-references.

Pudding. Haven't you a taste for occult sciences, chemistry, physics and like subjects? You dislike to obey and your inborn prudence will not let you run personal risks. You always feel lonely—and why? You hate society, and naturally society hates you in turn. You can bear no restraint and are therefore very independent. Are you not considered odd by others on account of your peculiar ideas about love and duty? Pains and swellings, especially in your legs, will make you suffer frequently.

Sarou (Bombay). It is good you discern those with whom you associate and so you cannot be imposed upon. You always try to analyse everything. Don't be selfish and run to extremes. I cannot call you quick and brilliant, but your plodding course makes your life a success. With a good taste about your house and dress, you are over-nice about your personal appearance. Inharmony and annoyance are bad to your health.

D. A. Dorainathan. Choose your own career, but be within your limits. You will succeed in any line, but never enter politics. You will be misjudged

in your criticisms on account of your extra-frank talk. Your worst fault is you break in while others are conversing and assert that you are right. Don't do so. Why do you spend so freely in these hard days of depression? You have full confidence in yourself and you are inclined to be charitable. Inflammation of the tongue, boils and acid complaints will trouble you often.

N. S. Gold. You will go through any amount of peril and fatigue. Be delicate in your intercourse with others. Don't be rough. You are endowed with a strong will power and a tenacity of purpose. You crave for affection, but you rarely get it as you resent other's interference. Don't become a prey to cajolery, you will be ruined. You are a severe disciplinarian. Do you not feel happy when you overcome any impediment? Are you able to understand the opposite sex? Don't overwork your brain.

V. Krishnamoorthy. Are you not able to judge human nature instinctively? You are affectionate and good tempered. Are you not doting on your family and children? Are you not lacking in certainty of purpose? You are quick and keen and can beat out anybody by your brilliant wit but you are tired of everything too soon. Don't be restless, and ask not for things you cannot get. Don't criticise the

mannerisms of others; it is bad. Develop your will-power. You are liable to be attacked by insomnia, tumours of the tongue and such like ailments.

Luck-now. You care more for the brain and brain-work and development and less for your physique. Sensitiveness and lack of self-confidence are the obstacles in achieving your aims. Push forward; don't retire from the gaze of the public. Don't promise on the impulse; you may not be able to keep your word afterwards. You will have numerous false friends ready to influence you into fraudulent schemes. Indecision spoils many of your ideas and schemes. Be alert. Poor circulation and anaemia will afflict you.

D. B. Rao. (Bezawada). Don't hyperbolize your contempt for miserliness, though you spend money too freely. Are you not showy in your religious inclinations? You are too sure of yourself. Your good nature and charitableness are tinged with aristocratic uppishness. Pray be moderate. Your impulsiveness will make you regret afterwards. Be always actively employed. Your lungs and throat are delicate.

Atien. I cannot call you quick and brilliant but your action is solid and plodding. Your feelings are mundane.

Replies

Don't be dogmatic in your doings. Don't give way to superstition. Don't become selfish in your aims and objects. Self-possession and self-reliance are assets in you, and so you are well suited to business. Disharmony and annoyance in your surroundings will spoil your health. You are endowed with a good constitution; so do not imagine any illness that is not in you.

Adapa Satyanarayana Rao. There is no use being easily wounded in your feelings; we should be a bit thick-skinned in these materialistic days to be successful. Don't get excited; it makes you lacking in self-control. You take interest in public gatherings and meetings and you mix with a good many people. But in spite of it you feel lonely mentally—why? It is on account of your extreme sensitiveness. Don't impoverish yourself in your enthusiasm to help others. Stomach disorders and bad circulation of blood are likely to afflict you.

Rao (Hyderabad, Dn.) 'Merry Magus' is too busy now to cross-refer and find English dates. However, if you can wait, he will refer at his leisure and publish your character in the *Merry Magazine*. For other particulars mentioned by you in the coupon, you may correspond with 'Merry Magus' giving full address.

S. Sivanandam. You have the aptitude to acquire knowledge about very many things. You are ambitious, but to achieve your aim you should improve and have confidence in yourself; you are now lacking in it. Don't stand aside but claim you right. Don't worry about money and your future position in life; there is God

Almighty to see to it. You dislike to be a burden on others, don't you? Promise not anything on the impulse. Are you not fond of travel with an innate desire to probe into the mysteries of the world? Anaemia and intestinal troubles will worry you.

Radha. Can't you shake off that laziness? Don't you know religion is not based on superstition. Fickleness and selfishness are badly apparent in you. In a way you are romantic, but romance only in fancy. Generosity in action is good, but not so in talk. You are susceptible to the magnetism of others; therefore be careful with whom you associate. I will advise you to do a thing; commence your plans in the waxing period of the Moon. Gastritis and dysentery will worry you.

Ramanlal Shah. You scheme with untiring energy. You possess influence over others and these qualities together make you a successful business man. You have many ingenious ways of making money. You are a man of solid facts with limpid logic and not of fancies. You are affectionate and loving, or rather doting on your family. Don't change your plans and temperament as well too often. Develop your will-power. Be careful of your throat and nose.

S. Raman. Don't be a stickler. Listen to the advice of others; else you will regret your actions afterwards. Raw militarism will not do in every-day life. I cannot, however, interfere with your plans; with all my good advices, you may even turn on me. Hasty and violent temper will lead you to do cruel things. Bring that temper under control, as otherwise you will be unhappy even in

your family life, and will make a muddle of things. Fever and headache are worse in you; take good care of your teeth.

K. Thiruvvarasan. My generous friend! You throw money for others' sake but I would advise you to see whether the 'others' deserve to get the money. Fatigue and peril are nothing to you, but at the same time audacity is not wholly a virtue. Listen to others' arguments and consider well before you pronounce your judgment. Obstinacy and arrogance will lead you to ruin. Check those tendencies. Sleep well and rest—a welcome suggestion!—and do not over-work your brain and body.

Rajagopalan (Tanjore). You are richly endowed both physically and mentally. You learn everything intuitively and understand everything logically. Your weak point is you speak out your mind too quickly and plainly. Criminally frank, you will spare nobody for his or her evil ways and tendencies even should the he or she be your own child. Extreme frankness is not good as it will wound another easily. You will meet with criticisms and oppositions in your undertakings. Troubles of the head, ear and eyes will worry you.

Five we. To compensate the failure on account of bad luck, you work hard. Don't give way to depression if you are not properly understood by others; try and make others understand you in your plans. Sensitiveness will make you a failure if you do not shake that tendency off. Always go ahead and do not retrace your steps at critical moments. Your truth and honesty will only be

rewarded by deceit and disloyalty.
You will have pains in ears.

★

K. R. Chari (*Dadar*). Have you noticed that your intuitions are correct and your first impressions are the best? Don't you know that an analytical tendency always destroys the finer qualities endowed by God? Peace and happiness in family life can only be obtained by kindness, sympathy, mutual and proper understanding and not by command or correction. Don't be wavering; good chances are missed thereby. Firmness of purpose is required in you. You are liable to undergo severe operations and exhaustion of nerves will afflict you.

★

D. K. S. (*Tinnevely*). Respect others. If you doubt others, understand that it's just a reflection. You are very prudent in not running personal risks. Do you not hate the pleasures and luxuries of the modern every-day life. You can bear no restraint and so you love solitude and dislike humanity. Are you not considered individualistic by your friends and relatives? Fate always plays a strange role in your life independent of your efforts. The result you achieve will be quite different from what you work for. Gout and swelling in the legs will afflict you often.

★

S. S. Sundari Namsi. Demonstration of any feelings is not in your line, though you feel deep. Don't be revengeful. Self-control is the road to success; hence cultivate it. You can do well in business. Do it for others, and not for yourself. You are a regular observer of religious ceremonies. Are you not a target for the opposition press, however much your actions may be for the good of others and disinterested. You espouse unpopular causes? Recognition of services is not for you. Are you not worried with liver complaints?

Bhagwandas (*Hyderabad, Sind*). You belong to the materialistic and practical school. You will be at the extremes of good or bad. 'Self first' is your motto. What others have failed to achieve, you will try and succeed, on account of your persistency and industry, but you cannot originate new ideas. Are you not adaptable to any situation? That tendency helps you much. You are a born conservative, respecting law, rank and position. Constipation is likely to worry you often.

★

Betel Box (*Rameswaram*). You being verusian, it is no wonder you have not forgotten your betel box even at a holy place! What becomes of your obstinacy and 'stiff-neck' and dogma while you are standing before the person who has your affection and devotion. Don't be fierce and impulsive; this tendency defeats your aim in life. Be careful; your emotional and sensitive nature is your weak point to mislead you. Live not in damp climates, as you are liable to tumours and internal growths.

★

Payar (*Bombay*). Do you think you will continue in your present career? I doubt it. Versatility in many things makes you indecisive in your career. Don't mix with bad and perverse persons, have good influences around you. You are sentimental and you are therefore able to appeal to the sentiments of others. Don't lead a double life; conventional before the eyes of the public and Bohemian elsewhere. It will lead you to troubles. Beware of kidney troubles.

★

Shiva Prasad (*Lucknow*). Originality is not in the line of materialists. Your toilsome manner and action denotes want of quickness and brilliancy, but your continuity of purpose helps to make your life a success. Be reasonable; what is right to you need not be right to others. The world is not made for you alone. Don't spoil your excellent system by drugging.

Hari Hara Sarma. 'Merry Magus' has hardly time to cross-refer various Calendars. Please give correct date of birth as per English Calendar.

★

Ahalya Bai (*Kharagpur*). Don't be over anxious in anything and especially in money-matters. It is not to all that gambling is a success. Hence don't gamble nor speculate. Is not your imagination feeding your plans in the dream land? Don't promise anything on the spur of the moment, for you hardly ever keep it. Luck is far away from you; hence work hard. Are not your word and thought tinged with romance? Don't be fickle, and avoid selfishness. Beware of gastric troubles.

★

Fag. Have a check on your speculative tendency. You are quickly tired of everything and hence you love travel. Stand on your own legs; don't enter into any binding partnership. Don't get depressed and go away from your work; press on till you reach the goal even if you lack encouragement from outside. Then only you will be successful. It is a pity your home-life will not be happy. Don't be cynical if you are opposed in your plans. Inflammatory diseases will affect you more.

★

Biligiri. Intuition helps you in your studies without effort. Are you not an object of attraction either for your friends or your envious rivals? Possessed with a good intellect you understand everything clearly. You are not fit for any deep study. You are dangerously frank. This is too bad. It is good your anger is only a thing of the moment, you cool down the next moment. Generous to a fault, and super-abundant in sympathy, you hate subterfuge. Though not an egotist, you have a thirst for celebrity. Take care of your eye and heart.

RESULTS

'Linking Letters' Competition

The Correct Solution :

- | | | |
|-------------|-----------------|-------------|
| 1. CATACOMB | 4. MANSLAUGHTER | 7. PENDANT |
| 2. UPROOT | 5. HEARING | 8. ANTIMASK |
| 3. CARAVAN | 6. NOTICE | |

The Following 14 Readers
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each getting
Rs. 17/14

1. Y. G. Dave, Kadia Road, Junagadh. 2. Miss A. Saroja, 12, S. I. Building, Matunga. 3. S. L. Soman, Mandvi. 4-5. P. Balu, News Agency, Robertsonpet. 6. N. Rama Rao, Steward Quarters, Victoria Hospital, Bangalore City. 7. C. M. Koshy, The Travancore National Bank Ltd., Pudukottah. 8. P. R. Krishna Row, Typist, Municipal Office, Pudukottah. 9. B. Srinivasa Rao, Sanskrit College, Udipi. 10. K. Srinivasan, 4, North Madavilagam, Ariyalur. 11. D. Srinivasa Iyer, Kondiampet Agraharam, Tiruvanaikoil P. O. 12. P. A. Ganesa Iyer, 'Surabhi', Tennur, Trichy. 13. Muneer Ahmed, Pondy Road, Villupuram. 14. C. S. Ramanatham, Clerk, S. B. Dept., Madras G. P. O.

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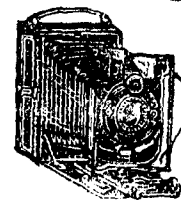
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K. S. G. Krishnan, Dharmapuri. (61) K. Manmadha Row, Ichapuram. (62) S. Peer Mohammed, Mettur Project. (63-64) S. V. Duraiswamy Iyer, Coimbatore. (65) B. Muniratnam, Karaikudi. (66) M. Muthusubrahmanyam, Sivaganga. (67) P. R. Subramanian, Madura. (68) Kalyanakrishnan, Palni. (69-70) G. Radhakrishnan, Trichy. (71) K. Srinivasan, Ariyalur. (72-78) D. Srinivasa Iyer, Tiruvanaikoil. (79) N. Ranganatha Rao, Tiruvanaikoil. (80-81) P. A. Ganesa Iyer, Trichy. (82) S. Ramaswami, Tennur, Trichy. (83) K. K. Menon, Tanjore. (84) K. Rangesa Rao, Tanjore. (85) V. D. Rajabooshna, Kumbakonam. (86) M. R. Rangaswami, Kumbakonam. (87) D. S. P. John, Mayavaram. (88) E. Gopalakrishnan, Thiruvilanthoor. (89) C. R. Srinivasan, Chidambaram. (90) K. Govindarajulu, Tirupapuliyur. (91-93) R. T. Velu, Vandipalayam. (94) S. M. Auquil, Vellore. (95) Syed. Md. Ali, Vellore. (96) K. Subramanyam, Srimushnam. (97-98) P. S. Sundaram Iyengar, Madras. (99) N. Swaminathan, Madras. (100) P. R. Ramaswamy, Madras. (101) M. Thiruvengadam, Madras. (102) A. V. Menon, Madras. (103) M. N. Kuppuswamy, Madras. (104) M. Magudamani Raj, Vepery. (105-106) M. S. Loganatha Mudaliar, Vepery. (107) Oscar. M. White, Vepery. (108) K. Kannuram, Vepery. (109) O. A. Venkatarama, Triplicane. (110) S. R. Athmanatha Iyer, Triplicane. (111) K. Rajah Iyer, Royapettah. (112-113) G. Narberumal, Mylapore. (114) Miss. C. Coles, Rangoon. (115) Seetaraman, Rangoon. (116-117) K. Sithravel Pillai, Colombo.

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First Prize Rs. 500. Second Prize Rs. 300.
(All correct.) Third Prize Rs. 200 (One error.)
(Two errors.)

Substitute one letter for each dash to get the given clue.

No.	Words.	Clues.
1	STR---	Punish
2	BO---	Drink deeply
3	TWI---	Twist
4	RE---	Take away by violence
5	CH---	Sound

RULES:—Ref. Chambers XXth Century Dictionary. A, An, The and etc., are omitted in the beginning of the clues. Bracketted words not used. Plain paper entries accepted and it is enough if all the alternatives are merely shown. STAMPS NOT ACCEPTED. Prizes will be divided in case of ties M. O. Receipt must accompany with the entries. Manager's decision on all matters relating to this Competition is absolutely final and legally binding either before the award or after the award and is an express condition of entry. The prize amounts and the result will be sent to all entrants, on 7-9-35. Enclose 4 quarter anna stamps for result.

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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 FAME. 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	F—ME	Celebrity	5	FLE—	Run away
2	F—ND	Attempt	6	FE—D	Bloody Strife
3	FE—R	Companion	7	FL—Y	Frighten
4	F—AY	Frighten			

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 14th September. The Manager's 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 Manager,

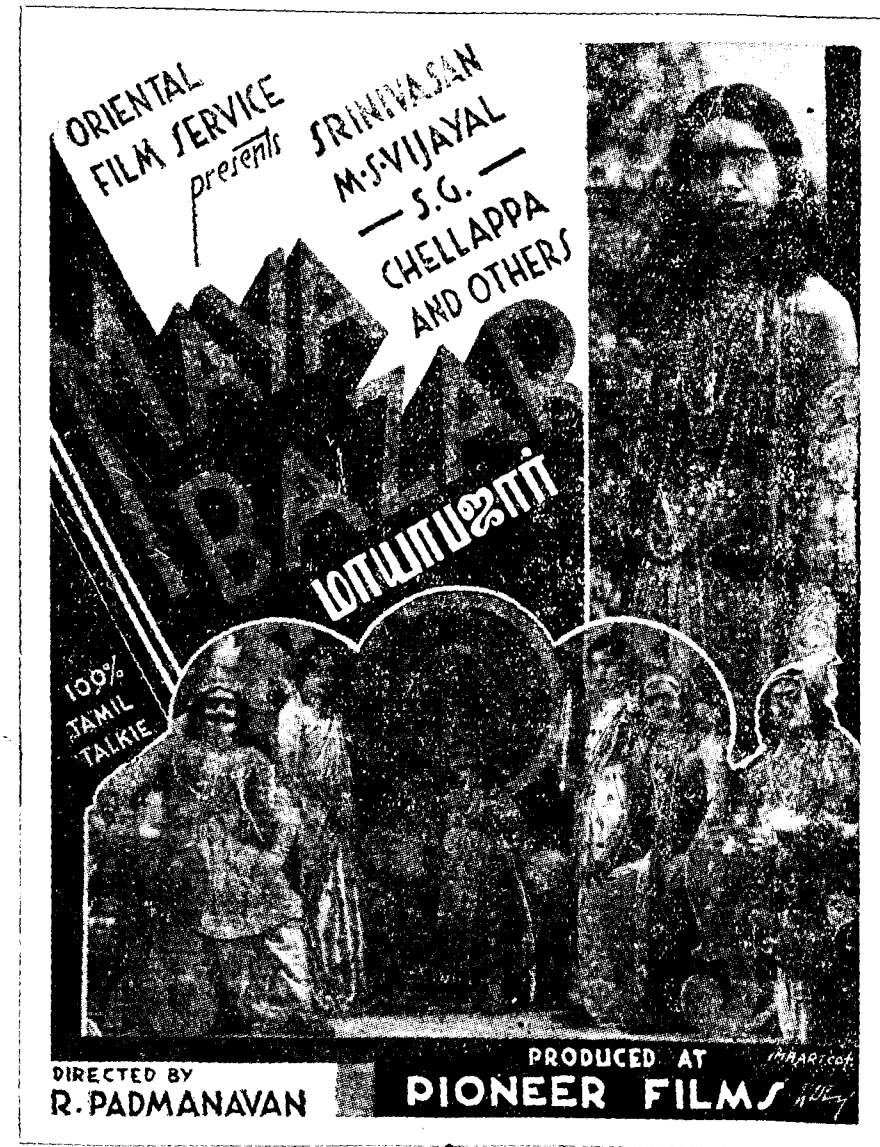
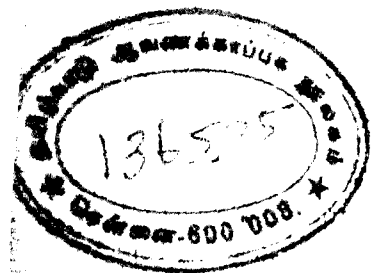
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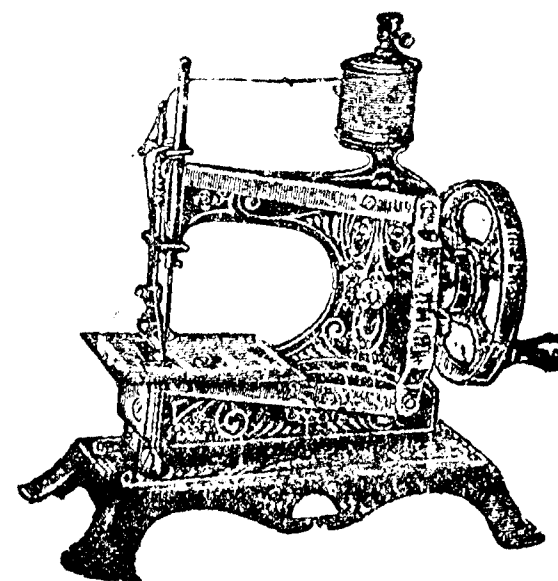
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