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The MERRY MAGAZINE



2189

Vol. III Madras, 21st December, '35 No. 51

- Conrad -
Dewan Bahadur
K. S. R. Sastri

Mrs. Kamal
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Old Soldier Jir



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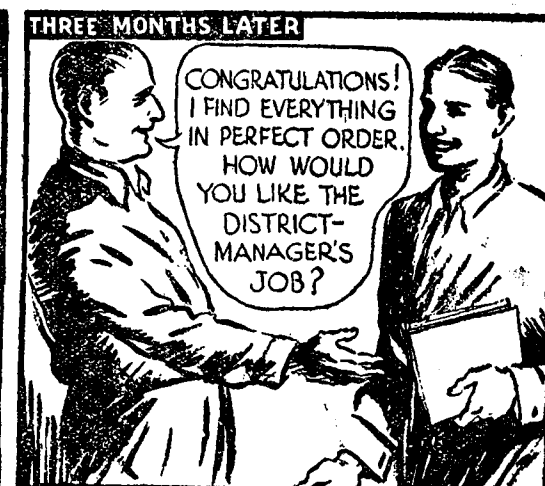
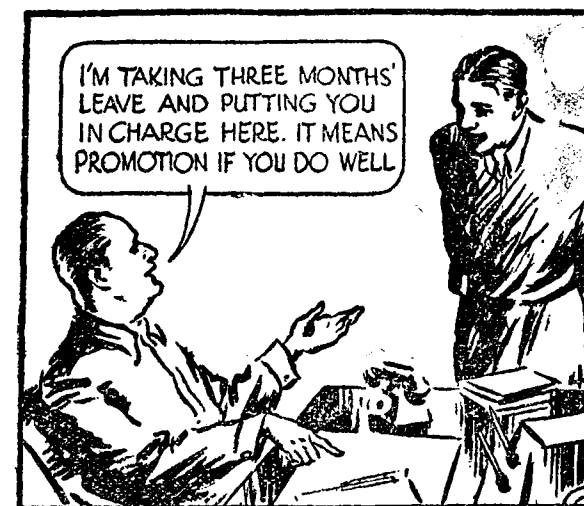
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Next Week: The River Demon—by Joyfull



Embusque

The Satsuma Vases

There is an Indian saying, that those who dig pits for others are themselves apt to fall in them. This apophthegm has a particular application to aunts and wedding presents.

John A. Henry

Keep These Resolutions

New Year ones, of course.

Taurus

The Missing Miss

Detective Sam (short for Ramasamy) loosens the lever of his extraordinary brain, and the working of his cerebral machinery is almost audible.

A. A. Roland

Best Laid Plans

If you are killing the fatted calf for Uncle, keep the kiddies out of the scenario.

C. H. Thakore

For Better Or For Worse

A yarn out of an advertisement. Shows how clever fellows get even with Editors.

SPARKS FROM OUR ANVIL

Expatriating upon the latest peace proposals, Mr. Eden says that they are suggestions which, it was hoped, would make possible a beginning of negotiations.

Ultimately, no doubt, they will see the end of the Negus!

* * *

He further says that they merely provide for an exchange of territory between Italy and Abyssinia.

And, as we all know, exchange is no robbery!

* * *

Sir Herbert Samuel, the Liberal leader, says that Sir Samuel Hoare has committed the first grave error of his career as Foreign Secretary.

We shan't be surprised if he is out to excel his record as India Secretary.

* * *

Reuter reports that while skating, Sir Samuel Hoare had a slight accident, and broke his nose.

It is hoped however that he will save his face over the peace proposals.

* * *

It is reported that Sgr. Mussolini is dissatisfied with the peace-terms, but would accept them with large reservations.

That would be accepting them in the spirit in which they are offered!

Commenting on the ill-success of women who stood for Parliament, a writer says that they have not proved themselves the equal of men in dealing with the issues to be settled in Parliament.

But they are as good as ever in settling them elsewhere!

* * *

A writer of Beauty Notes from Hollywood says that stars need once every three months at least a permanent wave.

An example of transferred epithet;—the need, not the wave, is permanent.

Says Mr. Macartney: "To-day and in Indian cricket generally there is too much pad-playing."

And too little of bat-play.

* * *

Commenting on Pandit Jawaharlal's challenge to the Bengal Government, English papers urge that the charge should either be proved or withdrawn.

A third course is possible: it may be explained away!

* * *

The B. B. C. announces a broadcast by Lord Zetland to school-children, giving a 'simple exposition of the Government of India Act in relation to the peoples of India.'

It should read, we think, 'Pupils of Britain.'

Speaking of Moghul influence on Indian culture, Lord Zetland is reported to have said that Sikhism was born from the ideals of Hindus and the Moslems.

This does not throw light upon the parentage of Schism from which we are suffering.

* * *

A meeting of the Justice Party held recently resolved to expunge the proceedings of the meeting held in December 1934.

We now look forward to the Party throwing up the sponge in the near future.

* * *

Welcoming the rapprochement between Bobbili and Chettinad, the *Mail* exhorts the Party to publish a confession of its political faith.

We agree, specially as it would be good for its soul.

* * *

It was stated in the course of the Party meeting that the Kumarrarajah of Chettinad was a valuable member of the Party.

We knew that he was always valued very highly!

* * *

A sports item says that 'Abyssinians' from Bihar beat Calcutta at Polo.

We are however more concerned with Abyssinians in Abyssinia!

'Perfide Albion!'

This was one of the charges levelled against Britain during the last Great War, and has a certain historical justification, when it is considered in the light of the traditional rivalry between France and England. Post-war Europe has seen the emergence of an alliance between them which is not only essentially incompatible, but which is directly responsible for much of the present maladjustment of political relations in Europe. The French have always prided themselves on being realists in politics; and French diplomacy has always been marked by candour, bordering almost on cynicism. Britain on the other hand suffers from a fixation of conscience which may be traced to the intensity of her religio-political struggles. She has therefore excelled all other nations in the enunciation of political principles breathing magnanimity of purpose and informed by noble temper. But when it comes down to brass-tacks, she has ever shown a capacity for adjustment which while damaging her high moral pretensions, leaves her in other respects stronger than ever. It is this undependability in her character that has given her an unenviable reputation abroad. The course of diplomacy in relation to the Italo-Abyssinian conflict brings out this truth with painful vividness. It will be remembered that the recent elections were fought ostensibly on the issue of support to the League, security for a league-member, and reprobation of the aggressor. It was fondly hoped that the League deriving its strength from the collaboration of England and France would show Mussolini his place, and vindicate those principles which are essential to collective security. But there were many astute people who distrusted the good intentions of the British Government; and Mr. Lloyd George gave pungent expression to that distrust when he declared that Britain was involved in a conspiracy to 'sell Abyssinia to Italy on the cheap.' The sanctions were a blind to gull the gullible; for at the psychological moment when they were to have been extended and made effective, the world is staggered by the publication of

'peace-terms' which give international approval to one of the most shameless acts of rapacity in modern times. Even Conservative supporters are said to be horrified at these proposals; but they are nevertheless a clear indication of which way the wind is blowing. Britain once again stands before the world, unmasked; but her resources are still so great, that she has no fear of being discredited or disgraced; for she is in excellent company.

Many theories are being put forward to explain this melancholy back-sliding of England. It is of course still possible that the whole thing is disowned or withdrawn, by the embarrassed authors. If however they should form the 'basis' of a settlement, it can only mean one thing. Mussolini's bluff will have carried the day! It is said that the whole trouble arose over the proposed oil-embargo. Mussolini is said to have declared that he would construe it as an act of war against the powers applying it. Incidentally, it shows how the embargo in regard to the other commodities is a sham; for apparently, Italy is not inconvenienced by them. But not so with oil. Hence the ultimatum. France is not prepared to fight Italy; England cannot afford to fight anybody alone! In the circumstances, discretion was emphatically the better part of valour. It is true that Abyssinia is betrayed; but it is a minor detail. The European caravan must pass on; and after all, the lot of Abyssinia will not be worse than that of other hapless countries which have fallen a prey to the benefits of civilisation. Italy played her cards well and there is nothing else to do but get out of this mess with the best face possible. If there should be any settlement of this dispute on the lines suggested, it will pave the way for other troubles not visualised in the present situation. The under-dogs of Europe will bide their time, and seize their day when opportunity arises. People will perhaps still talk of the League, but the stage will be feverishly prepared for another conflagration in the next two years. A cheerful prospect for the idealist and the pacifist!

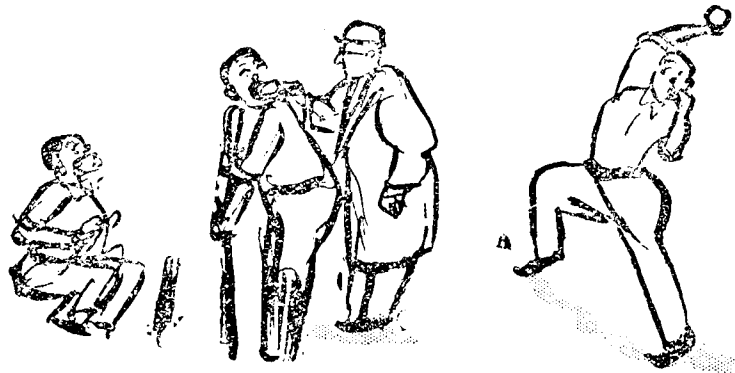
The Reason!



Boss: Why do you want an increment?

Cashier: Because, sir, I have committed bigamy; I have now two wives.

The March of Events



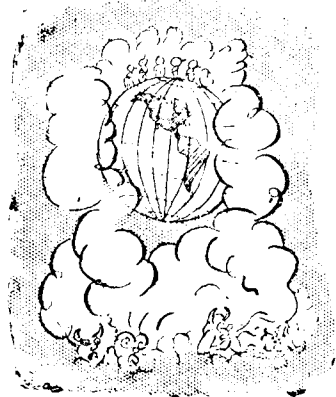
December 8th:

Writing on the Allahabad fixture between the Aussies and the United Provinces, J. Ellis of the visiting team says: "Today's game took the form of a picnic-match." Yes, it was a picnic, and a very pleasant one, too. I enjoyed it very much. They played the match with their pockets stuffed with lunch. They ate as they played. Poor fellows, the batsmen with both hands clutching the willow could not eat. So the umpires fed them. In the heat of the game Jack Ryder bowled a bun instead of the ball. The batsman missed it and the bun landed on the nose of the wicket-keeper. The wicket-keeper with great presence of mind opened his mouth. The bun disappeared. It was acclaimed by the spectators as a brilliant catch. We ought to have a few more picnic matches like that.

★

December 9th: Poet Noguchi of Japan let off a few bright sayings the other day at the Benares Hindu University. It seems, as a boy he asked the question (presumably everybody he met): "What is the sky?" Today at the age of over sixty, his question still remains unanswered! Any educated man would tell the Poet that the sky is a void where good people like Churchill, Kipling, Hoare and their ilk live as angels

after they die. Also the sky is a useful place to practise parachute jumping and for Professor Picard to go up in gondolas. If there were no sky, what about the fireworks, especially of the up-going kind? And finally where would all the



cigarette, cigar and beedi smoke go? If it cannot go up, it will go down—that is, to Hell. All the poor devils there would be choked, and Marie Corelli would be forced to write another volume of Sorrows of Satan.

Poet Noguchi says unblushingly that all he learnt after heavy experience through fifty years, is but one word—"Silence"!

What a dense old gentleman he must be. I, who am not at all a poet, know quite a few words. Even Ras Gugsu knows two words—"Good Night". I always had a suspicion that there was something fishy about poets.

December 10th: Some few years ago an anonymous writer (a disappointed girl probably) called the British Parliament the charnel-house of all romance. Outraged Cupid has come out with a wallop. Pola Negri, the Polish Film Star, once married to Prince Serge Mdivani, says she is to marry an ex-member of Parliament. He is older than herself in years, but just her age in spirit and outlook. She doesn't disclose the man's name. But when she does disclose the name, she says, it will be a surprise.

That 'ex' is rather misleading, because all 'exs' are eligible for re-election, unless they have gone dotty.

I wonder who the lucky chap is. It can't be Baldwin—horrible thought! Can it be Macdonald by any chance? Not likely, because he has not yet refused to marry me. Anthony Eden is out of the question. Lloyd George is a he-man all right, but he is a bit short on inches. Whoever the lucky man, I wish him polycoloured happiness. I know how hard it is to get a film-star look favourably on you. I tried desperately to marry one, but not one would have me. I suppose I haven't got a film-face.

★

December 11th: A Brahmin writes to the *Madras Mail* deplored the sorry state of his clan thus: "We (Brahmins) should retrace our steps, beg pardon of our masters—I mean the Government—and once again become the proud, the formidable, and the capable servants of the British Raj!"

See that mark of exclamation? The man is lost in admiration at the solution he is prescribing for the ills of his friends. I like the

Brahmins, their cute little ways. Let them by all means become once again the formidable servants of the British Raj. It is of little moment to me whether Willingdon is the Viceroy, or Panchapagesa Thirunarayana Thirunakshatra Ayer. All I want is that the faery pageantry of the Viceregal Lodge should be maintained unbroken in a Brahmin setting. When they become the formidable servants of the British Raj, I would advise them to introduce some long needed reforms in our scheme of things.

All people attending Viceregal parties should be directed to wear dhoti and turban in the Madras manner. A Madras so dressed is a thing of beauty. All Government offices should be washed with water every Friday morning and every servant of the state should be given a daily shave and a bi-weekly oil-bath, free. Ganges water should be supplied free to all the formidable servants, so that they may wash away the pollution resulting from their necessary contract with the un-Brahminical cadre of the services. Cow-dung should be used extensively for plastering the floors of all Government offices, including of course the Viceregal Lodge, if the Viceroy happens to be a formidable servant. The cow-dung is important, because it gives an old-world touch to things, and reminds us of our glorious culture.

★

December 12th: "The Capitalist and the Zamindar should disappear." That is what Mr. Dinkar Mehta said at Ellore. But where the hell are they to disappear? I have an open mind on most questions, Zamindars, Capitalists and Companionate Marriage, for instance. If and when the Socialists become our bosses, the Zamindars and Capitalists can come to me as a last resort, as storm-battered ships into a haven of rest and refuge. But they must bring their capital with them. Otherwise, how am I to know they are Capitalists? Crooks may come to me for help, passing themselves off as persecuted Zamindars and

Capitalists. That won't do at all, because crooks can look like capitalists and vice versa.

★

December 13th: Today the Italian Senate declared unshakable confidence in Sgr. Mussolini.

Foreign correspondents were in full strength in the press gallery. One cheeky Yankee correspondent snorted—a sceptical snort. A senator stood up, very much red in the face, and said: "What's that?" The cheeky Yankee said: "I don't believe that unshakable dope, that's all." The senator ran his eyes over his brother senators in an enquiring sort of



way. Fifty senators nodded their heads. They rose in a body and approached the Yankee. The original senator said, "We will prove that our faith in Mussolini is unshakable."

"How?"

"Here we are, fifty senators. Shaka each of us, and flasha da result to da world like an honesta pressman."

"That's a swell idea!" said the American. He shook the senators, devoting ten seconds so each. At

the end of the test he looked shame-faced and thoroughly licked. He shook them pretty hard. The faith of the senators clung like the very ducce to the lunches in their tummies and couldn't be shaken off. All that the irreverent Yankee could produce by shaking the senators was a loud 'glug-glug' sound, not at all musical, inside them. He apologised handsomely and stood drinks all round.

★

December 14th: After a twelvemonth of regrettable differences, the Rajah of Bobbili and the Kumararajah of Chettinad shook hands over a new bond of friendship. Sir Mohammed Usman hovered above them like a plump angel, blessing the reunion. I wanted to garland the Rajah and Kumararajah; so I ran to the flower bazar to buy a couple of rose garlands. It is funny, all the flower-girls of Madras are over fifty years of age. It may be an unreasonable prejudice, I don't know, but I could never reconcile flowers and fifty-year old girls. I came away in disgust. But when I came back to Fort St. George to kiss my hand at least to the reconciled worthies, imagine my astonishment at seeing a rain of flowers over the two noblemen falling from unseen clouds. That, I am told, is the way gods behave when they are pleased with people down below. My heart almost burst at the touching sight. I sang a hallelujah, at which a few flowers fell upon me!



Auntie Replies

"After going through the latest issue of the *Merry Magazine*, I came to the conclusion that you are very careless in replying to your nephews and nieces. Some weeks ago I addressed a question to you and duly received a typewritten reply. I named myself 'Unbearable'. In the last issue I found the reply under the name 'Umbrella'. Is it the mistake of the compositor, or yours? If it is yours, I think you ought to apologise to me. If it is the compositor's, I think he should be dealt with severely. In future I hope you will not commit such mistakes. I await your reply in this matter."—(Connoisseur, Madras).

Dear Nephew,

You should have seen Uncle Ghastly's face when he read your complaint! "The big bully!" he muttered. "Go on, Auntie, give it to him hot and strong! Think up something really scathing, and ask the Editor to print it in his biggest type—Admiral's letter size, if possible!"

Auntie smiled, and adjusted her patent shock-absorber. This convenient gadget is what Auntie wears when subscribers come along offering kicks instead of half-pence.

In some offices they have a Complaints Editor to take the shocks. He is a champion wrestler, and wears a kind of military uniform, covered with buttons. Every time he takes a deep breath, all the buttons fly off. Anyone who has a grievance is introduced to him, and he takes a deep breath, and that is the end of the matter.

Auntie and the compositor share the guilt of having changed your name to 'Umbrella'. We thought 'Unbearable' too significant a title. Never mind, dear boy. If you insist that you are Unbearable, it is all right with Auntie.

I am sending you a gilt-edged apology printed on the finest vellum—but not this week. As for the compositor, the wretched fellow is heavily chained, and confined in the basement. We are going to blow him from a gun when we have time.

Thank you for your other interesting letters, dear boy; and don't shoot the lady at the piano—she is doing her best.

Yours sincerely,
AUNTIE.

★

"I saw an advertisement recently, 'Soldiers and sailors in uniform admitted at ladies' rates'. What do the words imply? Does it mean that soldiers and sailors are ladies? If not, why should they be privileged?"—*Enquirer*.

Dear Nephew,

It is a custom in most countries, all over the world, to admit soldiers and sailors to theatres at half-rates. The reason is that these men, being homeless strangers, are good patrons of places of amusement. They are in units numbering several hundreds, and thus form a valuable block of regular patrons. They are badly paid, and could not attend regularly unless they were given a concession. It is simply good business for the proprietor.

Ladies' rates are found nowhere but in India. Auntie fears that the custom originated by a process of reasoning not very complimentary to her sex! Now-a-days, however, it is a useful means of encouraging the educative influence of the cinema among our shy womenfolk. Not that the films always are educative!

Yours sincerely,
AUNTIE.

Fun For All



Clerk: I have received a letter from a firm asking for a reference for that man Brown who used to work here.

Manager: Tell them that he is a rogue and a thief, and that anything he knows he learnt from us.

* * * * *

"My motto is 'Think before you speak'."

"You must find it very difficult, well nigh impossible, to carry on a conversation."

* * * * *

Member of Anti-Gambling League: I will not say I have never gambled. I once bought a ticket in a raffle for my wife.

Member of Audience: So, that's how you got her, is it?

* * * * *

Diner-to-be: Do you serve crabs here?

Waiter: We serve anyone, sir!

* * * * *

At a public dinner, the chairman hoped that, "The visitors will carry away with them some very interesting souvenirs of their presence this evening."

It may have been a coincidence, but simulataneously the waiters went round and carefully collected all the spoons of the coffee cups.

* * * * *

An Italian, whose fruit-barrow stood in a crowded street, grew annoyed at the way people continually handled his wares, pinching and mauling them. After a while, he put a notice upon a large card. It read: "If you must pincha da fruit, pincha da coco-nut."

* * * * *

Dr. Swagger and Miss Simple were at dinner.

"So you write poems, doctor?" she asked.

"A little, just to kill time," he replied.

"Why," asked the lady, "have you no patients?"

* * * * *

A notice outside the country inn said: "All cakes our own make. Clubs supplied."

A man who was taking tea in the restaurant called the waitress to him and asked if the notice were a true one.

"Certainly, sir," replied the girl.

"Then," said the man, as he struggled with a cake, "you might bring me one of your clubs."

* * * * *

"A nice ale, please."

"Pale?"

"No; a glass will do."

* * * * *

Lady (to tramp): "Did you notice that pile of wood in the yard?"

"Yes'm, I seen it."

"You should mind your grammar. You mean you saw it."

"No'm. You saw me see it, but you ain't see me saw it."

* * * * *

Unwanted Caller: Can I see the manager, please?

Office Boy: He's out.

U C: Can I see the under-manager, then?

O B: He's out.

U C: Very well, I'll just wait by the fire.

O B: It's out, too.

* * * * *

"What's the formula for water, Jones?" asked the science master.

"H-I-J-K-L-M-N-O," spelt out the boy.

"What's that!" cried the master.

The boy looked at him in obvious surprise and slowly repeated the letters.

"What on earth are you driving at? Who gave you that idea?"

"You, sir," was the reply; "you said yesterday it was H to O."

XMAS Double Number

By William

Reading Time • About 3 Minutes

Christmas comes but once a ye—ar.
When it does they give us be—er.
Beer, beer, glorious bee—er.
Pour it in your mouth
And it comes out your ear—r.

THAT's spoiling it by a Scotch accent. Scotchmen don't drink beer unless it's free; nor do they celebrate Christmas; at least not officially. They do assist the Englishmen to get over their festivities, however; and before these dull English can recover, the Scots have another celebration, entirely their own, on the 1st January.

I hear they are going to make things a bit more cheerful for soldiers (not the Scotchmen—but the blokes and old ladies who always look after soldiers) at Christmas. There's some stunt about having a Xmas Tree for Sergeant-Majors and Officers; and a possibility of Generals doing the Santa Claus stunt. All soldiers over seventy-five are going to be allowed to hang up a kit bag instead of stocking. I suppose the Generals will want the men to hang up their haversacks so that they can see who is carrying a Field Marshal's baton.

This is going to be a real Christmas. My old Pal Herbert has promised not to sign up in the Charwallah's book as the 'Prince of Wales' again and I'm expecting an opportunity to get really thirsty.

Some soldiers do have a hard life during the year and it's only fair that they should get something for nothing at Christmas without pinching it. Some even lose their food. For example:—

Two old black crows sat on a tree
As black as only crows can be.
Said one old crow unto his mate
What shall we do for things to ate.
They flew down on a soldier's bed
And *pakkaro-ed* his daily bread.
And then to make things worse



Two sparrows on a punkha chuckling
Flew down and *pakkaro-ed* his mucking.

So you see it's a hard life. Even the birds of the air are against them. (The other kind of birds are usually nice to soldiers).

I know this is supposed to be a double number—but I haven't had my double chota peg, and after all people always pretend to give things away at holiday times, when they are only really taking the opportunity of giving things to their superiors with a hope of a nice substantial increase of pay in the New Year; or getting rid of things they dare not give away any other time in the year.

I'm not a Scot, but I'm careful. I do wonder if the Editor is giving me anything for Christmas. Perhaps he'll give me a bird—or the bird.

(A bird is right—Ed.)

Anyway. Here's luck. If you get drunk it's your fault. If I get half seas-over it will be somebody's else's fault; or their mistake.

THE END

IF I Were Dictator

By Dewan Bahadur K. S. Ramaswami Sastri

Reading Time • About 7 Minutes

Sketches by Mali

THERE are only three persons who are dictators in this world to-day. But many others wish that they were dictators. Yet others tell us what they would do if they were dictators. Today I am fired by a similar ambition. It is after all a milk and water ambition. I am my sole leader and my sole follower. No danger will come to any one by my dictatorship. No heads will be off. No thrones will totter. No man's sleep need be the less on account of my dictatorship. Alnaschar dreamed about being a king and kicked an imaginary princess and broke the eggs in his basket. It is just in that way that I am going to be a dictator. If Julian Huxley can dream that he is a dictator why not I? If H. G. Wells builds and smashes year after year one Utopia after another, why should not I do so? If G. B. Shaw can stand on his head, why should not I try that inverted bliss? If G. K. Chesterton can laugh his world-shaking laughter, why should not I try to do likewise, though he is a man of mighty chest and I am a man of narrow chest? Don't you think that I am in a blustering mood to-day? I am. It does no one harm—least of all to me.

Mr. Chesterton says in his *Tremendous Trifles*: "I have only once in my life picked a pocket, and then (perhaps through some absent-mindedness), I picked my own... In taking things out of my own pocket I had at least one of the more tense and quivering emotions of the thief; I had a complete ignorance and a profound curiosity as to what I should find there." While I am playing the part of a dictator, Hitler and Stalin and Mussolini need not be in any dread of me. I am not going to pick their pockets. Have they got pockets, I wonder? It may be that Black Shirts have no pockets at all. But whether they have pockets or not, I am going to pick only my own pocket.

Talking of pockets I travelled the other day with three *byragis*. I wonder why they are called *byragis*. That word means men without desires or possessions. It is true that they have no desire to possess a

railway ticket and that they do not possess a railway ticket. This is the only desire and the only possession eschewed by them. They have all other desires and possessions. They have in particular abundance of human possessions. I saw a *byragi* followed by a *byragini*. Both were followed by a brood of potential *byragis* and *byraginis*. The Ticket Examiner examined them and demanded their tickets. They then began a furious search in the various pockets of their garments. Some of the pockets were sewn pockets and some were unsewn pockets made by subtle knots. Each bundle had innumerable chambers—a lower, popular chamber filled with eatables, and an upper aristocratic chamber filled with opium and *ganja*. Their hands went in and came out of the labyrinths—almost like Omar Khayyam who says that he always came out by the way he went. The railway tickets which were searched for were like metaphysics. You know that metaphysics have been defined as searching in a dark chamber for a black horse which is not there. The Ticket Examiner turned blue. He beat them black and blue. But they merely smiled an enigmatic smile and went more deeply and leisurely into other pockets. Then like Alexander he cut the Gordian Knot. He took them out in a lump and deposited them in the next station platform, leaving them to carry their pocketward expeditions at leisure.

Where was I? You left me picking my pocket. Do you know what were its contents? I found the strangest of assortments there. I found there bits from the Vedas and the Bhagawad Gita, bits from Darwin's Descent of Man and Drummond's Ascent of Man, etc. I found there biscuits and peppermints and *iddalis* and *jilebis*. I found there Dhyani Buddha and Venus Aphrodite. I found there a flute and a pistol.

But I set out to write about my being a dictator and not about pockets or *byragis*. I am, however, not a magician. I cannot produce by white or black magic things from the Land of Nowhere. I cannot pro-

duce biscuits out of torn bits of paper or coffee out of Cauvery water. Nor can I produce garlands out of ropes. I can certainly not produce sunbeams out of cucumber. I cannot produce snakes at will or make a man go up a vertically thrown rope and disappear in mid-air. Do you remember about the discussions in the columns of *The Hindu* regarding the Indian Juggler's rope trick? I wonder why there was so much discussion about it when every day our political leaders are performing even more wonderful rope-dances. Was there ever a more wonderful rope dance than that relating to prohibition propaganda which consumed six lakhs of rupees—almost as avidly as wine-bibbers consume liquor? As I am thus not a magician, I cannot produce world-saving schemes out of mere empty space. But my pockets contain all sorts of things as I told you already. Let me see if they do not tell me or at least suggest to me what I should do to save the world if I were a dictator.

Whenever a tubthumper gets upon a tub we hear much about the swing of the pendulum and about the impossibility of turning back the hands of the clock. But the pendulum as surely swings backward as it does forward, and you can put back the hands of the clock as you like and when you like. I am sick of these platitudes and catch-phrases. I am equally sick of watchwords and party war-cries and shibboleths and slogans. Chesterton says: "Man ought to march somewhere. But modern man (in his sick reaction) is

ready to march nowhere—so long as it is the Other End of Nowhere." I hate his new-born passion to march to the Other End of Nowhere after Nowhere. That is why I prefer to pick my pocket rather than anybody else's pocket—even if that person be Hitler or Stalin or Mussolini. I dislike throwing about the hallucinations of others when I have plenty of hallucinations of my own. The poet says: "My mind to me a kingdom is." I can say with equal justice and

propriety: "My pocket to me a kingdom is."

Please do not think that I am not aware of my own littleness or that I am not cognizant of my inadequacies and shortcomings. I almost hear you say: "A penny for your thoughts." Shall I expose the contents of my pocket to regale your vision? I am

hesitant. I feel that the contents are ill-assorted and unenlightening. Chesterton says about an umbrella: "Shut up, an umbrella is an unmanageable walking-stick; open, it is an inadequate tent." I feel that my criticism of the world will not serve you as a walking stick by supporting you or as a tent by keeping out sun and shower. I am thus in a self-distrustful mood. Further, just as I am gathering up my vanishing courage and self-confidence and describe what I would like to do as a dictator, my friend Mr. Nesan has brought Julian S. Huxley's book *If I Were a Dictator*. I have just read it. I feel floored. What shall I be able to say to supplement what Julian says? I am in no mood to play the dictator today. I shall make my *debut* another day.

THE END

The Students' Corner

Words' Worth—X

OIL

WE are all just now wondering whether the oil embargo will be applied against Italy, and if applied, what the effect of it would be on the fortunes or misfortunes of Abyssinia. But few, we dare say, know the romantic history of this inflammable substance. When we speak of oil, we think now-a-days of petroleum or kerosene only. But that was not the original meaning of the word. It is derived from the Latin word *oleum*, which is itself cognate with *oliva*, the name of the olive tree. There is a pretty little story in the legends of ancient Greece which explains how the olive came into existence. Long, long ago, it is said that there was keen rivalry between Poseidon the sea-God, and Athene, or Pallas, the goddess of wisdom and the civic virtues, as to which of them was greater. The one challenged the other to a combat of skill. Poseidon brandished his trident, and struck the earth, and lo! the Horse sprang into being. Athene was not to be outdone; she made the Olive spring up in the sunny plains and mountain-slopes of Greece. The high gods who officiated as umpires, decided that both were valuable gifts to man, but that the olive was superior to the horse. In token thereof, they gave Athene overlordship of the city which still bears her name, and which has been rightly called the 'Eye of Europe'.

This is the reason why the olive tree is most abundant in sunny, southern Europe. It is like the plantain tree in our own country—every part of it is of some use or other to man. The olive fruit is a table-delicacy; its green berries are used as pickles and in medicine; it can also be pressed for the oil used by the Greeks and Romans for all the purposes for which we Indians use the *til-oil*. For these reasons, it became the symbol of prosperity and husbandry. A branch of it was a sign of truce, and was so used in ancient days. Hence the phrase: *the olive branch*. The olive was also the symbol of domestic felicity, as it is used in the Bible to indicate the children one may have. It was commonly used for lamps in olden times: and so we have the phrases, *to lose one's oil*, *to smell of oil*, and *to burn the mid-night oil*. The first indicates any vain effort, the second refers to any laboured composition, and the last, one who studies far into the night.

But the other kind of oil, which is now such a potent factor in high politics, petroleum, was not unknown in ancient times. It is said that there was a pitch-spring near ancient Babylon. In Sicily, near Agrigentum, oil was not only extracted but also used for illumination. Plutarch refers to petroleum as being found near Ecbatana. In ancient China and Japan, it was known as 'burning water'. Marco Polo, the indefatigable traveller, mentions the oil-springs of Baku. Another oil-spring in Bavaria was supposed to have had medicinal properties, and so was called 'St. Quirinus's Oil'. In Galicia it was called 'earth balsam'.

America is associated with petroleum only from the sixteenth century. Sir Walter Raleigh mentions the 'pitch-lake' of Trinidad in 1595. England also had its natural gas, discovered and manufactured in Shropshire in the seventeenth century. The commercial exploitation of the oil was first begun by Englishmen, and *Rangoon oil* was used in the early XIX century. Burma came into prominence from 1890 as a result of the Scotchmen's pioneering work in this direction. We thus now have Burma, Persia, America, and Russia as the great rivals in the oil-field. Persia and Burma are protected by the pacific tail of Britain, America is a 'trust' in the hands of Rockefeller, and the Russian Red Wolf is prying furtively in many corners of the world, to dump her enormous supply. We must thank Russian oil for the boon we are just now enjoying of buying our petrol at Re. 1/- a gallon. It is said that it can be sold for six or even four annas, if only Russia had an open market. This is another reason why we should all be Bolsheviks!

The discovery of oil in America has given us an expressive Americanism—to *strike oil*, which means to become prosperous. The phrase was first used in a *Punch* article in 1866. To speak with an *oily tongue* is to flatter. *To oil the palm* is to gratify another person—by means of presents which are vulgarly called bribes. *To pour oil on troubled waters* is to compose a quarrel. If the proposed embargo promotes that end, it would be a very good thing indeed. But unfortunately Mussolini seems bent upon adding fuel to the flames!

A Chronicle History

1917: This year's Congress was held in Calcutta, and was marked by the enthronement on the *gadi* of a woman. Mrs. Besant had done in two years for the political education of the country more than all other parties during the previous twenty. The War years were specially favourable for the rapid germination of new ideas. As the then British Premier put it, the world was moving at a giddy pace, and the experiences of a hundred years were being compressed into those of one. Unkind critics of Mrs. Besant were not slow to suggest that she plunged into the political field to recoup the losses sustained in the 'religious' as the result of certain developments in the 'esoteric' life of the Theosophical Society. We ourselves shall never look a gift horse in the mouth, but give credit where it is due. And the debt we owe to Mrs. Besant is enormous, and can never be repaid. For what was her service? She infused courage into the timid, and familiarised us with the technique of 'agitation' as practised in Western countries. She showed us the value of discipline and leadership, and gave us an exhilarating display of the Karma Yogin in action. Her contribution to the national movement has thus an intrinsic and historical value. She paved the way for the Gandhian Era.

Her presidential speech is perhaps the longest on record. The Ali Brothers had been interned; and the Rowlatt Committee was forging the provisions of a famous Act which was destined to transform the character of Indian politics beyond recognition. E. S. Montagu was coming to explore the prospects of reforming the 'wooden, antediluvian' system of government, and expectations were high that a great forward movement was about to be launched by the British Government. The session was a personal triumph for Mrs. Besant, as she succeeded in roping into the Congress many who had kept aloof.

1918: This was the year of falling thrones. It may be compared to 1748, and 1848. The European War was coming to a close. The Kaiser, and a host of Kaiser-lings tumbled off their thrones. A trans-Atlantic dreamer dreamed aloud a vision of the millennium, of the lion fondling the lamb, of brotherhood, and universal peace and good will on earth. The Montford proposals had meanwhile been

published; and a special session of the Congress had given guarded support to the scheme, but wanted to see the 'picture' completely filled in. The year's session held in Delhi under the presidency of Malaviya saw the emergence in Indian politics of the phrase 'Self-Determination' which was said to be the guiding principle of the visitors in making the peace. The proposed reforms were pronounced unsatisfactory, although Mr. Sastri pleaded for accepting them. A resolution was passed demanding that India should be represented at the Peace Conference by its own delegates, and nominated Sir Ali Imam, Tilak and Gandhiji. The consideration of a resolution offering a welcome to the Prince of Wales was postponed.

1919: The 24th Congress was held in Amritsar under the presidency of Pandit Motilal Nehru. It met under the shadow of one of the blackest clouds that had ever settled down on the chequered history of this country. The Rowlatt Act had been passed in the teeth of opposition; a nation-wide protest against it was organised, and a week called the 'National Week' was set apart for it. The demonstrations passed off peacefully, except in the Punjab where Martial Law was proclaimed, and the harrowing incidents connected with Jullianwala Bagh took place. The presidential address is an exhaustive summary of these events of the year. The memorandum of the 19 members of the central legislatures was rejected by the Government, and the Montford scheme was being rushed through Parliament. The Congress also espoused the cause of the Khilafat which was in danger of being destroyed as the result of another war in which Turkey was involved. The attitude of Britain seemed luke-warm, and so Muslim leaders joined hands with Hindu in the national struggle. The main resolution on the Reforms found a supporter in Gandhiji who was not inclined to characterise them as 'disappointing.' Another resolution condemned the martial law excesses in the Punjab, demanded the punishment of those who were responsible therefor, and finally, the Congress demanded the recall of Lord Chelmsford, the then Viceroy. This was opposed by, among others, B. N. Sarma. Soon after, that gentleman became a member of the Viceroy's Council and subsequently became a Knight.

of the Congress - 5

1920: A special session of the Congress was held in Calcutta under the presidency of Lala Lajpat Rai, which marks the beginning of the Gandhian era of Non-co-operation. The reasons for launching it were the Khilafat, the repressive legislation, the lack of redress for martial law excesses in the Punjab, and the unsatisfactory nature of the new reforms. A lengthy resolution records the reasons, and lays down the steps by which this progressive non-co-operation should be practised by the country. The Congress creed was amended so as to read thus: "The attainment of Swarajya by all legitimate and peaceful means," the omission of the qualification 'within the British Empire' being deliberate. These special resolutions were confirmed at the annual session held in Nagpur, which further empowered the Congress to raise an adequate memorial to Tilak, who alone of our front-rank politicians was denied the distinction of presiding at any of the Congress Sessions. Instead, he has had the posthumous glory of having been the magic means of raising more than a crore of rupees for the Tilak Memorial Swarajya Fund. The saintly beggar was Gandhiji, and within one year India witnessed a great inter-provincial rivalry in contributions to that fund.

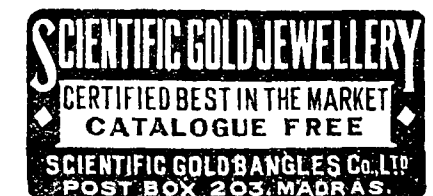
1921: The Congress met at Ahmedabad under Hakim Ajmal Khan's presidency. Non-co-operation was reiterated, and Gandhiji stated that he was going to try it in Bardoli. The Prince of Wales was announced to visit the country. The Khadder programme was formulated, and the Tilak Fund was primarily used to revive it. It henceforth became the badge of true-blue nationalism, and though white in colour, served and still serves as the proverbial red-rag to John Bull! The year saw the out-break of the Moplah Rebellion in Malabar, and the struggle in Gujarat. The Prince of Wales arrived, and began a tour of the country. The visit was 'boycotted' by the Congress; but nevertheless the Prince had a well-arranged tour, and found it no doubt both enjoyable and instructive. It is said that the then Viceroy, Lord Reading, offered anything that Gandhiji wanted if only he would call off the boycott, and join in the welcome to our future sovereign. Why Gandhiji did not close with the offer, and put an end to all our troubles must remain a mystery until later historians throw light on this aspect of recent diplomacy.

1922: Das was the president of the year. Gandhiji had been sentenced to six years' imprisonment after a famous trial which led to comparisons with another held long ago at Jerusalem. C. R. Das came out with a proposal to change tactics of the Congress. The Swarajya Party was formed; its aim was to wreck the constitution from the inside. The councils were to be captured, and used as the means of hastening the advent of Swaraj.

1923: Moulana Mohamed Ali was the president of the year. He made an elaborate survey of the non-co-operation idea, and showed its practicability and necessity.

1924: Saw Gandhiji a free man, after an operation for appendicitis while in jail. He presided over the annual session held at Belgaum, where a compromise was reached with the Swarajists. The two wings agreed to go their own ways for the time being, without calling one another names. The N. C. O. activities were suspended, and Gandhiji went into political silence. The elections to the councils saw the return of effective Swarajist majorities in Bengal, C. P. and Madras. But the ban on accepting office destroyed their advantages, and the door was thrown open for all those undesirable elements in the nation which have shown neither courage, nor vision, nor ability, to get into places of power, where they are still entrenched, and from which it is now found no easy job to dislodge them!

(To be concluded)



Head Office:—

43, Byragimatam Street,
Post Box No. 203, Madras.

Xmas Post—

By Koi Hoi



Reading Time • About 3 Minutes

I always think that by far the most thrilling part of Christmas Day is the opening of one's post in the morning. It is so full of surprises. Often there are greetings from the most unexpected people, and sometimes the writer even goes so far as to say that you'll shortly receive something so frightfully important that it will have to be brought to the house and handed to you personally by a policeman.

The first letter I opened last Christmas Day, I remember, was from a prosperous Government official with a comfortable position and a job that is never likely to be abolished. In spite of that, he actually found time to write to me on Christmas Day. Once he meets you, he never forgets. Last year's letter was all about money, and what could be a more congenial topic on Christmas Day? It was about quite a large sum of money, too! He said that he would very much like to give me a little gift and that I could have it as soon as I liked—if I would give him one first.

I decided that there was no hurry. To get a receipt I should have to pay my income tax, confound the man! Fancy, sending out a demand to reach you on Christmas morning! It's positively pagan. I should imagine that any well-bred Christmas card would get a terrible shock to find itself in a pillar-box surrounded entirely by "O. H. M. S.'s."

Anyhow, it's a nice sort of letter to open when you are toying feverishly to get that 'Peace on Earth'

feeling. One does not want to begin Christmas Day with a heart attack.

My other letter bore a three-quarter anna stamp on the envelope, and I was referred to as "Koi Hoi, Esq.," and not as "—Hoi, Esq.," as I sometimes am. There was even a printed card inside wishing me increased prosperity during the New Year. There was also a letter containing the same pious hope. I am sure it was very nice of the writer to take so much trouble. I only meet him about once a year and he is purely a business acquaintance and has never sat above my salt or even below it—or anywhere else under my dining-table, for the matter of that.

In fact, I should hate to have my tailor sitting under my table. He would probably savage my unpaid-for trousers or even re-possess himself of them by violence. He still has a theory that they ought to be paid for in full, which is absurd, because their value has depreciated considerably. He is so obsessed by this idea of his that every quarter he writes me a chatty little note, starting: "We cannot understand why you've not paid our account!" He must be a man of very limited intelligence, because I should have thought that the reason was obvious. I haven't got the money. He always swells my Christmas Mail with a pathetic little appeal for something on account, and I feel so conscience-stricken that I decide to order another suit from him as a little Christmas gift directly after the holidays.

My landlord also sends me a Christmas letter—but that's neither here nor there. As a matter of fact, it's jolly soon in the waste-paper basket.

All my correspondents, in fact, seem so confoundedly mercenary at Christmas time that I almost long for the days when those dear, delightful, old-fashioned money-lenders used to send their cheery missives through the post. They were invariably civil. They had much more of the spirit of give-and-take than the present brood of Christmas letter-writers.

Indeed, they would be ideal Christmas correspondents if it were not for their strange dislike of the younger generation. Even at Christmas time they cannot bring themselves to feel generously-disposed towards minors!

THE END

The Letters of Private Joyfull

At Appu's Village

Sketches by Mali

Reading Time • About 8 Minutes

Madras, 21st December, 1935.

DEAR MOTHER,

I expect you are waiting to hear of our adventures on the shooting-trip. Boggins and I sent our things forward in a bullock-cart, and the next day we followed by rail and road, reaching Appu's village in the afternoon.

The village is at the foot of one of the many crags in Southern India. There is an old fort on the top of the crag. You find these rock-forts everywhere, ruined and empty. They are very interesting, being like our mediaeval castles in England. They make me feel a little sad, too, because they give an impression of wickedness and cruelty.

I get the same feeling when I see an English castle. I am always reminded of the last words written in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle. For three hundred years, the pious monks put down the simple 'annals of our rude ancestors, and in bitter words the last scribe recorded the end of England as he knew it. 'The Normans are building strong castles everywhere', he said. 'They take away the people, and force them to labour. The castles are filled with fiends who come forth to burn and slay. The husbandmen are enslaved, and the women put to shame. The castles echo with the shrieks of tortured Englishmen. Neither age nor sex is any salvation. The gallows groan with the

bodies of martyred freemen. Every stone of the castles is cemented with blood. There is no mercy or justice or hope left in all England. God has deserted us. So ends this doleful chronicle of our race'.

Who would have thought that such a crushed and conquered people would rise again? Yet in a hundred years the English were wringing charters and concessions from the cruel masters, and in two hundred years there were no Norman masters left. They had sunk into the mass of the people, leaving us a couple of hundred words in the language, and a few refined habits.

The people who have always been on the land are the real people of a country. There have been all kinds of foreign lords in Oxford castle, but the lords have gone, and the Joyfulls remain. On Appu's crag there have been many strange lords and cruel masters, but they have all passed away, and the villagers are still there.

The first conquerors of Appu's people introduced Hinduism, but the villagers still really follow their ancient religion, which is the worship of a demon who lives in the river. We are just the same. No one has ever succeeded in making us into orthodox Christians. Under the name of Lollards, Anabaptists, Independents, and so forth, we have really kept



The urchins ran off.....

3-21-12-35

to a kind of natural agricultural religion, with puritan ideas, and a great distrust of priests and lords.

There is a bus-stop about a mile from the village, with a wayside shelter where a man sells refreshments. Two urchins were loitering near by, taking charge of a herd of buffaloes. These buffaloes are very powerful and dangerous beasts, yet they get bullied by tiny little scraps of humanity that fearlessly belabour them with sticks. As we descended from the rural bone-shaker, the urchins ran off towards the village, crying, "The two soldiers are coming!"

Long before we reached the village, it was like a disturbed ant-heap. All the housewives were poking their head out of the doors, announcing that Appu's friends were coming. These tidings were shouted from field to field, until the farthest herd-boy knew that we were on the way. Everybody ran about telling everybody else, and no one seemed to mind how often he heard the news.

Appu and the notables gathered in the village street, grinning all over their faces, and saying their prayers to us. We said our prayers to them, which is the correct thing to do. Boggins improved on the occasion with a public prayer. Putting his hands together, he recited:

*Eena, meena, mina, mo;
Catch a goblin by his toe!*

The villagers exclaimed at this, saying it was an admirable spell; and hastened to plant chairs for us in the middle of the street. Boggins got the iron throne; I got the Poona Pact chair.

The Poona Pact chair has quite a history. Originally it was an ordinary adult-size chair. On our last visit, Boggins pointed out that the chair was rocky, one leg being slightly longer than the others. He got a small hack-saw from his kit, and trimmed the leg to the same length as the others.

The villagers were very interested in this operation. They thought the idea of sawing the chair-leg was a stroke of genius that solved an otherwise puzzling problem. Also, they had never seen a hack-saw before. "So small, and yet so powerful!" they said. "The soldiers have fine things."

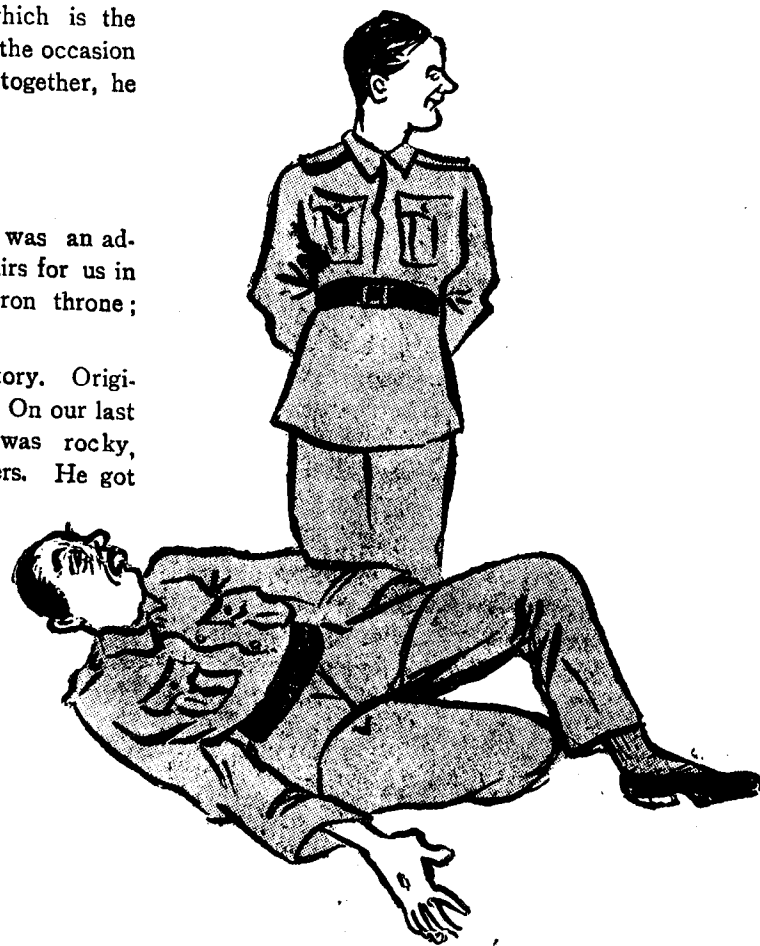
Appu begged to examine the saw, and as soon as he got it into his hand, he wanted to cut something with

it. This is a world-wide trait in human nature. If you give even a small boy a knife, he is not happy until he is using it to destroy something.

Meanwhile, a committee was testing Boggins' work on the chair. They put it in various positions, and when it stood firm each time, they were half-wondering, half-disappointed. At last, one of the legs got on to a slight rise in the ground, and the chair rocked.

This created considerable excitement. Everybody came and verified the fact that the chair was rocking. Everybody eagerly pointed to the leg that was too long. Appu was delighted. He made them all stand back, while he boldly shortened the offending leg by a full inch.

Further tests followed, and the examining commissioners soon discovered that the chair rocked worse than ever. This time there was a sharp difference of opinion as to the remedy. Appu maintained that his leg was the right length, and all the others were wrong.

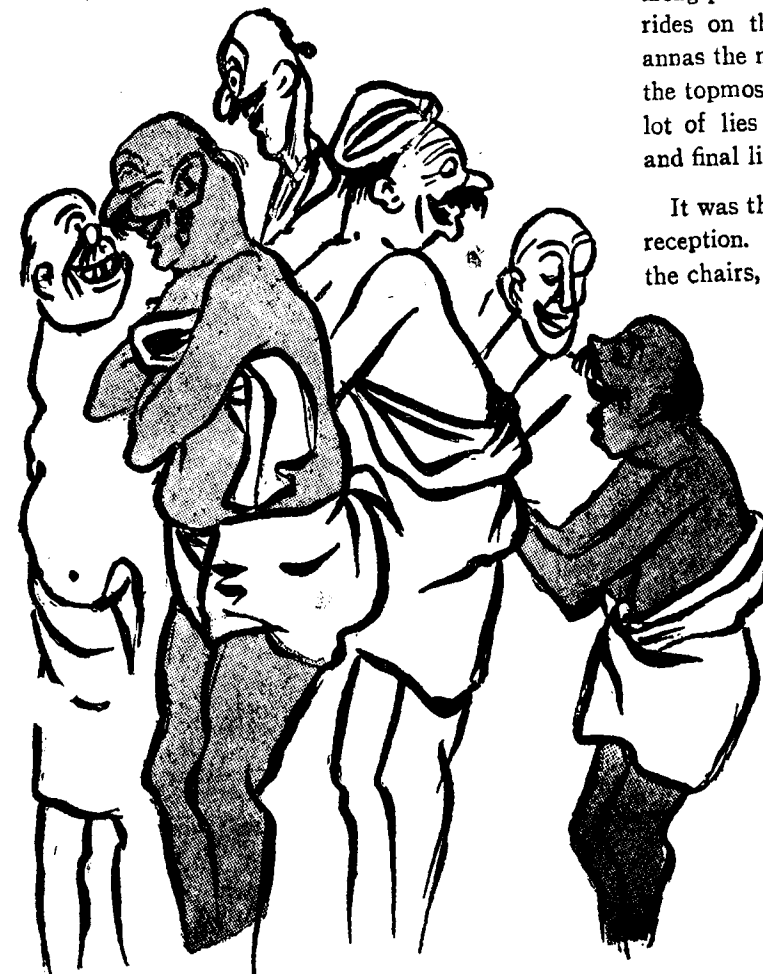


I rolled about.....

Raju, who is Appu's chief opponent in village politics, said that no one was going to cut a piece off the leg he had adopted. Eventually, they were all struggling for the saw, each determined to trim his own leg to the length he thought proper.

In the course of the riot, the chair was dashed to the ground, and one of the legs was broken. This resulted in the calling of a peace-conference. Eventually, a Poona Pact was evolved, under the terms of which the broken leg was to be trimmed by a neutral person, and the remaining legs cut to size by each faction in turn. As at least ten persons had established the right to use the saw, the result was extraordinary. Boggins started on the broken leg, and when all the contestants had had their turn, the chair did not rock any more, because the front legs were only six inches long, while the rest of the chair leaned forward so perilously that no one could sit on it.

This brought matters to a stand-still. No one was willing to re-open the conflict, but no one wished any



The villagers shrieked with mirth.

of the other parties to use the saw any further. Raju and his party sat on one side offering *satyagraha*, while Appu's party stood and looked at the chair in bewilderment. The case thus going by default, Boggins calmly took the saw and trimmed all four legs to his liking. The seat of the chair was now almost down to earth, and Boggins called it the ducks'-disease chair. I asked him what ducks' disease might be, and he said, having your hinder parts too near the ground.

However, I call it the Poona Pact chair, because it shows what happens when too many people start monkeying with the saw. After it was all over, Appu said the best idea would be to have the legs the original length, but Boggins pointed out that the chair-legs were now in a hundred and fifty distinct pieces, which was too great a problem even for a legislature.

The two chairs sometimes become palanquins. This is when visitors come to see the fort on the crag. Long poles are lashed to each chair, and the visitor rides on the shoulders of four villagers. For twelve annas the most *ghee*-fed of tourists can be carried to the topmost bastions, where they are entertained by a lot of lies told by the *Chowkidar*, including the great and final lie that he is a very poor man.

It was these two chairs that were produced for our reception. The reception consisted of our sitting in the chairs, while the villagers squatted in a circle and looked at us. We must have made quite a picture. Boggins was perched up high in the iron chair of state, which must once have belonged to a coffee hotel, while I was almost at ground-level, trying to appear at ease in the Poona Pact contraption.

At intervals, someone asked a question. Neither the question nor the answer seemed to be of any importance. We were asked the most extraordinary things at random; and whatever reply we gave, the villagers said, "Good!" I think this was their way of showing a friendly interest in us.

Presently, one of the villagers asked if we had come to search for the treasure. Practically every fort is supposed to have treasure buried under its foundations. The story is always the same. A wicked lord is supposed to have

buried people alive under the foundations, along with a huge treasure, as an offering to the spirits. This wicked lord must have built as many forts as there are beds that have been slept in by Queen Elizabeth.

It used to be a superstition in all part of the world, to offer human sacrifice for a new building. Our ancestors did it; so did most races; and there are mentions of the custom in the Bible. The early English used to nail the skull of the victim to the gable-end of the house, and to this day the gable-end of English houses has a useless ornament in the shape of a skull. I think it very likely that the wicked lords really did bury victims in all those forts, but unlikely that they buried any treasure as well.

I tried to explain my ideas about the treasure to the villagers, but they did not understand very well. Of course, though I write down our talk in plain language, we really spoke to the villagers in broken language, and signs, and even by acting little plays that were often exceedingly funny. For instance, when I wanted to remind them how Boggins shot the goat, I acted it. I pretended to drink some of the strong lemonade they call toddy, and I pointed to Boggins and lay down and snored. The villagers all began to laugh and explain my actions to each other. In a dramatic silence I began to imitate the 'wuff, wuff' noise of a panther, and all the villagers waited breathlessly. I suddenly jumped up, pointed an imaginary gun, and went "Bang! Bang!"

You could have heard a pin drop while they waited for the climax of the story. I rolled about like an animal that had been shot, and then paused on hands and knees, looked at them sadly, and went "Maa, Maa"! The villagers shrieked with mirth.

When I was telling my notions about the treasure, the villagers seemed to think I was talking about religion. They explained about the demon that lived in the river. It seemed there was quite a problem about this demon, and someone said that perhaps we could suggest a solution. Anyhow, they decided to tell us all about it, and the reception-committee turned itself into a vestry-meeting.

I must tell you about our adventures with the river-demon next week.

Your Loving Son,
OBEAH JOYFULL.

Song of the Wine-Bibbers

(From Abu Hassan)

We drink and make merry
With drinking we bury
All thought of depression and sorrow,
For life with its trouble
Is only a bubble
That's sure to blow over tomorrow.
Heigh ho! we are never in want
If we haven't got money we borrow,
Heigh ho! are we ever in want?
O never O never O no!

The carpet, the table
As though in a fable
Around me are rolling and reeling!
There's somebody drinking
And winking and blinking
And clinking a glass in the ceiling!
Heigh ho! in the floor and the wall
I can feel a peculiar feeling!
Heigh ho! am I sober at all?
O never O never O no!

My mouth is a cavern
It smells like a tavern,
My heart is a piece of rotation,
And every minute
There's music within it
That has a contempt for notation!
Heigh ho! from the poem of wine
I'm a learned and living quotation!
Heigh ho! any other like me?
O never O never O no!

—Harindranath Chattopadhyaya

Nationality

By Old Soldier Jim

Reading Time • About 3 Minutes



THE Great War affected the brains of many people. There is a sect of individuals who seem to be determined to give new names to old nations, or divide them up giving them several names and calling them ancient peoples, and naming them after some obscure country.

I can remember a time when the inhabitants of Mesopotamia were Arabs. Now they are Iraqi or Iraqians. Persians were Persians thousands of years ago. Now they are Irans or Iranians. Thousands of people who were once Russians are now Latvians. Letts, Lithuanians, etc. Some who were once Austrians are now Croats and Slovenes.

There may be no harm in this, but it rather worries me. When and if I return to England I shall have to be careful where I land. If I get off the boat on the banks of the Thames I might be taken for a Dane. Further along the East Coast they might call me an Angle.

(It won't be a right angle in any case.)

At a south coast port they might think I'm a Norman. (I shouldn't mind that much as I am a bit of a Conqueror.) Liverpool I daren't risk. They'd sure think I was an Irishman.

It will be disastrous if this craze comes to India. Particularly as they seem to want all names to end in 'n' or 'an'. What a crime it will be to call a humble Madrasi a 'Madran'? And 'Bombans',

'Bangalans', 'Calcuttans', 'Delhans' and so on, will lead to a lot of confusion.

The idea of this 'n' and 'an' business is to make everything and everybody masculine plural. They will have to modify this according to the authorised Roman Urdu method. A young girl born in Simla will be a Simle; a young boy born in Lahore will be a Lahori; a grown woman of the Sind will be a Sindeon, and so on.

This will simplify matters until it comes to twins, triplets, quadruplets etc. Then there will have to be a repetition of the 'i' and 'e's.

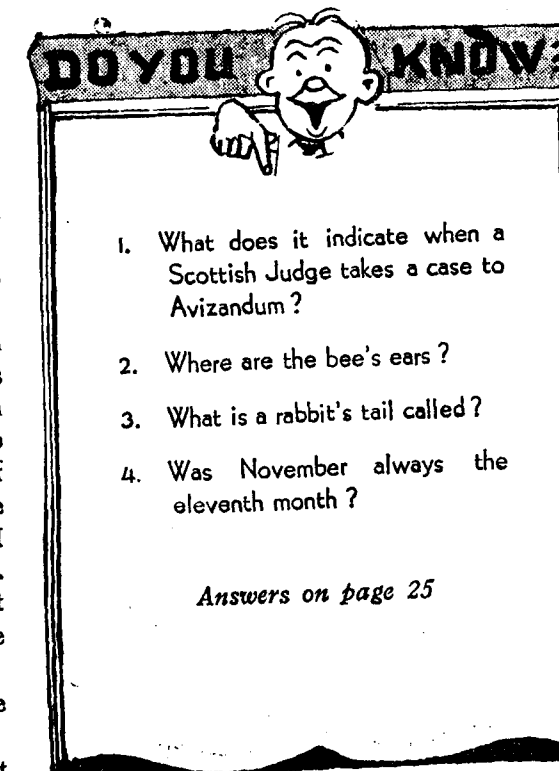
Care will be necessary in using the right vowels in the right place.

If you can answer this you have got a good grip of the system:—

A Bomban marries a Punjaban. They go and live in Honolulu. Their first increase in family is sextuplicates—two boys, three girls and—Each of the girls grows up and marries an American. The boys grow up and marry Maharratans. The first daughter of the second son

of the original couple marries a Chinaman. She presents her husband with twins. One of these marries a daughter of the third daughter of the Bomban. What is the Nationality of her second son when he arrives?

Solve that and you know all there is to know about Nationality. In fact you will know more than I do.



1. What does it indicate when a Scottish Judge takes a case to Avizandum?
2. Where are the bee's ears?
3. What is a rabbit's tail called?
4. Was November always the eleventh month?

Answers on page 25



The Third Leg

By M. A. S.

Sketches by Mali

Reading Time • About 6 Minutes

BY nature, my friend Srikanth was one of those persons who always stick to the boundary line. If on any question he did not hold the most conservative opinion, you can bet your last collarstud that he is among the staunchest advocates of the ultra-radical school. All the glib talk about the principle of the golden mean, the philosophy of the safe middle course and the theory of compromises had absolutely no sense or meaning for him.

No wonder, then, that Srikanth in his student days practised an extreme form of bigoted orthodoxy. I use the word 'practised' advisedly, because unlike some modern champions of ancient Sanatana Dharma, his enthusiasm for religion did not rest with mere preaching. In other words, he did not swear by Queen Victoria's proclamation by day and dine off mutton-chops at night.

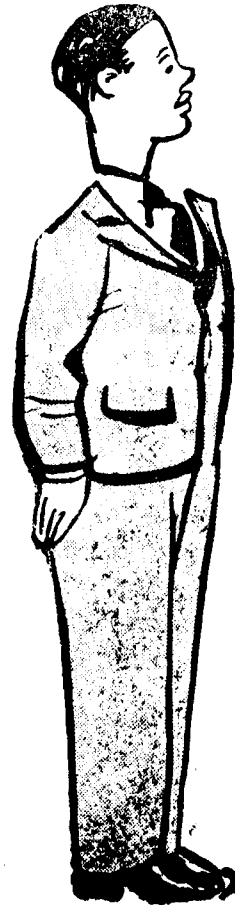
If Srikanth was orthodox, he went the whole hog. For instance, he would never miss his prayers at the proper hours. He would not, for his life, touch anything in a hotel, and what is more he would never eat anything without first purifying himself by wearing a silk cloth round his waist. I have seen him once taking with him a rope and a silver pot while proceeding to attend an examination, because forsooth, tap water was considered a pollution. These habits of his, as one might well expect, did invite a lot of ridicule from his fashionable friends, but Srikanth was the very last person to mind it. Verily, his faith in religion was not, like beauty, just skin deep.

It is within the experience of most people that chaps who hold very strong beliefs are more often prone to change their creed than people having only luke-warm

feelings on any vital matter. Even some of the greatest spiritual teachers the world has ever produced are said to have been, some time or other in their lives, pronounced unbelievers. If one would excuse these great personages for their change of front, one may as well pardon lesser mortals for a similar lapse, —or is it a virtue? When, therefore, one fine morning we found Srikanth quietly playing the role of a confirmed athiest, we were surprised but not astonished.

Srikanth did not allow the grass to grow under his feet. He at once got set to adapt himself to his new convictions. He promptly removed his tuft and face-mark, the two outward emblems of orthodoxy ever at the mercy of emotional young men. He purchased a whole set of the R. P. A. publications and opened a free library for the use of the interested public. He organised open meetings in different parts of the city and delivered inspired lectures on subjects such as—'Commonsense about Religion', 'The Eternal Why', and 'War vs. Faith'. To crown all, he celebrated his conversion by giving a grand dinner at a European restaurant to all his friends.

Talking about his friends, you may naturally wonder whether his friends approved his change of faith. No. They were divided in their verdict. But at the same time, in fairness to them, this much must be said to their credit. As one man they magnanimously conceded that the



idea behind the dinner referred to was very timely, very appropriate and, last but not least, very welcome.

If Srikanth had continued in this strain, there would have been no occasion for me to say anything about it. Well, but one afternoon, I was amazed to find him in an attitude, which unequivocally and irretrievably compromised with his cherished tenets. I found him actually kneeling on the ground, and with his hands clasped and eyes closed, he was unmistakably praying to the Almighty. He was further muttering some Sanskrit *slokas*. Later on he explained to me why he did that.

I put this strange conduct on the part of Srikanth as a problem before my friends the next day at the Club.

"I have told you," I said, "exactly how I found our friend Srikanth yesterday. Now, just exercise your imagination and tell me if any of you can furnish the true explanation for his queer action."

They all considered for a while. Shanker was the one to break the ice.

"The explanation is simple," he said. "It is no doubt a feat to execute a somersault. But if one is capable of doing it once, he may well be expected to do the trick a second time. Srikanth has simply gone back to his old orthodoxy. That is all."

"You are quite wrong," I replied. "And if you wish to maintain the small reputation you have for possessing a little intelligence, you had better keep quiet."

"Perhaps it is like this," suggested Ramu. "Srikanth might have committed some grave mistake in his office. He was probably praying to God that his error may not be detected or discovered by his superiors."

"That is not correct," I again said. "Moreover, the reason you suggest is too slight for allowing even a temporary holiday to one's convictions."

"I have got it!" stepped in Purushotham at this stage. "Srikanth had written and posted in a temper a letter, which immediately he regretted. He was praying to God that the said letter may get lost in transit and not reach the addressee."

"Your hypothesis is at least original, if not correct," I replied. And then turning to Prakash I asked, "Have you nothing to say?"

"Well, as a matter of fact," he began slowly, "the very explanations offered by all these chaps, of course, occurred to me also. But I was only just waiting to see, if any one else too could think of them. And now that they have already told all I had intended to say, I have nothing more to add."

"So be it," I conceded.

"We give it up," said Shankar. "Please unravel the mystery."

"Just think again. I give you one more chance to explain our friend's conduct," I persuaded.

"No, we cannot," said Prakash decidedly. "The case of *In re Srikanth* is too intriguing for us. Lift the curtain."

"Well, the thing happened this way," I explained at last.

The scene was laid at the Guindy Race-course and Srikanth had purchased a ticket for the Treble Event. Curiously enough, his first two selections had turned out winners, and it was just before the race forming the third leg of the Treble Event was to be run.

Srikanth's selected candidate therein was such a rank and out and out outsider and the situation was so critical, that unless God, in answer to his prayers, at once intervened and took prompt steps on his behalf, there was no earthly chance of his horse romping home first. Under the circumstances, our friend had naturally to take emergency measures!

"But did that horse win?" eagerly asked Ramu, who I knew was not interested in racing, but to whom (I also knew) Srikanth long owed a decent sum of money.

"Well, that is another question," I said side-tracking the issue. "What I want you to appreciate is our friend Srikanth's unerring presence of mind."

I shelved the question, as they do in legislatures, because, you see, I had not the heart to disappoint Ramu immediately.

THE END



Auntie Awful



"WHAT strikes me about your column," says a critical reader, "is your amusing presence of mind. You must be a lady of very varied experience."

Sob-sistering sharpens the wits, my dears. Auntie will tell you about the first staff-dance she attended, when she was a junior reporter on the *London Lyre*. Newspapers hold their annual dances on the Thursday before Easter, because Good Friday is a day when no paper appears. Strangely, the news on Saturday is not double the usual amount. The explanation is that all the real news in the world would hardly fill a column of the paper. All the rest is created by journalists. Journalists are cunning people who go about creating news where none exists.

At Auntie's first staff-dance, she encountered a frumpy-looking dowager in one of the retiring-rooms. Auntie sat down to rest her feet, which had been heavily stamped on by a massive master-printer who was under the impression he could dance. She engaged the dowager in conversation, and of course the topic was the *London Lyre*. With the usual frankness of journalism, Auntie cheerfully remarked that the paper was a filthy yellow rag, and the proprietor a cheap imitation Napoleon.

"Indeed!" said the dowager, freezing Auntie with a basilisk glare, "Do you know who I am?"

"No," said Auntie.

"I am Lady Grandiose, wife of the proprietor."

"Oh," said Auntie, "and do you know who I am?"

"No!" howled the dowager.

"Thank God for that!" quoth Auntie, making a quick get-away.

You see, my dears, presence of mind is often a matter of absence of body. Another time, Auntie was sent to report a new circus-act, in which a famous

animal-trainer entered the cage of a ferocious lion, guaranteed to be an untamed man-eater.

In the course of the performance, the door of the cage became unfastened by accident. The savage animal leapt forth, and made a bee-line for the audience. The audience made a bee-line for the exits.

When the riot-squad arrived, armed with elephant-guns and red-hot pokers, the lion was roaming round and round the circus-ring, growling. "Good heavens!" cried the trainer, "the lion has eaten Auntie Awful!"

"No he hasn't" piped Auntie's voice, from somewhere.

"Where are you?" cried the lion-tamer.

"Here I am!" said Auntie. With great presence of mind she had locked herself in the lion's cage, and was writing an article on 'Circus Life from the inside'.

Vardha (Park Town). "What is the difference between statutes and statues?" Statutes, dear boy, are created by a lot of old birds for the public inconvenience. Statues are subsequently erected to the memory of these old birds. The statues become a public convenience for birds of all ages.

Grammarians (N. Maistry Street). "The potatoes knocked loudly at the saucepan-lid, asking to be let out." What figure of speech is this? Auntie thinks it is personification with a touch of hyperbole, my dear; but Uncle Ghastly says it is bad cookery.

Earnest Reader (Madras). "An astrologer, in the course of his prediction regarding a newly-married couple, made the following amazing prophecy: 'The birth of offspring will occur during the year, or will

be probable later'. Dear Auntie, how on earth did he guess?" Auntie cannot imagine, my pet. Do you think he might have been reading one of those terrible sex-books?

Chatter (Kunavaram). "How can I deal with a fellow who gossips behind my back all the time?" Patronise a barber who is deaf and dumb, dearie.

Jane (Penang). "I do not like policemen or railway officials. They think the whole country belong to them." Well, my dear, though the country does not actually belong to them, they could afford to buy it any time, couldn't they?

Advance (Tiruvambadi). "Wireless will soon take the place of the newspaper." Auntie does not think so, dear boy. You cannot swat a fly with a radio-set.

Sceptical (Cutch). "How long after even a love-match do you find billing and cooing going on?" Well, my dear, the cooing may not last long but the billing goes on for ever.

Primary II. (Straits Settlement). "I am sending you some drawings made by my little artists.

These little Indian girls work like a weather-chart. To-day they try hard, tomorrow they go to sleep. I think they inherited these unsteady characteristics from their ancestors." The drawings show real talent, my dear, and an innate artistic sense. The last they certainly inherited from their ancestors. You must not think that little Indian girls are unique in working by fits and starts!

Transport (Coimbatore). "Will you please inform me how many persons a Corporation tram seats comfortably?" None, dear sir.

Curious (Visweswarapuram). "Why do Scotchmen lead such good lives?" It is thought that they do so, dear boy, in order to avoid paying for their sins.

Amplified Proportioned (Kilachevalpatti). "I am getting too fat. What steps do you advise me to take?" About ten thousand every morning before breakfast, dear sir

Chain Smoker (Bezawada).

pages, but the real thing I wanted to tell you is that if I did not leave off smoking cigarettes, I would become feeble-minded." Auntie is sorry, dear boy, that you did not heed the doctor's advice.

Gay Freda (Allahabad). "For our New Year's ball we are going to wear fancy dresses to match our boy-friends' hair; so I am going in black." That will be very nice, my dear. By the way, I hope none of you has a boy-friend who is bald.

Statistics (Manchala).

"Seventeen thousand nine hundred and fifty four persons are suffering from malaria, and another eleven thousand six hundred and twenty-two are infected with hook-worm. Add these figures together, Auntie, and what do you get?" The wrong answer, dear boy.

Troubled (Puthur). "My wife is threatening to run away with a man. What shall I do?" Tell her there is no need to run.

Organiser (Calcutta).

"We are arranging a procession depicting Woman Through the Ages. There

are ladies in ancient and modern dresses, and then one representing Beauty Unadorned. What should come after her?" A policeman with a summons, dear sir.

Swadeshi (Karachi). "You will be glad to hear that in future imported Japanese razor-blades will have to be marked." It is good news, dear sir. Hitherto these blades have made marks of their own.

Cheated (Fyzabad). "Recently I ordered a gramophone, and it broke down while it was playing a jazz tune." Yes, dear boy, but the makers cannot guarantee that it will always do this.

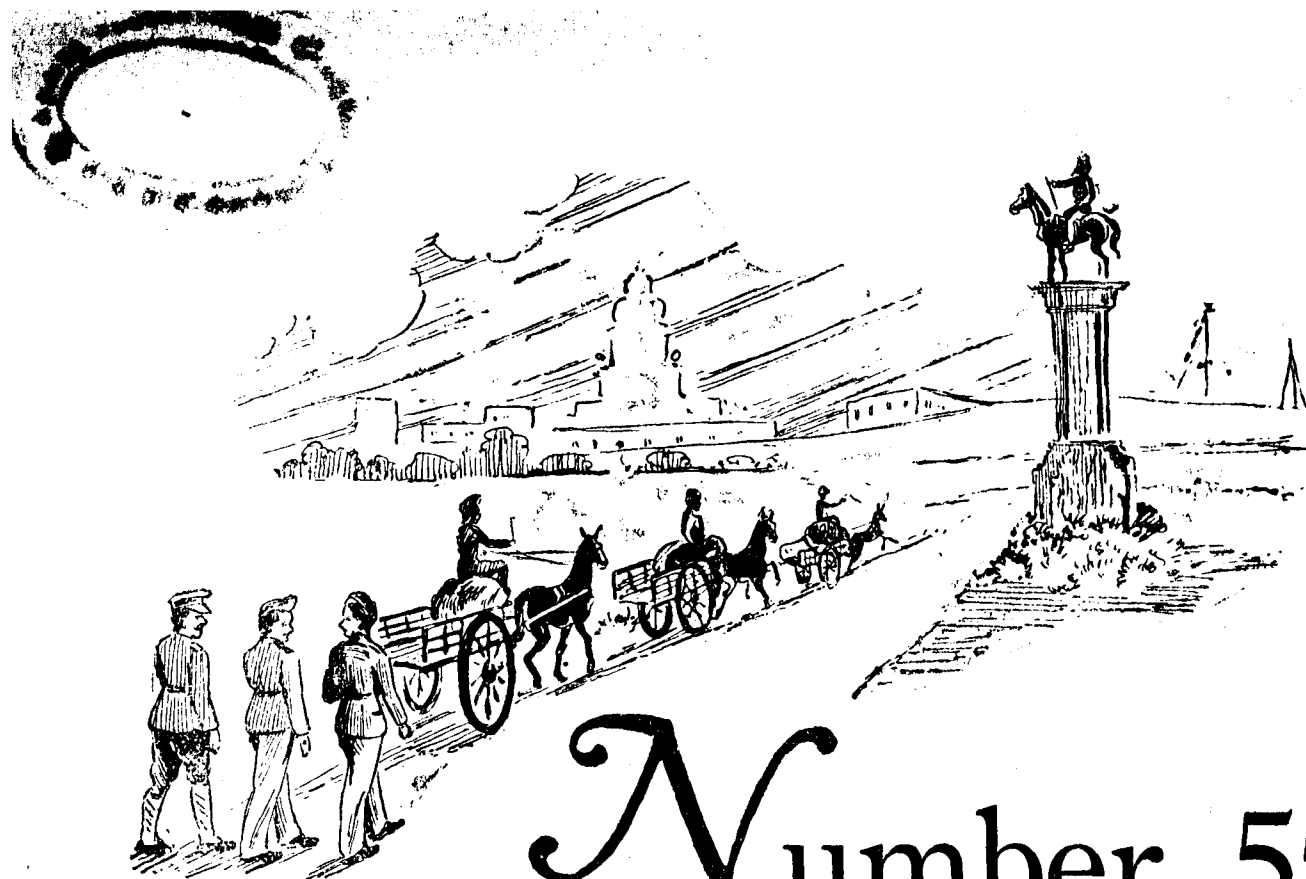
Promenader (Mylapore). "On the Marina the other evening, a fellow in a two-seater nearly crashed into a lamp-post. I said, 'You got a nice skid there', and he glared at me." Well, dear boy, perhaps the lady was his wife.

136591

YES, I KNOW

Answers to Questions on page 21

1. He reserves judgment.
2. Feelers (antennae).
3. Scut.
4. No; originally it was the ninth month (hence its name), but Numa added January and February in 713 B.C., making November the eleventh month.



Number 55

By J. A. Henry

Reading Time • About 9 Minutes

Illustrated by Varma

BOB looked out over the parade ground with an almost far-away light in his eyes. He flicked a fly from his hindquarters, the slow whisk of his chestnut tail indicative of his sense of tiredness.

"Number 55 been shod this month?" asked the O. C. as he came round inspecting the Battery.

The Farrier Sergeant nodded, and Bob, Number 55 on the Battery's books, pricked up his drooping ears as the grizzled man went on.

"Getting old, sir, is Number 55. He's 21. There was hardly any need to shoe him this month."

The O. C. smiled somewhat sadly, spurring his charger on.

"Yes. We'll most probably have to destroy him after this casting Board. Poor old fellow—" his voice tailed away towards the rear of the Battery as he continued his inspection.

The familiar Gun Park and the jingle of harness seemed unreal to Bob as he meditated. Something in that conversation had sounded sinister. Bob had seen some of his old compatriots filed out across the *maidan* to the spot where the vultures were—a spot from where,

at certain times of the year, came the "crack" of a pistol—a sound that only old horses like Bob guessed to be the sound of a firearm. And those that had been filed away, the Farrier Sergeant at their head, never came back.

"Keep your head up, Bob!" It was Mason's voice, the Driver on Bob's back. Bob jingled his bit and the buckle of his white head rope as he snapped his head into the proud position he was lately finding so difficult to maintain for long. He liked Driver Mason. There was something about Mason's grooming that made Bob feel placid and content. Most other men Bob knew irritated his skin with the curry comb or the brush, and had a habit of rushing the job so that they could while away a few minutes of the stable hour smoking surreptitious cigarettes in the shelter of the Harness Rooms.

"Getting old, Bob? Your fetlocks swell a bit too easily these days, eh?" It was the soft voice of Lieutenant Danvers this time. A caressing hand rubbed Bob's nose and he pushed against those sympathetic fingers gratefully.

Old? What was all this talk about his being old? But no matter how he tried, and how he held his

head up, Bob couldn't get away from the fact that his days as a Battery Riding Leader were over. There was, as Danvers said, that swelling in his fetlocks. And his hocks, after a long route march or a long hour on the parade ground, felt none too well—stiff—that's what they became—stiff through old age.

"Gunnery!"

This was the O. C., out in front now. Bob's head, which had begun to droop again, clicked up erectly at the authoritative command. It was when they were going through the various formations and movements on the parade ground that Bob could show them that there was fight in his old bones yet!

"Gunnery, prepare to mount."

A thud of pattering feet, and the Gunnery were in their places beside their respective vehicles. Bob looked out to where the sun was just rising over the horizon, red and gold, startlingly beautiful.

"Mount!"

A rattle of limber poles and the clatter of feet coming onto the limber footboards; the jerk and jingle of harness as horses strained at their traces, ready to move forward.

"Walk—" pause—straining traces—every man and horse alert—"March!"

Whips over and vehicle brakes off; the 'clip-clop' of iron shoes on the sun baked earth of Fyzabad. The Battery moved forward in a slowly rising cloud of dust.

Bob found it easier to remember old days when he was on the move. A trace of his old springiness came back to his prancing, pawing hooves and legs. The 'rumble of the gun wheels was like music in his ears.

"Good old Bob!" It was Driver Mason's voice, accompanied by an appreciative pat on glossy neck. "Keep it up old boy! You'll yet kid them into thinking that you're young again. You might dodge the bullet, old pal!"

Bullet? Bob had heard that word before. Old? There was a subtle connection between the two words that could not be overlooked. He had heard the O. C.

say, many a time, when a horse had broken a leg, cracked a joint, or become terribly lame through bone spavin, "Better put a bullet through him, Farrier Sergeant. I'll get the permission from the Station Commander."

Yes, 'old' and 'bullet' were ominously connected with the 'crack!' that echoed faintly over the dusty *maidan* after a horse had been led away from the stables—never to return.

As his nostrils distended with the growing labour of his breathing, Bob's eyes rolled in an effort to catch the glory of the sun and pink-tinged cirrus clouds. Something told him, some age old sense, that he would not look many more times at the sun as it rose.

"Keep your nose straight, Bob."

Mason again, and the light flick of his whip, turning Bob's head away from the sun. These humans

were kind, but they did not seem to understand that a horse had a soul—that he had his sad moments and those when the sight of Nature's beauty served as a slight emollient.

A signal from the arm of the

O. C. trotting in front—"Form Battery Column!" The increased thunder of wheels and hooves, punctuated by the musical tinkle of harness fittings as the Battery Broke into a faster trot to get into position.

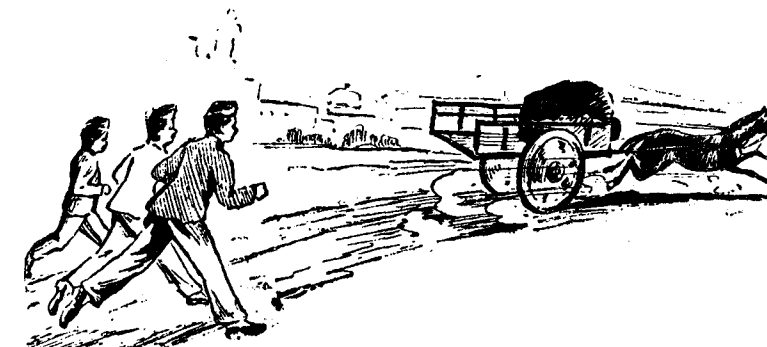
"Hold them! Hold them, you fools!"

The O. C.'s voice. Sounded alarmed, high-pitched. A sudden rush on the right flank—shouts—a thicker cloud of dust—and a gun team flashed out of its place—horses out of control.

The sight of them, galloping madly across the *maidan*, made Bob's heart pound with excitement. If only he could keep that mad pace in the same manner for an hour or two! Perhaps there wouldn't be so much talk of bullets and old age.

"Halt!"

The Battery halted. Three Sergeants galloped out after the runaway team, the O. C. following them up,



their single horses, outriders of the best, soon overtaking the now slowing team. But not before it had reached the old disused well at the north end of the parade ground.

When the rest of the Battery approached, the well was a scene of chaos—shattered harness, poles, wheels and footboards. Bob whinnied as he saw the two horses on the ground by the well, feebly waving legs that seemed to flap horribly from between the knee and fetlock. Three animals were unhurt and were rapidly being soothed by their drivers, who had miraculously escaped injury.

But the sixth horse? Bob was puzzled. No sign of it. Only, the sergeants were looking down the well.

"He's dead, sir—or I think so, anyway," called one of them to the O. C. as he went towards the well. "Not a movement from him."

The Farrier Sergeant, who had his orders, went swiftly up to the two horses on the ground, his revolver gleaming in the sunlight. Bob whinnied afresh as the two sharp 'cracks' stilled their agonised struggles.

So that was what a bullet meant! That was the exact connection he had been hazy about. Bob shook his head and pawed the ground. That was what he would get when his time came to be led out over the *maidan*, the Farrier Sergeant walking along in front, revolver swinging from his hand. That was no way for a horse to die—at the hands of men who loved him. It caused needless heartache to all concerned. And they'd carry his bridle back to the stables—to be worn by some young upstart of a remount—leaving him out there under the sun with the vultures. Fifteen years of hard work—and then—crack!

"We'd better haul him up," came the O. C.'s voice again.

Drag ropes were linked together. Men descended into the well. Forty horses were traced together, the long line of pawing impatient animals being hooked to one wagon.

"Walk march! He's coming up!"

The ropes tautened. Bob, out of respect for his old age, no doubt, had been left out of this grim tug-of-war. He whinnied with surprise as the sixth horse emerged from the well, being hauled to the light of the sun once more—motionless.

"There's no need for a bullet," came the low voice of the O. C. "He's quite dead."

Bob knew that the animal's stillness was as effective as that of the two horses which had 'had a bullet through them'.

* * * * *

"47—cast. 49—cast. 53—cast. 55—looks a gallant old fellow by Jove! Trying to bluff us all, I think!—sorry—55—cast."

The Veterinary Officer's voice. A long line of horses waiting to be filed past. Bob belonged to the small group for 'casting'.

Cast! Old—a bullet! Struck down as if he couldn't look after himself! Bob didn't mind the great, bare-necked vultures, but the thought of being, in his opinion, almost ignobly blotted out by the hand of one of these kind but misunderstanding humans—that rankled. It was not fair to him, and it wasn't fair to the man who had to shoot him.

Bob whinnied, pawing spurts of earth from the ground beneath him. With a wrench he freed his reins from the grip of Driver Mason.

"Get hold of that horse!" Shouts and curt orders—Mason leaping forward to grab the reins again—Bob was "just another horse cutting up fresh." His frenzy set other horses restlessly leaping. The eyes of the Veterinary Officer and the Officers of the Battery were on Bob, the veteran whose springiness they admired with lumps in their throats.

"Stop him!"

But Bob was off like the wind, off across the *maidan*, his waving tail disappearing in a cloud of dust, his eyes rolling towards the glory of the brazen sun, the greenness of the fields beyond the parade ground, the whiteness of the fleecy clouds in the sky.

Mason and a friend tracked him across the *maidan* he had trod in pride. And his tracks brought them to the old disused well at the north end of the parade ground.

"Looks almost as if he didn't like being cast and having a bullet put through his brain," murmured Driver Mason to his friend.

With misty eyes the two soldiers looked down the well at the sleeping form of veteran Bob—Number 55.

THE END

A Cock & Bull Story

By Devendra P. Lahoti

Illustrated by Sekar

Reading Time • About 9 Minutes

NARENDRA is a great story teller. He lives by this art. For years, the procedure has been this. Every month I loan him out a tenner and at the end of the month he stumbles into my study and blurts forth a perfectly cock-and-bull story about how he "lost it, old man. Give me a fortnight." And as I have a personal reference-table in which I find that Narendra's fortnight is equivalent to eternity, it is understood between us that in return for my tenner and the interest thereon he gives me a real gripping A1 story, and I call it quits. Eventually I recover my tenner from some Editor in an honourable manner.

Yesterday being the 30th, Narendra staggered into my study as per schedule, and sank wearily into a chair.

"You have brought my tenner, of course?" I said. Just force of habit and nothing more.

"Your tenner?" he cried painfully. "Ah, I am sorry, my dear fellow. Until another fortnight—"

"I see," I said, interrupting the familiar speech.

"Well, what happened?"

Narendra cleared his throat with an apparently painful effort.

"I am afraid it's quite a story. Do you mind if I recount the facts in their true order and—er—take a cigar out of that box?"

I said I didn't mind.

It happened (Narendra began) the day after you loaned me the tenner. Oh, that cursed blinking green note!

Well, the day after I departed with that tenner, I received an express telegram from the Private Secretary to H. H. The Maharaja of Balampur saying:

Come interview fourteenth nine morning own expense Private Secretary Balampur.

The telegram did not surprise me. I had

applied for the post of the head-ostler in that State. You see, not everybody is blind to a fellow's good points (as you generally are at the end of every month).

So, what with this and what with that, I decided that the best use for your blinking tenner—which I had



a mind to return that very day—should be expended on the journey to Balampur.

Followed, therefore, a hectic period of packing, swearing, unpacking and repacking. At last, I was in the train, sitting opposite the *prettiest girl in the world*, TRAVELLING ALONE.

Now, it is not generally ordained in the line of my luck to be sitting opposite pretty young girls of the Anna Sten type.

So I took a deep look at the girl every other minute for the next hour and a half and found that it did my system a world of good. My tongue began to water and my heart, about whose functioning the doctor had never been very sanguine, began to beat fast. As she was somewhat busy with a yellow-and-red book and seemed unmindful of my presence by her side, I waved my newspaper so that it brushed her elbow and caused her to look about her.

"Ah, I am sorry," I said readily. "May I know the time, please?" I had observed that she was wearing a tiny gold wrist watch.

"Yes, certainly," she replied sweetly, and then, looking at her watch she said: "Quarter past seven. Do you live in Lucknow?"

I was pleasantly surprised at her cute power of observation. She had evidently seen me getting in at Lucknow.

"Yes," I said. "Have you ever been there? A delightful city, I assure you."

She dog-eared her Edgar Wallace thriller and flung it aside, a keen light of intelligence dawning in her eyes.

"Yes, I love Lucknow," she said frankly.

I wondered if she also loved its inhabitants—especially those inhabitants who had such bright futures before them like myself.

"But it was not the historical monuments that interested me so much," she continued, "as the zoolo-

gical gardens. I have never seen such a fine python anywhere else. Have you?"

I had half a mind to tell her that I had—one from whom I borrowed tenners every month—but I said, "No, I haven't either. You a student?"

She nodded, whereupon I asked: "What are your views on the problem of co-education? Do you think it's good that grown-up boys and girls should be allowed to mix with each other?"

She regarded me for a moment amusedly. "Of course, they must," she said. "I cannot but feel sorry for our old men who say it is bad form for boys to look at girls and vice versa. Youth must serve itself. We protest against all parental interference. Is ogling bad or immoral? What rubbish! Or even kissing?"

I jumped in my seat. "KISSING???" I echoed incredulously.

"Yes," she continued. "I said kissing. And what is the harm anyway? Two pairs of *clean* lips come together for a few seconds and then separate, that's all. Where is the harm in that? By the by, how old are you?"

"Twenty-five," I said, reducing the actual figure by 20 per cent.

"Good! I am eighteen. Now, I ask you, aren't both of us old enough to be

able to take care of ourselves? Need we be lectured at? Aren't we much different from what we were, say, ten years ago?"

"We are," I said, "with one slight exception in my case. And that is I still retain my old admiration for pretty young girls."

She smiled shyly—meaning that she too had a similar weakness to confess. Then she chimed:

"And we are debarred from having social intercourse with one another. Now, isn't that too terribly cruel? Not, of course, that they can restrain us any longer. Why, if I think I should love an evening out with you, and you think likewise——"



"It is perfectly wonderful the way you guess things," I said.

"—and you think likewise," she continued, ignoring my remark, "we jolly well *will* have our way. Who can stop us from indulging our whims?"

I winced slightly under the challenge. "Don't you think that 'US' is rather too general?" I said guiltily. "I mean it may be alright in your case. But, you know, I have my—er—tailors and the landlady. It should be a mighty surprise if they did not stop me the first time they meet me—even if I were with you."

She smiled ironically and, as it seemed to me, a trifle bitterly. "Oh," she said, "you mean creditors? The curse of civilization. This reminds me that one of my own met me at the Delhi railway station and made me part with my only fiver. You see, I had quite forgotten I was owing anything to anybody," she hastened to explain, as I cast a dubious glance at her fashionable raiment and tried to reconcile it to a fiver surrendered to a creditor. "Or I should have wired papa for more money. As it is, however, I am now penniless."

A sympathetic cord vibrated within me.

"You mean you have creditors, too?" I asked gently.

She hung her head sadly. "Unfortunately, yes. But I am sure everyone has them. To your right, to your left, in the front, at the back, the world is teeming with them. Wherever you go, there they are to blight your existence. Sharks!"

"Very true," I said solemnly in a kind tone. "By the way, how inconsiderate of me not to have asked you your destination!"

She smiled. "Do you know the modern way? Gents first. Let us hear all about you first."

"Oh," I replied. "I am going to Balampur. I applied for a situation in that State and they have called me for an interview."

She gave a dramatic start. "Don't tell me you are going to interview my father?"

"Your father?" I asked, scratching my head.

"Yes, to be sure," she said. "My father is the Private Secretary to H. H. of Balampur. A dearie, I tell you. He used to have black hair, my father I mean, but it is now so long ago since I saw him that I suppose he must have grey hair now. I can't even recollect what he looked like. Funny, isn't it?"

But it wasn't the funny side that was striking me. I was just wondering how beautiful even a private secretary's daughter could be. Judged by the present sample, the ideal world should be full of private secretaries.

"But, of course, he will be at the station to receive me," the girl continued. "And I will see that he appoints you. It will be a pleasure to be of any service to you."

I was flattered. "I am sure I am infinitely obliged to you," I said humbly.

"Not at all," she said, looking intently at my purse which I had drawn out to purchase a packet of cigarettes (out of the balance of the tenner that had survived). "I say, that's a fine purse.

How much did you pay for it? Do you mind if I see it? Nice thing, really."

Overcoming my hesitation to show a purse which hardly contained anything above a fiver and some loose coppers, I handed her the thing and noted with satisfaction the pleasure its handling gave her. Then, after about five minutes, she gave it back to me and, as I took it and replaced it in my pocket, I failed to notice that it was a bit heavier.

Presently she took out a note-book from her small attache case, wrote hurriedly on a leaf with a pencil, tore it off, and thrust it in the breast pocket of her woollen jacket. In the meantime the train had steam-



ed into Zalampur, the station preceding Balampur. As the stoppage here was considerable, we both sauntered out of the platform and made for the book-stall where she selected half a dozen novels and magazines and shoved them into her attache case which she had brought out with her. Just as she collected her change, the train whistled.

"Get in," I said, drawing myself at the door of the compartment to assist her.

"You get in," she shouted, as the train started and moved slowly out of the platform. "You are heavy. I can jump in even at 10 m. p. h."

I jumped in, receiving a minor bump on my head in the act.

"Come along," I said turning back and extending my hand.

"Who? Me?" she said, laughing and running alongside the train.

"Not I. Thanks awfully. And here is a note for you." She drew a slip of a paper from her jacket and flung it inside, and the next moment the train had gathered speed and she was left behind, waving the daintiest handkerchief at me.

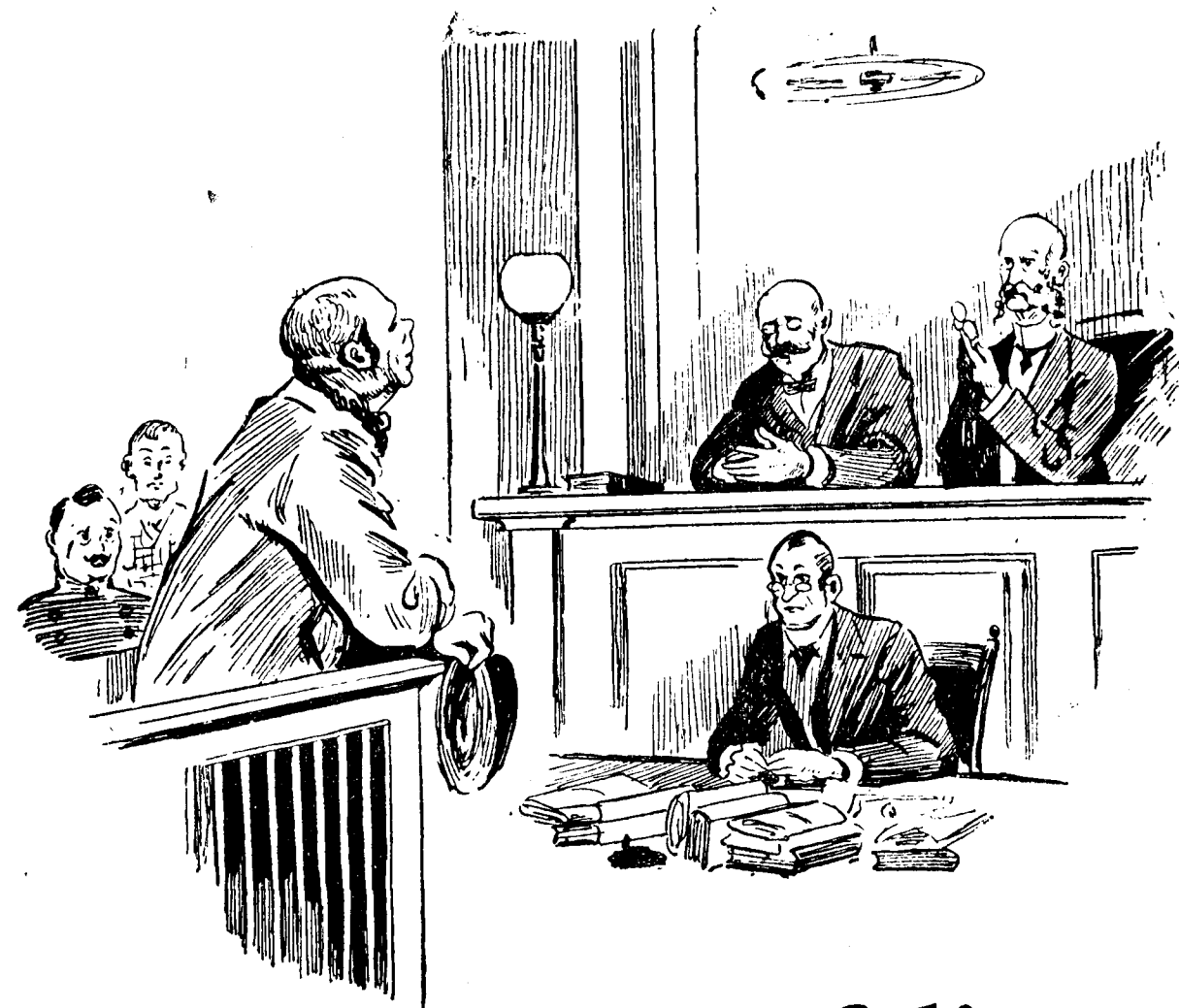
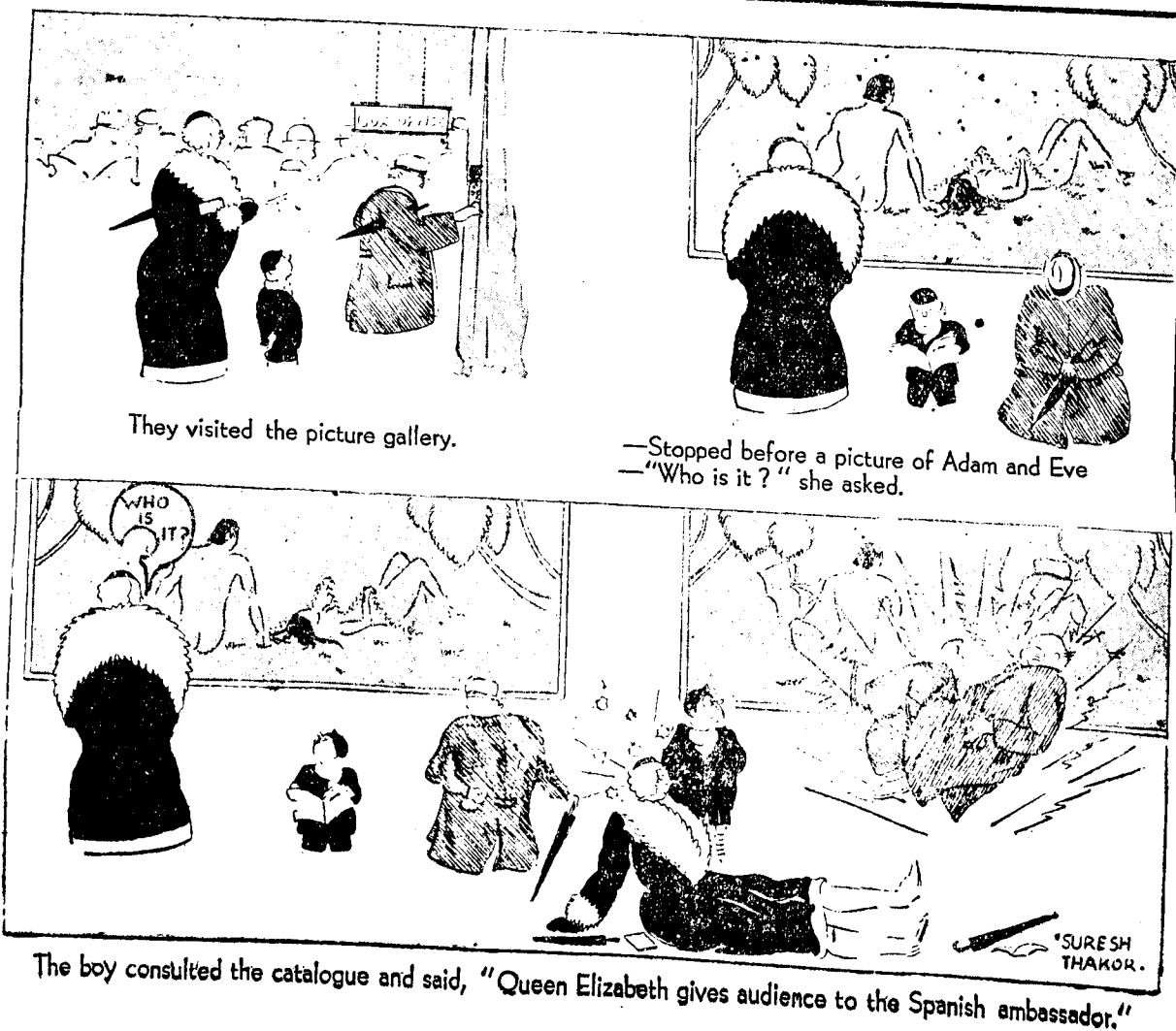
When she had disappeared from view and I had collected enough of my wits to achieve coherence in

my thoughts, I took the piece of paper she had thrown. It was the *explanation*.

"Mr. Crackhead," it read, "I am no blooming Private Secretary's daughter, and I think your appointment is as uncertain now as it was before. Altogether, I thank you for letting me see your purse, because you will find that it is not your purse at all. I am a travelling purse-agent and have given you a similar purse from my stock with the only difference that it is now full of stones and some loose tin foil to make the weight. I hope you don't mind. After all, men will pay anything for a good time. And do you think a mere fiver and some coppers pay for even a fraction of the enjoyment you derived from our short contact? Don't forget the tickle I gave you on the palm. So long, then, Adios. Miss Private Secretary!"

And now (concluded Narendra, hanging his head) you ask me to pay back your tenner when it is solely responsible for my present unhappiness. Can anything be more heartless? I should have thought you would try to make amends by paying me another, especially as I couldn't land that job.

"And that I will," I said, pleased at his story. "Here you are. Come with another gripping anecdote next month. Good bye."



Ababa Vs Adigrat

By Mrs. Kamala

Illustrated by Varma

Reading Time • About 5 Minutes

A] PLAY IN TWO ACTS

[Sign-post—Doctor Addis Ababa had sued a plain-fellow Adigrat (adjective Adigrat's not mine) for his bill long overdue, for attending on the wife of the latter. Acchis Amama was on the Adigrat side, and Adowa, the leader of the bar (not gymnastic or Bacchanalian, but legal) and a man who made much noise, were for the doctor. After the doctor had proved the number of his visits, their value according to his own computation, and his authority to do medical practice, Mr. Acchis Amama, asks Adigrat to make a speech if he wished to do so.]

Dramatis Personae:—Persons mentioned above, a couple of judges and other paraphernalia usually to be seen in courts.

[The 'Assbestos' curtain goes up.]

ACT I—Scene I

[A COURT IN EREWHON, THE PLACE OF THE CAUSE OF ACTION]

[TIME—COURT TIME, THAT IS 11 A.M.]

[The judge is seated biting the tip of his pen. The jurymen sit in all postures like Dasara dolls. The doctor is pacing up and down noiselessly and the

shining ends of his stethoscope are more eager than himself and is therefore peeping out of the pocket. The lawyers sit down waiting for the peroration.]

Adigrat:—"I will," ahem, (here the phlegm chokes him a bit, but great as he is or rather he thinks himself to be, he proceeds jumping over the difficulty in a trice.) "if Mr. Adowa won't be too hard on me." [Here Mr. Adowa assures him an uninterrupted hearing.]

Adigrat (rubs his hands importantly): "Gentlemen of the jury, you and I is plain-fellows, and if we don't stick together, these 'ere lawyers and doctors will get advantage of us. I ain't no lawyer or doctor, and I ain't no objections to them in their proper place, but they ain't plain-fellows, gentlemen of the jury. Now this man Addis Ababa was no doctor, and I went for him to doctor my wife's sore leg, and he came and put some salve on to it, and some rags, but never did it a bit of good. Gentlemen of the jury, I don't believe he is a doctor at all. There are doctors as is doctors sure enough, but this man don't earn his money, and if you send for him, as Mrs. Ethiopia did for a servant-boy, he just kills his patient, and wants you to pay for it."

Addis Ababa (thunders): "I don't!"

Adigrat (with the slow accents of a judge with the wig and gown on): "Did you cure him?"

[The doctor is silent]

Adigrat:—"As I was saying, gentlemen of the jury, we plain-fellows, when we sell anything say betels, we got to give vally for the money we ask, and doctors ain't none too good to be put to the same rule. And I don't believe this 'ere Addis Ababa is a doctor nohow."

Addis Ababa: "Look at my diploma, if you think I am no doctor."

Adigrat (in great contempt):—"His diploma! His diploma! Gentlemen, that is a big word for a printed sheepskin, and it don't make no doctor of the first sheep as wore it; nor does it of the man as now carries it; a good newspaper has more on it, and I p'int out to ye, that he ain't no doctor at all."

Addis Ababa (in a fury, screams out): "Ask my patients if I am not a doctor?"

[This is the last straw that broke the camel's back, for Adigrat replies, with a look and tone of unutterable sadness.]

Adigrat: "That is a hard saying, gentlemen of the jury, and one that requires me to die, or to have the powers as I hear tell ceased to be exercised since the apostles. Am I to go to the lonely graveyard and rap on the silent tomb, and say to 'em as is at last at rest from physic and doctors' bills, 'Git up here you, and state if you died a nat'ral death, or was 'urried up by Addis Ababa?' He says, 'Ask his patients,' and, gentlemen of the jury, they are all dead! Where is Mrs. Eritrea's man Wal Wal? Go ask the worms in the graveyard where he lies. Mr. Ogaden's woman Abyssinia was attended by 'im, and her funeral was appointed. Where is Mussolimi? Now in Glory, expressing his opinion of Addis Ababa's doctoring at his fist-end. Where is that baby-gal of Baron Alosee? She is where doctors cease to trouble and infants are at rest. Gentlemen, he has eaten tomato-soup enough at my house to pay for his salve. I found the rays, and I don't suppose he charges for making her worse." (Great Applause).

Scene II

[One judge wakes up and begins to evince an interest in the proceedings.]

Judge:—"I agree with the jurors' verdict and find for the defendant. Plaintiff to pay costs."

ACT II—Scene I

[The 'Assbestos' curtain falls but gives trouble in the middle.]

ACT II—Scene II

[It now falls smoothly.]

NOTE:—Dearth of Plots, may tempt talkie producers to select this. But then royalties must be paid. If they can't afford it, let them not be bothered. I am rich.

THE END



The Chevalier d'Eon

By Conrad

• Reading Time • About 8 Minutes

EARLY in the eighteenth century, a child was born in the house of a prosperous Parisian lawyer. The event was announced as the birth of a son, and congratulations poured in on the proud father.

The child soon became remarkable for beauty, wit, and intelligence. The heir of Maitre d'Eon entered the paternal business with every prospect of a brilliant legal career. The powerful Prince de Conti, one of the patrons of the father, took an interest in the handsome and clever lad.

The Chevalier d'Eon possessed a small, smooth face, dainty features, and a pink-and-white complexion. He had a graceful figure, wide hips, and a full, well-rounded bust.

One evening the Prince de Conti held a masquerade. Young d'Eon happened to visit the Prince's residence on business. The ladies of the household seized the handsome lad, and in sport decked him out as a young girl of the nobility. The transformation was astounding. As a girl, the Chevalier surpassed in beauty, grace, and loveliness, the most exquisite ladies of the most brilliant court in history. D'Eon was persuaded to attend the masquerade as a girl.

Louis XV arrived, dressed as a Persian sultan. He was immediately overwhelmed by the superlative loveliness of d'Eon, who was introduced as a young relative of the Prince. The King paid great attention to the beautiful girl, and was amazed at her charm, discretion, and intelligence. He commanded the Prince de Conti to arrange an assignation with the ravishing young noblewoman.

De Conti treated the situation as a marvellous joke, too good to miss. He installed the Chevalier in a luxurious pavilion outside Paris. In due course the royal lover arrived privately, and spent the evening in the company of a handsome person who wore the garments of a young lady of fashion.

What passed between the King and the Chevalier can never be known. It is believed the d'Eon main-

tained the character of a young lady of unassailable virtue, and confided to the royal suitor that she had the ability to pass herself off as a man. The shrewd King quickly saw the advantages of such a gift, when allied to the mental abilities of one such as d'Eon. It is certain that Louis XV never discovered whether the Chevalier was a man or woman.

Madame de Pompadour was the king's all-powerful mistress. She would never have tolerated the king's constant association with a beautiful and accomplished girl, yet she became the close friend of d'Eon. It appears that the diplomatic Chevalier told the king he was really a woman, while confiding to the Pompadour that he was really a man.

The Chevalier was soon deep in the confidence of Louis XV. He became the most trusted member of that corps of secret diplomats by which the Sun-King dominated the councils of Europe.

The Chevalier's first mission was to Russia. He went in the guise of the niece of the French Ambassador. In his role of a girl, he insinuated himself into the boudoir of the Empress Elizabeth, and learned the intimate secrets of her private life and public policy.

The Ambassador's errand was the effecting of an alliance with Elizabeth. In this he was unsuccessful. He returned to Paris, and his beautiful niece departed with him.

Louis dispatched another ambassador to St. Petersburg. This ambassador was the Chevalier d'Eon, in male attire! In the handsome young Frenchman the Empress did not recognise the beautiful young woman of the previous year, but she took to the latter as much as she had done to the former. The ambassador thus had the advantage of a masculine friendship with Elizabeth, in addition to the feminine knowledge of her secrets, gained during the previous visit. In the circumstances, he had no difficulty in negotiating a very advantageous treaty.

D'Eon managed to keep on intimate terms with the royal lady, without being compelled to reveal his sex. There is no doubt that the amorous Empress desired to add him to her collection of lovers. D'Eon, however, was recalled to Paris soon after the ratification of the treaty.

The Chevalier now became an officer in the Royal Dragoons! He proved to be a fine soldier, of undoubted courage on the battlefield.

In the intervals of travelling on the King's business as a beautiful woman, he fought many duels as an officer of the royal army.

Eventually, he was sent to London as Military Secretary to the French Embassy. He was really Louis' secret agent. In the course of his work he frequented London society sometimes in military uniform, sometimes as the Ambassador's beautiful daughter.

His letters to Louis XV were written in the character of a girl, and contained loving endearments. An agent of Madame de Pompadour secured one of these letters. Confronted with such evidence, the King's mistress was convinced that d'Eon was a woman. Furious at having been deceived so thoroughly, and burning at the thought of the boudoir confidences she had given this person, she compelled the King to dismiss d'Eon in disgrace. Privately, however, Louis gave the Chevalier a huge pension.

Owing to the jealousy of Madame de Pompadour, the mystery of the duality of d'Eon's sex became widely known. Young men of fashion made huge bets on the question, and many artful tricks were played to discover the truth. The Chevalier nevertheless preserved the secret until the end of his life.

Throughout his career, d'Eon enjoyed the greatest popularity with men and women, whether he presented himself in his male or female character. His success as a diplomat, a soldier, and a beautiful woman, was probably due to the brilliant coolness of his character. As a man he was unaffected by the lure of female beauty, and as a woman he was proof against male blandishments. He never aroused jealousy among his contemporaries. As a man, he never seemed effeminate; as a woman he never seemed masculine. He charmed everyone, and yet was unassailable.

At the death of Louis XV, d'Eon returned to Paris, and presented himself at the Court of the new Queen, Marie Antoinette. This imperious woman refused to receive him as an Officer of the Dragoons. Mindful of

the anxiety he had caused Madame de Pompadour, she caused an edict to be made, legally proclaiming the Chevalier a woman. D'Eon was forbidden to wear male attire in future, and was compelled to curtsy before his new Queen in all the finery of hoops, petticoats, and patches.

The new King, intrigued by the mystery, commanded an interview with this remarkable female. But the compulsory stabilisation of his sex seems to have annoyed the gallant Chevalier. In the King's presence he created a ludicrous scene by stumbling over his petticoats, uttering soldierlike oaths, and altogether behaving quite unlike the exquisite and dainty woman he had always been. With wig awry, he made a clumsy curtsy to the King, and then stood aside ridiculously fanning himself, like a burlesque fishwife in pantomime.

He was forbidden to appear at Court any more. For some years, he brought the royal edict into contempt by striding about Paris in skirts, smoking and swearing like a Dragoon.

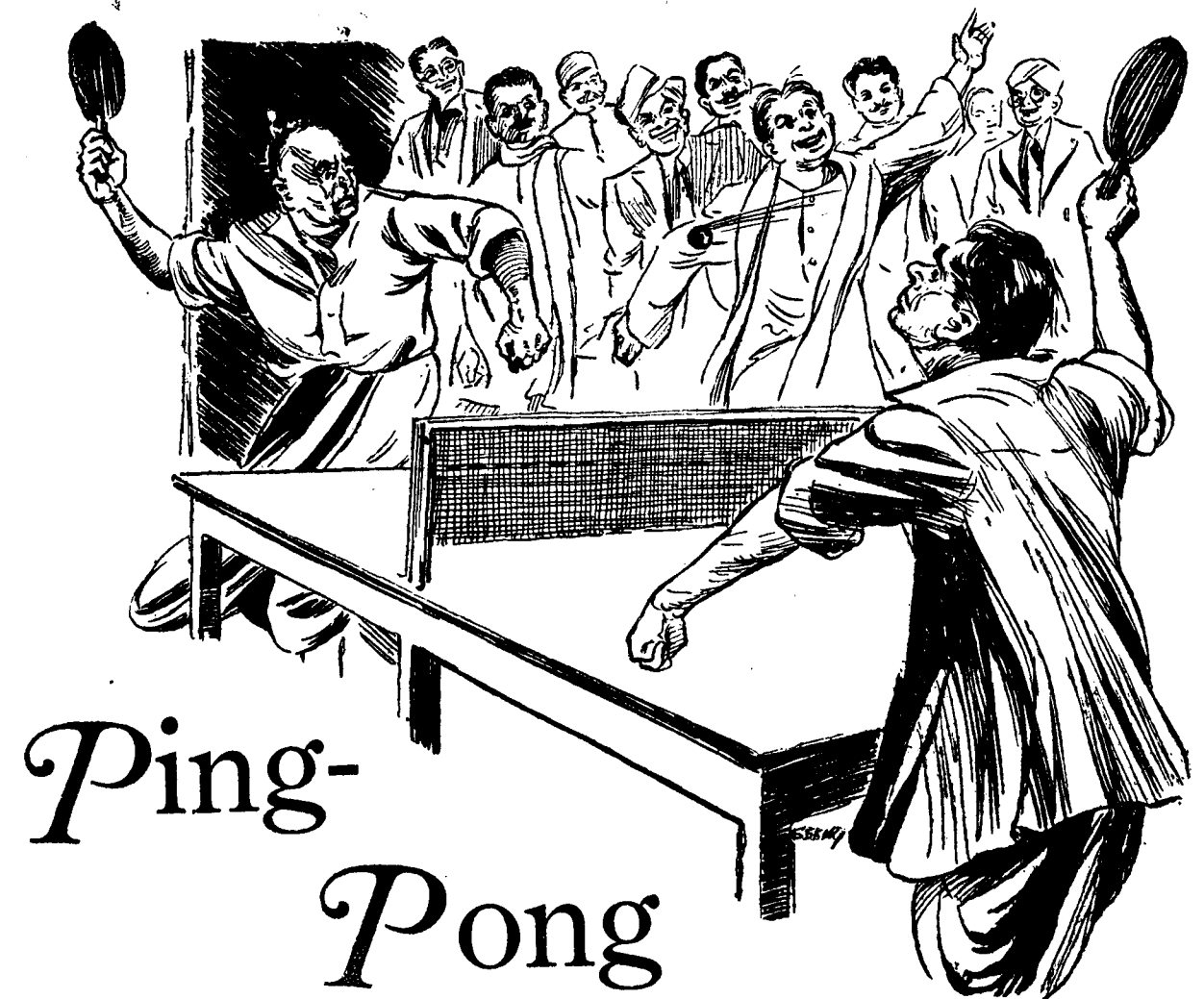
However, people remained unconvinced, and immense wagers continued to be made regarding the sex of the Chevalier; for in private company he was still the embodiment of lovely womanhood. Beaumarchais was convinced that d'Eon was a woman, but Voltaire caustically held the opposite opinion. Ordinary people ventured their opinion with care, for the charming lady fought desperate duels, still wearing petticoats, with any man who ventured an unseemly remark in her presence.

D'Eon lived for the better part of a century—born in 1728, he died in 1810. Towards the end of his life, he developed into a sweet old lady, loveable and grey-haired. At the time of his death, opinion was almost universal that the Chevalier was a woman, charming even in her extreme old age.

When d'Eon's death was reported to Napoleon, he commanded an autopsy on the body. The result was the following certificate, which may still be consulted in the archives of France:

"I certify, by these presents, that I have inspected the body of Chevalier d'Eon, in the presence of M. Adair M. Wilson, and Father Elisee. I found all the male organs perfectly formed. On dissection, there was complete evidence of undoubted male virility, despite the advanced age of the subject.—Copeland, Imperial Physician."

THE END



by R. Jaganathan

Reading Time • About 7 Minutes

Illustrated by Sekar

PING-PONG. Pretend to hear it for the first time and tell me what you think. Don't you feel that it is rather a funny name? Doesn't your mind jump at once to Hong Kong? Aren't you ready to admit that it is, at all events, a sweetly nasal name, quite incapable of stirring you to the depths? Nothing in it to make you visualise any moving accidents; just one of the minor sports of mankind. You may even object to calling it a sport at all.

On the other hand, to my friend C. S. R., Ping-pong spelt something profound and abiding. It was the only recreation he indulged, and one in which he was able to excel all others. Tennis, he said, whatever merits it had as a sport of social import, tended to make snobs of the weak-minded. Cricket he rejected

as the sport for idlers. Hockey and lathi charge ranked together; and then too, there was an insensate haste about it which was revolting. Football smacked of schoolboyishness. Badminton was admittedly effete, save when somebody aimed at your nose or spectacles. Volley ball somehow savoured of the mob-complex. So, C.S.R. decided on indoor games; and there is no gain-saying the fact that Ping-pong ranks high among indoor games. C. S. R.'s argument was that Bridge, with all its vaunted merit as an intelligent man's recreation, was likely to bring one's sub-conscious angularities prominently to the surface, culminating in disputation and argument. Carrom was too feeble and feminine to be reckoned at all. Chess was a notorious nerve-racker. So, there remained only Ping-pong, and C.S.R.

took to it with great earnestness. Before a twelve-month had passed he became a master of the game. Year after year, in the Club tournaments, handicap or no handicap, he came out victorious and was mighty proud of the fact that he was peerless and unapproachable. And it so happened that everyone that went to have a try at him returned scorched with a love set. For six years, he thus reigned supreme. "Oh, spirit of bliss!" he would have exclaimed if it was only put to him that way, "if you have no name to be known by, let me call you Ping-pong."

Such was the man and his reputation: no wonder that the whole Club foregathered to witness the finals this year. As was expected, C. S. R. had an easy walk-over in the earlier rounds. Those who were matched against him were *bachchas* compared to him. As was his tradition, he took love sets against them all and came to the top. In the finals he had to meet Chari, a very recent recruit to the Club, whose only known qualification was that he was backed by all the younger members of the Club. His ascent to the finals was no easy matter as it was fought every inch and won.

The match began with C. S. R.'s service. There was nothing remarkable about his play. He was a careful hand, very steady and would never risk a stroke even when it was tempting and sure. By the sheer monotony of steady returns he would tire out his opponent and win. He felt sure that he would be able to make quick work of Chari. On the other hand, Chari did not care a damn what happened so long as the play was good. A younger player, all style and no illusions; that was Chari.

The first game went against Chari. The second, ditto, though Chari put up a good fight. The third should have gone to him; he was so near taking it, but happened to miss it by the narrowest margin. The fourth and fifth went to C. S. R., thanks to his steady returns. One more game and the first set would be over. C. S. R. was beaming with success and looked at Chari with pitying eyes. "Another of those *bachchas*," he thought. And then a charitable thought dawned in his mind. Why not give a game to the poor fellow and take the next one and the set? He would thus show that he was not selfish or greedy. The audience too, at any rate the younger members who felt envious of him because he was an old bandicoot, would realise that he was a real sportsman. Intrigued by the idea, he gave a few high balls for Chari to smash, and himself did a few deliberately erratic hits and missed.

The game went to Chari and the younger members gave him a prolonged applause in which C. S. R. also joined. But Chari was not elated; he knew what that game meant. It was no more than a crumb thrown to him out of pity. He could not brook it. "I must show him that I can jolly well deserve it on my own," he thought.

The next game was a long-drawn struggle. Both matched their best against each other. On five occasions the game was pendulous at deuce and by the merest chance Chari took it. The applause he received was deafening in which C. S. R. weakly joined. "Of course, the next game and the set will be mine," thought C. S. R., and played. Again, by the narrowest margin Chari won the game. C. S. R. began to search himself. "What did it mean? Had the tide begun to turn? Has anything happened to me?" he wondered, and drank a glass of water to steady himself. But Chari was slowly gaining ground. A few more minutes, and the umpire announced the grand score, five all.

C. S. R. became visibly alarmed. His reputed steadiness was met with an equally stubborn steadiness. It was no use sticking to the old method. It was tiresome and tedious and not as effective as of old. So, he decided to change tactics and began to hit hard, but being unaccustomed to hard strokes, missed every time by a *broad* margin. The champion was looking funny. "He has taken leave of his senses," murmured one in the audience as C. S. R. vehemently cut the air, missing a ball. Chari again won the game with a stroke in the grand manner which at once provoked an ecstatic ovation. One onlooker could not contain himself and burst out, "Kill!"

C. S. R. was wroth. "Umpire! I protest," he stormed.

"What's there to protest?" retorted the onlooker, "I only meant kill the ball."

"I don't want your advice," shouted C. S. R.

"Surely, you aren't the only one playing," was the reply.

The set went to Chari at last. In the second set, too, he was in excellent form, in a fine frenzy as it were, and determined to wrench victory from C. S. R. After another thirty minutes of dogged fighting, Chari took the second set also. In the third set C. S. R. made a desperate rally. "My reputation! My reputation!" he was constantly reminding himself and put forth his best. You could see the man melting into sweat. It was a treat to Chari's supporters.

(Continued on page 40)

About Fat Women

By Mea

Sketch by Mali

Reading Time • About 5 Minutes

WHY do fat women always wish they were thin? At any rate they pretend they do. If they only realised it, and perhaps some of them do, they have many advantages over the thin women.

When a man thinks of a woman he pictures a vision of curves and soft bulges, plenty of soft white flesh. Not a whisp of skin and bone.

I remember the first time I noticed Isobel. She was sitting opposite me in a railway carriage; we were trying to carry on a conversation above the roar of the train. In order to hear me better, Isobel leant forward. The generous view of feminine curves which met my approving eyes was one which might well have filled a slim flat-chested woman with envy. It was this sight that made me decide Isobel was worth cultivating and ended in my leading her to the altar.

A slim girl may be very nice to dance with, she certainly has her points. A fat girl's points are well covered, a fact that you soon discover when you are sitting in the seclusion of a "kala jaggar". It may be easier to pick up a slim girl and sit her on your knees; the fat girl may be a greater weight, but your thighs won't feel sore.

When you stroke the thin girl's arms they seem all knobbles and joint, but the fat girl's arms are a dream of cool, smooth rounded flesh, and when she twines them round your neck, Oh Boy!

'Laugh and grow fat' is a well-known maxim. A smile sits naturally on the fat woman's pleasant face, but it has to be forced onto the sour visage of the thin woman. Fat women are always laughing, and we can quote yet another maxim in this connection, 'laugh and the world laughs with you'. Yes, the world really loves fat women.



them no harm. A thin woman may occupy less room in the car but the fat woman prevents you from being thrown about and she feels more comfortable beside you.

It is remarkable that most women in India run to fat, and it therefore follows that the majority of women in India are pleasant to look upon, charming to meet, and delightful in every way.

Have you ever noticed a thin woman's legs? Two sticks of bone and gristle, on which her stockings hang in wrinkles. Take the fat woman's leg (not literally). The ankles taper up to a beautiful calf which fills her stocking to its capacity.

Poets and artists, who know what they are talking about, rave about women's curves. The slim girl with the boyish figure hasn't got any. She is unnatural, unsatisfying, unpleasant and unsexed.

I believe the question as to whether shrimps make good mothers has never been satisfactorily settled, but there can be no doubt about fat women. They are obviously born to be mothers. And see how the infant rejoices in his fat mother! There is no more pitiable sight than a scraggy mother nursing her baby. The child of the fat mother wallows in the glorious play-ground with which she is able to provide him.

A fat woman exudes good nature; a thin woman looks on the world with jaundiced eyes. The fat woman has contentment written on her face; the thin woman has a forbidding countenance.

A woman should rejoice in her adipose tissue, for it makes her comely in the eyes of men. The Greeks, the greatest connoisseurs of physical beauty in the history of the world, admired the fully developed woman, the woman with rounded curves. They had no use for the flat-chested, narrow-hipped and half-starved miserable creatures that sometimes masquerade under the name of women.

Fancy trying to make love to a girl with a really modern figure! Why, there's nothing of her! Give me a good buxom wench who looks as if she had been poured into her clothes and they weren't quite big enough to hold all of her.



Finally let it be well noted that practically all the famous beauties and the majority of great women were, and are, fat. Therefore let not the fat woman bant and diet, let her cease from worrying about her waist measurement and her weight. May she continue to smile her happy infectious smile and be content in the knowledge that flesh is a sign of prosperity, (if not in monetary wealth), in health and happiness. Gentlemen, let us raise our glasses and drink to fat women! May their shadows never grow less. (Amen—Ed.)

THE END

PING-PONG—(Continued from page 38)

"If you have perspiration," quoted one of them.

"Prepare to shed it now," concluded another.

At last, however, C. S. R. took the set and deserved all the applause he got. The fourth set commenced. It was Chari's now or never, and he was bent on winning the match. C. S. R. also fought desperately to re-establish himself, but the younger man had more stamina and greater success with his strokes; and, above all, had the moral support of the audience. Well, Chari won the match amidst the tumult and shouting that shook the Club premises.

This unexpected reverse knocked the bottom from under C. S. R.'s feet. His faith in Ping-pong was rudely shaken. He never knew until then that it would rouse him to such a pitch of excitement and goad him to primeval depths. His nerves were jagged and his eyes grew dim. The irreverent young fellows had yearned for his defeat and had their day. He could no longer lift up his forehead and his eyes as the Ping-pong hero that he was. As he revolved over these, he came to the conclusion that he had stuck to Ping-pong rather too long. None of his generation indulged the sport, at any rate, with his infatuation. It was meet only for the youngsters that wanted excitement. "No more of it for me," he said and shunned the green table thenceforth.

C. S. R. is still a member of the Club, but a very silent member. His recreation is gardening; breaking the stubborn glebe, watering the plants and plucking the weeds.

Star Snaps By Satellite

All In One

Bouquet For Rainer.

"See Naples and die," said one and, rue to his words, died. Same way, a veteran journalist pays a glowing tribute to Miss Luise Rainer for her acting in *Escapade*. He says "She was new to me, but I'll certainly go and see her again. I was told she is a Jewess. If that be the case, were I a German of strictly Aryan descent, I would commit suicide!" That is about the handsomest thing a man said of a woman.



Luise Rainer

Wanted: A Fire!

A huge conflagration was required to film a fire sequence in *A Fire Had Been Arranged* at Twickenham Film Studios. They had to arrange one, at great cost, little dreaming they were in for a genuine one not so long after! And, three days later, the Twickenham Film Studios were actually gutted by a big blaze. Things choose strange times to happen, don't they? Had the Studio waited for just a while! But had they known—

Triple Taxes

Hollywood is worrying. The taxes on the stars' picture-salaries are telling. The position, especially of the English stars like Herbert Marshall, Brian Aherne, George Arliss and Ronald Colman is anomalous. They have to pay a triple tax—an extremely unfair imposition—to England, to the United States and to the state of California. Most of these stars will be obliged either to quit Hollywood for England or stay there and make fewer pictures. To a Hollywood producer, this is certainly a source of danger, but to the picture-goer, this is indeed a turn for better films.

A star making two or three pictures a year is apt to give those pictures more thought and devotion than when he is making hectic attempts to do about six. And there will be greater chances for new personalities as the producers will have to enlist new talent.



A wealthy humorist has by devious means acquired hundreds of these condemned little bits of films and pieced them together for his own delectation.

Pickwick G. C. M. P. C.

Mr. Micawber of *David Copperfield* is going to play Mr. Pickwick in the Pickwick Papers. Micawber (W. C. Fields) and G. C. M. P. C. Pickwick-to-be, is convalescing in a nursing home just now, but is making good progress.

Stars, male and female, are divorcing year after year. It may be all well for the ex-s, provided they are not thrown together to their mutual annoyance. But imagine the situation when a divorced husband finds himself suddenly in the midst of his divorced wives. This is what happened to the ex-wives of the Barrymores in Beverly Hills last month. In a fashionable restaurant were seated Lionel and John Barrymore. There entered, Dolores Costello, the very epitome of beauty and dignity; Michael Strange, and Doris Rankin—all wives of the Barrymores once. Only one was not yet arrived but was on her way, and that was Catherine Harris, John's first wife. Dolores and John Barrymore have settled things reasonably for themselves, i. e., without going to court. And now Dolores is coming back to the screen.

A Naughty Humorist

One of the most interesting films ever made, and one which has the world's greatest cast, has never been shown to the public, and never will be!

It shows famous stars when they are cursing, having forgotten their lines, or tearing their frocks on nails during romantic scenes, or slipping on rugs and landing in the most undignified manner on the floor of the set.



Sriranjini (Devaki)

The reaction of the audience is the true test of the success or failure of a performance, whether it is a picture or a *Kalak shepam*. If the attention of the audience strays to detecting bugs and finding faults, it is time the performer ended or the producer took to some other line, gardening his back-yard for instance, where there is no audience to satisfy, except perhaps the wife.

The late Panchapakesa Sastri, the Charles Dickens of the Tamil Nad appreciated this perfectly and fashioned his discourses to please the audience. Everyone of them was a model and school-boys, retired orthodox elders, or old women,—whoever comprised his audience—stayed enthralled. No one would stir in his place, nor even so much as turn his head for fear of missing a sparkling joke or the pathos of a poignant incident. Sastriar gave his themes an intensely human treatment rather than a humorous one. This method was unfailing in its appeal, and Sastriar always won. Humour there would be in abundance in his sallies, but that was not what endeared him to his audience. He held that humour, if simple would be denounced as vulgar, and if subtle, it had the unpleasant



P. Subba Rao (Vasudeva)

The cameraman has managed his photography trick-effects cleverly and the superb scenes of the Jumna making way for Vasudeva, *Chakrasuravadam*, *Rasakrida* and *Kalinga Mardanam* deserve the highest praise.



V. Gaggiah (Kamsa)

The film *Krishna Leela*, in Telugu, instead of being the usual chain of Lord Krishna's philandering romances, is a human picture of the triumph of parenthood. The theme is adroitly handled and touchingly portrayed.

I was sorry when the show finished, but it had run for nearly three hours! There must have been the usual bugs: I was not aware of any!

Last year I saw Telugu *Lava Kusa* and thought it was the best produced in S. India. Now, Telugu *Krishna Leela* is even greater. Many of the actors who took part in *Lava Kusa* are in this too, but they all act, sing and look better.

Lovers of our film industry in general and the actors and actresses of the Tamil pictures in particular, especially those in *Krishna Leela* and *Radha Kalyanam*, ought to see it. Throughout I was feeling sore that our (Tamil) film-acting should be deteriorating with each production while that of our Andhra neighbours is making progress by fast strides.

Ugrasena, Kamsa's father, is introduced for the first time in this picture and the exchange of Sri Krishna and Nandagopa's child takes place on the river-bed—another departure from the original version—Nanda himself handing over his child to Vasudeva. The final scenes show Ugrasena restored to the throne—also new to the story. To a good many of us this is a surprise. These two interpolations might well have been left out. Otherwise there is nothing in the story to distinguish it from the Tamil edition.

Krishna

Producers: Vel Pictures, Ltd.

Leela (Telugu)

Reviewed By K. A. P.

The singing in this film is of a high order throughout. Akkura, (Parupalli Satyanarayana) in particular, sings *Kethara Gowla*, *Dhanyasi* and *Atana* wonderfully.

Someone remarked that the tunes were mostly of the Telugu stage style with their terminals. I don't see why it should not be. It is a Telugu talkie and the only sensible thing to do is to adopt Telugu tunes for it, unlike our producers copying, and that clumsily, the North and West Indian style for Tamil songs for the Tamil fans!

Another notable thing is the attention paid to details. While the major settings and scenic arrangements are admirable, the usual errors of detail are conspicuous by their absence.

The continuous drone of music accompaniment detracts from the otherwise beautiful picture, jars greatly and intrudes often. But then, the characters while speaking, might allow their lips freer play. In some places it looks awkwardly like Kathakali pantomime.



Miss Sriranjini (Devaki)

Sri. Sriranjini gives an appealing and understanding interpretation of Devaki, and holds one's interest with power. She stirs the eternal mother in women with her unerring acting, and if there is any actress in the south Indian films who can do it better, I have yet to see her.

Vemuru Gaggiah (Kamsa)

Vemuru Gaggiah, as Kamsa, is the Lon Chaney of Andhra stage and screen. He is grand. Hated by his father, dreaded and despised by his subjects, pursued day and night by the phantom of an impending retribution, the mental agony and reaction he depicts—every bit of his acting is refreshingly close to the mark. He is a human caricature in symbolism—the fruits of a villainous life, villainously lived. Gaggiah interprets the symbol as it should be interpreted.



Ramathilakam (Yasoda)

The Other Actors

The acting in general is remarkably good all round. Miss Ramathilakam is good as Yasoda. It is a relief to find that her cradle-song for lulling Sri Krishna is not about Rama!

There is also a comic domestic scene of two quarrelsome wives of a cowering weeping and their hubby also co-operating wholeheartedly, not knowing what else to do. This is nice, wholesome fun.

Vasudeva (Parupalli Subba Rao) is all right but doesn't seem to show sufficient concern in the things happening. His acting lacks pep.

Rajeswara Rao as Bala Krishna is good enough but his companions are not. They are a sorry lot.

This is an excellent picture of the paranic story, full of bitter pathos, softened by the understanding of human suffering and frailty, well produced and well enough directed—in other words what is known in trade parlance as a *Stellar Vehicle*.

Judging from the bumper house it attracts in its run for the fifth week, it is a star picture.

The Yule-Tide Spirit

By A. T. M. Thomas

Reading Time • About 10 Minutes

Sketches by Mali

THE members of the family, excluding the children, were assembled round a table, to discuss the momentous question—who should be Father Christmas? Lots were cast. It fell to Uncle John. He firmly declined the offer on the ground that he was sorely afflicted with sciatica, and for the mysterious appearances and exits for which Father Christmas is noted, he felt, sciatica would be as helpful as tooth-ache. He added, as the weather was bitterly cold, he would be secure in the fastness of his bed-sheets as locust's eggs are in a pod, and if anybody was going to bother him on a night like this, Christmas or no Christmas, he would knock his head off. We were thoroughly ashamed of him. We cast lots again and Uncle Sam was lucky enough to be Father Christmas.

Now, Mary, a tall, lissom girl with roguish eyes, brought in a Bill to the effect that Father Christmas should undertake an aerial journey this time, namely, he should be let down from the top floor *en route* to the Christmas Tree, alongside the staircase, with the rapidity of lightning. Uncle Sam, probably not being a member of the Madras Flying Club, shuddered at the prospect of his aerial transit. He said if he should have to volplane like that, he was not their man. Of course, he came round, when he was assured that he would descend upon the floor beneath like the gentle rain.

Then the agenda was gone through. Among other things, it was decided that Father Christmas was to be let down by ropes and he was to be intercepted by the children, when, his lift was to be moored unseen to one of the banisters of the staircase. After having given the kiddies the greetings of the season and the presents, to the accompaniment of animal noises from above, Father Christmas was to be further lowered on some unexplained mission to the cook and the gardener. Very ingenious—whatever Mary schemes.

Christmas!

The Christmas tree stood ablaze with candle-lights and loaded with presents. There were some dolls with such hideous faces as would have destroyed the mental peace of many a young lady below twelve. But fortunately, the wits of the children as they stood



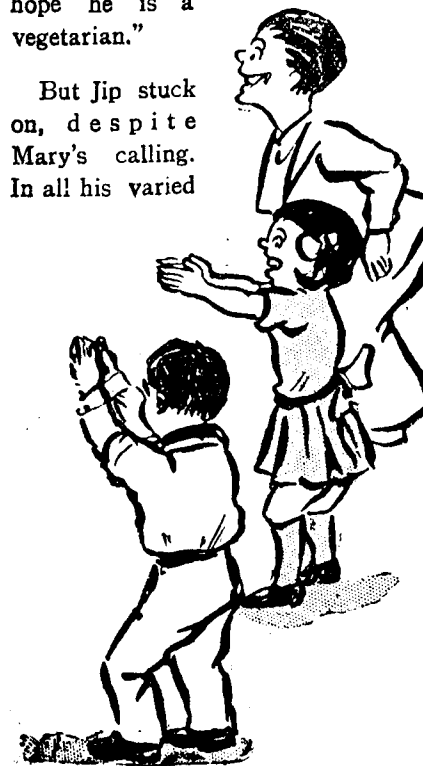
round the tree, were mercifully blunted by plum-pudding, cakes and turkey-roast, in which they had grossly indulged just before. Whoops of delight broke from the children as they gazed rapturously upwards, for, they were seeing a pair of boots, monstrously large for the legs of Father Christmas, wildly kicking about, followed by a red gown, a snowy beard—some-what like that of the late Mr. Robinson Crusoe's—and an unconvincing mask that rather sat oddly on him.

While he was being lowered, his beard got involved with the crepe-paper decorations and by the time he had extricated himself, his mask was violently dislodged with the result, Uncle Sam's eyes were looking out of Father Christmas's mouth and U. S.'s ears sticking out of F. C.'s eyes. One young girl, who seemed to have had a very good film-education, observed that Father Christmas could be an excellent understudy to Boris Karloff. Meanwhile Jip—Mary's dog—who was hitherto a silent spectator, began to execute in lower register at the sight of the strange apparition.

Hardly had Father Christmas acknowledged the hail of the children when Jip made a dash at him and fastened himself to his leg. Father Christmas swore himself hoarse and wasted in three minutes such bad language that should have kept a decent Christian going for a lifetime.

"I say, Mary, call that blasted dog of yours. I hope he is a vegetarian."

But Jip stuck on, despite Mary's calling. In all his varied



experience, Jip had never seen men making aerial descents and when you add a mask and a beard, Jip was justified in thinking that he was showing the good old bull-dog spirit of his ancestors in having him by the leg. Added to this, was the strange noise that came floating down the staircase, which distinctly sounded like the grunting of bears. Jip thought he was dealing with a dickens of a rumpus.

"You scoundrels, pull me up! Pull me up! The dog is chewing my leg. Pull me up, dammit!" bellowed Father Christmas, addressing the bears parked on the top-floor.

What with their own gruntings, the wild cheering of the kiddies, Mary's remonstrances with Jip not to make Uncle Sam's calf an item on his supper menu and Uncle Sam's vociferous instructions for an upward drag, the bears didn't hear Father Christmas. On the contrary, they joyously changed themselves into tigers and sent down roar after roar. This all the more infuriated Jip, who was not a hail-fellow-well-met with anybody and who now transferred his attention to the other leg. When at length instructions for pulling up Father Christmas reached the tigers through a special messenger, they promptly pulled him up, not before one tiger had remarked that Father Christmas, on the contrary, ought to have been sent down (a) to the cook and (b) for first aid. This led to Father Christmas *plus* Jip being suspended between

Heaven and Earth like Muhammed's coffin. At this moment, Father Christmas did a very wise thing in pulling off his mask and beard and bidding the dog to desist from giving full play to his carnivorous instincts. When Jip saw the facial features of Uncle Sam, he, as if by magic, immediately let go his leg and wagged his tail for joy. Taking a poisonous look at him, Uncle Sam sent the animal, with the vigour of a penalty-kick, flying through the air.

As soon as Jip touched the terra, somebody deftly threw a cloth over him and Mary threw herself on the mixture of cloth and dog. Jip, thus brought under control, was removed by Mary from the scene of his late conflict and was thrown into a room. Highly chagrined at his mistress's conduct, he began to worry the bedsheet. One heard the unmistakable sound of something falling over and something gurgling out of it.

The children, when they perceived that they hadn't yet received their Christmas presents, set up a howl. And to their disappointment, no Father Christmas was to be seen about, for, he had joined the company of *ci-devant* tigers (who were cuckoos now) and was swearing at them like blazes. The run of things immediately demanded an emergent meeting. I was asked to assume the evil-smelling mask and Father Christmas's role. I flatly refused the offer because no man who valued his skin would stalk about the house where man-eating dogs were at large. After Mary had assured me that Jip was in safe custody, I was prevailed upon to impersonate Father Christmas. It was decided on a burst of inspiration from Mary that the cuckoos, alias tigers, on hearing the agreed cue, "See you again next year," should pull me up.

When Father Christmas came down in a flowing gown that was 15 sizes too large for him, the children stopped crying. Cries of delight burst from them and they vaulted round him for joy. The distribution of presents was going on smoothly. One boy was extremely displeased with his toy engine. He bellowed and nearly washed away the Tree, as he wanted the *real* one. Father Christmas had to pacify him by saying, "Never mind, sonny, you'll get the real one next year."

Instantly Father Christmas found himself hoisted precipitately. He stood swaying dangerously and the next moment, he fell, got his legs entangled in the ropes and hung upside down, swinging like a kinkajou. From below came the sound of toys crashing on the floor and from above came seven voices spluttering oaths,—and calling Father Christmas, "You bungling ass! You mutton-headed muff! That was the cue, dammit!"

Accepting the greetings of the season with a benignant complacency and being deeply thankful that his pendulous state would strengthen his varicose veins, Father Christmas prayed, as he had never prayed before, for a rescue-party. How long Father Christmas would have stayed *a la* racoon, astrology itself couldn't have predicted, for, at this juncture, he was treated to the rare sight of seeing Uncle John—the gaffer who was crumpled up with sciatica—chasing Jip round and round the Christmas Tree.

It was a glorious sight. The pendant Father Christmas, the cuckoos, Mary, the kiddies and others simply drank it in. They saw Uncle John following the dog, (which came of a long line of ancestors whose instincts, both aggressive and self-preservative, had

run on parallel lines) with a string of oaths while the quadruped was streaking for the open windows by a clear lead of twelve lengths. A moment later we all realised that Uncle John, as he ran limping was trailing a canal in his wake. Before he could express himself in a tangible manner—it was a pity he had no line of wolf-hunters behind him—the animal managed to escape *via* the window.

"What's the matter, uncle?" Mary inquired.

"Matter my foot! One can't have a moment's peace in this house," he wheezed out.

"What's up, old horse?" from one of the cuckoos.

"Who threw that blasted dog into my room? He has only got to say so and I'll knock his head off."

Tense silence prevailed. Mary looked as if butter wouldn't melt in her mouth.

"Tell me, who threw the dog? I'll split his wind-pipe. Had I known that the blighted dog was in the room, I'd have sooner crept into a keyhole than be left alone with him. What is the name of that sub-human creature?"

"You refer to the thrower or.....the animal?" from Mary.

"Thrower, dammit."

"Oh! Sorry, uncle. You see, we were at the Tree.....Did the dog bite you?" from one of the cuckoos, who evidently came of a long line of police-inspectors.

"Bite? Oosh! That would have been better. I just had a nub-down with liniment. As my hips were paining like hell, I took aspirin and slid between the sheets for a goodish stretch of sleep. I first thought I was in the bye-bye land but," here his voice choked like a motor exhaust, "I was—in a—pool of—icy water.....too utterly too-too. Believe me, the dear old frame was good as dead. I found the water trickling, *drip, drip, drip, drip*, on to the bed. What do you think it was?"

"Rain-water?" from Uncle Sam.

"Fiddlestick! The bally dog had upset the goglet that was on the teapoy. Finding that he was confined, he jumped and darted all over the shop, exploring for an outlet. Oh, Heaven! I'll die to-night. Now tell me, who threw the dog? I'll knock his head if he only says so."

"Cheer up, old fruit. Today is Christmas," said Father Christmas from the upper regions.

"Christmas be blowed!" exclaimed Uncle John and then wondering wherefrom the disembodied voice came, he looked about him.

When he saw Father Christmas in a pendant state, his eyes started out of their sockets. He stood speechless for a while. When he regained his voice, he inquired what monkey tricks I was up to. When the scenario was explained to him, he guffawed so violently that he came within a touch of apoplexy. He had now forgotten his sciatica and his recent encounter with Jip. In the meanwhile, Father Christmas was disentangled from the ropes and was safely lowered.

"You've got to look at these things from every angle," soothed ex-Father Christmas, when I came down.

"I jolly well looked at the things from the correct angle," I said.

"Don't pull a fiddle-face."

"Is a girl who can deliberately allow her lover to go through the horrors of an aerial descent worth bothering about?" I asked.

"Or a girl who could callously allow her blighted dog to chew her uncle's calf?"

"Or a girl, for that matter, who could unfeelingly soak her sciatic uncle by throwing her dog into his room?" I pursued.

"What do you mean?" choked Uncle John.

"What I said. I had half an idea all along that she had forgotten something when she threw the dog into your room. You know how it is."

"Where is the cold-blooded daughter of a Tartar?" thundered Uncle John.

The cold-blooded daughter of a Tartar was nowhere to be seen. She had gone after Jip.

When we compared notes and swapped views, we found our Yule-tide experiences had forged a new bond of sympathy. Undoubtedly, a confirmation of it by a hearty booze was indicated.

"How do you react to a drinking-bout?" from Uncle Sam.

"I am all for it."

"Let's drink to the Yule-tide spirit in the right spirit," added Uncle John.

THE END

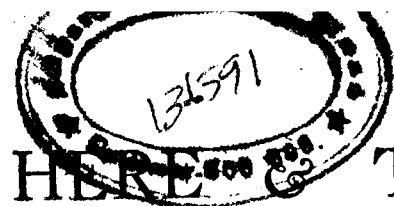
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HERE & THERE

Viscount Castlerosse tells a story about chloroform, which incidentally shows that God is a very obliging old gentleman where royalty, especially the feminine gender, is concerned.

It was Dr. James Simpson who discovered the possibilities of chloroform. He used it in child-birth. Conscientious objectors objected to the anaesthetic on the ground that God willed that woman should suffer at childbirth. Later, Queen Victoria decided to use chloroform when her next baby arrived. And she made her wish known. The same conscientious objectors who flew at Dr. Simpson didn't say anything when their monarch sought the aid of science. Wise men, they understood that God changed his opinion about the ungodly attributes of the drug.

* * * *

Indian air is heavy with the talk of unemployment of educated youths. Except for the doctrinaire nonsense doled out to the poor fellows at convocations with disgusting iteration by professional orators, precious little is done to 'liquidate' the curse.

The world is a large place, and Santiago de Chili is an important place in it. Thousands of Chilians, young bucks to doddering grandmas and grandpas are eagerly learning English. There are not enough teachers going, however. The reason for their love of English literature is, of course, the films. Hollywood is dumping its produce in the Chilian market and the Chilians, to appreciate and enjoy the films, are yearning for a little knowledge of English.

Here is an opening for adventurous youths of India. Chili by the way, produces, among other good things, very fine girls.

* * * *

After Cocky, the 102-year-old parrot of Trafalgar Square, who after passing himself off as a man all his life, suddenly laid an egg, comes another, six years older than cocky. This bird too gave its owners the false impression that it was a male. Now it is laying four eggs a week and trying to hatch them. She is sad because nothing comes out of her eggs. She ought to be proud of her exploit. It is not every bird that could lay an egg at 108 years.



Amrutanjani

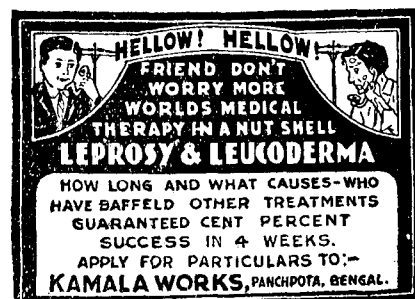
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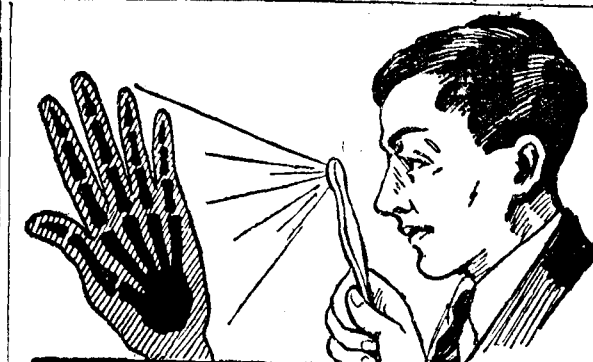
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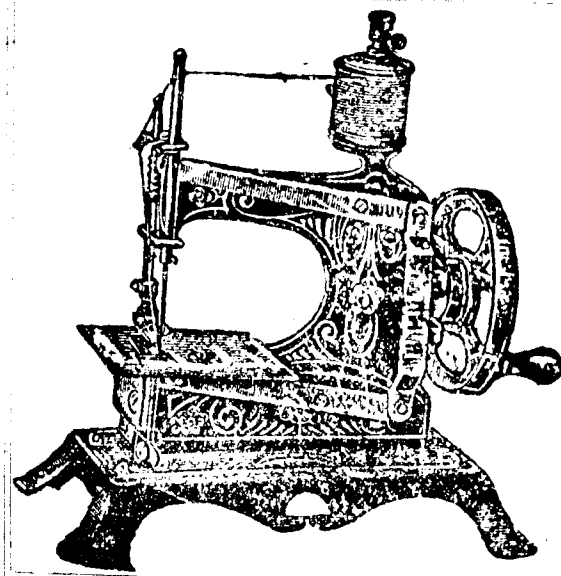
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