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No. 35

The MERRY MAGAZINE



On Parrots
by H. V. Collett

August 31
1935

100000th Child
by E. L. Shipman

Madame Resourceful



by R. Jagannathan

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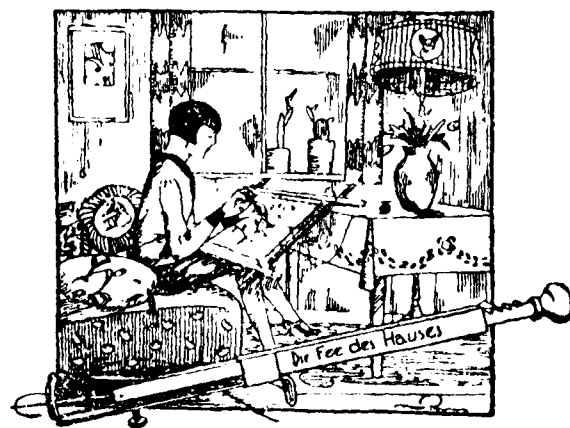
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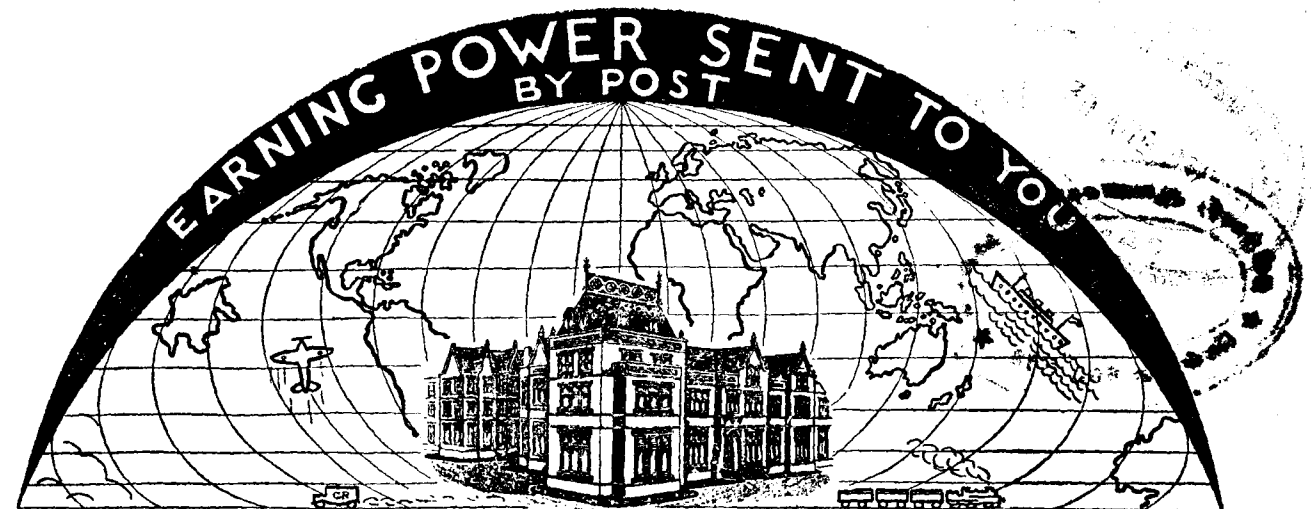
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There are some people who manufacture an article, and put it on the market to sell. We do not do that, we work in exactly the opposite direction. We find out what employers want and we train our students to fill those jobs. We have to be experts in the matter of employment, progress and prosperity.

If you have any anxieties at all as to what your sons or daughters should be, write to me, or better still, let them write to me personally—Fatherly Advice Department—and tell me their likes and dislikes, and I will give sound practical advice as to the possibilities of a vocation and how to succeed in it.

Yours sincerely,

J. Bennett

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The
MERRY
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Lummie

Wife's Comforter

High pressure salesmanship which leaves everything hot around.

John A. Henry

The Simple Way

It is always the simple way that does the trick—even in the matter of securing a wife.

R. Jagannathan

The First Rift

Baby yelling—Confidences exchanged—All is well that ends well.

MacNaughton Thomas

No. 27 Across

Love in the X-word puzzle way.

SPARKS FROM OUR ANVIL

The *Echo de Paris* says that the Abyssinian question is resolving itself into a trial of strength between Britain and Italy.

We are surprised that the French press also has adopted a provocative tone towards England!

It is understood that a Zulu chief has volunteered to raise a Zulu contingent to fight for Abyssinia.

No mention is made as to whether Mr. Ramaswamy Mudaliar will be invited to assist in their war-dance!

A separate academy for preserving Jewish culture has been organised by the Nazi government.

This it is hoped will leave the Jews in their own stew.

From Reuter's account of the last Test-match: 'Mitchell was unenterprising.....Mitchell played a delightful innings giving an exhibition of a variety of strokes, but was unenterprising.....Mitchell's was a model of defensive innings. He played magnificent cricket, hitting all round the wicket.'

Which shows how Reuter's are never un-enterprising!

Appealing to the Muslims to join the Justice Party, the Hon'ble Mr. P.

T. Rajan is reported to have said: 'There was no trouble in Madras between Hindus and Muslims. That was all the work of the Justice Party.'

We shall hereafter bid the Justice Party go North, instead of West!

At the end of the Cabinet meeting to discuss the failure of the Tripartite Conference, Mr. Ramsay Macdonald told press-men: 'We have a very clear mind as to what should be done. I am returning by air to Lossiemouth.'

For once, Mr. Macdonald knew his own mind!



Mr. Ramaswamy Mudaliar, speaking elsewhere, claimed that the aims of the Congress and the Justice Party were the same.

Heaven forbid!

He further said that the Justice Party could not be converted by spectacular appeals to voters.

We know that conversion can never come without Grace!

Explaining why he opposed a civic welcome to the Congress President,

he is reported to have said: 'The Corporation would honour Congress leaders if they established to the satisfaction of the people that they were sportsmen, even though the battle might be full of politics.'

Far from his 'battle being full of politics', his politics seem to be full of tattle!

Speaking at Kumbakonam, the Hon'ble Mr. Pannirselvam explained that the term 'Kumbakonam' was used by a person who found it difficult to understand a particular thing.

We are bound to say that the Hon'ble member has not so far talked 'Kumbakonam.'

He added that he was proud of being partly a Kumbakonamite.

We dare say Kumbakonam too is of him—partly.

In the course of a press interview, Sir Sikandar Hyat Khan is reported to have said: 'I am what they call a sick man.'

This has surprised us; we thought he was a Muslim man!

"Quetta 'Earth-Quake' Banned in Delhi: Chief Commissioner's Order," says a head-line.

We wish he had banned it in Quetta too!

Scouting the idea of wrecking the constitution from within, Mr. Jayakar says: 'The fly sat on the circumference of the wheel. The fly now wants to sit on the central pivot.'

Unlike Mr. Jayakar, who seems to prefer being always the fly—in the ointment!

To Accept Or Reject :

OUR elderly statesmen have been suddenly galvanised into life by a visitation of a 'latter-day spring, and halloween summer'. In their desperate anxiety to find a platform, they have invaded the club-room and the class-room! Mr. Sastri at one end, and Mr. Jayakar at the other have spoken with a touching unanimity on the futility of 'wrecking' or 'rejecting' the new constitution. They contend that since we are powerless, rejection becomes a meaningless term. We must work the new constitution, or, they say, the new constitution will work us—to death! If that is the alternative, is it so unnatural after all to say that we refuse to commit suicide? The dishonesty, if any, is on the side of those who, while admitting the new constitution to be worse than the present one, in many respects, would yet gull themselves and the public into the belief that they could improve it by submitting to it. The moment you say that you accept the constitution, with whatever qualifications, you allow your case to go by default. But the reason for saying that we reject the constitution is entirely psychological. It leaves our hands free to replace it by another without notice, and without breach of faith. If our powerlessness renders our rejection meaningless, it makes our acceptance no less hollow. Let us take an illustration of what we mean. The peace imposed on Germany by the allies was admittedly atrocious. The Germans did not waste their breath on the arid question of accepting or rejecting the peace. They went about

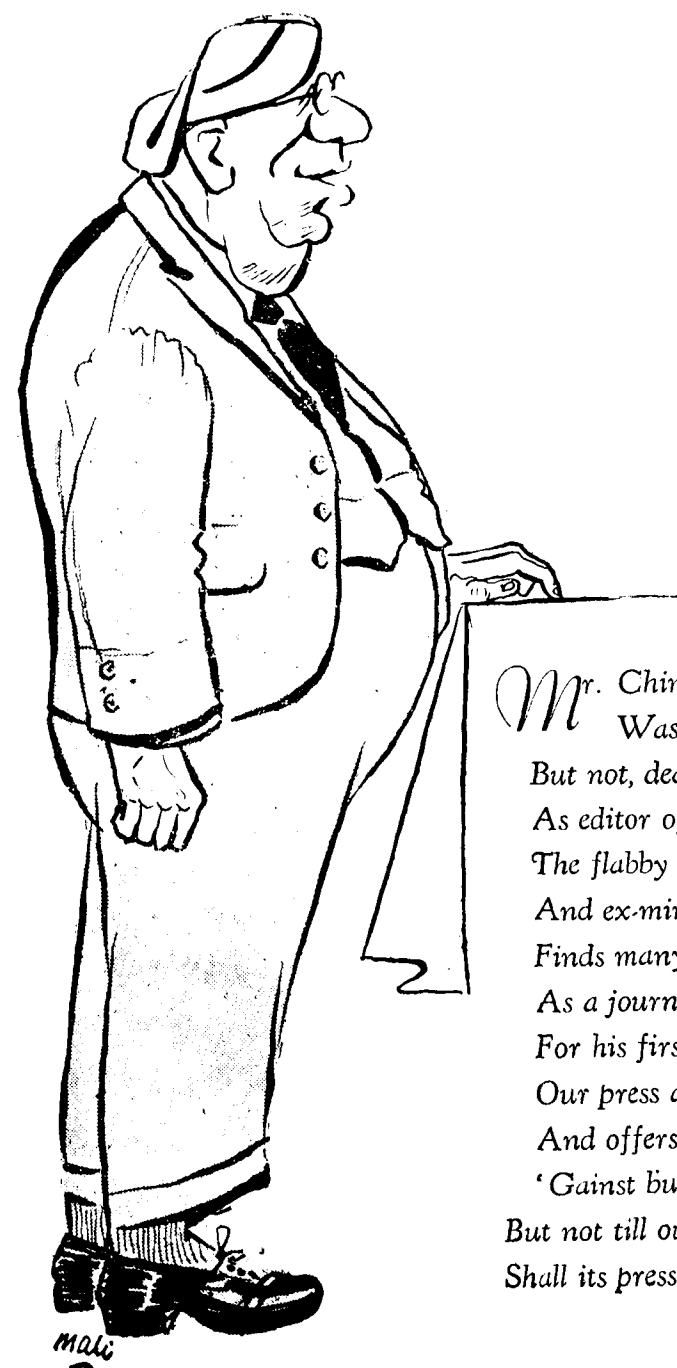
generating the atmosphere and spirit which have redeemed her honour from the worst imputations cast upon it by the peace. What national opinion means by rejection is precisely the same. It is a fair warning, and a fair fight which are offered. Hedged in as it is by law, we shall fight it according to the very law which has brought it into being. Britain connived at Germany's violations of the peace treaty. She did not stand by the letter of the law. May we not hope also that a situation might be created where law will be swallowed by statesmanship, only to evolve a more acceptable law? We may fail, but let there be no mistake about it. No other method will succeed!

The Delimitation Proposals :

The Madras committee was packed with a Justicite majority. This is not surprising, since the Congress boycotted it. Its most eloquent decision was to disfranchise the University graduate as university graduate. The Justice Party's claim to be a democratic party seems to be true in a particularly un-flattering sense. Democracies have always been afraid of the educated and cultured minority. By depriving the most enlightened part of the population, 'the men of light and leading', as Burke calls them, of the right to send even a single representative to the legislature, the Justice leaders have established another record. We hope their propagandists will include it among the achievements of the party. It still remains to be seen if the Central Committee will allow this scandal to be perpetuated.



Merry's Personalities-I



Mr. Chintamani
Was at one time funny!...
But not, dear reader,
As editor of the LEADER.
The flabby moderate
And ex-minister of state
Finds many things to hate
As a journalist irate.
For his first love he chose
Our press and all its woes,
And offers a ceaseless fight
'Gainst bureaucratic might.
But not till our country's free
Shall its press have Liberty!

— Mr. C. Y. Chintamani —

Who Shall I Fight For—

Mussolini or The 'King of Kings'?

by 'Old Soldier Jim'

Reading Time • About 4 Minutes

FROM my vast experience of Wars and Warriors, I have learnt to believe in what some people call coincidences. My tenure of service with the British Army expires in August and the Italo-Abyssinian War is due to commence in September. It is obvious therefore that Fate has arranged that War so that I shall be able to assist.

I have always been concerned with Wars; at least I have been an interested spectator to several, including the Great War.

The newspapers now say that Abyssinia does not want the services of Britons. That does not concern me, as I am the man for War. Why, the Germans were winning the Great War until the day I joined the British Army. I'm certain that Mussolini will be delighted if I offer my services to Italy. My problem is—on which country should I throw my weight?

Medals and decorations are, I understand, more easily obtained in the foreign armies than in the British Army. That's a point in favour of Italy, as I'm told that there is as yet no medal factory in Addis Ababa.

As regards the uniform—that of the Italian Army is very pretty but the Emperor of Abyssinia would be so thrilled at my offer of assistance that he would undoubtedly permit me to design my own uniform.

If I decide to assist Ethiopia I will arrange for my uniform beforehand, and take it with me, as there may not be enough of the right kind of material available in the country to make it.

Pay is, of course, quite a secondary consideration. Mussolini must have quite a lot of money, but there are rumours of untold untapped wealth in the ancient African country. It's nice to know, however, where the remuneration is coming from. That's the second point in favour of my Italianization.

Arms, fighting troops, guns, aeroplanes, submarines etc., will not be required by the country I decide to assist. The mere fact of my presence will overawe the enemy. That's how I win wars.

Gas? They needn't worry about that: I've got plenty of my own.

Religious scruples need not influence my decision. Italians are mostly Roman Catholics and Abyssinians, they say, practise a form of corrupted Christianity. I am Catholic and if I go to Rome I can become a Roman. With or without Christianity I'm perfectly corrupted. So I would get on nicely with the people of either country. An occasional bit of corruption is healthy for the soul; and there are so many ways of being corrupt and doing corruption. I might give this point to Abyssinia.

Then there is that very important question of food.

Italians eat Macaroni, Spaghetti, Onions and Olive Oil. That's not good enough for me. Not sufficient vitamins A, B, B₁ and C₃ in such a diet.

Dates form the staple food of the Abyssinians, and I believe the Ethiopian housewife can dish them up in forty different ways. They'd have to arrange dates to suit me if I give my assistance. I should not be staying long in any case. Whichever country I decide to assist will have to arrange to supply me with the necessary vitamin-containing food. For this purpose they might require a few aeroplanes.

Weather and climatic conditions—Both countries are full of hill-stations and I'm an adept at dodging the hot weather season in the plains. So these considerations need not carry any weight when I make my decision.

Ladies contribute largely towards success in War. I must therefore consider the feminine aspect of these two countries before I make any hasty decision.

Italian ladies carry stilettos and daggers concealed in their clothing. These they will have to confiscate if I decide to assist their country.

I know the war would not be fought in Italy, but my presence in that country would be necessary for the moral welfare to the nation.

European females wear various kinds of tight-fitting clothing containing buttons, hooks, eyes, pins, etc., whereas African women wear only loose-fitting, easily adjusted garments of one or two pieces only. To the uninitiated the question of clothing of womenfolk as related to war may not be apparent. Yet it is an important factor connected with the Supply and Demand Branch of the Army. For example, in a battle a soldier may lose certain parts of his personal clothing and on return to the base of operations find that the Quartermaster's Stores has been burnt down. He may then be required to return immediately to the battle-front. This would mean that he would have to commandeer clothing from the civilian population; the men being all at the front, the women would constitute the civilian population.

The same thing may happen to a whole battalion. Imagine a battalion of soldiers, half-clothed, waiting for a crowd of European women to adjust certain pins, bits of elastic etc., before the war could continue! Why, African ladies could hand over one of their two garments to the troops before you could wink.

Certainly Abyssinia scores this point. Therefore the score to date is:

Italy 2—Abyssinia 2: with 4 draws.

And I've still another fortnight to make my decision.

(But look sharp about it—Ed.)



Dear Mr. Merry—

Reading Time • About 4 Minutes

THERE is a general impression that 'question-time' in our Legislatures is usually more lively than the rest of the proceedings. Newspapers often feature appetising headlines such as 'The Home Member Heckled' or 'The Chief Minister Castigated' or 'The Law Member Laughed At!' I attended the recent meeting of the Council hoping for a treat on the above lines. But I am sorry to say that I was doomed to bitter disappointment. I found that the question-hour is not as lively as it can be made; and I've found out the reason.

It's this: One side of the House asks the questions, and the other side is perpetually condemned to answer them. My heart went out to the occupants of the Treasury Benches, since they have to play a monotonously defensive role. They are denied the elementary right to hit back. Like caged animals, their freedom is severely restricted; and this goes against all my notions of fair play. How much livelier the proceedings would be, if the Government spokesmen could be permitted to turn the tables upon the non-official hosts, and devastate them by well-planned questions! It is a pity that the New Constitution which so bristles with safeguards provides for none in the direction which I have indicated. Nevertheless, Madras, which is notorious for its successful working of the late un-lamented diarchy, and for the conventions which it has set up, might bring about this desirable innovation by general consent. When that day dawns, I can confidently open my daily paper, and find interpellations given notice of by Government members in some such terms as the following:—

1. Will the Hon'ble the Leader of the Congress Party be pleased to state:
 - (a) Whether he thinks it likely that Mr. Satyamurthi will continue as President of the Tamil Nad C. C. for another year?
 - (b) Whether his views on the Communal Award as published in the *Hindu* of 8-7-35 are correctly stated;
 - (c) Whether they were intended to placate Muslim leaders;
 - (d) And whether, at any rate, he considers those views logical.
2. (a) Whether he used the word 'Kumbakonam' in a derogatory sense;
 - (b) And, if so, what authority he had in etymology or ethics to indulge in such a terminological extravagance?
3. Will the Hon'ble the leader of the Justice Party be pleased to state:
 - (a) What, if any, is the exact position occupied by either Mr. Ramaswamy Mudaliar or Sir A. P. Patro within the Party?

(b) Whether the former gentleman's plea at Bombay for a united front is in the best interests of his Party?
(c) And in the event of the united front being achieved, whom or why he proposes to attack? And if not, why not?

(d) Will the Hon'ble the Leader of the Justice Party be pleased to take appropriate steps to put an end to the contradictions in the public utterances of his party-men, either by setting up a council of trusted workers to explain away the inconsistencies, or, to impose a vow of silence on his party-men?

4. Will the leader of the United Nationalist Party be pleased to state:

(a) What, if any, are his reasons for his prolonged silence;

(b) What he expects would be the strength of his Party: (1) on the eve of the next elections, and (2) on the morrow.

5. Will the Hon'ble member representing—Dt. be pleased to state:

(a) Whether it is not a fact that he was returned to the Council on the Congress ticket;

(b) When and why he ceased to be a Congress member, and

(c) Whether in view of the strong resentment felt in the constituency which the member continues to 'mis'-represent, he is prepared to tender his resignation, and seek re-election, if he dare?

The following question might be shot at another non-official:

(a) Whether it is a fact that he has attended only three sittings of the Council during the last five years, and if so,

(b) Why he attended them alone?

Such was the delectable vision which came to me as I sat in a corner of the visitors' gallery. But suddenly, I was disturbed from my reverie by a rude fellow approaching me with a threatening air, and demanding of me my permit. I was about to remark on his bad manners, when he made it clear to me that he was a plain-clothes variety of personified Law and Order. As my retort would have been peculiarly inappropriate against such a person, I complied with his orders, answered a prodigious number of short-notice questions, interspersed with many searching supplementaries, and was permitted at last to withdraw from the chamber.

It is now up to our present and prospective legislators to give my suggestion a fair trial. I commend it to them in the certainty that it will add enormously to the gaiety of the nation.

Yours &c.,
TEEKAY.

Bravo! Mr. Gordon—

Reading Time • About 4 Minutes

“CAN a leopard change his spots, the Ethiopian his skin or the Police man his—?”

This was the uppermost thought in my mind on perusing Mr. A. D. Gordon's Note to the Calcutta Police, which details admirably the duties of the Police to the public.

Seldom have we been accustomed to frank official statements: and confessions like Mr. Gordon's, coming as they do from a Police Officer, literally stagger us.

In fact, we have all along been spoon-fed upon news coming something like this: “A glowing tribute to the splendid morale of the Indian Police Force was paid by Sir Samuel Hoare in the Houses of Parliament today.” Or may be it was in India from the lips of an I. G. of Police, after a satisfactory Police Dinner.

Happily, Mr. Gordon has proved himself a singular exception to this general rule and stands, in this respect, in sad and utter contrast to his team-mates. He is really guilty of a serious attempt at facing facts and calling a Policeman—a Policeman.

According to him, the antipathy of the public to the Police is mainly due to the fact that the average policeman is a bully, is overbearing and high-handed, and entirely lacks consideration for the feelings or purses of others; in short, the complaint is that he forgets he is the servant of the public—not the master.

How true! Have you ever met the vulgar-looking constable who almost weekly walks into my house, spoiling its marble flooring with his unshod feet, thundering forth his question as to who Raja is? He seats himself without ceremony on my best cushion for taking my signature on the back of a summons and looks down on me contemptibly as though I were a worm. And, believe me, he does all this for no other reason than my possessing a car and my using it in my own way.

Sometimes the summons is for over-speeding; on rare occasions it is for being drunk while driving; but almost always it is because the particular police division stands in fear of being abolished for want of work—and no criminal comes in more handy than a motorist. The recital in the summons in the latter case would be the breach of an obscure clause of an obscure rule which requires every car-owner to exhibit his Municipal Licence on the left-hand side topmost corner of the wind-screen—and for three years running, my car has had no wind-screen whatsoever.

And in the Police Courts a wise Magistrate sternly dispenses justice with the unfailing prescription: “Pleads guilty—Rs. 5” “Pleads Not Guilty—Rs. 25”. I remember the first time I was hauled up, I pleaded ‘not guilty’ to the charge and contested the case in virtuous indignation. But ultimately I had to pay Rs. 25 fine and Rs. 25 to a very clever-looking lawyer—for his pains at seeing me convicted. I have been wise thereafter to plead ‘guilty’ on every charge brought against me. My dread of the Police Courts has gone, but I still regard the burly policeman with holy horror.

That a man in the street like me has come to regard the policeman with a “Take care, he bites” attitude, that the policeman actively encourages this by

assuming an exclusive and superior attitude and that mutual suspicion governs the dealings between the police and the public are candidly admitted by Mr. Gordon. To establish more cordial relations with the public, however, Mr. Gordon impresses upon the Police the stark necessity of unfailing civility and courteous behaviour on their part towards the public. “Only then,” says he, “could the latter be won from an attitude of animosity and distrust to one of trust and affection.”

It was only the other day that a full-page cartoon appeared in the *Merry* titled “Help Oh Help.” I have a feeling that the cartoonist had scooped an advance copy of Mr. Gordon's circular. How else could he have portrayed so thoroughly the Policeman Product of the New Gordon School? The man with the lathi in the cartoon, truly, has a very proper conception of his duties to the public.

I can now readily imagine to myself the lines on which the New Gordon Reformer would go. I fancy that lathi drill classes would be turned into moral instruction classes and conduct classes. The Police Manual may be supplemented by Dicey's Book of Etiquette for Policemen, and an examination in the latter may be held in the Preliminary Year of the Police Honours Course. And it is not improbable that at all traffic points biscuits and cool drinks, as a mark of common courtesy, may be offered to motorists who have been made to wait, and a kind constable may nutter almost apologetically, “I am sorry, sir, I am delaying you; but will you try this while you wait.”

And what do you think of employing women in the Police Force to render the duties of the police “as little harassing and distasteful as possible to the public”—which, after all, is Mr. Gordon's objective. Politicians particularly, when they are being shadowed by intelligence men, would greatly appreciate the gesture if the spying were ordered to be done by smart women and not by sour-looking men. In fact, even ‘constitutional’ agitators may then demand that they be considered so dangerous to the tranquility of the land that they should also be spied on by charming C. I. D. Policewomen.

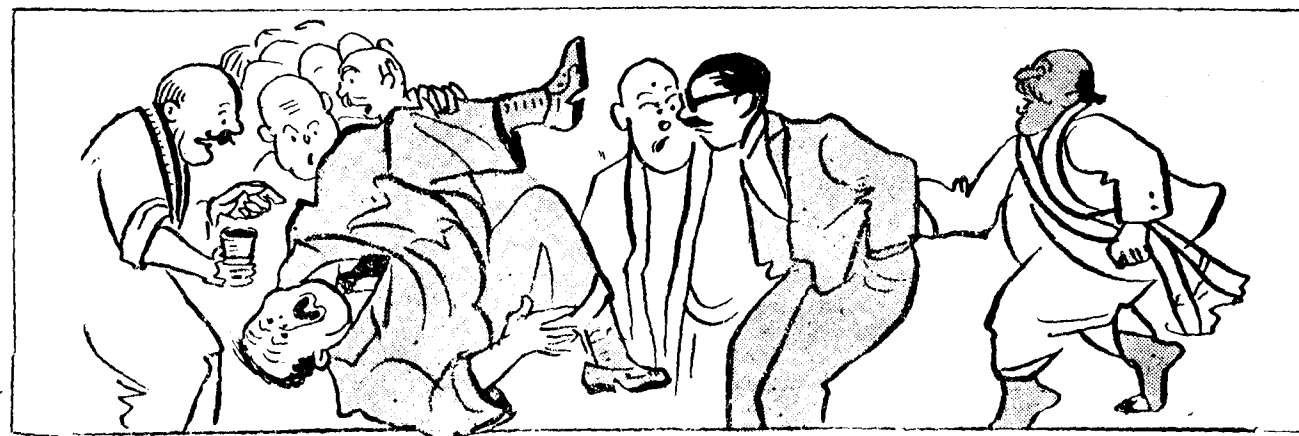
From every point of view, the results will more than justify the step. Far from dreading and avoiding them the public will view the Police in an attitude of trust and almost love. And the Police, conversely, will view the public, and, even the erring portion of the public, with sympathy and affection. We can have D. S. Ps. who weep at the sight at a volunteer being beaten, C. I. D. Inspectors who sternly set their teeth against opening letters of a Suspect to Moscow and marked ‘private’, and even station-writers who refuse to entertain cases against a thief who stole because he was starving and had nothing to eat.

Ashamed of their own conduct, then, the erring public may give up their nefarious activities and white gloves may greatly be in demand for being presented at every session to Magistrates and Judges. In fact there will be a stoppage of all criminal work and hence of all Police work.

But then—Mr. Gordon, may be asked to go on leave *sine die*.

—Raja

THE END



Paralysis—

Reading Time • About 3 Minutes

by ‘J. J. S.’

Illustrated by Mali

RAMU had been forbidden to drink by his doctor. He was not to touch liquor, and if he did he would be seized by an attack of paralysis of the worst type, which would cause immediate death. He abstained for two days, but after that he could not do without drink. The unsatisfied desire for liquor was breaking his nerve. He felt dizzy and sick to the marrow of his bones. He could control himself no longer. He got up and went to the cupboard where he used to store wine. But there was nothing there; he emptied all his stock of liquor into the gutter on the advice of the doctor.

Madly he came out of his house and rushed towards his Club. By the time he reached the Club the cool breeze of the evening had cooled him down a bit. He was feeling a little better, but the craving for liquor had not gone.

He ordered a glass of wine. And it was only when he had gulped down the whole glassful of wine that he remembered the doctor's advice. A horror seized him. He threw his head back allowing it to rest on the back of the chair, and quietly waited for the attack of paralysis and the angel of death, which the doctor had told him would visit him soon after the attack.

As he sat thus, he felt as if a louse was tickling his scalp. He raised his hand to his head to scratch. But to his horror, he found that he did not feel the touch of his hand. It was a sure sign of paralysis. Soon he would die. Not knowing what to do, he got up. But as soon as he stood up, he felt a whirlwind in his head. His legs trembled, and he fell down senseless. People gathered around him. A doctor was sent for.



“Please send me home,” requested Ramu of the doctor, when he had regained his senses. “I don't want to die here in the Club.”

“But my dear man,” said the doctor, “you are quite all right.”

“Don't bluff me. I know I have been attacked by paralysis and it is my death knell.”

“But every limb of your body is in perfect condition. How do you say you have been attacked by paralysis?”

“Do you think I am a child? Only just now I found that I have lost the sense of touch.”

“But where?”

“I felt some irritation on my head and to allay it I scratched it. But I did not feel the touch of my hand. Is that not enough to prove the loss of the sense?”

“But my dear man, you forget that if you had lost your sense of touch you should not have felt the irritation.”

Ramu looked surprised for a moment at the doctor and then said, “But what about my hand?”

A short man, who was hanging about, could not control himself. He burst into laughter and said, “How could you have felt the touch of your hand when it was my head that you scratched. I was sitting next to you.”

THE END

The Rising Star—

by S. I. Rasool

Reading Time • About 5 Minutes

GEORGE doesn't do things in the straightforward manner of the ordinary person. He has to throw style and fineness into it, and wonders why he comes unstuck. Even a little seaside flirtation—But let me begin at the beginning.

We were spending a week at Folkstone when he fell for a platinum blonde—and fell rather seriously. She sat at a table in the window of Marine Hotel, a contemptuous tilt to her adorable nose. Men buzzed round her like flies round a honey-pot, but none of them dared to settle.

After a day of morbid and touchy silence, George came up with a plan. What was the secret desire of every nice girl? he demanded.

"A handsome young man—plenty of money," I said.

"Pooh!" he exclaimed. "It's something much bigger. Something which will give them as many handsome husbands as they wish and wealth beyond the dreams of avarice."

"A film career?" I guessed.

"You've said it," replied George warmly. "Let's pretend we are film producers, then. You have a reputation which will convince them beyond doubt, and I bet the game will not take long in coming."

I agreed rather hesitatingly, but I thought it might set the ball rolling. And so it did. I mentioned it to an elderly lady in strict confidence. In the evening she appeared in a girlish make-up, and floated through the dining-room in the best Hollywood manner. The news travelled fast. The whole atmosphere became gay and colourful. Only, of course, nobody danced on the table. That would have been out of place in Marine Hotel.

George's life no longer lacked feminine society. He was by no means averse to a *tete-a-tete*, but to be vamped by a dozen girls in turn was rather too much for a good thing.

After a bit, competition got so keen that George wasn't allowed out alone. A bevy of maidens followed him, just to see fair play. You see, a nasty spirit was poisoning the amenities of Marine Hotel. Hollywood is said to be like this.

My friend now began to think about a scenario. That is to say, he thought it was time I knocked one together.

"What sort of a scenario do you want?" I demanded.

"Oh, spin any yarn you like round one man and eleven girls."

"Sounds a bit Oriental," I said. "Must I do as you say?"

"I should think so. You see, I have promised the lead to each one of them. What do you advise?"

"I would advise you to fly the country," I suggested.

"Helpful, aren't you?" he sneered. "I expect I shall have to do it all by myself."

But his worries about his eleven leading but unwanted ladies were resolved. That very day the platinum blonde began to sit up and take notice. George intercepted an enigmatic smile from her table, smiled in return, and was answered by a 'come-hither' look. He moved across and introduced himself.

In a voice which didn't sound a bit like his, he explained that he didn't know whether he was on his head or on his heels, but he must get her to play the lead in his little film. Nobody else could do what he had in his mind.

"I'll think it over," she promised. "What's the scenario?"

"Oh, that," exclaimed George. "We've got a good man knocking it together. But of course the direction is everything."

"Of course," she agreed, as if she had lived on the set for months. "Suppose you give me the big idea?"

That was rather a tough job for George, but he tackled it carefully and gave her an idea of what it was going to turn out to be.

"What am I supposed to wear for the film?" asked the dainty little blonde in a casual sort of way.

"Beach pyjamas, bathing suit—anything," said George joyfully.

She gave a little gurgle of joy.

"Well, who his playing the hero?" she inquired.

"As a matter of fact, I mean, I rather thought of doing it myself," blundered George.

"I thought you were directing the film," she said. "Directors don't act. Why not let my boy friend—"

"Charlie Chaplin and Douglas Fairbanks," explained George, "always direct and act. So much better than trying to hammer the idea into another man's thick skull."

"My boy friend's skull isn't thick," she retorted icily.

"I am sorry," apologised George. "I didn't mean your boy friend. I haven't even seen him."

"But you will now. Moreover, he is good at sports and could do things very well," she said.

George rubbed his chin reflectively.

The platinum blonde was as good as her word. She played the part well, but did not allow George to bend down and imprint a kiss on her beautiful mouth. That part of the acting was left to her boy friend, and when George tried it the other way round saying it was a part of the scenario, he had the devil of a time.

It was not only the black-eye he had got, he had actually disfigured the shape of his handsome face. It was a very poor show—that film business.

I have got a splendid picture of the scrap. I wish you could see it, but it will not be released, I am sorry. It shows you that the straightforward methods pay best, especially when you have only got a fortnight's holiday.

THE END

The Biter Bit—

by V. S. Hignatio

Illustrated by Varma

Reading Time • About 7 Minutes

HAROLD Loveday had a romantic nature—his soul simply craved for romance. But Dan Cupid seemed to have no use for him. Perhaps, he was too busy attending to the inexhaustible supply of film and novel heroes to smile upon Harold.

Harold had travelled far and wide, in a vain search for the elusive Lady Romance, and we now find him staying at Paris Hotel, sunk into the depths of gloom and boredom and fed up with his unromantic existence.

Then, with the alarming suddenness with which such things usually happen, the Fates plunged him right up to the neck into an affair which had every indication of developing into a real hall-marked romance.

It was like this. One evening he was at his customary corner table in the great dining hall, attacking a sumptuous meal with creditable determination, when an apparition walked up to the third table from his and sat down. The "apparition" was a sweet young thing of twenty (or thereabouts) and a worthy match for the prettiest and most seductive feminine screen craze Harold could remember ever having seen.

The waiter who slid up for Madame's order had to wait while she touched up her nose with a tiny powder-puff, and after she had announced her pleasure in an airy voice which Harold mentally likened unto the chime of silver bells, her long-lashed dark eyes swept the hall and came to rest upon—HIM!

In his sudden confusion a chunk of *chicken d'savoire* stuck down Harold's windpipe and set him coughing like a misfiring auto-engine into his serviette. When he had

got over it he found the cause of his discomfiture smiling amusedly at him. Ah, romance at last! The real stuff, by gad!

Harold had been smiled at by dozens of girls before—but never just like *that*. It was so full of smouldering passion and unfathomable mystery—every inch a French smile. It gave him a prickly sensation that started behind his ears, coursed gleefully down his spine.

Harold reacted to this sudden plunge into romance in an entirely different manner from that which he was wont to do in his frequent encoun-



...her right hand moved out...

ters with women of all types, sophisticated and unsophisticated—in his dreams. Whereas in the latter instances he was invariably a gallant Romeo-cum-Juan with a Clark Gable touch, all he could manage to do now was to return the lady's smile and feel extremely foolish. In spite of that, however, his sex appeal appeared to be in good working order, for she was now smiling more tantalisingly than before.

By this time Harold's nerves had worked themselves into such a state that he could almost feel them wriggling about under his skin, and he hastily lit a cigarette in a desperate effort to calm them. When he raised his eyes again he gulped a mouthful of smoke as he observed one of the pair of beautiful dark eyes which rested upon him deliberately close and open. He winked back, and this time she responded by pouting her cherry-red mouth.

Harold's brain was working furiously in an effort to decide what his next move should be, when Madame rose from her table and swayed gracefully across the floor towards him. As she swept past his table, her right hand moved out and deposited a door-key beside his plate.

His heart pounding mercilessly against his ribs, he snatched up the key and scrutinized the tag which was attached to it, inscribed with a boldly-printed "13". Underneath, scribbled in pencil, was: "Ten o'clock, to-night."

Harold passed the rest of the evening in a fever of excitement. Long before the specified hour he was ready, dressed in the best suit of evening clothes he possessed, his radiant appearance bearing testimony to the pains he had taken over his toilet.

The clock in his room irritated him. It ticked on with exasperating sluggishness, as if this were just an ordinary night; in fact, he had begun to have a suspicion that it had purposely slowed down with the deliberate intention of trying his patience. His nervousness grew as the minutes dragged by, and at half-past nine he had begun to feel so hot and damp that he decided he would have to have another cold tub. By the time he had got through the laborious processes of a second toilet it was nine-fifty-five.

Five minutes later he was out in the corridor, eagerly scanning the number above each door. It did not take him long to locate number 13, and having paused to adjust the set of his bow-tie and look himself over, he tapped gently upon the door. Immediately from within the silver bells chimed: "Come in!"

Harold pushed open the door and stepped inside. The lights were off and he could perceive nothing in the gloom.

"Come right over here, *cherie*," He groped his way in the direction from which the voice had spoken, until his knees touched the edge of a bed. A breath of delicate perfume wafted to his nostrils as he lowered himself on to the bed. Something moved beside him, and the next moment a pair of soft, warm, scented arms entwined themselves about his neck.

"I wondered if you would come," the voice murmured in his ear.

"My beautiful, my adored one, your slave craves no greater pleasure than obedience to your commands," replied Harold gallantly. These were the words, as near as he could remember, used by a very romantic character in a very romantic play which he had read, and he felt certain she would be thrilled.

"Kiss me, my gallant lover!" The lips that spoke the invitation pressed themselves gently against his own,

and with a happy sigh Harold gathered her body into his arms and kissed her with a right goodwill.

"You love me, do you not?" she whispered.

"Love you? Yes, with the greatest, purest love in the world!"

"And the most expensive!"

Harold started as if he had been shot at the sound of the flinty voice which came out of the gloom behind him. He had time to do nothing more than gasp a startled "Oh!" when the lights snapped on and he craned round to find a man standing at the foot of the bed, regarding him with an icy smile.

He turned back, to find his heroine reclining against the pillow. She, too, was smiling at him, but Harold did not like that smile—it was utterly devoid of any hint of romance.

"What—what is the meaning of this?" he gasped.

"That's just what I want to know," drawled the intruder. "I'd better tell you that I happen to be the lady's husband, and I want to know what you're doing in this room, forcing your attentions upon my wife."

"But—but—she invited me when we met in the dining hall this evening."

"Well, Lucille, is there anything to what he says?" asked the other, turning to the woman on the bed.

"I should say not!" she retorted in a voice which had lost its silvery chime. "I never even spoke to him in the dining hall. I must have dropped my key with the number on it and this man picked it up and got in."

"H'm—one of those cheap adventurers, I guess," rejoined her husband, and turning to the 'cheap adventurer' (who was now looking as cheap as it is possible for a fellow to look, adventurer or no adventurer), he snapped: "Well, what're you going to do about it?"

"I—er—I suppose I've made a mistake—" faltered our sorry hero.

"Mistake, rats! I've got a hunch you're a dangerous character—one of those hotel crooks! Lucille, get dressed and go down and get the manager—I'll hold this bozo here meanwhile."

"Wait a moment. You can't do that. I'm not a crook—I can prove it," protested Harold desperately.

"Who are you, then?"

"Why, I'm Harold Loveday, of London. My father's William Loveday, owner of the Loveday Automobile Works. He's one of the leading businessmen in the City—perhaps you've heard of him?"

"Oh!" drawled the other, "a rich guy, eh? I wonder if he knows what sort of a son he's got? He'll be real tickled when he reads of this scandal in the papers—I don't think!"

"But you can't do that—you don't realise what it would mean to me!" protested Harold, scared.

"It's going to mean a thousand quid to you if you don't want the publicity!"

"What? But this is blackmail! You're a couple of twisters, and you call me a crook! You'll get nothing out of me!"

"Oh yes, we will. And we won't call it blackmail—it sounds crooked. It's just a little business deal."

"Of all the infernal cheek!" murmured Harold.

By this time Lucille had dressed. "Do you want me to fetch the manager, Fred?" she asked, addressing her husband.

"Yes—if this guy's cheque-book isn't out in five secs." It was out in considerably less than five seconds.

THE END

Pussy by Ram Saran

Illustrated by Mali

Reading Time • About 4 Minutes

"MEOW!"—I looked over my tea cup to behold Pussy sitting there on the floor. She seemed to have sprung out of the Earth or to have solidified from the air.

Uncanny, I call it. She has the extremely bad habit of appearing without any warning. I am quietly enjoying a nap and am startled to behold Pussy in my lap or I am negotiating a particularly dark corridor and she gets right into my steps. How I manage not to trip is more than I can say.

Pussy, at the moment, looked at me intently, so intently, that I blushed, for I am a bashful chap. My hand moved up to the tip of my nose to see if all was well on that front.

She mewed again.

"Oh, eh," I said, "well?"

She merely purred and looked at me more intently.

She was, I believe, trying to hypnotise me. They say cats and tigers and snakes have a hypnotic influence over their victims. There are numerous tales of veteran *shikaris* about that strange spell. But I don't believe a word of it. If it is true, why don't cats work that spree on men? Or tigers on *shikaris*? I think that is sheer un-nerving terror of death that makes the poor frog or the mouse or the goat limp.

So, Pussy looked at me. But now she had changed her tactics. Finding that staring was of no avail, she had closed her eyes. I wondered why she did it. Probably the sight of the eatables was too much for her and she dared not go off for fear of losing them completely. Or, she might have been imagining to herself the exquisite thrill she would get out of the pastries.

I suspect, on the other hand, that she had closed her eyes in disgust at the way men eat their breakfast and drink their tea. It seemed so silly to her, this ugly way of picking up the cup and then sipping it.

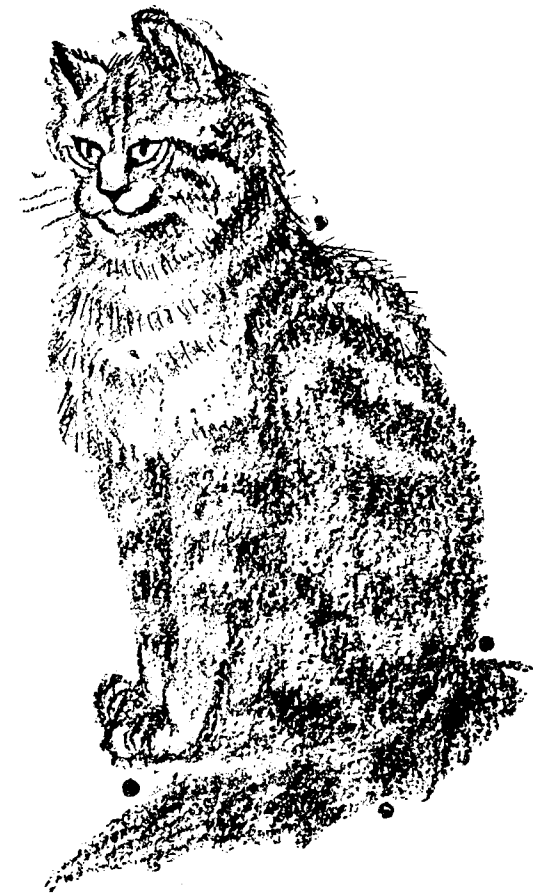
I felt rather uncomfortable with the added reflection that she was annoyed at my impertinence of taking tea without her.

She gulped down a piece of toast that I threw to her, licked her lips and I am sure would have twirled her moustache, if she could. And then she wetted her paw and rubbed her face with it.

Talking of cats reminds me of a very strong superstition that prevails, at least, amongst the Hindus of Northern India. Granny told me that she had been told by her granny, who in her turn was told by hers,—and so on—that if you see a cat washing her face, good luck awaits you round the corner.

If the League of Nations had a dozen cats and started its session any morning, early, one of those dozen cats must be washing her face. And good luck must attend the day's session.

When Mr. Eden is thinking of rushing from one European capital to another in quest of peace he ought to carry a dozen mewing, pawing pussies with him. Good luck is bound to stumble in his way.



Of course, there is one stipulation. Nothing sticky is to be put on poor pussy's whiskers to compel her to rub it off. The omen shan't hold, for it will be a manufactured one.

So, there is a red-hot idea for folks to take on. Good luck. Meantime, I return to my puss. She likes to be tickled under the ear and purrs with pleasure at the caress. Now, do all cats like it? I think they do, for animals go by class tastes and not by individual ones. But is it good for her or bad? A perusal of Mr. Bertram Wooster's adventures gives me the impression—a faintish one—that it's bad.

My puss has, as I have told you, an uncanny habit of getting into my feet when I am going out. Mother frowns at her and you must see Granny—when she is visiting us—to believe the effect. Both of them strongly believe in a superstition that if a cat crosses your way, something awful awaits you. You should turn back. If you don't, heaven help you.

So strong is the superstition that an Indian Engine-driver was known to have refused to start his train when a cat crossed the line.

My puss has a very bad habit. She does not mind stealing a bit. Eggs and butter and bread and sweets—nothing edible is safe from her. She possesses a faculty of detection that might be envied by Sherlock Holmes. How she does it beats me completely.

Very often have I tried to convey to her—as gently as I could, that I am no Socialist, that I also do believe in the institution of Private Property and finally that it is I who pay for all the eatables. She refuses to understand my view point.

No wonder human Communists are not objects of love to Individualists.

On Wasting Time

Reading Time • About 6 Minutes

by 'Ram'

Illustrated by Bahadurje

HOW hard some people work! And when I say work, I mean work, not sit in a desk chair with the typist on your knees signing letters with abandon. Not that I object to their working as long as they confine the thing to themselves—after all it's *their* funeral—but when it comes to proselytising as well, then I must rise to protest on behalf of the thousand and one wasters of time whom I represent.

In every newspaper, in every magazine, even in the talkies they are glorifying this gospel of labour. It started with Ruskin—or Carlyle?—and since no one did the obvious thing it has grown as the cactus grew before our cochineal insect eradicated it.

You are asked to buy a car, not because it will enable you to take Susan (or it may be, Susila) out to the Marina, but because it will whisk you to your work quicker.

And since cars are still being sold, it conclusively proves that there are still people who want—honestly want—to get quicker to work. In this the Age of Progress! If they put it in another way—for instance told you it would add another to your list of excuses for being late (“car broke down sir—had to get it towed”) then I could understand—people adding the proverbial last straw to their financial camel-loads, for a plausible salesman's sake.

Take these mind-improving courses. Do they promise an eventual extra day off per month, or enable you to think up a new one when it is urgently required—*par example*, when your black-haired wife desires the presence of three Amami shampoo'd golden hairs on your coat collar, explained? No sir, they don't. What they are prepared to do is to increase your concentration which is a euphemism for work capacity. And who benefits? Your sweating—or is it sweated?—employer.

Even the refrigerator people descend to this pro-labour, unsocialistic attitude. Instead of telling you to buy an Ice-O and keep the beer cool, they approach your wife

with yarns about how healthy cold meals are, and how much time she'll save for the pictures or getting her hair waved. And that means more work later on for you—footing the eventual bill.

The other day I was seated at my desk signing the receipt for a payment slip from an editor—a form of literary endeavour at which I excel.

An insurance agent breezed in like an act of God. You simply can't keep these gentlemen out; if they took to journalism and accompanied their Mss. in person, not a single editor would have the nerve to reach for a rejection slip. He might, of course, resort to active and physical methods, but that I doubt. Your insurance-wallah has a man-quelling eye.

“I'm very happy to have found you in,” said my visitor.

I was just going to retort with the whiskered joke that I'd much rather he found me in, than found me out, but his face discouraged such frivolity. So I said, instead, “what can I do for you?”

“Sir,” he murmured with exceeding great solemnity, “I have come to do something for you.” I looked with alarm for facile and rapid modes of egress, just in case, but evidently he did not meditate violence.

Then he began the usual line of sales talk. At the 23rd minute of his discourse, I caught him out rather neatly. He said something about it

being my duty to my wife to get insured, and I countered with the news that I had no wife. He was his own umpire, however, and gave himself ‘not out’; the monologue (it was practically that) continued again. Came the climax four minutes later.

“The real reason, sir, why you should insure yourself is this. At present you have, probably, a nebulous purpose in life. There is no urge, no necessity to rise that spurs you on. You lack ambition, because you lack compulsion. Now if you took out a policy for a large amount, the premiums would be pretty stiff, in spite of our exceedingly moderate rates. You would not be able to meet them out of your present income; you would have to work harder and harder and harder. Ambition, would come to you, and desire. You would become efficient—a workman worthier of his hire. You would stop wasting your time.”

He had gone too far. At precisely this moment I smote him with gusto on the head, using my ebony ruler for the purpose and he recovered his senses on Narayanswami's door-step. Narayanswami, you will doubtless guess, is no friend of mine.

I have quoted the above incident just to show what the world is coming to. Imagine advocating insurance for harder work! And the most grievous part of it is that people must be taking out policies because otherwise the Insurance Co. wouldn't have paid this fellow's hospital charges.

If employers are wise and let this lesson sink into their—er—heads, in a couple of years' time you will see men offering testimonials like these.

“So-and-so is an excellent loafer. During the time he was with us we had no loss whatsoever through over-production. His services had to be terminated because he unfortunately took a course of Phyllonan simultaneously with one of Okasan, with the result that he began to think and act as well. This, if permitted would have been ruinous to us.”

Or what about advertisements?

“Wanted: an experienced clerk, who can guarantee to waste at least three hours out of his daily five. Pay according to satisfaction given.”

“Required: an experienced loafer to lounge outside salesroom and look happy, bearing a board ‘I have no cares because I invested in a Baby Pink’.”

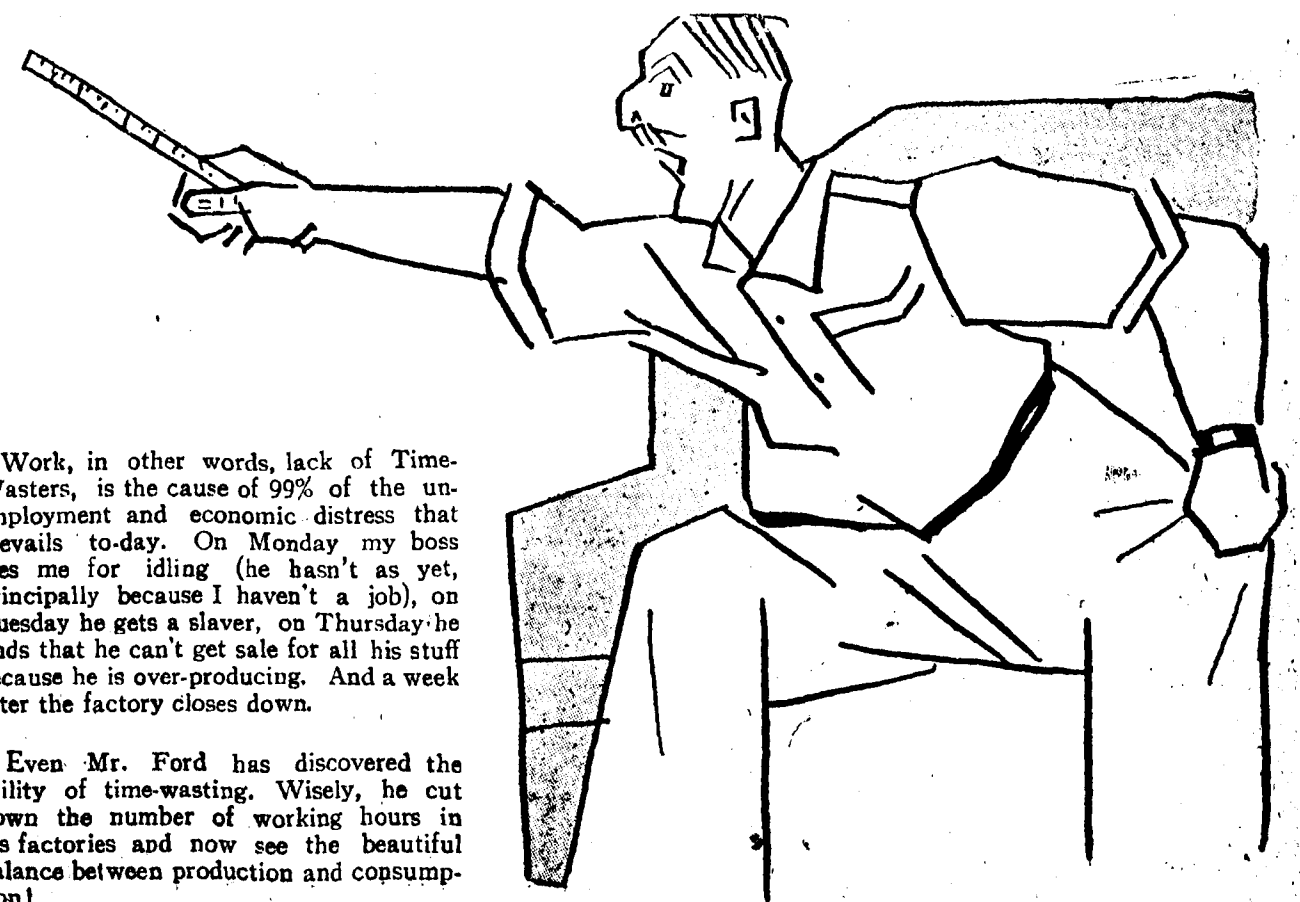
Yes, gentlemen, undoubtedly in a few years time the value of laziness, good, honest, nearly congenital laziness, will be realised. I am addressing gentlemen only, because ladies are unapproachable on this topic. Illogically they do not realise the value of that extra hour in the Club—for their husbands.

Well, so long! I am now going to fill a pipe, and lie on my back in an ant-free glade to waste another afternoon.



Work, in other words, lack of Time-Wasters, is the cause of 99% of the unemployment and economic distress that prevails to-day. On Monday my boss fires me for idling (he hasn't as yet, principally because I haven't a job), on Tuesday he gets a slaver, on Thursday he finds that he can't get sale for all his stuff because he is over-producing. And a week later the factory closes down.

Even Mr. Ford has discovered the utility of time-wasting. Wisely, he cut down the number of working hours in his factories and now see the beautiful balance between production and consumption!



THE END

Readers' Forum—

Dear Fellow-Readers,

I hope you have not forgotten what the Editor said about reserving a page for us readers to discuss anything under the Sun. After weighing the matter carefully, I have decided to discuss Auntie Awful from A to Z. She is certainly under the Sun now. Mr. Hyde said to me a second ago, "Doctor Jekyll, don't forget to discuss Joyfull." Joyfull is under the Indian sun, but what a son of India he would make! He ploughed the seas during the Great War and planted green and blue water plants which to-day blossom into lilies white. You can see these blossoms on the beach but you can never pluck them. Of him, later. Oh, the discussion? Here goes.

AUNTIE AWFUL.

A is for Auntie who answers our questions.
B is for the Bag that brings her mail in.
C is for the Care she takes in scanning them.
D is for the Desk she writes upon.
E is for the 'Elp she gets from someone.
F is for the Fits she gets into sometimes.
G is for the Good answers she gives.
H is for the Hearty laughs we get.
I is for the Ink she uses.
J is for the Jane she invents.
K is for the Kick in her replies.
L is for the Lamp she burns at night.

M is for the Mat she sleeps upon.
N is for the Nap she gets in the dark.
O is for the Ovaltine she takes in the morn.
P is for the Pen she has to wield again.
Q is for the Quick answers she gives.
R is for the Reward she expects.
S is for the Stamps she has to use.
T is for the Tea she brews.
U is for the Uncle she is waiting for.
V is for the Vanity case she can't do without.
W is for We who laugh at her.
X is for her to fill in.
Y is for Youth she has lost.
Z is for the Zenith of her success.

—Curiosity (Penang)



A rather irritable Inspector, visiting a provincial school, was worried by the noise of the scholars in the next room. At length, unable to bear the uproar, he burst in upon the class. Seizing the tallest of the lot, who was talking a great deal, pushed him into a chair.

"Now, be quiet!" he said.

A few minutes later, he heard a small boy say in a meek voice: "Please, sir, you have got your teacher!"

The teacher found that one pupil had written all the numbers up to ten correctly but he had written only '1' in the place of '11'.

"What's wrong with eleven, Ramu, don't you remember it?"

"Please, sir," he replied, "I don't know on which side of the figure 1, to put the other 1."

Kittu could never keep a job for any long period. At long last, he was engaged in a scientific instrument dealers. He broke a theodolite, and was informed that half his salary would be deducted each month till the damage was adjusted.

"How much was it worth?" he asked anxiously.

"About Rs. 800!"

"Heavens at last!" he shouted to the amazement of the manager.

"Say, what's the matter with you?" he asked.

"You see, sir, it looks as if I have a steady job at last!"

The only son had been sent to the Metropolis to study and was home for the holidays.

"How beautiful the sky is! I wonder where the stars go in day-time?" asked his mother.

"Oh, I don't know," he replied. "But I fancy that most of them I know sleep till evening."

A young man entered an inn with a dog and attracted a good deal of friendly interest from an Irishman, who inquired what kind of a dog it was. The owner looked the questioner insolently up and down, and then replied with a drawl: "It is a cross between an Ape and an Irishman."

"Faith, then, we're both related to it," was the ready retort.

Parson: How did you get that black eye, Mrs. Robins?

Mrs. Robins: Well, sir, me 'usband came out of prison on his birth-day.

Parson: Yes?

Mrs. R.: And I wished him many 'appy returns!

The boy was probably mentally deficient and an examination was indicated.

"How many ears has a cat?" queried the psychologist.

"Two," replied the boy instantly.

"And how many eyes?"

"Two."

"And how many legs?"

"Say, doc," asked the boy, "haven't you ever seen a cat?"

"I wish to marry your daughter, sir."

"Do you drink?" asked the bewildered father.

"Thanks, but let's settle this other thing first."

The quack was selling an elixir which he declared would make men live to a great age.

"Look at me," he shouted, "hale and hearty. I'm over three hundred years old."

"Is he really as old as that?" asked a listener of the youthful assistant.

"I can't say," replied the assistant; "I've only worked for him for one hundred years."

Fisherman: I tell you it was that long! I never saw such a fish!

Friend: I believe you.

"One of our canvassers booked a twenty thousand rupee order yesterday."

"Don't swank."

"Gospel truth. I'll show you the cancellation!"

The Hundred

Reading time • About 10 Minutes

“—and I direct that the residue of my estate both real and personal shall be realised and the proceeds held in trust by my executors hereinbefore named and by them invested in such manner as they shall deem fit until such time as the number of children born in this city of Greedom shall have reached the total of One Hundred Thousand. And I further direct that the full amount of the fund thus accumulated together with all accretions thereto by way of interest or profit shall be paid over unconditionally to the parents or surviving parent of the child male or female who shall be the One Hundred Thousandth child to be born in this city of Greedom.”

Although a somewhat soured old man during the latter ten years of his life, and reputedly of a grasping nature, John Wilton had long been known for his local patriotism and the interest he had always taken in the welfare and continued expansion of Greedom, the birth-place of himself and of his ancestors. Having spent the working years of his life in spheres far removed from his native city, he had afterwards returned thereto at the age of fifty-six, rich almost beyond the dreams of avarice, some twenty years before his death. The old man being childless and without relatives, much speculation had naturally been rife on the subject of the disposal of his wealth. Nevertheless, the interest and excitement aroused by the publication of his will was, to say the least, intensified, the more so in that a preliminary estimate put his wealth at the immense figure of £ 6,500,000. In any case, the matter was now of obviously practical interest to every married couple still sufficiently youthful to anticipate additions to its family circle, and, of course, of vital concern to those still more youthful citizens whose thoughts were on matrimony bent.

On the day following the publication of the will, there gathered a small crowd of ladies in one of the principal streets of the city to discuss the matter.

“The main thing,” remarked Mrs. Gustabel, whose progeny already amounted to eight, and whose husband’s wage was small, “is to find out exactly how many children have been born in this city up to date.”

“The paper published this morning,” put in Mrs. Thickwick, a still childless matron of fewer summers, “says that the Hundred Thousandth child must have been born already, judging from the figures of the last census, and has probably grown up by this time.”

“It’s no good going by what the paper says,” replied Mrs. Gustabel. “We’ve got to find out for certain.”

Thereupon, this little group of interested mothers, expectant mothers and might-be mothers entered into an animated discussion of ways and means. After considerable bickering and more than one near approach to strife, it was finally decided that their respective husbands should be compelled where feasible, and

implored where necessary, to ascertain the invaluable information anent the native born population of the city. Overcoming—by compulsion, in the majority of cases—their natural diffidence to discuss such matters as child-birth, the husbands duly met and decided the course of action on which their better and fiercer halves had been unable to agree. A committee, headed by the Mayor and financed by a willingly paid levy on the adult population, examined all the parish registers of birth from the earliest time-worn and fading volume to the latest tidy and well-kept record and then, co-opting an antiquarian or two to their committee, proceeded to delve into the city’s hidden past. The final result of these investigations, as far as could be gathered in face of the almost insuperable obstacle of lack of remote records of any accuracy, appeared to put those born in the city at the figure of 99,968, thus leaving a further thirty-one births to occur prior to the coveted Hundred Thousandth.

Followed scenes of a nature to make Malthus arise from his grave and weep bitter, scalding tears. Marriages became hectic in their hurry, and both clergy and marriage registrars were nearly reduced to tottering wrecks. Husbands and wives whose very sight of each other had hitherto but served to let loose floods of vituperation now forgot their differences and once more fondly embraced. Pending divorce actions were promptly *nulli prosequi*, and Greedom quickly developed into a town of such marital bliss as could scarcely have been found in a long day’s march.

In due course the babes commenced to arrive. First by the ones and twos of those whose little lives had been *en route* prior to old John Wilton’s death, and then, gradually but surely, the flow increased to become in time a very spate of future citizens. Week by week the local paper published official figures of the births, almost in the manner of printed statistics of the progress of a fund for the relief of sufferers in some major tragedy. As the race drew closer to the finish, typewritten bulletins were pasted up in the office window of the newspaper, daily to begin with, then twice daily and at last hourly, until, with a jump, the Hundred Thousand mark was passed, and the heir to millions, together with a small horde of contemporaries, arrived on the scene to draw the interest of all men upon its group. This could not, of course, at once put a stop to the abnormal rise in population for obvious reasons. Nevertheless, the cause of matrimony suffered an immediate and serious check, while aforesaid disagreeing couples once again resumed their bickering and the courts their earlier wonted activity in the matter of divorce.

It is an ill wind that blows nobody any good, and the necessity of providing unimpeachable evidence of the date and time of the birth of each infant born had led to much employment amongst doctors and midwives. Every family, however straitened its circumstances, had been compelled to employ at least one doctor and two nurses,

Thousandth Child by E. L. Shipman

while the sales of stop-watches had run up by leaps and bounds.

Now, the bunch of babes, whose number included, or was presumed to include, the lucky heir, consisted of three sets of twins and twenty-four single specimens of either sex. The trustees of the fund, to whom claims were at once made on behalf of every one of these children, found, on a strict examination, that the birth of the ninety-nine thousand, nine hundred and ninety-ninth child was not a matter veiled in any doubt, inasmuch as it had arrived alone into the world. Subsequent to this, they found that the claims to be the Hundred Thousandth could legitimately be reduced to six, namely one pair of twins, three boys and a girl. Having got thus far, they referred the matter to the High Court for decision, whereupon the Court appointed a day for the hearing of the suit and issued notice to the interested parties.

Long before the momentous day of decision arrived, the applications for seats in Court were sufficiently numerous as almost completely to snow under the clerk’s table, while from an early hour in the evening prior to the day itself eager spectators gathered from far and near and stretched themselves in a long and continuously augmenting queue from the doors of the Court, some with chairs, some with light cots, but the majority with nothing but the bare ground on which to recline.

Unused, as we are, to forms of Court procedure, we shall content ourselves with a brief, but free narration of the great day’s proceedings.

In view of the extremely doubtful accuracy of the figures of births, particularly of those occurring prior to the introduction of compulsory registration, as computed by the Mayor’s committee, and the certainty of the lack of any proof thereof, the Bench announced that it would have been prepared to hear arguments on the question of the reversion of the bequest to the Crown, had not the Crown itself generously waived its rights in this respect.

After this, the evidence in favour of each of the six claimants whose claims had been admitted by the trustees was examined in detail, the doctors and nurses present at each birth giving their evidence in person. Towards the conclusion of the examination of the medical witness in the case of the final claimant, the question was put to the witness from the Bench:

“You have stated that this child was born on the seventh of June, at ten hours, six minutes and six seconds in the forenoon, that is to say, fifty-one minutes and six seconds later than the duly attested birth of the ninety-nine thousand, nine hundred and ninety-ninth child?”

“I have, my lord.”

“Is it, therefore, your considered opinion that the child on whose behalf you are at present giving evidence

may be said to be, either singly or in company with other children, the Hundred Thousandth child born in city?”

“My lord,” replied the witness, “before giving an answer to that question, may I please be informed as to what exact area constitutes the legal definition of this city?”

This caused a stir in Court, and a wave of excitement went round. The Bench replied:

“As no definition of the limits of the city was laid down by the testator, the term ‘the city’ must be deemed to include all that area directly under the authority of and administered by the municipal council.”

“One last enquiry, my lord,” went on the witness, “to permit of my replying to your lordship’s question with perfect accuracy. Does that waste land known as Gipsy Heath form a part of this city?”

“If necessary,” replied the Bench, “evidence may be taken later on that point. Meanwhile, in order to expedite these proceedings, will some municipal councillor present state whether the council has the place named under its direct authority?”

Several of the councillors and the clerk to the council, who was also in the court, answered together in the affirmative.

“Then,” said the medical witness, “in replying to your lordship’s original question, I have to state that I personally attended, in company with one Mrs. Aider, a certificated midwife, an unmarried woman by the name of Lucy Styles, a member of a troupe of strolling players who were encamped, from the seventh to the twelfth of June inclusive, on that plot of land known as Gipsy Heath. I have further to state that a female child was born to this woman on the Seventh of June, at precisely nine hours and thirty-three minutes in the forenoon. Unless illegitimacy should prove a bar to this inheritance, I take this to be the Hundred Thousandth child born in this city.”

“Under the terms of the will,” said the Bench, “illegitimacy can be no bar to inheritance.”

The Court was thereupon adjourned.

At the renewed hearing of the case some days later, satisfactory proofs were brought before the Court on behalf of the eleventh hour claimant, the child of the woman Lucy Styles, and judgment was finally given in her favour.

Thus did an old man’s friendly farewell gesture end, at last, in naught but a mockery of his intentions, though, possibly, his ulterior object may have been attained.

THE END

On Parrots

by H. V. Collett

Illustrated by Mali

Reading Time • About 5 Minutes

HAVE you, dear reader, ever possessed, had in your keeping, or been in the company of an African grey parrot?

I ask the question not from idle curiosity, but from the point of view of interest. Now India does not produce one single parrot. There are parakeets and lorikeets, the difference to the ordinary observer being merely in size and colour markings, but there is not one real, honest-to-goodness, dyed-in-the-wool parrot, which by the way, brings us back to our original question about grey parrots.

Now a grey parrot as the name indicates, is a grey parrot. But, note this carefully, he is not all grey. His tail is a beautiful scarlet, and nature lovers are agreed that this colour in a bird is a danger signal. It is a danger signal when seen in other places also but that, as Kipling would say, is another story.

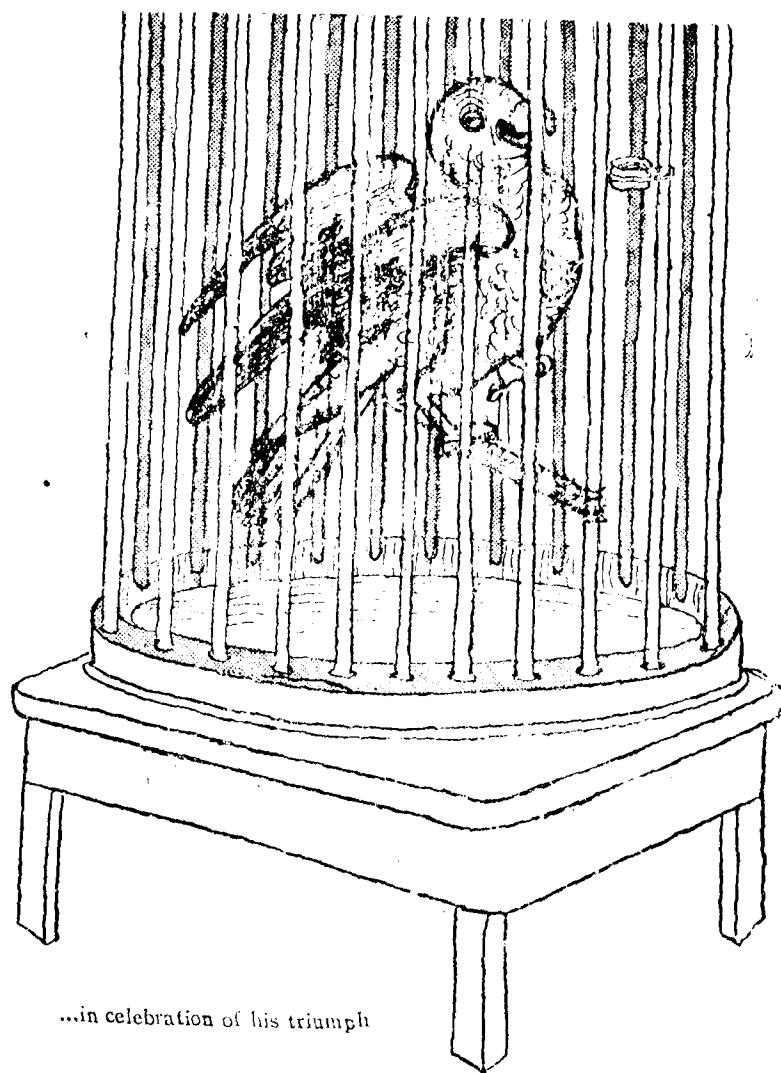
He has also, I am now referring to the parrot, a wonderful, razor-edged black beak, and a clear yellowy-white eye, which combined with his red tail is sufficient evidence to make one believe, without actually trying to prove it, that he is dangerous.

Some people of course will not accept one's word for it that he has to be treated with respect, and to these doubting Thomases I merely say, "Go ahead and try him, laddie."

One such scoffer, by name Briggs, scouted the idea of Peter's dangerousness. Peter is my parrot, by the way.

"Why, he wouldn't hurt a fly!" he guffawed, looking with amused eyes at the elongated mass of grey feathers, which was Peter, dozing on his perch.

"Flies are difficult things to catch," I murmured, slightly ruffled at his jeering tone.



...in celebration of his triumph

"Watch me, old man," he boasted, "I'll have him eating out of my hand in two ticks."

"Go ahead," I answered, settling myself comfortably in my chair. Approaching the cage he opened the door, and Peter flicked open an eye-lid and watched him, his feathers beginning to stand on end as he realised his sanctum was being invaded by a stranger.

"Pretty Peter; good old Peter. Come along old chap, come and sit on uncle's finger," came in persuasive accents from Briggs. Peter, feathers abristle, moved to the end of his perch, the irises of his eyes becoming white, his pupils like pin-points.

"Dear old Peter; come along then, sit on nunkies hand—Ouh-Yaroooh-Ooh—Take it off. Damn the bird, he's biting pounds out of my hand."

I rushed from my chair, and inserting my hand through the open door, succeeded in separating a fiercely indignant old parrot from the thumb of his tormentor.

"The damn bird's a cannibal!" spluttered Briggs. "He's not only bitten pieces out of me, he's eaten them!"

From his position on his perch, his domain cleared of hostile invaders, the old fellow cocked an eye downwards, and peering through the bars of his cage, remarked, "Peter wants."

"There you are! What did I tell you? The blasted bird wants some more meat. My meat! He's carnivorous, I tell you. Carnivorous!" Seizing his hat, and with his handkerchief bound over his hand, he rushed out of the house. As the gate clicked, I thought I caught the word 'carnivorous', but I couldn't be sure. I was laughing too much.

It's these little human touches that help to endear a parrot to one.

once grasped, events move to a rapid climax. Seizing it firmly, he pulls it to him and gives it a good sharp 'nip'. There is a yowl from the dog, who whips round like lightning to see what enemy has so feloniously taken him in the rear, and Peter climbing swiftly back, executes a small war-dance up and down his perch, in celebration of his triumph in routing the enemy.

He is fond of dancing too, and one has only to do a few steps in front of him, waving ones arms the while, when he will immediately lift up his wings, and bob up and down on his perch. There have been times when, the spirit of dance entering his very bones, he has, in the



Now we have a dog by the name of Bob. He has a long, bushy tail, and it is his custom while we are lunching, to stand by the table and wag it in expectation of any tit bits that may come his way. He is rather a large dog, and his tail in its pendulum-like motion, brushes against the bars of Peter's cage, placed on a nearby stool. Such a flagrant breach of good manners seems to this knowing old bird, like a direct insult. He leaves his perch, and crawling cautiously along his cage, extends one leg through the bars, and with extended claws seeks to catch the offending member. The tail

excitement of the moment, leaped off his perch, and fallen heavily to the bottom of his cage. But then Life is like that. One has often to pay heavily for one's pleasures, and parrots, apparently, are no exception to the rule.

Is it any wonder then, that he becomes one of the family and a continual source of amusement to its members? One has always to remember however, the colour of his tail, and recollect that it stands for danger, and never stand up against his cage unless ones eye is on him.

THE END

Shadows

by John A. Henry

Illustrated by Varma

Reading Time • About 10 Minutes



".....you win," I said quietly

THE prison authorities are making a special concession in allowing me to write this brief history. A man who has been sentenced to hang by the neck until he is dead, receives the maximum of courtesy and consideration before that last grey dawn when he walks up the steps of the scaffold to have his life snuffed out like a candle by a man who has no personal grudge against him.

The shadows of the bars of the tiny cell window fall across the paper as I write, each shadow reminding me of the dark river I must cross a week hence.

Here I am known as No. 710012. My name used to be Graham John Graham. I will not bore you with the story of my life. What I want to do is to set down the facts of the killing of Max Stellan.

I met Stellan many years ago, on the gold-bearing banks of the River Klondyke, where both of us pegged claims that made us wealthy. It was there too, that both Max and I fell in love with sweet-faced Joan Cummings, the daughter of an old prospector who had roved the cold barrenness of the Yukon all his life.

Briefly, Joan, naturally enough where two stalwart, handsome young men were concerned, could not decide which of us she really loved.

She told me about her perplexity quite frankly one day when I asked her, for the third time, to be my wife. She also told me that she had expressed her feelings to Stellan as well. She naively confessed that she loved both of us equally and too dearly to accept one of us. The hurt to the other, she decided, would be too great.

I liked Stellan. He was frank, humorous, and would have made Joan happy—or so I thought, anyway. But we are all essentially selfish where the girl we love is concerned. We usually cling to her in the same desperate manner that we cling to life. And I could not relinquish my claim to Joan.

I ran into Max in Jem Master's Saloon that afternoon, where he was drinking Scotch. He was not looking as cheerful as usual.

"Lo, Max," I said as I sat down at his table.

Without preliminary, he came to the point.

"Graham," he said fiercely, "it can't go on. You must see that for yourself."

"I suppose you mean about Joan?" I asked. I felt rather sorry for him because I had an uncanny instinct that told me that Joan would choose me if it came to a show down.

He nodded and tossed off another Scotch. A cracked piano tinkled unmusically in one corner of the room, while rough miners passed to and fro. Max was silent for a while. Then:

"I repeat, Graham, this can't go on. One of us has to get out. We've both panned a fortune from our lots and there's nothing to stop one of us trekking away from the Klondyke."

"Nothing," I said softly, "except Joan."

We looked at each other for a moment, and I think that, in that second, we saw that neither of us would willingly trek away from the gold area.

"Yes," he said. "We both know that neither of us wants to throw up the idea of Joan. Neither of us will, unless—" he paused for another drink, "unless we decide it by the age-old method of chance."

"Rot!" I broke in. "That's a fool's game!"

He became very earnest then.

"Have you ever stopped to think, Graham, of the hell that Joan is living where we are concerned? Have you thought of her in this? No, you haven't. And neither have I, all this time. There's only one way out."

I thought deeply. I had never thought it out in the light that Stellan now put it to me. And I realised that it must be hell for Joan. It is not impossible for one girl to love two men equally—or to think that she loves them equally.

"What's it to be?" I asked, my mind made up. "Dice or cards?"

"I think—cards," he replied slowly. "Low cut leaves the camp. High cut marries Joan."

"Suits me," I said, and called to Jem Masters for a pack of cards.

It was a perfectly fair cut. I cut the five of Diamonds and Max turned up the Queen of Hearts.

"You win," I said quietly, but inside I felt queer. Although Max and I had always been the best of pals, I raged. I suddenly realised, in a flash, that I hated his good-looking face and gentle-though strong ways.

"I'm always lucky," he smiled. "Bad luck, old man. But it's the best way."

"Yes," I said dully. "It's the best way."

I left the saloon before him. And I waited, concealed behind a clump of scrub, on the side of the track that he would have to traverse when he was returning to his lot. There was a faint moon and I couldn't mistake his figure and gait anywhere. I could tell a story of a shot that I heard when I was almost home. How I rushed back and found him dead. The bullet would mean nothing. Hundreds of miners used the same '45 brand of Colt.

At last he came along the track. I lifted my Colt. The moon must have somehow glinted along the barrel. For, even as my gun roared, Max threw himself to the ground and fired into the bush where I was hidden. One of his shots got me in the right shoulder. The second

ploughed its way through my left thigh. The agony made me lose consciousness for a moment. And in that moment Max leaped into the bush.

When I opened my eyes I saw him looking down at me. Blood was streaming from his forearm, where my shot had gone home.

"You yellow swine!" he snarled. "If you're not twenty miles from here before daylight, I'll aim for your brain next time. I'm always lucky, and most probably I shan't miss."

Knowing that I would not stand a chance with Joan when Max told her the story, I headed away from the Yukon that night. I do not acknowledge that I was yellow. We all do some very funny things for the sake of love. I knew a man once who shot his wife because he loved her. But I went away because I felt I couldn't face Joan after my attempt on Max.

And during all those years I have never forgotten the face of sweet, lovable Joan. My wealth enabled me to travel widely. But the shifting, varying life did not erase the memory of blue-eyed Joan. I even forgot to marry at all. And neither did I forget my hatred of Max Stellan. I came to India in the course of my wanderings.

And then, in one of Delhi's fashionable Restaurants, the other day, I saw Stellan!

I went frankly up to him and gripped him by the hand before he could recognise me. Then a light came into his eyes, although he was looking worried, haunted. Despite the past he seemed to remember that we had been friends once. I ordered lunch and hid my seething hatred under a smooth and smiling exterior.

"I'm glad I met you, Graham," he said. "There is something that I've wanted to tell you for the last few years—ever since we parted."

He was looking very prosperous, apart from his worried air, and his grey hair added a look of distinction to his impressive appearance.

"And I'm glad that I met you, old man," I smiled. I was never so glad in all my life. "Bygones are bygones."

He shook his head slowly, a whimsical twist to his lips.

"If I had been in your place that night and lost, Graham, I would have done the same as you when you had a pot at me. Although I condemned you at the time, I knew that what you did was perfectly natural. I never told Joan about it. But I went straight to her that night and said that you had gone. That broke her up. This is what I've been wanting to tell you all these years. But I couldn't find you. She wept her heart out for a few minutes, and then told me that she had always loved you and that she could never marry me."

I gasped. The years seemed to roll back. There was a slight, almost rueful smile on Stellan's lips.

"And this is my confession," he said. "It is just as despicable as I deemed your action when you shot at me. I could have easily told you before you left that Joan loved you. But I kept silent."

"Then—then," I stammered, suddenly overpowered with a sense of peculiar numbness that was yet excruciating, "you never married her?"

"No," he replied. "I never did. I trekked away the next day. And I've never seen her since."

I looked down at my plate, hell in my heart. When I looked up, my gaze roved from his clean-cut, wrinkled features to his breast pocket.

"Still carry your gun about?" I asked laughingly, indicating the swelling in his breast pocket. He nodded.

"Old habit, you know. I'd feel lost without it. It's the same old one that I used to use on the Yukon and Klondyke."

And it was in that moment that I decided to kill the man who had robbed me of a lifetime of happiness.

"Well," I said. "Let's forget it. No amount of worrying can bring it all back. Here's to the future!"

We raised our glasses. Two leather-skinned old men of nearly seventy drinking to the future! Death!

I began to lay my plot.

"What about celebrating our meeting by doing a show at the Grand tomorrow night?" I asked. "They've got a fairly good cabaret running there."

He nodded gladly.

"Right."

"Will you call round for me in your car?" I asked. "I want to get mine overhauled to-morrow."

He could not know that this was a lie.

"Certainly. About eight? Good."

I gave him my address.

After the cabaret, the next night, I suggested a drive out to New Delhi. The road was usually a lonely one, and I calculated that I would have time to kill Stellan

before anyone came on the scene. It would be suicide, of course. He wouldn't be expecting me to wipe the gun from his breast pocket. After I had shot him, I would wipe the gun and place it in his left hand. I remembered that he was left-handed. A shot through the heart would look like a suicide's natural aim, I thought.

We came to a fairly quiet spot. There wasn't a car in sight. There was, in fact, nothing in sight for miles on either end of the road.

He swerved as I suddenly put my hand into his breast-pocket and ripped out his gun. It was done in a second. I pushed the muzzle against his heart.

"Stellan," I said, "say your prayers! And stop the car. I've been wanting to kill you for years!"

Then he laughed loudly, accelerating as he did so. It was so swift that I was paralysed for a moment.

"I'm always lucky, Graham!" he shouted after a short silence in which I knew he had grasped the situation. Then he laughed again above the roar of the wind. He twisted the wheel completely round. We crashed into the embankment. And the last thing I remembered was a sharp "crack!" as the gun in my hand exploded.

Of course, when we were extricated by rescuers, the gun was still gripped in my unconscious fingers. And Stellan had a bullet through his heart. I couldn't explain that away!

Well, the sun has sunk. The shadows of the bars of the window are not lying across the paper. The whole room is in shadow. The Shadow of Death!

THE END

The Fisherman's Net

A fisherman's net that came from Cape
Asked the wise man of Tricundrum
In the tangled language of a net
A knotty net-conundrum.

The wise man nodded his head and said
"I'll answer you in a minute!"
"What is a fisherman's net, I pray?
If you haven't an answer, spin it!"

"It is that which is wet when it isn't dry,
And dry when it isn't wet!"
"Hee-hee-hee! How wise you are!"
Cried the naughty fisherman's net.

Then it heaved a sigh as the wind went by
And gaily began to sing,
"I am numbers and numbers of square holes tied
Together with bits of string!"

—H. Chattopadhyaya.



DEAR boys and girls, have I ever told you about Uncle Jeff, the moonshiner? His hobby was the making of hooch; but the police called it illicit distillation. Uncle Jeff was quite annoyed with them. "I've never distilled anything in my life!" he protested. "All I do is to brew some mash in the bath-tub."

Uncle Jeff was a generous patron of his own product. We always knew when a new brew was in hand, for he would descend the farm-house stairs in short rushes, singing his favourite tune:

*Call me early, mother dear,
For I'm to be Queen of the Prox.*

Uncle Jeff had had a business training in his younger days, and always used terms like 'Ult' and 'Prox'. He thought they were superior expressions.

One day, Uncle Jeff fell down the stairs after making a more potent brew than usual. "Why, Uncle Jeff!" said his wife reprovingly, "you're drunk!"

"Drunk?" said Uncle Jeff, picking himself up. "Certainly not! I'm practising for a circus."

"Well, then, if you are sober, Flossie is waiting to be milked," said Aunt Jemima.

Flossie was our favourite cow. She had one annoying trick. While you milked her, she would suddenly flick her tail into your eyes.

Presently, Uncle Jeff returned with a pail of milk and a black eye. "Oh, poor Uncle!" we all said.

"Never mind," replied Uncle Jeff. "I've cured Flossie of that nasty habit of hers."

"What did you do, Uncle?" we cried.

"Oh," said he, "I tied a brick to her tail."

Once a week, Uncle Jeff used to go to market, and he always had several jars of hooch under the seat of the cart, to sell to customers. Each sale was accompanied by a good deal of sampling, but Uncle never came to any harm. At the end of the day, his friends put him in the back of the cart, and the old mare brought him home.

On one occasion, however, Uncle Jeff wandered away into the park, and at last came to a tree with an iron fence round it. Uncle held on to the fence, and cautiously

felt his way round it. The fence seemed to have no end, and Uncle became panic-stricken.

"Help! Help!" he shouted. "I am shut up in a cage! Let me out!"

The next morning, Auntie Jemima complained about the noise he had made the night before, when he came home.

"Noise, my dear?" said Uncle Jeff virtuously. "I didn't make any noise. It was the four fellows who were carrying me."

When the Policeman came to see Uncle Jeff about the hooch, we were all very upset. "Don't take him away!" begged Mrs. Jeff. "He is really an angel."

"Indeed?" said the Policeman. "Then it is time that we clipped his wings."

Uncle Jeff was never the same man again. *Miss Fi Fo Fum (Far East)*. Now for the rest of your questions.

- (1) "Do you own the *Merry Magazine*?" Well, darling; have you ever heard of a man who owned a dog, and barked for himself?
- (2) "Are you married?" That, my dear, is a question that Auntie would welcome from a gentleman.
- (3) "Have you ever had any lovers?" What is the object of the enquiry, dear girl? Do you want Auntie to boast, or merely to complain?

Zoologist (Kuttalam). "I was greatly entertained by your theory that the water-beetle can swim only as long as he does not know how it is done. Do you really think that the activities of insects are so instinctive? What about a centipede?" The centipede, dear boy, employs the same unthinking dexterity as the water-beetle:

*The centipede was happy quite
Until a toad, in fun,
Said, "Please, which leg comes after which?"
This wrought his mind to such a pitch
He lay distracted in a ditch,
Considering how to run.*

Disturbed (Chakla). "How do you reconcile the reassuring-statements of Mr. Hirota, the Japanese foreign minister, with the facts of Japanese action in northern

(Continued on page 33)

Madame Resourceful

by R. Jagannathan

Illustrations by Mali

Reading time • About 8 Minutes

IF I am to be believed, I presume I shall have to establish the authenticity of my story. Well, it's as follows.

Once upon a time, there were four women (the number might have been five, I can't say for certain) in a village assembled for the purpose of helping one of their own in the preparation of *appalams*. I take it you know the stuff. Of this group one was an old woman who was unable to render any material assistance. So, or it may be even otherwise, she undertook the duty of beguiling the tedium of the others' toil. Story-telling was her forte and she freely indulged in it, now drawing her material from facts, anon from pure imagination. Her stories were passed from mouth to mouth and handed down from one generation to another. This old woman had a sister who had a son. This son had a daughter who was married to, say, X. This X happened to be the present writer's neighbour and has passed the old woman's story on to him.

The subject under discussion, I gathered, was marriage. No wonder. For, didn't a great poet say (or sing) that marriage is only a part of man's but the whole of a woman's existence? Fact was, the talk centred round a beautiful girl in the village, belonging to poor parents, who were unable to marry her off.

"So, what's the good of mere beauty, nowadays?" asked one of the women.

"Except to prostitutes," amended another with sarcasm. You are at liberty to infer what an ugly duckling she must have been to have made such a remark. But, she was married and had a husband; therefore she imagined that she was privileged to say anything she liked.

There was a brief pause. The rollers moved with speed and the tiny plastic *appalam* balls began to spread out in ever-widening circles.

"Money is the essence of life," a third ventured to generalise. "Without it you can't do anything in the world, not to speak of marrying off one's daughter."

"Whereas in the good old days—" began another.

"I don't think you are all quite right there," pointed out the old woman. "Even in my young days the



".....grandma, let's hear it."

difficulty of marrying off girls was as great as it is now. At any rate, I know of one instance. You will delight to hear of it."

The active women laid their tools down for a moment and demanded in chorus,

"By all means, grandma, let's hear it."

The old woman related the story.

"In my uncle's house in Nedunthur, there was a poor woman. They called her Chenga. Poor thing, she lost her husband while she was still young, with only a daughter to console her in her wretchedness. Being a distant relation, my uncle took her to his house and employed her for doing the routine household work and paid her five rupees a month for this. Beyond this, she had absolutely no means.

"Though her daughter Kombli grew amidst such surroundings, that did not seem to arrest her beauty or her brightness. So clever and vivacious was the little girl. Chenga was very proud of her and felt sad to think that she would not be able to get a good husband for her. As the years passed, Kombli grew more and more comely. The gossips of the village began to talk and urged Chenga to get her married off.

"Not until I am able to get a good alliance," replied Chenga.

"Why not give her to Govindan?" suggested one.

"The temple cook?" asked Chenga. "No, I won't, while I am living, throw my Kombli on a dung-heap."

"How can you hope to get a rich son-in-law when you can't afford to give him anything besides your daughter?" asked another.

"You people needn't be so anxious about my daughter," Chenga replied back. "It's my business and I'll look to it in good time."

"What pride this servant-woman has!" the gossips murmured and went away.

"Unfortunately for Chenga, no Prince Charming came



to claim Kombli's hand. Moreover, the girl had already attained her age, and the fact could not be concealed for long. It was nothing short of disgrace to remain idle any longer. Chenga fretted and worried herself far into the solitudes of the night. Whatever I may do, she determined, I'll not throw her on a dung-heap.

"At length she made up her mind. She came to my uncle one morning and said that she would be away for a fortnight in order to fix up Kombli's marriage. Both the mother and daughter left the house and went to Papanasam. There they went straight to the Tahsildar Ayyangar's house. The Tahsildar was a rich mirasdar besides being a very hospitable, handsome and in every respect lovable character. And Chenga had found out, as a result of laborious research, that he was a cousin of hers. Under cover of that relationship she boldly entered the house with her daughter. The Tahsildar was away on camp and was expected to be back by evening.

"I'll tell you something about the Tahsildar's family before I proceed. The fact was, his first wife was barren, though it must be said in justice to the poor girl that she wasn't given a fair chance. But the Tahsildar's mother would not wait. If a woman can't get a child within five years of marriage, she said, there's hardly any hope afterwards. At any rate, she would not wait in

futile expectation. So, she arranged for another bride. The second woman seemed to show promise, but before she had time to present her mother-in-law with a grandson, the old thing kicked the bucket. And, with the control gear gone, there was no peace. For, the two wives were constantly at loggerheads with each other and the Tahsildar found it hard to adjudicate between them.

"It was all very propitious for Chenga. In those good old days, you know, an old woman's word was the law, in the absence of the old men on the spot. Chenga ordered about the cook and servants as though she was by right entitled to their service. She made herself thoroughly comfortable in the house. As luck would have it, the two wives of the Tahsildar remained in sulk and did not come out of their rooms.

"Why should I bother who comes and who goes?" said the first one to herself, "let the other woman look to it. I don't care."

"Why should I disturb myself when she is not bestirring?" said the second one and kept to her room.

"It's their way," the servants whispered and Chenga said she didn't mind it at all. It was really the Tahsildar who was her relation and not these women. She proceeded about her business unmindful of them. She gave Kombli an excellent oil-bath. Then she took out the most attractive *sari* that was on the clothes-stand and decked her daughter with all the finery and jewels that lay scattered about the dressing room, thanks to the sulking pair.

"The Tahsildar returned home in the evening and was told that his wives had not come out in the open since morning. So much trouble saved, he said, and did not bother. Chenga then explained to him of their cousinhood and showed him her daughter. He was greatly pleased. "You have kept the house very trim and tidy," he complimented her. When meals were served, he said he never enjoyed such wholesome dishes. After talking of old times and the fate and fortunes of their common relations, he retired to his bed-room as it was getting late.

"The greatest surprise was in store for him there. He couldn't believe his eyes. Yes, there Kombli was, a maiden clad in the beauty of a thousand stars. Graceful, charming and untouched by man. She prostrated before him and touched his feet. What could any man do in such a predicament? So much beauty, youth and romance straight in front of him?

"Well, to cut the story short, he made Kombli his wife. And didn't regret it either. Very soon, he was promoted to be Deputy Collector, and in addition, begot an heir who was reckoned long overdue. The two senior wives also seemed to profit by this unforeseen happening. The first one argued, if two is permissible, why not three? The second one wept copiously at first, but found by experience that Kombli was a good friend and a real find."



Oh, That Lizzy!

by C. V. Ramani

Reading Time • About 12 Minutes

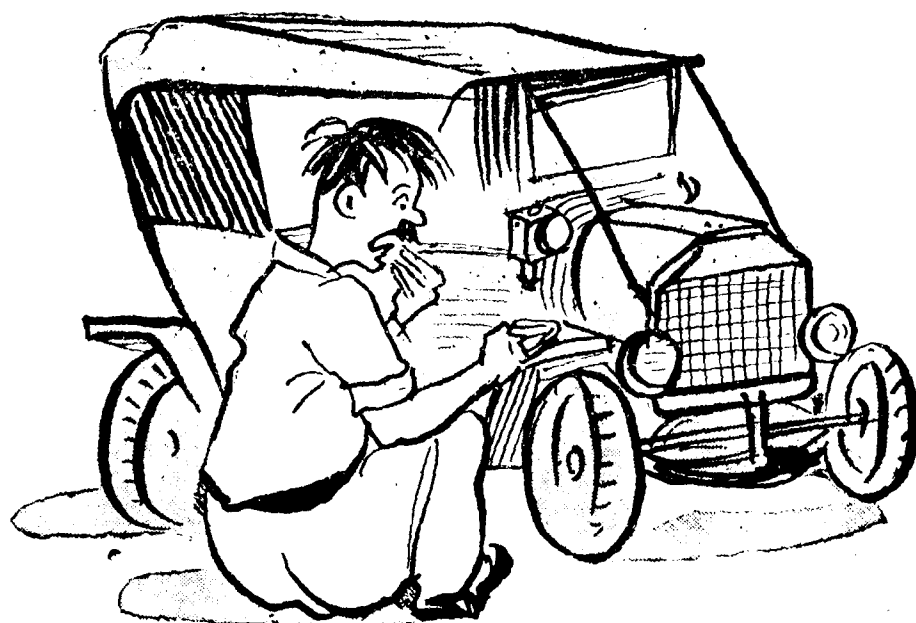
Illustrated by Mali

EXACTLY six years ago, I owned a Tin Lizzy, or as those unversed in automobile phraseology say, a motor-car. She was a remarkable specimen of her species, in that she was almost human. She had an unerring instinct for doing the wrong thing at the right moment. She—but let me begin at the beginning.

One fine morning, I was walking along Mount Road with my hands in my trouser-pockets, and a merry whistle on my lips, when my roving eye fell on the above-named Lizzy, standing on the road. When I say standing, I do not mean the ordinary kind of standing. As you very probably know, there are many kinds of standing, like social-standing, misunderstanding, notwithstanding, and so on. But the standing that I refer to in the present case, was outstanding. What I mean is, the aforesaid Lizzy had broken down, and from all appearances she had like Casabianca, every intention of staying there for ever and aye. The frantic owner was alternately cranking the starting-handle, and tearing his already sparse hair. I stood, and watched interestedly; as I watched I felt in my bones that she was the car for me. And, like all great men, I decided on the instant, to buy her at any cost.

So, I toddled along towards the owner, and, tapped him on the shoulder. "You seem to be having some trouble with her," I said brightly.

"Ha, Columbus!" he observed, and turned again to his unpleasant task. I felt a little hurt at the fellow's tone, but I let it pass.



while he was looking on.....

"Are you prepared to sell her?" I asked.

"No."

"What?" I exclaimed in amazement.

He became more explicit. "I am not prepared to sell this damned tin-pot," he said. "I am prepared to give it away free, gratis, and for nothing, if only some priceless ass will take it."

"I will," I said quickly, and then bit my lip.

But that bloke was rather quick in the uptake. He goggled at me for a moment, and then, began to roar with assinine laughter, as if he would never stop. Presently he controlled himself sufficiently to gasp, "Seventy-five chips, and this contraption is yours."

I agreed, and asking him to wait, I dashed to the Bank, to ask for an over-draft. I was successful, because my brother-in-law is the Manager.

When I returned, the owner chappie was sleeping the sleep of the physically exhausted, in the back seat. I woke him up and gave him the money. He took it, and hung about there, evidently eager to see what I was going to do about Lizzy's Casabianca act.

The poor mutt did not know that I was made of sterner stuff. But he soon learnt his mistake. While he was looking on, I opened the front door, fiddled a little with the various gadgets on the dash-board, and then cranked the handle. Lo and behold, the Lizzy quivered in every limb. She had started! I climbed into the driving seat, proudly.

"I say? How on earth did you manage it?" shouted the astonished ex-owner.

"Car psychology, my dear Rothschild," I retorted gaily, as I drove off.

But my gaiety was short-lived, for before I had gone a hundred yards, I noticed that everything was not quite all right with my newly acquired Lizzy. She seemed to have a glorious disregard for the rules of the road, and a passion for the extreme right-side of the road. I pulled her determinedly to the left, but before I could say Editor, she was again on the wrong side. I did not know what to do. I became worried;

beads of perspiration broke out on my forehead, and visions of the police-court, where, in the dock, I quailed before the squint-eyes of a Traffic Inspector, floated before my eyes. Fortunately at this moment, the priceless thing, which I call my thinking-box, came to my aid, and the catastrophe was averted. I found out that by twisting the steering wheel about half-a-dozen turns to the left in such a manner that if I wished to go due South, the front-wheels were pointing about 80 degrees S. S. E. and keeping it there, I managed to retain my proper side, more or less. After this great discovery, driving Lizzy became mere child's-play.

For, whenever I wanted to keep a straight course, I applied with singular success the above method, and whenever I wanted to take a turning to the right, I merely let go of the steering wheel, and leaned back; Lizzy would do it all by herself and we would be safely round the bend. Provided, of course, that there was no obstruction on the other side.

An obstruction, however, would have complicated matters, because my Lizzy had such a great contempt for any kind of authority, that she could never be stopped within a hundred yards. Every time I had to stop her, there was a great duel between us; all our faculties were brought into play: brain, muscle, and will-power. But the issue, let me say with due modesty, was always in my favour. I succeeded by simultaneously jamming on the foot brake, and the reverse pedal, in addition to straining at the hand brake-lever.

Doubtless, dear Reader, you are now wondering what I used to do in an emergency. Well, to be quite candid, I don't know, because such an emergency never arose as long as I owned Lizzy. Even the possibility of such a crisis was very remote, since, Lizzy's favourite cruising speed was only about 15 m.p.h. Not that she could not do more than that at a pinch. Oh, yes, she could easily reach 30 or 35 m.p.h. without any effort—when she was going down a mountain, or even a hill.

I am one of those wise guys who have nothing but disapproval, for the modern craze for speed. In fact, I abhor and loathe all speed-hogs. Therefore, in this one matter, namely, Lizzy's love for a slow and dignified gait, I was in entire agreement with her; we were, so to speak, like two hearts that beat as one.

In all other matters, I regret to say, our relations lacked in harmony. My chief complaint against her was her temperament; she was never the same for two consecutive minutes. Sometimes, a mere touch on the self-starter would wake her up to riotous activity, at other times prayers, curses, and even physical violence would be of no avail. Because of this, fond as I was of her, I gradually came to dislike Lizzy.

I know, gentle reader, what you are thinking now. You are mentally telling yourself, "Here is a cross-grained fellow who is too hard to please." You are wrong—entirely. On the other hand, you could never come across a fellow who is more easily pleased, or more reasonable. I have read my History and I know that even women like Cleopatra and the good Queen Bess had many faults; and I know too, that Antony,

Cleo's boy-friend, lost everything, including his life, because of Cleo's faults, and Sir Walter Raleigh first ruined his cloak and later his head, thanks to Bess's failings. But Lizzy, who resembled these two ladies in many particulars, while she possessed all their faults, had none of their virtues.

And that was exactly what turned my heart against her, as you will see from the subsequent incident. She let me down without a pang of conscience when I needed her co-operation as I never before needed it. And thanks to her pig-headed contrariness (or vice versa) I lost a fortune.



I have an uncle—my long departed father's elder brother—who has permanently settled down in the cool heights of Kodai. He has amassed, by what trickery I know not, a veritable fortune and I am his nearest kith and kin. But the old buffer is so eccentric that my inheriting his horde was highly problematic as it was, but now Lizzy has put her foot in it, and settled matters beyond doubt.

My uncle suffers from an illusion that he is a great businessman, and very often he swoops down like an eagle (a fat, spectacled eagle) from his dizzy nest and alights either in Madras or Bombay as the case may be, to dabble in high finance. When business requires his presence in Bombay, he commands my services in transporting him from the Egmore Railway Station to the Central ditto.

So, one day when I received a telegram from this blot-in-my-horizon, asking me to be present the next day at Egmore at 6-30 a.m. with the necessary means of transport for conveying his portly form to the Central, I was glad that I would have an opportunity of thrusting myself into his mind and consequently perhaps in his will.

Early the next morning therefore I went with a beating heart towards Lizzy, anxiously wondering if she would behave herself on this all-important occasion. I gingerly switched on the ignition and cranked the handle. Hurray! She started. I smiled, I laughed, and proudly patted her bonnet. "Good old Lizzy!" I said as I started for the station.

Lizzy behaved wonderfully on the way, and exactly in time I parked her outside and went in. The train steamed in and the mountain-eagle alighted from a second-class compartment.

"Hullo, Hullo, Hullo, Good Morning, Uncle," I shouted cheerfully.

He looked at my newly-pressed suit and the tasteful flower in my buttonhole and merely sniffed. I stood and smiled at him affectionately.

"What are you grinning at me for?" he asked rudely. "Oh, nothing," I replied, turning off the smile. "Don't stand blinking there. Get my things out of the station and hurry. I have to catch the 8-30 at the Central," barked my relative.

* In a few minutes I had everything loaded on to the back of Lizzy: then I nipped back to the platform and conducted the uncle to the car. When he saw the car, he seemed a little taken aback, but he did not say anything. He merely grunted in his usual manner.

Proudly, I helped him into the car, and proudly I got into my seat. Proudly, I stepped on the self, and promptly, Lizzy responded. Good old Lizzy! Merrily, we left the station—the rich and eccentric uncle, and his hopeful nephew.

We took the over-bridge near the School of Arts neatly, and turned into the main road. And there unexpectedly, it happened.

There was a sudden explosion. The engine spluttered twice, and with a low gurgle, stopped. "Damn!" said the uncle. I said nothing. I jumped down, and turned the handle. Nothing happened. I went on turning the handle till I was blue in the face and everything swam

before my eyes. Still the same silence, as far as the car was concerned. But the august representative of my forefathers, was far from silent; he was giving tongue like a drill sergeant, in very unprintable language.

"Really, uncle, it is nothing serious," I remarked. "I shall have her running in a jiffy." My remarks, instead of soothing, had exactly the opposite effect on him; he became quite inarticulate. Unable to bear the sight, I raised the bonnet, and shoved my head inside, pretending to do something. For one thing, I did not know what to do to the insides of a car, when something was wrong; for another, I dared not touch Lizzy's internal viscera, lest they might drop out. You see they were all so old, and fragile. But I kept my head under the raised bonnet, and prayed passionately to God and Lizzy, for deliverance from this situation. There was only one silver lining in the clouds, and that was the fact that Lizzy's former owner was not there to see my predicament.

A little later, I ventured a look at the uncle. He had regained his vocal powers now, and was talking at the rate of—well—like a machine gun, and his face had assumed a really remarkable colour; something like an over-ripe tomato. At last, unable to go on with the pretence any longer, I let down the bonnet and had another go at the starter, but my efforts were in vain.

"You blithering idiot! It is eight already and you persist in winding up your d—d cocoa-tin. Throw it into the gutter, and get me a Taxi—quick! I can't afford to miss my train," burst out my uncle, uncharitably.

Well, to cut it short, I brought a Taxi and managed to take him to the station, just in time for his train. As soon as he was safely inside his carriage, he leaned out and dropped the bombshell, in these cruel words: "I have always known," he said, "that you were a mental cipher and to-day's exhibition has confirmed my opinion. You know very well that my heart is not all it should be, and that excitement of any kind is inadvisable. Yet you took the risk of forcing me to ride in that d—d car of yours. Your behaviour was most reprehensible. Therefore, I have decided to cut you off from my will." I tried to plead with him, but with the air of a Caesar he waved me away.

Crestfallen and heartbroken, I left the station, and stumbled to the place where the thrice-cursed Lizzy stood. My mind was in a turmoil, and wave after wave of anger swept over me at the thought of Lizzy's behaviour. Just to work off my emotion, I took hold of the starting-handle, and gave it a vicious twist. And, can you imagine it, the damn thing actually started. Oh, the perfidy of her black heart! The treachery of her leprous soul! She had staged that break-down, just out of contrariness, and ruined my whole future. "Ingratitude, thy name is Lizzy!" I cried aloud. Thus apostrophising, I drove the wretch home, and put her in a dilapidated cow-shed, and resolved never to take her out again.

And there she stands to-day in disgrace, condemned to end her life in ignominy.

Oh! That Lizzy!

At the Old Rest - House

by 'Embusque'

Reading Time • About 9 Minutes

THE rest-house was small, old-fashioned, and un-repaired. It had only two rooms. From the front verandah, a single door led into the living-room. Opposite the entrance, a second door led to the dressing-room. A further door in the dressing-room opened on to the back verandah.

The worst of the hot weather was in progress, and tempers were short. Considering the season, Mullins and O'Hara were remarkably active, as well as remarkably cheerful. These two members of the P. W. D. were in the living-room of the old bungalow, supplying the derelict place with a few unauthorised fixtures.

Mullins was putting a thin wire across the living-room, close to the ceiling. When the wire was taut, he arranged a small pulley to run along it. Using some more thin wire, Mullins suspended a coat-hanger from the pulley. On the coat-hanger he arranged a woman's night-dress. It trailed just clear of the ground.

"Now for a rehearsal, old man," he chuckled.

"Wait a moment," replied O'Hara, "I haven't finished fastening the door. We don't want him to break it open." O'Hara was nailing up the inner door of the living-room.

Mullins pushed back the pulley until the night-dress hung at the end of the overhead wire, in a dark alcove. "You can hardly see it now," he said. "It will be quite unnoticeable after dark."

O'Hara inspected the apparatus, and grinned. "Come on," he said, "let's go round the back, and watch how it works."

"Pass these threads through the hole where the punkah-rope used to go," directed Mullins. One thread was attached direct to the coat-hanger, the other reached it via a hook in the alcove.

The two conspirators circumambulated the bungalow, and entered the dressing-room by the back-door. They crossed to the nailed-up inner door, and peered through the punkah-hole. Mullins took a thread into his hand, and pulled steadily.

Soundlessly, the night-dress moved out of the alcove, and swept slowly across the room, invisibly supported, like a phantom. Mullins pulled on the other thread, and the night-dress eerily returned to its hiding-place.

"Gosh!" said O'Hara. "It gives me the creeps, even in daylight! Won't Mister Know-All skip, when he sees it in the dark!"

Frederick Marsh, alias Mister Know-All, was the Inspecting Engineer. He was in camp with Mullins and O'Hara, out in the compound. Travellers did not use

the rest-house. Besides being dilapidated, the place had a sinister reputation.

Many years ago, a Road-Surveyor and his wife had stopped there. They were accompanied by a colleague, who camped in the compound. The colleague was on intimate terms with the couple, and spent much of his time in the house.

Late one afternoon, the younger man was at work at a triangulation point on a neighbouring eminence, while the husband was a mile distant, fixing the levels. Between the two engineers ran one of the rocky water-courses of the Deccan, almost dry in the hot weather.

A violent thunderstorm arose, and in a few minutes the water-course was a raging torrent. Through the driving rain, the young man watched his superior approach the stream, hesitate, and draw back. It would be almost impassable until the water subsided. After further hesitation, the surveyor began to signal to his young colleague. He directed his friend to return to camp, while he took shelter in a neighbouring village.

It was dark by the time the young man reached the rest-house, and the storm was still in progress. He found the lonely woman very frightened. She flew into his arms, and in that moment a long-hidden spark of passion kindled between them. They fell to comforting each other. Presently, the lightning was glaring balefully on their guilt.

It was during one terrible flash of lightning that the woman suddenly screamed. The door of the rest-house was open, and on the threshold stood an outraged husband.

The husband drew his revolver, and shot the faithless pair as they lay.

When the search-party arrived, they found the woman still alive, though mortally wounded. Her husband lay stretched beside her paramour, having turned his weapon on himself.

Her last words were, "If only I had locked the door!"

That was why the rest-house remained untenanted.

When Frederick Marsh, alias Mister Know-All, was told the story of the rest-house, he was loud in his jeers. Mullins and O'Hara were not particularly credulous themselves, but they resented the superior contempt of Mister Know-All. There were high words in the stuffy, over-heated tent, and at last the two cronies challenged the scoffer to pass a night in the haunted room.

"Why should I spend a night in the rotten little place?" objected Marsh. "And if I did, what would there be to fear?"

"The room is haunted by the ghost of the dead woman," said Mullins. "Everyone knows that the ghost of a woman is more malignant than that of a man. She frets because of the carelessness that precipitated the tragedy. She takes the occupant into her unholy clutches, and locks the door. Her victim is imprisoned, and cannot get released until day-break."

"Nonsense!" stormed Marsh. "I noticed yesterday that the lock is choked with rust; and besides, there is no key."

"Say what you like, you are afraid to pass a night in that room," sneered O'Hara.

The upshot of the dispute was that Mister Know-All was committed to spending a night in the haunted bungalow. In his absence, Mullins and O'Hara were arranging a convincing mechanical ghost. Their object in nailing up the inner door was two-fold. First, they would be able to creep into the house by the back way, work the ghost, and observe the results. Secondly, it left Mister Know-All with only one means of egress. When he fled by the front door (as they expected), they could confront him with his pusillanimity. He would not be able to say that he was merely taking a little exercise.

Fredrick Marsh, according to contract, left the tent at 10 p.m., and took up his vigil in the haunted room. The two conspirators winked at each other, and sat down to a game of double-dummy.

At 2 a.m., Mullins yawned. "The witching hour has passed," he said. "Is it not time that the ghost walked?"

O'Hara filled his pipe. "Wait a little longer," he said. "The later we make it, the more the blighter will have his nerves screwed up by expectancy. Let's play another rubber."

It was after three more rubbers that the practical jokers crept on crepe-soled shoes into the dressing-room of the old rest-house. They approached the hole in the nailed-up door, and peeped through.

In the pale moonlight that filtered through the tiny window under the eaves, the figure of Fredrick Marsh could be dimly seen. He was sitting in a chair at the end of the room, his back to the wall. He was nodding drowsily.

A board creaked under O'Hara's foot. The watcher jerked into wakefulness with a convulsive start. "Who's there?" he shouted, by no means calmly.

The silence was unbroken, and the watcher slowly relaxed. Then the loose board creaked again.

Marsh jumped to his feet, revolver in hand. "No monkey-tricks, or I'll fire!" he cried.

O'Hara giggled, and nudged Mullins, who slowly began to pull the thread. The night-dress, swaying in ghostly fashion, glided from the alcove.

"It's a trick!" shrieked Marsh. Then followed six deafening bangs. The night-dress jerked under the impact of the bullets.

The sixth shot was accompanied by a twanging noise. A bullet had struck the wire, and the whole contraption fell to the ground.

"I knew it was a damned trick!" shouted Marsh, in hysterical relief. Then his mood changed. He dropped his empty revolver, and began to pull down the broken wires in a rage.

"So this is the ghost!" he bawled, furiously tearing the night-dress. "Evil spirit! Bah! Do you hear me? I defy the phantoms of Hell!"

Mullins and O'Hara looked sheepishly at each other. "Let's go and apologise," whispered the former, with some contrition. "It was a silly joke."

They groped their way to the front of the bungalow. "Yes, we rather over-did our sense of humour," agreed O'Hara.

As they turned the corner, there was a drumming on the front door of the rest-house. The two companions hurried on to the verandah.

"What's the matter?" shouted Mullins.

Marsh was frantically beating on the inside of the door. "Let me out!" he screamed. "Let me out!"

"What's the matter?" repeated Mullins.

"Let me out! Oh, let me out!" cried Marsh, with fearful urgency.

"There's nothing to stop you opening the door," called Mullins.

"Let me out! Let me out!" came a dreadful shriek from inside.

Mullins rushed to the door, and tugged. It would not open.

"My God!" cried Mullins. "The door is locked!"

"It can't be," said O'Hara. "There is no key. Who could have locked the door?"

"Don't stand jabbering!" shouted Mullins. "Go and get in through the dressing-room."

"I can't!" cried O'Hara, wringing his hands. "We nailed up the door!"

"Then break down this one! Don't you understand? There is something inside there with poor Marsh, and that something has locked the door! Break down the door!"

But the door was the old kind, very solid, with a massive lock. It resisted the combined force of the two men. Meanwhile, the cries of the imprisoned victim had sunk to terrified moans.

Panting with fear and anxiety, Mullins and O'Hara searched for an implement with which to break down the door. At last they thought to drag a post from the fence of the compound; but the post was deeply sunk into the soil, and many minutes passed before they were able to free it. Bearing the heavy post, they ran to the bungalow, and began to batter at the door.

It was many more minutes before the door began to splinter. The sky was slowly brightening in the east. A last terrific blow set the door hurtling open. In the near-by village, a cock-crow heralded the dawn.

A gibbering lunatic staggered out of the haunted room.

THE END

AUNTIE AWFUL—(Continued from page 25)

China?" Fortunately, dear boy, Auntie is not required to reconcile the political declarations of the great powers with their military acts. In the case of Japan, it may interest you to know that six hundred years ago, Marco Polo wrote as follows: 'In the island of Zipangu, the Gods are fashioned in a variety of shapes, but the chief one exhibits the appearance of a single head with two countenances.'

Promenade (Madras). "Taking my evening stroll, I have stumbled across many peculiar things on the beach." Really, dear boy, do you think it nice to allude to the young persons as 'peculiar things'?

Beauteous Features (Ahmednagar). "The magazine said that the heroine had a dimpled face. What is a dimple?" A dimple, my dear, is a pimple turned inside out.

Bored Pupil (Benares). "Our master is the most long-winded man on earth. While teaching us, he lingers on every point." If you thirst for action, dear boy, place a drawing-pin on his chair, and see how long he lingers on that.

Stationmaster (M. & M. S. Ry.). A ballad, dear sir, is a story in verse, usually adapted for singing. A ballade is a poem. Each verse of a ballade has eight lines, and they keep to the following rhyme-pattern: A, B, A, B, B, C, B, C. The eighth line is the same in every verse. A nice slack metre is employed. Here is an example that Auntie has composed for you:

As I sit on this desolate station,
And preside with a dignified unction;
Passing trains to their due destination
And wishing the place were a junction;
I wonder if it is my function
For ever to sit on hard stools.
Has Fate never any compunction?
And why are all passengers fools?

You can write as many verses as you like, but they must all have the same theme, and the same last line. You round off the ballade with an 'Envoi' of four lines which should sum up the poem. Here is Auntie's envoi:

If I weren't a fellow of gumption,
I'd tear up the line, and the rules.
Why isn't this station a junction?
And why are all passengers fools?

The next time Auntie catches the dear Editor in a generous mood, she will ask him to give a prize for the best ballade sent in by a reader.

Remarkable Fellow (Ambur). "I am a most peculiar chap. My energy knows no bounds." What are you, dear boy—a rheumatic kangaroo?

Changing Fashions (Allahabad). "On the tennis-courts, the younger girls are taking to shorts, but the old-fashioned skirts still have their supporters." Well, dear Madam, it would be rather awkward if your old-fashioned skirt was lacking its supporters, don't you think?

Student (Straits Settlements). "If a vegetarian is a person who lives on vegetables, what is a disciplinarian?"

That is an easy one, my dear. A disciplinarian is a person who lives on disciples.

Fight Fan (Triplicane). "I am going to put my money on the champion. He uses soul-force. While he is training, he says to himself, 'I am going to win the fight; I am going to win the fight.' Beware, dear boy! You know what liars some of these pugilists are."

Isaac (Springhaven). "I performed a most remarkable feat the other day. While walking on the breakwater, I caught a fish with a walking-stick. How very interesting, dear boy. Was the fish carrying the walking stick under its fin?"

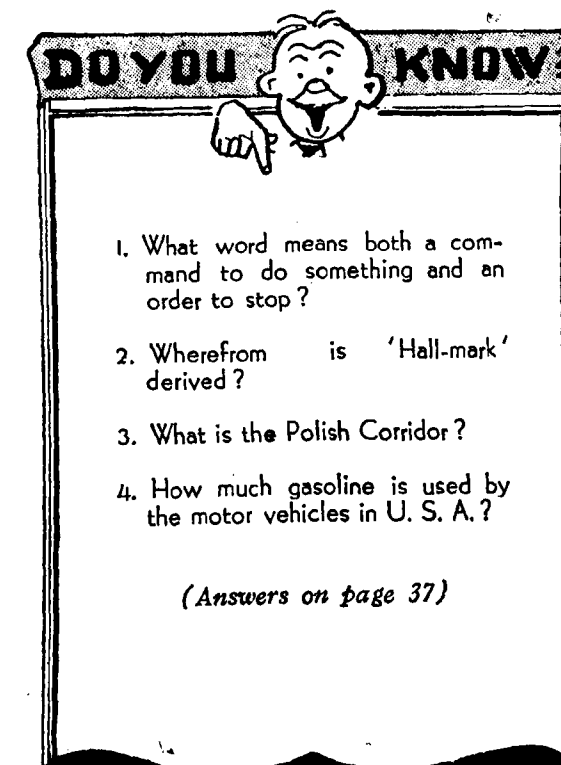
Restaurateur (Madras). "We should like you to sample our fare. We have a new cook." Auntie is already aware of the fact dear sir. She noticed a new set of thumb-prints on her plate.

Suitable Match (Vaniyambadi). "I am quite contented with the bargain. Besides being a pretty girl, she has brains enough for two." How fortunate, dear boy!

Tax Collector (N. India). "The assessee appealed to the Commissioner, and was released from payment. Now every time he sees me, he laughs." You can soon put a stop to that, dear sir. Charge him amusement-tax.

Learner (Madras). "I want to improve my English. Please tell me where I can listen to some polished conversation." Try one of the local council-meetings, dear boy. The conversation there is so polished that it always reflects on someone.

Ticket Collector (S.I.R.) "She was a very stout lady, and refused to show her ticket. She kept on tossing her head and saying, 'I am going to descend at Egmore.' What did she think she was?" Apparently, dear boy, she thought she was an airship.



(Answers on page 37)



"You wretch! You ghoul!
Out you go!"

Nalini

by A. T. MacNaughton Thomas

Illustrated by Nalkarni

Reading time • About 13 Minutes

SUPPOSE you had an uncle who willed all his doubloons to you (with a view that he should cut up fine) on condition you married his only daughter whom you had never seen, failing which, the money would go to some extraordinary Society for the Preservation of Pedigree Cockroaches—no, not even to his daughter—how would you feel? If you are one of those bachelors like me, you will say, "Let the cockroaches have the cash." If you are otherwise, you will certainly not throw away a sizable bit of fortune even though you may have to string with an ogress.

Nalkarni, as he sat sipping his cup of morning tea in his appointed room down in a Byculla street, felt his nervous system twanging like a string orchestra going for a hot fox-trot, when the postman handed him the contents of which were somewhat like that

of in para one. What made Nalkarni goggle a lot was, the letter was typed on an authentic-looking note-paper. It was couched in a legal phraseology that nearly addled his brain and was signed by lawyers that nearly left him gasping. What made Nalkarni further wonder was, that the testator, Uncle Bhasker of Nagpur—of whom, he hadn't thought for years, should take it into his head to 'give and legate' twenty thousand rupees—not a bad sum, you'll admit—if he clicked with his daughter Nalini. Otherwise, the money would go, sure as surety, to an agricultural society in Poona for the improvement of water-melons. Nalkarni went through the letter a second time. Well, dash it, such uncles were to be described as loopy who went about distributing largesse to water-melons and other assorted gourds, depriving their daughters of their legitimate share.

Nalkarni, though he had money of his own, was employed in one of the mercantile firms of Bombay and the seventy rupees he was drawing *per mensem* was sufficient to make him feel that he was on velvet. He would have gladly welcomed the twenty-thousand rupees that his uncle had left him but for the condition that he must marry an impossible girl whom he had never seen. "I don't know her," he thought, "and they haven't sent me a photo of her. Most probably, I shouldn't like her, even though she might have walked away with the first-prize at a beauty-contest. I am blown if I am going to marry anybody—of course, with the exception of Vinodini and that's official. Let the water-melons have the ducats."

Vinodini, for your information, was the rising filmstar of the BUGABOO MOVIE-TONE CORPORATION and, don't you know, she scored a tremendous success in her last film, *The Heartwave*. Whenever Vinodini was working on the sets, Nalkarni found opportunity, with an artist-friend of his, to potter about the Bugaboo film-colony and consequently, by getting to know each other, a friendship had sprung between them. From that moment, the sun shone Vinodini, the wind blew Vinodini, the motor-cars tooted Vinodini, the tram-cars shrieked Vinodini, the telegraph-wires hummed Vinodini, the mills whirled Vinodini, the flowers in the Victoria Gardens were Vinodinis to a bud, in short, all was Vinodini to Nalkarni.



NALKARNI

So, on this morning, he thought how handy would the twenty thousands be.....He could give Vinodini a dinky diamond necklace, for, only yesterday at the studio, she expressed an overwhelming desire for a trinket. "Just something pretty and natty," she kept on repeating, "for evening parties. I think, a diamond necklace would do beautifully." All the money Nalkarni could scrape wouldn't amount to one-third of the price of the d.n. which Vinodini had in mind. Now that the twenty-thousand was unleashed on him.....Well, acceptance of the dough would mean the loss of Vinodini. While he was thinking furiously what to do, he had to have a bout with Conscience, a host with whom he never reckoned in his calculations. It was a three-round contest, which may be briefly described thus:—

CONSCIENCE vs. NALKARNI

ROUND ONE

Conscience came to the scratch with a beaming face. Led off with a straight hook to the jaw that it would be bad, in fact, criminal, for Nalkarni to ruin his unknown cousin by depriving her of her money. Nalkarni countered heavily by saying that he must not be held blame-worthy for what the old goop of her father did. Nalkarni put in a lot of sparring. Time called, with little damage done.

ROUND TWO

Conscience, much freshened, now nearly got home with "Nalini is a pretty name. Don't you think so?" Nalkarni punched Conscience on the chin with a terrific "Shut up. I have nothing to do with her or her name." Conscience went home with a stiff upper lip: "You'd let Nalini starve, would you?" Nalkarni side-stepped with "Oh, she can marry somebody else. When I click, I'm first going to fall in love." The round ended with a brisk rally, Nalkarni crowding in a lot of punches.

ROUND THREE

Conscience came with a bleeding face and greatly weakened. Feinted with the charge of caddishness but Nalkarni was too alert and sent it twice to the ropes. Conscience made a final attempt with a damaging "That is how you realise your responsibilities, you cad. The way you are treating Nalini would make the water-melons mutiny." Nalkarni cross-countered with a terrific "Keep Nalini in cold storage. She won't get me even with a lasso. Thanks frightfully, Vinodini is the girl for me." Conscience down and out.

"That finishes it," said Nalkarni as he put aside the letter, to resume his tea. He went through his breakfast with such an unconcerned air that the Quetta Earthquake would have seemed to him like a slight disturbance in the pantry—say, a mouse upsetting a saucer. It looked as though the water-melons were in for a run of bonanza.

For two months or so, everything seemed to go on greased castors for Nalkarni. And these two months, Vinodini kept on importunately asking her admirers for the diamond necklace and since everyone of her admirers' bank-balance was groggy, the d.n. seemed as capable of realization as a sea-horse winning the Derby. On one evening, the blood in Nalkarni's veins froze when he

heard that a blighter by name Mehta had definitely promised Vinodini that she would be the recipient of the d.n. within a week's time, as he had that day only placed an order for the same with the jewellers. "Now or never," thought Kulkarni; he sat down, collected his benumbed senses into a complete set and evolved such a fruity scheme in the twinkling of a bed-post that, if we, short-story writers could only get our plots like that, we would be a happier lot.

The plan he sketched out was briefly this. To go straight to Nagpur by the first train and tell Nalini that she was his chosen mate. Probably she may despise him for having delayed so long, but that was by the way. If she was unwilling to marry him, to take her to the registrar's, even though it came to the necessity of having her chloroformed. Tell the trustees to look sloppy and hand over the dough without the least delay. Buy the d.n. and give it to Vinodini, who would, no doubt, call him on the spot her soul-mate. Divorce Nalini: give her a chance to click with whom she liked and then settle on her the twenty-thousand which he now took from her, he admitted, in a manner that was not quite the ticket. Of course, one has to throw overboard certain principles in a ticklish job like this, esp. when Vinodini was the consideration.

When Kulkarni slipped the information to Vinodini that he would be going over to Nagpur in a day or two on a private affair of his, she could not with all her artful coaxing worm out of him what the private affair was.

Kulkarni received a facer when he landed at Nalini's house. The nurse who attended on Nalini told him point-blank that no one could see her mistress, as she was seriously laid down with a devastating fever and was, in her belief, quite a 'goner' and that orders were orders. Kulkarni's heart went pit-a-pat and pat-a-pit. He remonstrated with the nurse, who constituted in herself the duties of a nurse, a janitor, a secretary, a *femme de chambre*, and a watch-dog, for nearly twenty mins., and all was of no avail.

"At least, you'll tell her who I am," pleaded Kulkarni. "Tell her that her long-lost cousin has come to her. Tell her my name—Vasudev Kulkarni. It will act on her simultaneously as a febrifuge, a restorative, a roborant, a sedative, a corrective and an alternative."

Five minutes later she came to him with a face which was a study in itself.

"You wretch! You ghoul! Your name is more lethal than the concentrated venom of ten kraits. You sent my poor mistress into fits warranted to send her express to the Great Beyond. She looks dead as nits. Out you go! Don't darken this door any more." With that, she chased him down the steps in the most approved manner with a broom, before which the most valiant of men must quail.

Kulkarni thought that before Nalini could be launched into eternity, he must somehow scoop the twenty-thousand. Presently he brought an ambulance-car to Nalini's door. It occurred to him that the best course was to beard the lion—in this case, a lioness—in its own den. "Come on, you Five-in-one Phenomenon. Get this into your noddle. I'm your mistress' cousin—her protector—her guardian—her bridegroom-elect—her hus-

band-designate. Any more lip, I'll sack you on the spot. What ho! Boys! (to the ambulance-men) Stretcher! Bring the stretcher. Show some speed. Stretcher forward. Nip along. Decant the patient into it. Look sloppy. Yes, that's the way. Now, right about turn. Dump her into the wagon. Now tool off."

When the patient was being transferred to the ambulance-car, Kulkarni couldn't help observing that Nalini was veiled and that set him wondering. "I say, spitfire, your mistress wasn't by any chance serving her probation in any zenana?"

But the nurse looked vinegar at him.

"I say, Miss Vinegar, tell Nalini we can play blind man's buff some other time. I hope, she won't pop off by asphyxiation."

The machine pulled up before a poky building. The registrar, a moth-eaten individual, ambled towards Kulkarni, telegraphing significant nods. When Kulkarni had signed the certificate, the R. asked him where the lady was.

"In the bin," replied Kulkarni. "You see, she's a patient. Hop in and ask her to put the signature." He pressed into his hands a wad of notes.

"I'm darned if the lady wasn't in a state of asphyxia. It was a mighty job to put the pen in her lifeless fingers and bring her round. I hope you aren't marrying her against her wish?" said the registrar with a sly wink. "Now, sir, we want a witness."

"Miss Vinegar, collect a witness. At once, please."

Five minutes later, the ambulance-car was speeding towards the hospital with Kulkarni left behind, who was walking, whistling gaily, to the lawyers' office. He had told Miss Vinegar as a parting shot: "Whether Nalini recovers or not, if ever you care to write, my address is 'Vasudev Kulkarni, Senior Asst. Stoker, Brimstone Section, Pit No. 8, Inferno!'"

The same evening Kulkarni was seated in his Nagpur residence, hugely pleased at having executed his scheme with the consummate touch of an artist. Vinodini was his now for the mere asking *via* the d.n. He was brought down to earth from his pleasant reverie by a knock at the door. The post-man handed him a telegram which had evidently come from his artist-friend.

VINODINI ELOPED WITH MEHTA DESTINATION UNKNOWN SAKARAM.

For once, Kulkarni knew in a tea-spoon sort-of-way what the Quetta Earthquake was. He felt the world reeling about him. Everything seemed to tumble on and about him with a force that left him lifeless.

We find him, two days later, seated in his Bycula home, drowning his sorrows in a flagon of the best country rum and leaving everything to Time to do its spot of doctoring. He heartily wished somebody would sell him a 10 oz. bottle of the waters of Lethe or some pills made out of nepenthe so that he might, as prescribed by the doc., at one draught or by repeated doses, forget the whole incident and consider it as a closed page in the book of his life.

On the fifth day a letter arrived to him, out of a blue sky as it were. It was from Miss Vinegar. It concisely stated that her mistress, instead of going the way of all flesh, had recovered surprisingly and was now bursting with health. She would be coming on *that* day to take up her household duties as befitted a wife and a cousin and that he was to keep the house ready. Kulkarni emitted a dreadful moan as an antelope might do when it has to do another spot of cross-country race at 70 m.p.h., after having just escaped from the jaws of a crocodile, with a lion making towards it. He was wondering how on earth to.....As if to drive him further mad, two hours later, a car came to a standstill before the door-step. The sole occupant of the car was the nurse. She wriggled herself out of the prodigious pile of luggage and came towards Kulkarni, who staggered to his feet, with his heart whirling like goodness-knows-what.

"I hope, everything is ready?"

"Well, er—what's the idea?"

"Don't stand gaping at me like that. Tell your servant to collect the luggage."

"Look here, who's the tenant?"

"Get some tea. It's now my turn. What Ho! Man! (to the servant) Tea! Bring some tea. Show some speed. Tea forward. Nip along. Decant it into the cups. Look alive. Now right about turn. Place it on the table. Now fade away. Oh, here's a car. It must be Miss Nalini."

For the first time in his life, Kulkarni came within a touch of heart-failure. "Good God! This ain't no Nalini. This is—" He just stood and stared.

"Vasu, you aren't cross with me?"

Who could be cross, when two little hands are eagerly outstretched, two lips invitingly parted and two eyes with that love-light, which girls reserve only for men whose shirts they are willing to mend without conditions?

"I hope I'm not dreaming."

"We both are dreaming. But it is so rotten to dream—alone."

Kulkarni folded her in his arms.....When coherence came to them both, he asked her whether she was really Vinodini or Nalini.

"You see, darling, my real name is Nalini."

More incoherence. Then she gave the explanatorio. "Ever since I was a kid, you know, I had a strong fancy for the screen. But papa didn't like the idea of my going under arc-lights. He simply wouldn't hear me at all. Anyhow I chose my career and called myself Vinodini. Papa cut me off. He thought by asking you to marry me, you could bring me round. I should have despised you if you had grabbed at the conditions of the will. But you were far otherwise. When I came to Bombay, my first duty was to study you without letting myself known who I was. I asked your artist-friend to bring you round to the studio. We both became immediately chummy. I loved you from the first day I met you—"

"But you were never going to tell me."

"Well, I had my own motives. I wanted to see how you'd react to the will. The diamond-necklace was the bait. The rest—that of Nalini being sick, that of my secretary refusing you admission—by the bye, don't call her Vinegar; she is the sweetest of creatures—that fake telegram of my elopement, was all pure tomfoolery. We did it just for a lark. Your friend Sakaram did the rest. You see, our present scenario is absolute

punk—no pep in it. We thought, by such foolery we could be square with our director. I would like to have a bath first."

"Eh?"

"I thought wives were generally allowed to stop with their husbands."

"I was just going to ask you when did I marry you?"

"Two weeks ago in a rickety old bus. Men forget."

Kulkarni hugged her joyously.

"Anyway I'm jolly glad the water-melons aren't going to have a pie."

YES, I KNOW

(Answers to questions on page 33)

1. Injunction.
2. From the official mark stamped on articles of gold and silver by the Goldsmiths' Hall, London, to indicate purity.
3. The Northern part of Pomorze Province, Poland, between Pomerania and East Prussia, to Danzig and the Baltic.
4. In 1934: 15,314,511,000 gallons; 89 percent of the total consumption of the country.

THE END

The Letters of Private Joyfull

64. Joyfull Gets a Driving Licence

Reading Time • About 10 Minutes

Madras, 31st August 1935.

DEAR MOTHER,

A few days ago, the Orderly Corporal came into the room just after parade, and called out, "Is there anybody here who can drive a motor-car?"

We all looked at one another suspiciously, because questions of that kind are a favourite ruse. An Orderly Corporal is a man who has to get all sorts of jobs carried out; and in collecting the necessary assistance he has to use guile. The last time the Orderly Corporal came rushing in, he wanted to know if anyone was good at drawing. Naturally, we supposed that a draughtsman was wanted in the office. With visions of securing an easy and comfortable post, Tiny Hopkins thrust himself forward. "I used to work for an architect," he said. "May I have the job? I am very good at drawing."

"Ah!" said the Corporal, "you are the very man I want. Go to the Quartermaster's Store, and draw a ton of coal."

The Orderly Corporal is the slave of the bugle. If the Colonel loses his collar-stud, the summons goes for the Orderly Corporal. If there is a riot or a fire, the bugles blow for the Orderly Corporal. Orderly Corporals spend their lives galloping about as military maids-of-all-work. They take weak men to hospital and strong men to jail; check the accounts of the *dhobies*, and the kits of the deceased. If the Sergeant-Major wants the services of a radio-mechanic or a tomato-grower, he tells the Orderly Corporal to produce one. The Orderly Corporal must never forget and never fail. Anybody can be a General, but it takes a good man to be an Orderly Corporal. In fact, all the best Generals served their apprenticeships as Orderly Corporals.

Well, most of the men in the room have driven all sorts of motor-cars, but none of them was to be trapped into admitting it.

"Motor-car?" said Boggins. "Now, that is a pity. I could manage a locomotive, or even a pea-nut engine, but not a motor-car. My education has been sadly neglected." And he shook his head in mournful regret.

Freddy Moore said he used to have a mechanical scooter when he was a child, but the doctor had forbidden him to meddle with internal-combustion engines, on account of there being a bone in his leg. "It is quite a big bone," said Freddy sorrowfully.

"What," said the Corporal, "is there no one here who knows the difference between a choke and a strangler?"

"Why, Corporal," I said, "they are the same thing."

"Oh, are they?" replied the Corporal. "You are the man I am looking for. Go and report to Major Firebrace at once."

Everybody burst out laughing. "All right, Corporal," I said, putting a good face on my discomfiture, "what have I to do?"

"The Major's driver is sick. You will be employed as temporary chauffeur in the evenings."

Everybody stopped laughing. "Here, Corporal," said Boggins, "I would like that job."

"No doubt," said the Corporal, "but unfortunately the Major hasn't got a locomotive or a pea-nut engine."

I found the Major in his garage, pottering about with the car.

"Ah, Joyfull," he said, "are you a good driver?"

"I've had some experience, Sir," I replied.

"Good. How fast can you drive?"

"I don't know, Sir. I never go faster than thirty miles an hour."

"That will suit me. I want a careful driver, whom I can trust to take out the children in the evenings."

I thought this a very sensible attitude on the Major's part. A car-owner generally boasts that he has a good driver, by which he means a reckless one. These 'good' drivers can cut their way in and out of traffic at high speed. By skill and luck they are constantly just escaping accidents; but the danger of the accidents would not exist, if these 'good' drivers were not always taking risks.

I know men who have driven recklessly for years, without coming to any harm. But sooner or later, at some nasty corner, they meet a driver as reckless as themselves, and then there is a tragedy, generally involving innocent persons.

These 'expert' drivers are always extolling the safety of speed. They claim that in 'expert' hands a car is safe a fifty miles an hour. This is a downright lie. Such speeds may be all right on racing-tracks, but on the public road they are always dangerous.

It is sheer mathematics. At fifteen miles an hour, a car can pull up in ten feet. At thirty miles an hour, the distance is forty feet. At fifty miles an hour, the car must hurtle along for *three hundred feet* before coming to a halt. Our school-master says it is geometrical progression, but I call it plain murder.

Excessive speed was the cause of every accident I have ever seen. The verdict at the inquest may be faulty brakes, mechanical failure, an error of judgement, or misadventure; but none of these things are fatal in themselves. When a tyre bursts at twenty miles an hour, the car has almost stopped by the time it hits anything. But if the car is doing forty miles an hour at the time of the accident, it crashes into the luckless victims with the force of a battering-ram, before the brakes have a chance to act.

The driver generally gets away with it. His story is that he was crawling along at a walking-pace, and the victims committed suicide by throwing themselves under the wheels. There is no one to contradict him: dead men tell no tales.

Drivers are always blaming slow-moving vehicles, inanimate objects, and such-like. They complain about 'dangerous' bullock-carts and 'dangerous' road-side trees. The truth is that the car is the dangerous thing. Any man at the wheel of a motor-car is in charge of a potentially death-dealing mechanism, capable of great velocity and weighing more than a ton. He should act with corresponding care. If he passes a bullock-cart at such a speed that he cannot avoid a collision in case of emergency, the responsibility is on his head. If he rushes off the metalling in his impatience to overtake other road-users, and wraps his car round a tree, it is nothing short of manslaughter.

The maximum safe speed on any Indian road is thirty miles an hour, provided the road is clear and without intersections. In towns, the safe speed may be much less, and may even drop to five miles an hour in a thoroughfare crowded with pedestrians. It depends on the prevailing conditions; but I have never seen a road in India where anyone should exceed thirty miles an hour at any time. Even much lower speeds may be dangerous. For example, on a *ghat* road, a driver who charges round a bend a twenty miles an hour, is as criminal as a man who goes along China Bazaar firing a pistol. "I am sounding my horn," says the criminal driver. It is as if the man with the pistol cried "Scatter!" as he went along, and thereby imagined himself free from blame.

I told the Major these ideas of mine, and he laughed and said I was a bit Draconian. "Anyhow," he added, "go down to the Traffic Commissioner and get a driving-licence."

In the first instance I must have wandered into the wrong department. I found a place fitted up like a school-room, with a lot of grown-up pupils sitting on the floor, and some more sitting at desks around the side of the room. I wondered if it was the counterpart of the Police College we have at home.

Some of the pupils were in a wooden cage, and the school-master was seated at a big desk on a dais at the end of the room. A man in a black coat was whispering to the school-master in a low voice, but with expressive gestures. I wondered if he were confidentially telling him a funny story.

"Silence! Sit down!" cried someone; so I went and sat at one of the desks. Everybody looked at me.

The man in the black gown finished whispering his story to the school-master, who called out some announcement, and the pupils in the wooden cage were taken away by some policemen.

A very humble-looking person now stepped into the cage. He was simply dressed in a cloth of red-and-white checks, like a farm-house table-cloth, and he had a drooping moustache and a lugubrious expression. He wept bitterly, and told the school-master he was a very poor man; which should have been obvious to anyone. It appears he was in trouble through getting a sum wrong. Another pupil said that instead of allowing for fifteen per cent of water in some milk, this man had

worked on a basis of fifty per cent; which was certainly a gross miscalculation.

"You will get five rupees this time," said the school-master, which seemed a very generous way of dealing with the errant pupil. He was led away, still weeping, and protesting how very poor he was. I suppose that owing to his excessive poverty he was unused to showing gratitude, for he failed to thank the school-master for the five rupees.

Presently a person stole up to me and whispered, "Are you here to make an appearance?"

I looked at myself in alarm, but there seemed nothing wrong with my appearance.

"I've come about my driving-licence," I explained.

"Oh," he said, "out of date, I suppose. Who arrested you?"

"I haven't been arrested yet," I replied, with some trepidation. "Do I have to be arrested before obtaining a driving-licence? It is much simpler in England. There I just go the post-office and get one."

"Ah, you want a *new* driving-licence," said the man. "Go and enquire downstairs."

I rose and took my departure, bowing to the school-master, who smiled quite pleasantly. He was now dealing with some pupils who were said to have been playing a gambling-game in a recess. It seemed a very unruly sort of school.

I was directed hither and thither, and from building to building, and at last presented myself to a young man at a desk. He seemed to be new to his task, and regarded me as a sort of curiosity. I explained that I wanted a licence to drive the Major's car.

"Ah, not your own car? Are you a professional driver?"

"Well, I would call myself an amateur," I replied, modestly.

The young man, however, decided I was a professional, and asked if I had brought my photograph.

"Good heavens," I said. "Must I be photographed, as well as arrested, before I can have a driving-licence?"

"Certainly," said the young man. "Photographs are required in the case of professional drivers. Also you must fill in this form."

I started to fill it in. I wrote that my name was Joyfull, and my father's name was Joyfull, and my grandfather's name was Joyfull. It seemed a bit redundant somehow. The next item was my caste, so after some consideration I wrote 'Outcaste'. Then followed several entries that were quite unintelligible.

I turned to the young man for assistance, but he had gone away, and was pointing me out to his friends as an object of interest. At last a more experienced clerk came to me, smiling, and I explained the situation. He directed me where to go and what to do, and said I need not be arrested or photographed, and I need not fill up the form. He was a pleasant gentleman, and all the other clerks crowded round and listened, and seemed to be amused and yet friendly.

It took a long time to get the licence, and I had to pass a driving-test, but at last I came away armed with the precious booklet, and ready to begin my duties as temporary chauffeur.

Your Loving Son,
OBEAH JOYFULL.

Madras and the Madrassi

As seen by the Man from Mussoorie

Reading Time • About 5 Minutes

TRAVELLING "Third" to discover the India between Southern Seas, I have detrained at the centre of the presidency of *upbunav* and *pepper-water*, that is Madras of the Madrassi. Madras in the East may be said to be a sister city to Vienna in the West. It is a City of Million Lights, thanks to nocturnal reflexes on the Cooum and the rest of that variety of sewage-canals; and renewed thanks to the scintillating rain-water in the city's road-pockets.

The Man from up-Mussoorie-way hath made his temporary abode on a street whose name is rather intimately linked with the British Navy. The prefix is, in point of fact, *Naval*; and, in point of evidence, one gathers that there was a flotilla of the Grand Fleet cruising along this thoroughfare. A receding sea has, again from evidence, completely washed away its asphalted 'school-girl complexion', and it has laid bare a strip of shore-land, rock-shingled and lined with the flotsam and jetsam of those Naval days.

About which the Madras-born and Madras-bred feels mighty proud, (and justly so), is the Marina, which rests its broad bosom on the golden sands of Senate House-Triplicane-San Thome; and, that with queenly grace and majesty. No electric trains, trams, and buses are given a ghost of a chance to scratch the ebony polish of the beautiful Marina, rendered still more beautiful by a neatly-kept side walk and a pleasing vista of flower-beds, each set off by an enclosure of trimmed evergreens.

Bound for the Marina, I stepped nimbly into an 'Egmore' tramcar, paying *two coppers* to the Central Station, since no through tickets are issued. At the M. S.M. Central we drew up alongside the 'change here for Triplicane beach' tram. But the M.E.T. drivers, it seems, must have their little joke. And, 'Barber's Bridge' got a move on and gathered speed the moment I was spotted doubling round 'Egmore' to catch 'Barber's Bridge.' This little joke has been rehearsed twice again at that centre of fun. On another occasion, two M.E.T. men, busy apparently in discussing the price of rice, took no notice of my oft-repeated query. The tram started off. Then one of the uniformed pair shouted, "yes, get in." When I had jumped in and wiped my perspiring brow, I was politely advised to get back and board the right car!

However, the M. E. T. folk, as a class, are considerate and helpful. For example, one of the Company's European officials had informed me most concernedly that I had taken the wrong car, directed me to the right one, and apologised for the inconvenience caused by a mistake of my own. My latest experience of the M. E. T. staff is one that comes to us but once in a life-time. I had been warned not to carry my purse in my trouser-pocket. Alas! this tendency had become a hard habit with me. The other day I discovered, hours after I had alighted from an Egmore Station car, that my bulging purse was missing. The next morning No. 28 had traced my present diggings by means of my visiting card which bore a Lucknow address! Having duly verified the identity of the owner, he promptly produced my purse with the cash and cards, *all intact*. Conductor Vadivelu had been handed the lost property by one of a crowd of tram-passengers, and the former had observed my quitting his car at a certain street-corner. Hats off to these worthy citizens of Madras, the *gentlemen* of Madras!

Spinsters and Grannies, who maintain boarding-houses to keep the wolf from the door, seem to take in a good few of the wolves in sheep's clothing. At one of the houses for paying guests, a boarder disappeared at the end of a month's substantial feeding, but left what appeared to be a substantial legacy—a well-filled trunk. On the advice of the police, the trunk was opened after three months and was found to contain mud bricks. Another boarder had worked the jolly old confidence trick on the poor old soul. He had paid in advance for the first month, was awaiting receipt of a M. O. the second month, and, when he said his good-byes in the third month, he promised again, most unfaithfully, to pay up all arrears no sooner he received the expected M. O. A third ex-boarder drops in regularly for tea merely to assure 'Aunty' that his long-standing debt in three figures is going to be a thing of the past. He covers several miles in a brand new Five-Seater (acquired, they say, on the strength of a 'promise') just to tell the old lady, that a bank draft of several thousands is definitely on its way to his Bank. This particular 'Aunty', however, takes the hard knocks of life in a spirit of cheerful resignation. She tells me, with a merry twinkle in her weather eye, that most of her money is lying in fixed deposits; *permanently* fixed. Further, that these ex-boarders come at fixed intervals to have high tea by way of discharging the 'interest' due on those fixed deposits!

Pensive Percival

by Miss K. H. Acott

Reading Time • About 5 Minutes

PENSIVE Percival, at an unearthly hour of a summer morning, sat on a stile—not for any particular reason—except that he could not sleep and thought that a stile was, at the present moment, the best thing to sit on.

Elbows on knees, he was chewing a piece of grass and ruminating on this sad world of ours, trying to put his thoughts into words.

Yes, Percival wrote poetry—to the cows in the fields, to the pigs in their styes, to the goats leaping on the mountain sides. His poems were always sent back to him by unappreciative editors, but, nevertheless, Percival persisted with his trochees, iambii, metres and all the other necessary adjuncts of poetry.

"Ha!" he said at last, "I've got it!" And, lifting his eyes to the green leaves above his head, he recited with much feeling:

Life is short and full of trouble,
Ah! Woe is me!
I'm like a spent and bursted bubble.
Oh, woe is me!

The moth-eaten, once fierce old bull frisked his tail in the air, rolled his bleary eyes at this frog-voiced mortal and trotted off to the opposite side of the field, where he could chew his cud in peace.

Percival was not bad looking, but of late his expression had become mournful and funeral; his shoulders drooped, his feet were inclined to shuffle along the ground, and—well, in other words, he had been let down in love—and let down rather badly.

Dannia, the source of all his trouble, was a keen exponent of 'the body beautiful'—which meant physical exercise out in the open with a modicum of clothing. Percival objected to her showing so much of her divine form as she did, to any man other than himself, and he had spoken to her rather strongly—in verse.

"Oh Dannia! I object to your being seen
In nothing but panties and a vest;
It's enough to send any old top off his bean,
And hurts me like a knife in the chest.
"From this day on you must cease your morning
jerks,

Or I will turn you over my knee.
Your beauty should not be exposed to blase
turks,

But kept solely as a treat for me....."

And so on—and lots more.
Result—Percival received his conge and his verses became worse than before.

"No, that's all wet," he went on musing. "A spent bubble and a bursted bubble (if there be such)—clash. If a bubble is spent, it's burst. And anyway, that boulder of an editor will not understand my reason for adding the 'ed' to 'burst'—he don't know, and don't care a damn about the finer points of rhyme and rhythm. But why worry?" His face out-rivalled that of Dismal Desmond. "Deserted by Dannia; told I couldn't do exercises, that I can't write verses, that I'm not worth the salt I eat and that I'm all wet. Well, the only thing

for me to do is to get me to the pool in the wood and there drown my sorrows, and myself with them."

Came an interruption to his dismal thoughts—a ringing, joyous laugh, and the faint sound of twigs crackling under light, dancing feet. Dannia, his adored, his beloved, his shameless one—Dannia, who had turned him down flat—she was in that little wood, dancing, exercising, touching her toes without bending her knees.

Well, he'd show her!

Off came coat, shirt, pants, vest, shoes and socks—nothing to cover the superb youthful figure but little white underpants.

A brisk short run across the open to the wood, where the morning sun had only just started peeping through the trees, and so to the little pool—an ideal bathing spot, fitted up by Dannia with spring boards and diving boards.

A scream from a white, wet figure that was Dannia, a rush up the spring board, a perfect jack-knife dive into the cool water; the splash of the crawl as Percival swam for the edge—and Dannia.

"You—oh you! I didn't know you could dive and swim like that, Percival!"

"No? And you didn't know I could do this either, did you?"

He picked her up in his arms, sat down, turned her over his knees, and gave her a sound smacking. She struggled and screamed, but he didn't stop until he saw the white skin under her thin white bathing suit glowing red. Then he let her up.

"Oh! Oh! Oh! I—how dare you? I hate you! You beast. You cad!" and sobs of angry surprise choked her.

"I'm not a beast and not a cad—I'm just a pretty smooth fool that tries to write poetry—that can't exercise, can't do this and can't do that! Well, I've shown you how smooth I am, and what I can do. And now, if you'll say you're sorry for treating me as you have done, I'll forgive you and love you again—"

"You're a—a self-satisfied—low-down—er—oh! I detest you!"

"No, I'm not low down. But to-night there'll be a low-down moon, and I've bought a new low-down record for my gramophone, and I love you and want you to be all mine and nobody else's!"

And he enclosed her with his strong young arms, holding her gently at first, and then tighter and tighter as she made no effort to get away from him. And somehow or other, his lips found hers and clung in a long, long kiss.

"And," he softly murmured, "I'll show you that I can write poetry too." The song of the birds seemed to mingle with his voice as he recited:

"Out of the dark troubles of life
Into the light of love divine,
Dannia has promised to be my wife,
For ever and ever all mine....."

"Say 'Amen' darling!"
"Amen, Percival dear!"

The Girl with a Capital G

by The Silent Watcher

Illustrated by Varma

Reading Time • About 6 Minutes

1st April 1935!

It was my birthday. The sky was clear and the day, fine. (Sounds poetic, doesn't it?) The sun was shining as if he was paid to do it. I was congratulating myself on having completed twenty-six years of existence unaided. O Lord! And what an existence! How many ups and downs! I mean, no downs at all!

It is a curious thing that whenever a birthday comes along, except the person whose birthday it happens to be, very few people remember the occasion. And it was on account of this that a couple of weeks prior to the event, whenever I met friends, I made it a point to bring the topic into conversation as if by the merest accident.

When I met Janardan, I said, "Hallo, Janardan, you seem to be younger these days. How is that?"

"Younger? Why, I am twenty-five!"

"Twenty-five!" I ejaculated, "that means you are only one year younger than me. I am twenty-six, or rather I shall be in a couple of weeks. To be precise, the First of April is my birthday."

In this way friends, relatives, distant friends, distant relatives and even casual acquaintances were all given sufficient notices and reminders. It was therefore not my fault when I expected a heap of presents. A special postman would have to be engaged for extra duty, thought I.

It was therefore a disappointed self that waited for the postman and his heap of parcels. The morning delivery

brought nothing. The afternoon delivery brought two letters. One of these was from a relative who had sent me good wishes without a substantial present. You know in these days of depression a few rupees go a long way. These people who call themselves my relatives ought to be ashamed of themselves. The second letter was from Bangalore, from my uncle. Evidently he had forgotten that it was my birthday. Perhaps it was more convenient for him to have forgotten the fact. Any way the letter contained no reference to my birthday or any present. He said he was keeping good health and hoped the same with me. He had, he wrote, a surprise for me. It seemed he had married again and would be in Madras with my new aunt in a day or so.

Fancy my uncle marrying without the 'slightest warning! I began to think. Doctors say that thinking is very good for health. It stimulates the circulation of blood, and the red corpuscles are excited thereby. So I continued thinking.

Here was I, a young man of twenty-six, of good education, of average height and weight, of excellent health (due to thinking), a modest income, and yet unmarried. I had friends of the same age, of the same height, weight and educational qualifications who were married long ago. Why, some were even fathers, and here was I, twenty-six years from top to toe, one hundred and thirty pounds, still as unmarried as a new born babe. My uncle had married a second time, and I? Not even once. Dan Cupid, thy bow and arrow under repair? Shall I give you a revolver instead? A machine gun? A cannon?

No, sir, No! I am rong. As rong as the spelling of this word! Cupid's bow, (dart to be more poetic) was in excellent condition, and its aim was as sure as it is reputed to be. For on the very day on which I was thinking all these thoughts and thereby circulating the blood, I saw a girl! (A Girl with a capital G, Mr. Printer) Girl! (That's O.K.) The circumstances under which I saw the Girl were these. Having got fed up with these relations, I thought I ought to spend my birthday in enjoyment. A programme of refreshments and cinema. A good idea. I took a tram and reached Mount Road, and was standing there wondering whether I should go into this restaurant or that, when I saw the Girl, standing in front of a restaurant evidently waiting for somebody. I was about to cross the road and introduce myself to her and ask her if I could do anything for her, when a tram car came and stopped between her and me. I waited till it left. It left. I looked in the direction of the Girl, but she was nowhere to be seen. The road was there. The restaurant was there but THE GIRL had disappeared. I looked at the departing tram.

A taxi! Yes, a taxi. The taxi overtaking the tram took me to the next 'All cars stop here'. The tram containing the Girl came and stopped. I jumped in. Columbus might not have been so enthusiastic in his search for Americas as I was after the Girl. I found her. I could have found her in a bevy of Hollywood beauties. She was sitting on the end bench and in two seconds I was on the bench opposite her, my heart trying to jump out of my mouth. I tried to look away from her but could not. Her face was as beautiful as the Moon. Her eyes were sparkling like two stars.

Her hair was as black as the sky containing the moon and the two stars. Who says love at first sight is all humbug? I could not take away my eyes from her. The bullock-carts on the road, the beggars on the foot-path, the street-dogs and all the other sights of the City were not for my eyes. The tooting of the cars, the language of the jutkawallas and the other melodies of the road were not for my ears. I was in another world altogether, and in that world were only two human beings, the Girl and I. But I was soon jerked back to this world by the tram conductor bawling into my ear:

"Ticket please, saar."

"Royapuram," I said, and handed him a four-anna bit.

"But this is going to Mylapore," he cried.

"Then, Mylapore," I said.

I do not know what he thought of me. But I did not care. One cannot go on caring for tram conductors when there are other important things of life to consider.

The Girl got down at Luz Church. I did the same. She starting walking, and I followed, keeping a discreet distance between us. Jutkawallas shouted at me. Pedestrians into whom I bumped told me so many unpleasant things about myself which I didn't know before. But I heeded them not. I was engrossed. I saw only one object. It is quite likely that I might have accidentally knocked a couple of steam-rollers down! I don't know.

The Object, the Angel, the Girl finally left the main road and entered a compound. I followed mechanically. After a few steps she entered a house; and now having lost sight of her, it struck me that I was in the premises of a strange house with absolutely no authority for it. My presence there was unexplainable. I could not, if anyone asked me, say that I was after a Girl with a capital G. The fact that she had hair as black as the sky and eyes like stars would not have been a sufficient justification for my intrusion. Under any circumstances.

My thoughts were interrupted by the entrance of a jovial looking middle-aged man. Just behind him—and I confess it surprised me considerably—came my uncle, the Bangalorian—the newly-wed old sinner.

"Hallo, you young Devil!" he cried coming to me. "I was just going to telephone to you. I came from Bangalore this afternoon and—but I must introduce you both. This is my father-in-law,—the owner of this house,—this is my nephew. You will be able to see each other very often as you are both in Madras."

Just then the Girl came.

"—and this," continued my uncle, "is your aunt."

"Er-er-" I stammered. "Very glad to see you, but I have a very important engagement."

I sneaked away.

I reached my rooms and found a small parcel on my bed, evidently dropped from the window. I opened it. It contained a beautiful wrist watch. There was a small card with it, with the legend:

"WITH LOVE FROM YOUR UNCLE AND AUNT."



I followed, keeping a discreet distance between us.



Merry-Magus

I 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. **I**
Announcement and free character-reading coupon on page 48—Ed.

Bharadwaj N. (Hyderabad, Dn.) Though kind-hearted and ready to help everybody, are you not making many enemies and creating opponents to all your views? This is a peculiarity in you. It is unfortunate that distrust and ingratitude are the fruits of your labour. Of course, you are religious, but don't turn out to be a fanatic. Have you ever noticed that you have a strange influence, capable of subduing insane and nervous people? You are a successful debater. Don't become unscrupulous in achieving your aims. Beware of jaundice.

C. Ramachandriah. Hullo! Mr. Schemer! What is the scheme you have up your sleeve at present? Studying the science of life or discovering a novel way to make money? How are you to work the scheme successfully if you lack continuity of purpose? You yourself do not know what you want really. You are cold and hot at the same moment; love and hate the same person. Suppose I make you realise what is exactly needed for you, will you not be tired of it, and run in for something new and quite different? You believe you are truthful and honest but this opinion should be voiced by others. Take good care of your digestive organs.

S. Narasimhan (Calicut). Why do you require proof for everything? Due to this tendency you

are not able to develop the finer qualities in you—presentiments and psychic powers. Don't weigh things too much. It spoils even your family happiness. Be a sport. It is better you act according to your first impressions and decide everything without any hesitation. It makes you lose fine opportunities. You attach no value to money and so you are a successful speculator. Pains in the back and head and skin-diseases will worry you.

S. Vijayalaxmi (Mandapam Camp). My dear baby! I will be charmed to meet you! Are your mother and father able to understand you well? You laugh and weep at the same moment and they wonder what to do: you punish them severely by getting tired soon of everything they do to amuse you. You ask for things they cannot get easily. Your papa believes you will be jolly for ever as you are to-day. He does not know that tomorrow you are going to tax him by being a most naughty child. Don't be restless; ask your parents to take you round in the open air. Don't show up your mischief to you mother! Yes, don't show her; if she catches you, divert her attention and humour her by your pranks. Tell your mother—if you are able to—that you require only such things that will not affect your digestive organs.

Laxmi. Your *nom-de-plume* befits you well, as you are cheerful and

kindly. Are you not envied for your brilliance by others? Firmness and sincerity are your assets; but extreme pride is your failing. Why are you so self-conceited and rash? You create a lot of enemies thereby. Being independent, you hate to be under the restraint of others. Employ your brain and body actively. The depth of your feelings is seen only in action and not in expression. Your ambition helps you throughout your life. Pains in the head and ears will trouble you.

Mahendra Nath (Cawnpore). Don't place too much value on the opinions of the world. One cannot satisfy all. Desire for pleasure is a defect in you. Don't become an easy prey to cajolery. You arrive at conclusions only after great deliberation and analysis; which is good. Your speech and actions are rather emotional and sentimental than logical. It is good you are open to conviction. Have a check on your sex-nature. Diseases of the bladder will afflict you.

Nathan (Gudiyattam). First of all are you able to understand what you want to achieve definitely in your life? Decide it first and then work for it. Be steady and constant. Restlessness will spoil your aims. Oscillation between doubt and belief makes you restless. Don't be over argumentative. You have the peculiar knack of making little even of

Replies

great things by your wit. Don't be a rolling stone, fix your ambition and work to attain it. You may love dearly but constancy is not your strong point. You are to prosper by dint of work. Be warned against nervous diseases.

T. K. Balasubramanian (Tirupattur). Why are you spending so much? Is it to show your exaggerated contempt for parsimony? Conservative to the core, you are not at all fit to keep company with. Don't be selfish. You are likely to go out of the way to get your things done. Check your anger and jealousy; the result of this temperament will be deplorable. Don't be lawless in your family affairs. It is bad always to find fault with others. Are you perfect? You are likely to become peevish due to this tendency. See that your blood is always pure and does not become impure.

N. R. S. Manian (Tirupattur). Is not your aim in life to serve others? It is good. Why do you feel the responsibility too much? It makes you uneasy. Do your mite and everything will get done in its own course. Be frugal, but turn not to be a miser. You understand well, but is it not difficult for you to make others understand you? Endurance and perseverance are needed to make you successful. Don't lose control of yourself, it is due to the high-strung nerves. Improve, therefore, your nervous system. Keep cheerful and have constant change of climates. These are the good remedies for your weakness.

Vithal Hari Limaye (Kolhapur). Why are you so unsteady in all your

actions and words. Opposite feelings are drawing you in different directions. You love and hate; you are charitable as well as miserly and you want to do two kinds of work at the same moment. Try to have a definite idea in your mind and work. Though not idle, you feel restless. Don't depend on luck; work and work hard to prosper. Are you not able to understand the mind of others and to act accordingly? You are not physically strong and are liable to nervous debility.

Goverdan (Rawalpindi). You are ambitious to attain a high position life. But how are you to attain it if you are so unsettled in your mind? Why do you feel that you are alone and that the rest of the world is antagonistic? Don't worry about your future, especially in money matters. You know your capabilities; but how is the public to realise it unless you demonstrate them? Think twice before you promise, as you are liable to promise things beyond your power. Avoid all intoxicants and don't indulge too much in pleasures of society. It is better you work for others than do anything independently. Liver complaints and impurity of blood will affect you.

G. S. Kora (Bagalkot). Why are you so tired of everything too soon? Do not try to solve all problems through the medium of argument. Certain things are beyond the senses and you will have to accept them. You are restless; do you know why? You have no fixed idea of what to do; you change your work and opinion too often. Prosperity to you is only by hard work. Your mind is inclined towards science. What is the new idea now

evolving in your brain to earn money. Beware of nervous diseases.

M. Shanker (Colombo). Though you have no originality, you are able to store up a lot of information about different subjects by deep study. You are liberal and charitable. Are you not susceptible to the magnetism of others? Don't stand aside; have confidence in yourself, come forward and claim your dues. Are you not fond of travel and change? It is a pity every moment has a separate existence for you; you will not be the same next moment what you are at this moment. Be steady and ambitious. Hesitation spoils all your good chances. Don't be inconsiderate in your family matters; it will spoil the peacefulness of the family. Rheumatism will worry you.

B.A. Ramaswamy Setty (Bangalore City). Yes, you are firm, sincere, sympathetic, noble and all that, but all these qualities are outraged by your extreme haughtiness. Have you not found out that due to this trait you are often unnecessarily wounded in your feelings? Your ambition is helped by your determination. Be careful of your associates! You are liable to misplace your affections and the result will be degradation. Don't be so rash. Certainly you will feel lonely if your instincts are not sociable. Don't be inactive. Beware of heart disease and fainting fits.

Aquil. Your motto is 'honesty is the best policy'. Do you know there is the other side to it? It makes you often misunderstood by others on account of your frankness and creates a good lot of enemies. You hate

work of daily routine and to be under the restraint of others. It is good you are self-reliant and believe in self-help only. You argue out everything, blind faith has no thing to do with you. It is bad that if you are not allowed the lead in every undertaking, you should lose interest in that work. Do not the others consider you cold, though in your heart of hearts you feel much for the sufferings of others?

★

Md. Ali. You are still a young boy and it is time for you to overcome that oversensitiveness in you and develop the will-power. You are impulsive but you should properly cultivate it on good lines. You are liable to be dogmatic in your views on account of this impulsiveness; don't give place to that tendency, but listen to reason. Don't get into bad company. Associations will have a great effect on your moral and mental development. Wait not to be 'awakened'; wake up yourself and work. Disorders of the stomach will worry you.

★

Ismail. Steadiness and industriousness will make good the deficiency in originality in you. It is bad to be selfish. Self-possession and self-reliance, combined with wit, make you a success. Don't go to extremes; you can be honest as well as dishonest. Your endeavour should bring you success. Try for peace in your family; lack of harmony and annoyance will affect you physically and mentally. Are you not extremely sensitive to your surroundings? Guard yourself against derangement of intestines and constipation.

★

C. R. Chari (Conjeevaram). Though intelligent and endowed with good grasping power you are impulsive. Be social, ix with good society, don't be engrossed in your own thoughts and feelings; else you will become melancholy. Don't try to probe into the mysteries of the world. You are ambitious, but you undervalue your individuality; it is an impediment to your achievements. Don't give room for idleness. It will make you lose

good opportunities. Open air is more congenial to your health.

★

E. E. L. Why are you so secretive? You fear public censure, don't you? Don't be carried away by praises. Have a check on your temper and jealousy and do not jump to conclusions. Don't allow selfishness to gain the upper hand over you. You are an autocrat in your home affairs. But the strange thing is, you have so much influence over the opposite sex that your lovelessness is forgiven and sympathy is the return. Don't be revengeful—that is bad in life—it will make you quarrelsome. If you are not licentious, your health will be good.

★

M. Mathrubutham. What is the latest scheme in your mind? To become proficient in medicine or literature? You are a deep student. Are you not ambitious to gain social position? But to achieve that you should be constant and stick to one thing. You should not get tired of a thing or position as soon as it is got. That is your nature. Are you not a puzzle in yourself? You love passionately, but you are not constant. If you want to succeed in life, cultivate patience and steadiness; don't become idle and ease-loving. Beware of sore throats and avoid over-feeding.

★

T. R. Narayanan (Kattampatti). Do you know Dr. Annie Besant was born on 1st October? And so, can you not become a devout Theosophist? That instinct is in you. You can be so if mundane things do not attract you much and if you do not demand exact proof of even intangible matters. Gifted with intuition and foresight, you will be at your best if you act on your first impressions. Don't spy on the shortcomings of others. Have a check on your selfishness. Don't depend on luck, work hard and persevere. You are liable to suffer from nervous diseases.

★

Parijatak (Coimbatore). No! I am not going to interfere with your plans

nor dare I criticise you. You will be simply up against me in no time. Do things according to your own way. Don't be impulsive, it makes you lacking in self-control and you will have to regret what you have said or done in the heat of the moment. Be tactful, as without it you simply make enemies. Why are you making a mountain of a molehill? You plan well but how are you going to execute it, my friend, if you are so lacking in steadiness and perseverance? Be careful about your throat and nasal cavities.

★

G. Kasthuri (Ongole). You hesitate to come forward and stand an open test with all you ambition to become great? Are you not worrying yourself about your future? Don't be rash in your promises. You are likely to lag behind when keeping it and you will then be misunderstood to be a miser when in reality you are not. Don't be influenced by false friends, you will become a victim of deceitful schemers. You are likely to get complaints of the liver.

★

V. Seshan. Do you not feel a bit excited always? Don't be jealous, it makes you do things rashly without considering the pros and cons. Though good-natured and generous you are spasmodic in your actions. You cannot be easily understood and that is why you will be unhappy in domestic life. You are courageous but you wound the feelings of others by your audacious acts. Don't be so overbearing and unreasonable; try to understand the feelings of others. You are liable to attacks of apoplexy and skin diseases.

★

K. S. Panchapakesan (Devakottai). Are you not making a muddle of your plans if interfered with by others? Don't be so tactless and outspoken. Let your ambition be supported by perseverance, will-power and caution. You are liable to be flattered. Don't become a victim to it, you will then become very unreasonable and arrogant. Be restrained in that direction. Unless you create proper understanding,

your craving for love and affection is futile. Are you not suffering from headache and insomnia?

★

Devil's Due (Purneah). You are not a devil so far as generosity and magnanimity are concerned but you are a devil where the feelings of others are concerned. You are too daring even in love matters. Are you not extremely independent and a bit unreasonable? As a matter of fact, you do not want to understand others. What is your idea about a prize-fight? You like it immensely, don't you? Don't be tyrannical when you try to be a disciplinarian. You are not a success in your dealings with the opposite sex. Be a sport. Lead a pure life if you want peaceful life. Don't overwork your brains.

★

M. Ameenuddin. (Nellore) Don't waste your energy in speculation and gambling; you are not a success in that line. Divert that energy towards business. Be industrious and work hard but depend not on luck. What if, you are not understood, don't be depressed and feel melancholy on that account; develop will-power to carry on till you reach the goal. Why are you so superstitious and timid? Be brisk and avoid laziness. Are you not of a romantic temperament? You are not demonstrative of your affections. You are inclined towards gastric troubles and diarrhoea.

★

Ch. Mohd Ahmad. Are you not loving life in spite of all its miseries? You are at peace with yourself and with all the rest of the world. You are generous to a fault and pardon unrestrictedly other's failings. Decide all questions for yourself, don't have too much consultations with others, as you are liable to be misled. It would be good if you are not too outspoken; it forewarns your enemies. Haste and bad temper put you in awkward situations, don't they? Choose good surroundings and companions. First of all, don't sneeze early, it will be a mistake. Your nose troubles will afflict you.

Kausik. Of course it is good to be courageous and determined, but at the same time your impulsiveness shows your intentions too plainly and creates antagonism and opposition. Have your own way. You will be better then, than acting under the direction of others. The fault is you are liable to go to extremes and being exhausted you fly off at a tangent. You have good power of concentration and are highly principled. I will be very sorry for the man who deceives you. Don't become selfish and snobbish. Boils, carbuncles and skin troubles will worry you.

★

K. Srikantiah (Basavangudi). Have control over yourself. If you are going to be so sensitive at this young age what are you going to do in later years in your manhood. Overcome that sensitiveness and develop sufficient will-power. Don't be over argumentative. It is good to be frugal without being a miser, but don't turn to be tricky in money dealings. You want to serve for the public good, is it not? Don't wait for an opportunity or lose it when it presents. If you are not careful you will suffer from bladder and kidney troubles.

★

Manonmani (Walajabad). You care more for brain work and development than physique. You cannot realise your ambition if you are going to be so sensitive and lack self-confidence. Come forward and take your credit. Don't go back on your undertaking; if you do, you will be misunderstood by others. Why do you imagine that others are against you? You will become melancholy. Are you not conservative in your feelings? Your arguments are dexterous but impulsive. Be warned against bad companions; you are very susceptible to your associations. Disorder of the stomach will worry you.

★

Merry Villager (Nathapettai). Do you know Grace Darling was born on a 24th November? You are in urgent need of good company. Are you a 'merry villager' by yourself or are you flattered to be so? Be careful,

the adaptability of your temperament will capsize you at any moment, due to the influence of evil minds. While in merry mood, don't postpone things. Procrastination is your born enemy. Is it not that you always want to have an upper hand in the guidance of your family. Have it by all means, but don't gain it by tyranny, but by kindness and love. If you want your health to be blameless, don't be licentious.

★

John Stephen Caleb (Rawalpindi). Yes! You delight in discussing religious matters and ceremonies, but where is veneration! Why do you doubt others? Don't incite others to riot in unpopular causes while you yourself do not want to be in the front. You are quick in your intuition but what is the use if you lack self-confidence and are easily discouraged! Are you not sacrificing yourself to home interests? Do not others consider you of a queer nature, as your idea of duty, love and ideal are so unlike others. Don't be pondering over things. This tendency will ruin your health. Disorder of the stomach rheumatism are likely to worry you.

★

Love. You are amorous by nature, but not vicious. Extreme pride is your weak point. Are you not fond of show? It is good you have determination and tenacity of purpose in anything you do but the pity is you think yours is the only right way and resent any interference from others. Don't be so spasmodic in your feelings. How can there be affection and sympathy if you are not able to create proper discernment in family affairs? You are prone to illness and blood diseases.

★

Worried. Certainly you will be worried in your home-life unless you are an accommodating sport. You are inclined towards material things. Don't you consider it a waste of time to discuss matters because they are of no material utility. Don't spy on the weakness of others and take advantage of it. Don't size up matters too much; you are courting disillusion and disappointment. You can speculate well. Don't be exacting



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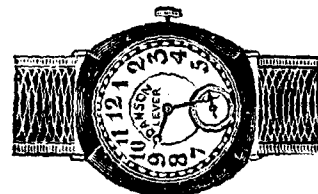
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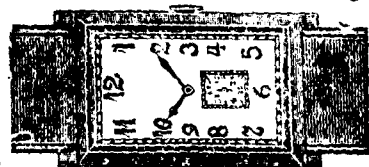
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HOW TO WIN

Below you will find 7 incomplete words and in each of them, only one letter is missing, and is marked by a dash. Against each word there is a clue. What all you have to do is to substitute one letter for each dash to get the corresponding meanings. For example, No 1. is CABIN. 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	CAB—N	Small house	5	CHA—E	Pursue
2	CE—SE	Stop	6	COS—	Snug
3	CAB—	Anxiety	7	CL—GGY	Sticky
4	CL—FT	Crack			

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 21st 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,

THE PARAMOUNT PUZZLES, P. O. WASHERMANPET, MADRAS

MISSING LETTERS No. 160:—1. SPORT. 2. SALT. 3. SINGLY. 4. SAUNT. 5. SIKKAR. 6. SKIP. 7. SLING. The prize of Rs. 450 has been equally shared by the following 26 All-correct competitors, each getting Rs. 17-5-0:—Messrs. 1. H. N. Arunachalam, Bangalore; 2. R. Swaminathan, Thiruvanna-malai; 3-4. V. Viswanathan, Arsikere; 5. N. K. Singh, Patna; 6. R. Hari Dass, Bezwada; 7-10. B. K. Mukherjee, Ambala Cantt.; 11-12. M. B. Srinivasan, Bangalore; 13. A. V. Narasimha Row Naidu, Peddapuram; 14-16. B. R. Sabhabhushan, Chintadripet; 17. R. Venkata Dass, Madras; 18-20. N. R. Ghose, Calcutta; 21-23. K. Nagarathnam, Alapakam; 24. N. Jagannathan, Madras; 25. B. R. Sindhe, Bakerganj; 26. Sudhrindranath Sen, Karachi.

Rs. 25 has been equally shared by the first 5 winners, each getting Rs. 5 extra. The prize of Rs. 25 for the sender of largest number of entries, has been awarded to Mr. B. K. Mukherjee, Ambala Cantt. for sending 256 entries. All prizes are remitted. Rescrutiny fee Re. 1.

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(Ref:—Chambers XX Century Dictionary without bracketed or hidden words)

Last date for Posting Entries: 16th September, 1935.

Results on 26th September, 1935.

HOW TO SLOVE? Below is given Six Puzzle Words each containing ONE misprinted letter. Replace the misprinted letter by a correct letter to get the name of a Bird or an Animal. For example the Solution for No. 1 is MONA. Similarly Solve the others. No shuffling of the letters is necessary as they are given in correct order.

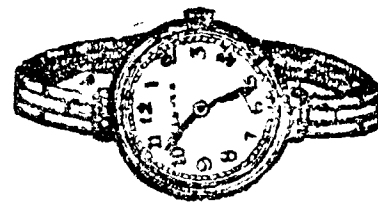
- | | | |
|---------|---------|---------|
| 1. MONA | 3. KITI | 5. SWAG |
| 2. LACK | 4. LAMP | 6. CUCK |

RULES AND CONDITIONS:—An Entrance fee of Rupee ONE per entry or Rs. TWO for every THREE entries is payable by M.O. or Postal orders. M.O. receipts must be enclosed with the entries. Any number of entries may be submitted with the requisite fee. Entries without proper fees will be disqualified. The prize of Rs. 1,000 will be awarded to the competitor who sends in an all-correct solution and which agrees with the Competition Manager's Sealed Key-Solution. Failing an all-correct solution the prize will be awarded to the nearest correct entry. In case of ties it will be divided. The decision of the manager in all matters relating to the competition is absolutely final and legally binding, and is an express condition of entry. Entries to be sent on plain paper along with one anna by stamps or extra with the entry fee for the results. No correspondence can be entered into or interviews granted.

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