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The **MERRY** MAGAZINE



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Vol. IV Madras, 11th January, '36 No. 2

- Mie -
A.T.M. Thomas
- Omega -

- Artiji -
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The Banana Burglar



By Thirupathi

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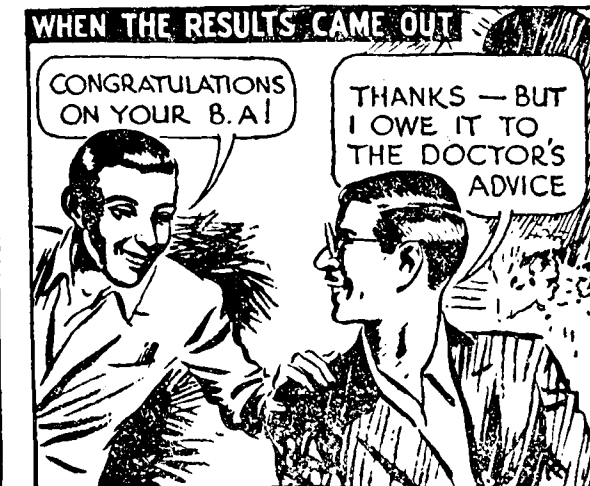
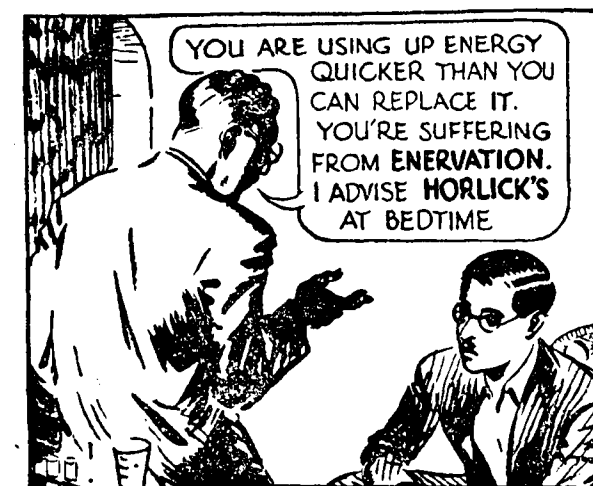
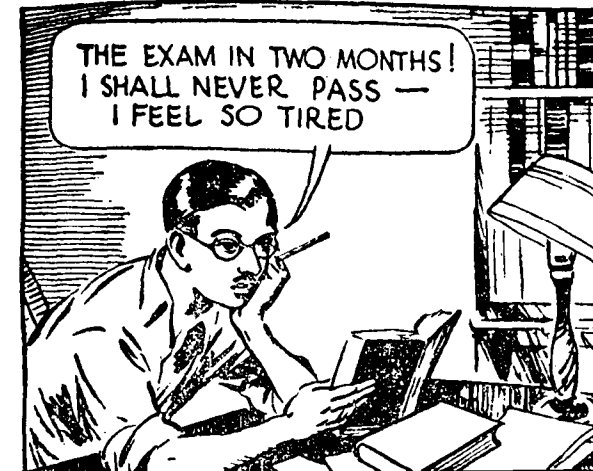
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Madras, Jan. 11, '36

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Thirupathi Suicide!

The age-old struggle between villainy and wit. A perennial theme in a new setting.

Artiji

Sightseeing in Venice

Here is the Grand Canal brought before you almost on a salver! If you are going on sightseeing in Venice, you may cancel the booking. You can enjoy the whole thrill of it by proxy.

A. T. M. Thomas

A Bed-time Story

If you are thinking of Maurice Chevalier and Jeanette Macdonald you will be sadly disappointed. However it is a naughty story, showing that idiocy and successful love making are not incongruous.

Also

The Knighted Buccaneer

By V. V. R.

The Case of an

Infatuated Duke

By Embusque

And all usual features

SPARKS FROM OUR ANVIL

In the course of a statement, Sgr. Mussolini explains that the present lull is the result of one of those necessary pauses in a campaign.

It looks more like necessity making the pause.

* * *

On account of the scarcity of gold in Germany, a decree lays down that wedding rings should be of 9-carat gold only.

But wedding couples should continue to be 24-carat Nordic.

* * *

Astrological forecasts indicate that the Italo-Abyssinian War will not last much longer.

Military indications are trying their best to confirm this!

* * *

A manifesto by Scottish graduates appeals for support to Mr. Macdonald as the embodiment of the best qualities of their national character.

It must be a novel experience to the Scotch to dispraise themselves!

* * *

In the course of a statement, Mr. Eden says that the trouble in Cairo will cease when Egypt learns of Britain's good-will.

It is not so much a case of learning as of seeing.

There is no foundation for the report that the Rajah Saheb of Bobbili sent his cordial greetings to the Congress on its Golden Jubilee.

* * *

A Nagpur message says that Congress was at home to Liberals.

We doubt however if the Liberals will at any time be at home in the Congress.

* * *

One of the speakers at the Liberal Conference confessed that they were prepared to accept office.

The only point in doubt is whether the electorate will let them!

* * *

A Viceregal Court-circular says that Their Excellencies attended a ball depicting the period 1750—1800.

For further details, one must go to the history of the French Revolution!

* * *

At the annual session of the Hindu Mahasabha, a speaker remarked that India belonged to Hindus, and that other communities were merely guests.

That is why they get such excellent treatment!

Dr. Ambedkar says that Hinduism is not a religion, but a disease.

And the worst symptom of it is patience!

* * *

The Working Committee of the Congress has ruled that the Manual Labour Clause does not apply to ex-Presidents of the Congress.

This should remove the final obstacle from the path of Mr Srinivasa Aiyangar, and enable him to resume high command.

* * *

From an account of the Second 'Test' Match: "Amarnath showed grit, and taking his courage in both hands played the bowling..."

Next time, let us hope, he will find a place for the bat also!

* * *

At the Women's Conference, a resolution was passed asking for legislation to penalise bigamy.

We should have thought that bigamy is its own punishment!

* * *

Speaking at the Christian College Day celebrations, Sir R. K. Shanmugham Chetti is said to have remarked: "If I were given the option between charity and service, I would choose service."

What a pity he has had no choice in the matter so far.

The Beginning of the End

MUCH indignation has been roused by the 'frightfulness' exhibited by the Italian army in Abyssinia in bombing Red-Cross centres. If we can consider the matter dispassionately at all, bombing of the sick and wounded is no more heinous than that of women and children. Both kinds of victims are at the mercy of the bomber; it is an unequal struggle, and utterly repugnant to notions of chivalry, which with all the barbarism of olden times, were recognised as binding on both sides. But the course of modern progress has destroyed that notion, and there are no rules of the game at all in modern warfare. But the bombing of hospitals, coupled with news of the remarkable recovery of the Abyssinian troops seems to indicate that the Italian offensive has not only spent itself out, but is actuated by the recklessness of despair. The doped and depraved press of Italy calls for more frightfulness, apparently just to spite world-opinion. Such a loss of morale on the part of the civil population is perhaps the best indication of the sad plight of the Italian war-lords. Under the most favourable conditions, the campaign in Africa was no better than a colossal adventure; and now that it is going definitely against Italy, she can find no outlet to her impotent rage than to wreak destruction on helpless and wounded human beings. It is perhaps too much to expect, as did the French Socialist leader, that it will precipitate the imposition of the oil embargo. But it will certainly bring Abyssinia the sympathy and help of the world at large.

Birth-Control

One of the conferences held in Christmas week was entirely in the hands of women;

and dealt with subjects primarily relating to the place of women in our society. The awakening of our women is a recent phenomenon; it was due directly to the emotional and religious appeal which the National Movement in its militant phases held for them. Their growth psychologically has been remarkably rapid. While not concerned with politics in its dustier manifestations, they have shown an eagerness and capacity to be in the vanguard of the nation's progress in more than one direction. We shall not be surprised if in the next decade they should prove to be the solvents of all communal bitterness that has led to communal cleavage.

One of the most controversial subjects dealt with by them during the last few years has been 'Birth-Control'. The public is not yet educated enough to understand the rights and wrongs of the subject. On one side are ranged authority, custom, prejudice, and timidity born of subservience; on the other are the modern spirit of healthy scepticism, the rights of the individual, and the lure of the modern materialist era. But above all, the problem is a woman's problem; and a woman must be given the right to choose for herself, and not be dictated to. At bottom, one side wants knowledge, and the other is afraid to give it. It is the old, old story; birth-control has come to stay; and soon let us hope that neither old maids nor *sanyasins* will lecture either on the one side or the other, and thus add to the darkening of counsel. The presence of two such distinguished workers in the field as Mrs. M. Sanger and Mrs. How-Martyn is bound to spread knowledge about what, apart from economic and ultimate race considerations, is an urgent and pressing problem for individual women.

In The Wrong Place



The Squeezer: Do you realise you are putting your hand in my pocket?

The Squeezed: I do, sir. I am sorry, but I shall take it out at the next stop. I have nothing to hang on.

The March of Events

By The Man on the Move



Sgr. Mussolini told his cabinet this week (I am not referring to the furniture in his study) that the Paris Proposals were very far from satisfying Italy's minimum requirements.

When this cruel decision came to the ears of Sir Samuel Hoare (who is having a spot of well-earned rest in the Swiss Alps) he was so disconsolate that he refused to eat his lunch. Baldwin when he heard of his old pal's sad reaction to Mussolini's cruel words shed a tear (or two) and sent a rattle and a copy of the latest edition of the India Act as post-X'mas presents. He also sent by 'plane Anthony Eden (incog) to console poor Sir Samuel. Sir Samuel is progressing splendidly. There is no cause for anxiety. No bulletins will be issued.

The other day I was reading a paper in the tram. The fellow sitting next me naturally shared the reading, placing his head on my shoulder. We happened to read the same news-item:

Calcutta:—National bags were hoisted over the Corporation Buildings, parks and many private buildings.....

"Bags!" said that chap. "What a silly misprint for 'flags'!"

"No, sir!" said a man sitting opposite. "It is not a misprint, much less is it silly."

I looked at the man keenly. If one could tell a Socialist by the face, this was one. I was right.

"Then, what the roaring blazes is it?" asked the chap who shared the paper with me.

"They are bags all right," said the Socialist. "They are symbolic of the shape of things to come. Into those bags go the resources of the country,—call it confiscation, expropriation, what you will. And then....."

The tram stopped and I got down.

I read this bit about Gandhi.



Doctors examined Mahatma Gandhi this evening, and they state in their bulletin that he is suffering from high blood-pressure and no cause for anxiety.

Well, then, let us give our Mahatma some good cause for anxiety so that he may get better early. One way to do it is to proclaim goat's milk very bad diet for people who are after Truth. That it contains vitamins with pronounced bellicose tenden-

cies. Working on the idea of the end justifying the means, I am prepared to lie to Mahatma Gandhi, who, I fervently pray may be long spared to us. But he will only laugh and say, "Naughty Munusami!"

Babu Bimalendu Bose gave a dance performance in Madras in the house of Desodharaka Nageswara Rao Pantulu. There was a large and appreciative gathering. Mr. C. R. S. Iyengar who assumed the role of the Big Gun was very warm in his eulogy. He congratulated Mr. Bose on his study and understanding of the dance representing the Cosmic Evolution and its highest (!!!) meaning and spiritual significance.

I haven't had the pleasure of seeing Bimalendu Babu doing the Cosmic Dance. But I share the warm sentiments of Mr. C. R. S. Iyengar.

This dancing business opens up a vista of possibilities not yet envisaged by the common run of humanity. This great art is cribbed and cabined. It is understood and practised by only a lucky few. My suggestion is that it may be learnt by an increasing number of people. Just as the cadences of music exert an extramundane charm over man and beast, the rhythm of a swaying, curvilinear body has a wholesome



de-brutefying effect (A. P. Herbert not to interfere) over brutes, human or jungli. This art would come in handy when you are confronted with your impertinent, importunate, vociferous creditors—your landlord for instance.

When your landlord comes to you with a cold gleam in his eye, keyed up tense, for a row with you over that overdue rent, start a dance. The commercial brute in him would be de-bruted and the divinity in him would fight its way to the surface.

Try this in your unhappy daily life, my indigent friends, and let me know what you think of it.

Mr. T. K. Velu Pillai, Deputy President of the Travancore Legislative Assembly, addressing the All India Women's Conference at Trivandrum, requested the ladies not to think that men were against them. If they were against the ladies, said Mr. Pillai, what had the men to live for? And he wound up with, "Put your trust in men."

I am quite in agreement with Mr. Velu Pillai. "What had the men to live for?" is good. Bar those bumptious bachelors, and *brahmacharis* in the Gandhian sense, I would like to see the fellow with humanities so atrophied that he cannot see a beauty, a higher purpose, behind the face of the plainest woman, that he cannot detect a perfume in the honest sweat of the toiling pastoral girl, as Henry Fielding did a couple of centuries ago. And if we are against the ladies, what about the babies of whom Sgr. Mussolini, M. Le Brun and Herr Hitler are so fond? If there are no babies what is to become of wars which help the Theory of Selection? That would be an unmerited torture to the soul of Darwin and the soul of Mussolini when he will be dead.

Yes, put your trust in men, girls. Believe all the lies they tell you; for a lie, an intelligent lie, is a piece of art, the outcome of a highly imaginative brain, a thing to admire. Let the poor men strut as heroes before you; every man loves to play the hero before his woman.

However I must protest against all this talk of equality of the sexes. Every woman at the Trivandrum Conference got hot over the advocacy of this idea. In the higher philosophical sense, in the cosmic plan (if there is a cosmic plan) the point may be conceded. For instance, as beings throbbing with Life there is precious little difference between me, a donkey and Sir Samuel Hoare and Mussolini and a vulture. That is a concept of life long established, and no reasonable chap is likely to debate it.

We have dressed this nude truth in fairy fabrics; and it must be admitted that this truth is no less a truth because of the romance we have woven around it.

Politics may be the last resort of the scoundrel, but the evening resort of the tired, toiling, normal man is the arms of his mate. Suppose after a hard day's work a man goes home and is greeted by the wife with: "Hello, old horse! Had a good day?" If I were that man I would disguise myself as a horse and spend the rest of my life on the turf or out, producing pedigree stock.

Or suppose again the girl you always called "Darling" "Honey" or "Saccharine" accosted you in the street and said "Say, old chap, got a cigar on you?" You would feel like thumping her nastily on her back and bite her ear.

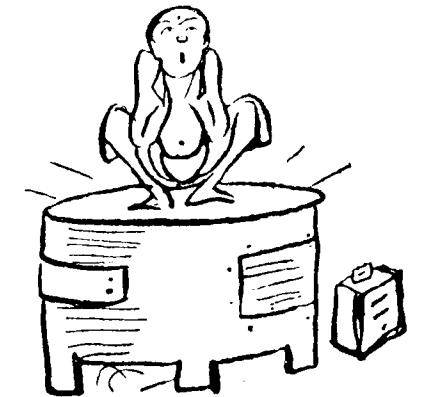


From Poet Kalidasa down we have always compared a woman's eyes with lotus petals and silver fish, her neck with roseate conches, her underworks with golden-

hued, velvet plantain trunks, her upper works with the majestic humps of elephants, her truant locks of hair playing around her face with jet-black bees, her breath with perfume, her voice with celestial music, her whole being with a walking, flower-laden, tender plant.

Let us cherish that illusion, if illusion it be, for in it there is no harm. Equality be blowed! Woman is any day the superior of man.

Dr. Ambedkar says that Hinduism is not a religion but a conta-



gious disease. This is a shocking bit of news to me, as doubtless it is to others who share my faith. No wonder my father, his father and so on up the family-tree, were always suffering from some disease or other, which doctors have never been able to diagnose properly. This horrible contagion is handed down to me in the form of a recurring nausea whenever I read about Hindu caste divisions, and a racking pain in the heart whenever pious Hindus poke a little harmless fun at the Harijans. Now that the pathological possibilities of Hinduism are so tritely expressed by Dr. Ambedkar, I must, for the sake of my own health and that of my unborn children, do something about it. A Harijan friend of mine advises me to place myself in quarantine in the valleys of the Western Ghats, or if that doesn't suit me, to drink a pint of Russian petrol and sit on an oven. I am told by one who knows that the treatment has yielded startling results. Sounds plausible. Will correspondents write to me what they think about it?

Star Snaps—

A Medal For Kay Francis

There is a medal for being good in Hollywood. The medal for such virtue was awarded to Kay Francis, by Harry Warner, her employer. For a long time, she had been the 'good gal' of the studio; no arguments, no walk-outs, no gruntings—accepting every part assigned to her by Warners. The consequence was a gold-lined three-year contract and a paternal pat on the back.



Kay Francis

The Female Fred

One of this week's super attractions is *The Broadway Melody of 1936*. This is worth seeing, if for no other reason, at least for Miss Eleanor Powell's dancing and singing. She is the 'sensational' discovery of the M. G. M. studios this year; and in her debut she is ably supported by Robert Taylor and Jack Benny. Miss Powell is hailed as the "Female Fred Astaire" and the greatest woman tap-dancer in America. This is running at the Paragon Talkies.

Cantor Receives Condolence!

Exactly six months ago, 11th July, 1935, news spread like wild fire that Eddie Cantor had suddenly died! The noteworthy part of the joke was how Eddie himself heard the news. He was sitting in his car, waiting for his wife. The soft music of the radio in the car stopped abruptly. Came the news broadcast.

"Special news flash! We regret to announce that the most famous popeyes in the world have closed for the last time. Eddie Cantor, stage, screen and radio star, has passed away. It happened suddenly. Only yesterday he was permitted to leave the hospital where he had undergone a serious operation. He returned to the Cantor residence in Beverly Hills to participate in the celebration marking his twenty-first wedding anniversary. The end came....."

Eddie tried all the tests to see if he was alive. Mad with fury, he flew home and spoke to the wife and to make sure, touched her and asked her to clout him on his head. This process proved to him conclusively that he was not yet dead! Telegrams poured in, the telephone rang non-stop, and friends started a siege. A few priests sent sweet condolences to his wife—all under his own nose! An actor, between whom and Eddie had existed a feud, sent beautiful flowers! It cost him thousands to contradict it. All this happened because he hadn't returned to the hospital at the time he had promised he would!



Luise Rainer

The Joke was On Him!

On the set of *Snatched*, Rochelle Hudson was busy shooting some of her big emotional scenes. When all was ready, a resounding crash was heard. A studio truck had backed into a brand new gray coupe parked by the stage. News ran round that it was Rochelle Hudson's new car.

"Don't tell her," implored Director George Marshall. "At least not till after this scene!"

The scene was shot. Then Marshall gently broke this 'bad' news to Rochelle, and led her to view the remains. As they approached the crumpled mass, Rochelle broke into a wild fit of laughter.

The smashed coupe was Marshall's!

Not He!

Douglass Montgomery, the hero of *Little Man, What Now!* was walking in a London street when the flower from his lapel disappeared, the handkerchief from his coat pocket was snatched and his pipe seized out of his hand. This was not the work of a pick-pocket. It was the souvenir-fiends. He really did not mind the flower or the kerchief but the pipe was a cherished possession and the cute stealer knew it.

Two days later, he received a perfumed note from the grand lady who had taken his pipe:

"I'll give it back," she wrote, "if you'll send me the number of your hotel room."

Next day Douglass replied:

"Keep the pipe!"

Romance For Rainer

Luise Rainer came to Hollywood under the shadow of a calamity. Her lover was killed in an accident. The shadow is being slowly lifted by the springing up of a new love between Luise and Jean Negulesco, the artist.

She is an example of how a girl's chances come in a big way in Hollywood. After her part in *Escapade* in the place of Myrna Loy, she is to act in another picture, opposite her, with William Powell.

Fun For All



Wife: What have you done with that book 'How To Live A Hundred Years'?

Husband: You don't think I'm going to leave that lying about, with your mother in the house, do you?

* * * *

"Won't you sing, Mr. Brown?"

"I'm sorry, but really, I only sing in my bath."

"Oh, do sing; and I'll tell the other guests you haven't had much practice lately."

* * * *

Jones: I hear Bill has had an accident.

Bones: Yes, someone gave him a pet alligator for Christmas and told him it would eat off his hand.

Jones: Well?

Bones: It did.

* * * *

The prospective candidate for a South Wales area was giving forth an account of his aristocratic lineage at a meeting:

"My father was a baron, my father's father was a baron, and my great-grand father..." He could get no further; a stentorian voice bawled out, "It's a pity your mother wasn't barren."

* * * *

At the end of an examination the master gathered up all the papers. Among the last lot he discovered one sheet which, instead of being covered with historical names and dates, bore merely a crude drawing of a tombstone on which was written, "Sacred to the memory which always deserts me on occasions like this."

* * * *

"Why did the new Women's Club break up so suddenly?"

"The members decided that the three oldest women should constitute the Board!"

* * * *

A few minutes after a fire-alarm was given in a hotel, one of the guests joined the group watching the fire and chaffed them on the undue excitement.

"There was nothing to be excited about," he said,

"I took my time about dressing, lighted a cigarette, didn't like the knot in my necktie, so tied it over again—that's how cool I was."

"Fine," one of his friends remarked, "but why didn't you put on your trousers?"

* * * *

Brown tried hard to bear the wheezy trombone player's "Good King Wenceslas" with seasonable resignation but when it was followed by loud and repeated bangs on the knocker he got angry.

"What do you mean," he roared, "making that infernal row outside my house?"

"I'm a wait," replied a husky voice.

"A weight, are you! Then tie yourself round your neck and drown yourself."

* * * *

The orchestra was practising the composer's very long and tedious piece when he arrived.

"What's this?" he demanded from the doorway. "I can hear only the violins, not the wind instruments."

"It is too hard a job for the wind instruments," replied the orchestra leader. "They can't blow and yawn at the same time."

* * * *

Father: My boy, I'm spanking you because I love you.

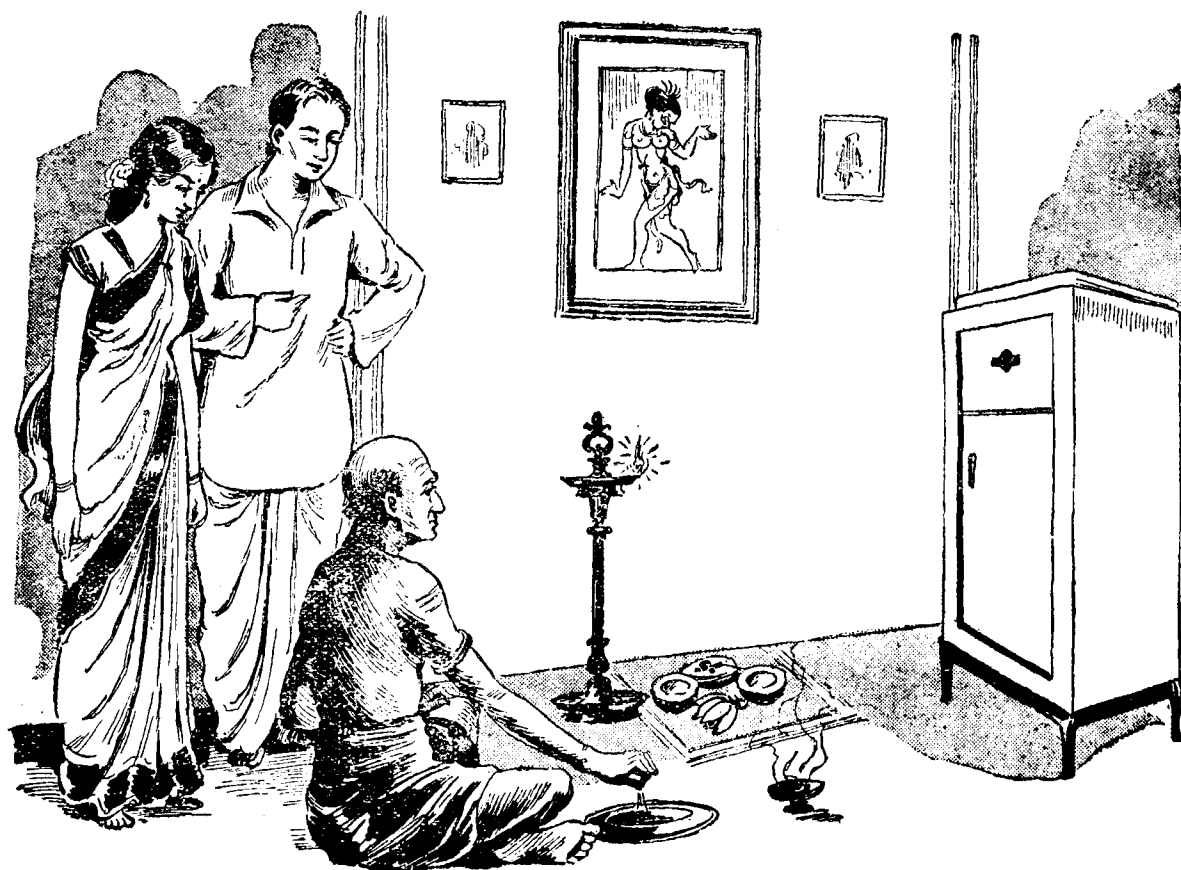
Son: I wish I could return your love.

* * * *

The practical science lesson was in progress and the teacher was demonstrating a piece of apparatus.

"You will have noticed," he shouted, "that this machine is operated by a crank!"

Then he wondered why the boys laughed.



The Banana Burglar

Reading Time
About 9 Minutes

by Thirupathi

Illustrated by Varma

MR. RAJU was a clerk in a bank which had over twenty branches in the back alleys of the Madras Presidency, just like rotten brinjals thrown away by prodigal housewives. With so many branches to its credit, one should have thought that the bank was a prosperous corporation. But it was not, really. However, this is not the bank's story. The bank not being a prosperous corporation it paid Raju Rs. 45, and expected him to carry on his duties as clerk, citizen and husband.

Yes, Raju was not a bachelor. In an evil hour, (or an auspicious hour) he was rushed into wedlock by his well-meaning father. Though a retired police Head Constable's daughter, Subbamma, Mrs. Raju that is, was not a bad girl.

Like most poor people, Raju dreamed of wealth. He also showed his palm to every palmist, professional or amateur, that he came across.

Subbamma (Subbu to her husband) viewed her husband's eternal palm-reading as a good joke. She would ask him when he came home after office, "What is the latest reading?"

To which Raju would reply, "Wait, Subbu, every dog has his day, you know."

Many of his amateur palmist friends told Raju that he would one day land a big thing. One of the friends went a step further and said: "Raju, if I am not very much mistaken, you will make lots of money out of crossword puzzles."

Now this fitted in like a ball in its socket with Raju's then mental state. He was a crossword devil. However, being a poor fellow, he never submitted his solutions. He just solved them for the naked joy of the thing. Now that palmistry showed him where his talents lay, he used to sit up late at night solving puzzles which offered four and five-figure prizes. His wife did not like it. Not his solving of crosswords but his sitting up late. Her idea of a husband was that he should attend to his wife exclusively after eight in the night.

He pinched himself (but not his wife), cut out his poor comforts, and invested the saving on crosswords. He would often dream of telegrams pouring in apprising him of his luck. Oftener in his sleep, under the influence of a particularly pleasant dream, he would hug his wife more tightly than usual. To this Subbu did not object at all.

A day came when the prognostications

came true. Raju's labours bore fruit. He did not receive a telegram. But what of it? He received a beautiful bulky cover with the crossword people's imposing name embossed on it. With a thumping heart Raju tore the cover open. In it was a letter written in felicitous terms and concluded thus:

.....Enclosed please find railway receipt covering the despatch of a Kool-Cold Refrigerator (Rs. 1000 net at ports), being the first prize offered for our crossword No. 7. Wishing you continued good luck.

Yours etc.

Raju was a true philosopher. True, he did not gain anything in cash. But he got a useful contrivance of science which was worth Rs. 1000 net at ports. The last two words puzzled him a bit. Never mind. He got a first prize. That was what mattered. He was satisfied.

His wife was not. She was for selling that refrigerator. Raju patted her back indulgently. One must make some concession to a policeman's daughter.

"That is a good idea, Subbu," he said. "But I would rather not sell it. You see it is the only prize I got so far. Moreover a daily sight of it would spur me on to greater effort."

"Sight, humbug!" said Subbu. Then as a thought struck her, she gasped. "And pray, what about the cost of the electric current to set the refrigerator working?"

Who pays for it? And how? You earn a princely salary, don't you?"

This quiet fire of sarcasm made a few holes in Raju. The suppressed steam in him escaped with considerable force through the holes.

"Shut up, woman! No sense. No imagination. No—no—no nothing." (Raju was a poor orator.) "Who said anything about electric current? We will not use the refrigerator. We

will put it in the front room and look at it. That is all."

True to her kind, Subbu started the water-works. She wanted to know rather urgently why she was born? Being born why she was born a woman? Being born a woman why did she have such a husband? As there was nobody in the house except Raju, nobody enlightened her. Raju (good fellow) repented of his harshness. He made amends. He hugged his wife as he had never hugged her before. He knew his wife's weakness. It was her chin. He gave her a bouncing kiss on her chin. Subbu smiled through her tears. Peace was restored in that humble household.

That refrigerator was a lovely piece of manufacture—a thing conceived in red and gold and white. They installed it in their tiny front room. There it remained shedding distinction on its owners, making Raju's neighbours envious.



One day at supper Raju said to his spouse, "We ought to use the refrigerator, Subbu." He detected a bellicose gleam in her eyes. He hastened to add: "No, no, I don't mean that. What I meant was—"

"Yes?" said Subbu, with dangerous calm.

"I will buy, daily, a half-anna worth of bananas. We will place the bananas in the refrigerator in the night. We will eat the fruit in the morning."

"Is that all?" said Subbu. "Certainly."

That evening on his way home from office Raju purchased two coppers' worth of bananas. The wife received the fruits and placed them on the top shelf of the refrigerator with mock ceremony and much giggling.

Next morning Subbu served her husband's dinner and ran to the refrigerator to get the bananas. She ran back to her husband, panting.

"What is the matter, Subbu?"

"There are no bananas in it."

"What!"

Raju ran to the refrigerator and stared into the empty top shelf. Raju thought that his wife ate them up. Subbu thought that her husband ate them up. Each read the other's thought, and the comic side of it struck them both simultaneously. They laughed heartily.

That evening Raju again brought two coppers' worth of bananas. Subbu again placed them in the refrigerator. When, next morning, she opened the refrigerator, the fruits were again gone.

They did not laugh this time. They looked at each other grimly.

The third evening another two coppers' worth of bananas went into the refrigerator. They were again gone, by morning.

This was serious. Each thought that the other would not play such a silly joke for three nights running. No. The thief, whoever he was, was a third party. When this realisation came upon Subbu, she was frightened.

"Oh, what shall we do!" she wailed. "I am sure it is an evil spirit. Take me away from this horrid place."

"Pooh! Spirits! What a silly girl!" said Raju. Truth to say, he was himself frightened.

"Ayyo, what—why not send for my father? He knows *mantrams*. He will drive away the devil from the house."

"I will," said Raju.

The father-in-law was wired to:

Subbu dangerously ill start immediately
Raju

That was an innocent lie, dictated by Subbu herself, to make the old man arrive immediately.

Old man Ramayya, retired Head Constable, arrived that evening. He excused the lie when the state of affairs was explained to him. He got busy. He got together all the articles necessary for *pūja*. He sat opposite the refrigerator and scowled at it. He began to chant creepy mantrams to dislodge the devil. He chanted for about an hour, his daughter and son-in-law watching him reverently.

"Give me those bananas," he demanded of his son-in-law.

The son-in-law produced the fruits. The old man placed them in the top shelf of the refrigerator and closed its door.

They retired for the night.

Next morning all the three flew to the refrigerator. They opened the door gingerly. The bananas were gone.

The old man looked a bit silly. He laughed it away.

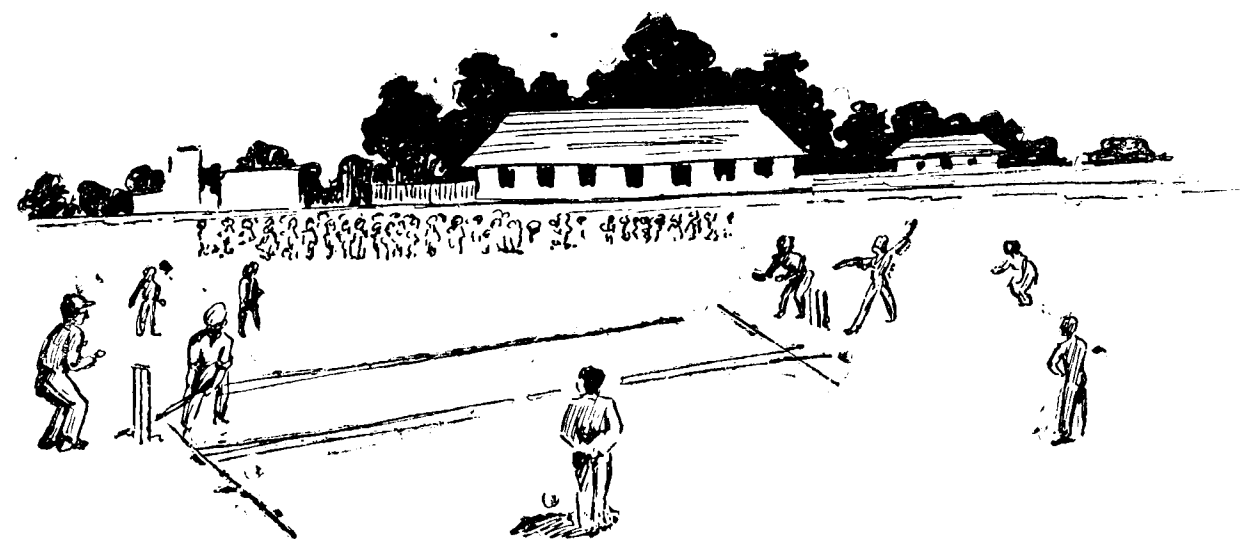
"No, this is not an evil spirit. I will catch the thief this night," he promised.

That night Ramayya placed the bananas in the refrigerator and placing his cot opposite it, watched for the thief.

The night was dark. The hours ticked by slowly. It was past midnight. Ramayya kept his vigil. One hour struck. A door creaked. A figure came out of the gloom. It approached the refrigerator, opened its door with a click, took out something from it, closed the door softly and went out into the street. Opposite the house was a cluster of trees. The figure stopped under a tree. A monkey descended from the tree and began to caper around the figure. Between them, they began to eat the plantains. While they were eating, old man Ramayya, who followed the figure, rushed at them. The monkey frightened at the intrusion, screeched and ran up the branches. Ramayya caught the hair of the figure. "Got you at last, you dirty banana thief!"

"Where am I?" asked the figure in a dazed way.

That voice! Ramayya struck a match. His jaw dropped. "Raju, you—you—a sleep-walker!"



Cricket—

By Mie

Illustrated by Varma

Reading Time • About 10 Minutes

CRICKET is on us, and I don't want my brethren to waste their time and money seeing that brainless and unreasonable game. I don't want my friends (for, I am nothing if not altruistic), I don't want them to suffer—er—I mean to say.....oh, well.

Let us take the game. What is cricket? I don't mean the thing that chirrups on the hearth, that jumps about. I mean the thing that newspapers are full of. You go to a big enclosure, pay four annas or whatever it is and get in and see the behind of a goodly crowd. If you are fortunate and have a spot more cash with you, you pay another rupee or something and are shown a gallery of sorts by a steely-eyed person whose manner suggests that he is doing what he is doing on sufferance. Anyway, having sat down, removed the leg of your neighbour behind from your right eye, you look on at a bit of open, in the centre of which a rectangular piece is marked out and some short poles stuck at each end of this space. There will be three such sticks together on each end. You watch it critically. You examine these sticks in all aspects or as many aspects as are possible under the circumstances. You take note of their appearance, speculate on their potentialities,

(or if you are a Theosophist-cricketer) try to recall their past until you have pretty well digested them (metaphorically of course). This process has taken you exactly five minutes or so and you turn your attention to other things.

You are not protected from the sun. You are thirsty. You have very little money with you. Your neighbour invariably is eating milk chocolate, drinking a lemonade or sucking an orange, all delicious things to do, which you wish you yourself were doing. Your neighbour is also smelling of sweat and his legs have a habit of creeping under your seats. This unpleasant fellow in addition has the habit of explaining his theories, expounding his criticisms and examining questions on hand loudly, possibly in your ears, though he is an utter stranger. He will throw out bones for you to snatch in order to start the fray. He will say with a gleam in his eye, "Amar Singh, I hear, is out of form," or "Nayudu is much better on mats," or "Patiala is better at square leg." If you think Amar Singh to be 'in the pink' or Nayudu as good at table as on the mat (I mean as good on grass), or again Patiala's legs are not so bad, don't say so, or you are in for it. Agree with him heartily; say you

noticed it too, congratulate him on his keenness of perception, remark that you and he are twin souls, and then the utmost harm that can befall you is that he will pinch two of your three cigarettes and borrow your topee (if you have one) indefinitely. But look at the other side of the picture. He will think you are a good judge of things yourself and will say so, and as you have just told him he is a good judge of things, this opinion of his must be of some value.

To add poignancy to your situation you see your worst enemy (the Editor of a magazine you contribute to or the man who touched you for five rupees six months before) sitting comfortably in an armchair under a marquee.

You have been sitting thus for exactly two hours and they have not begun. There is nobody on earth to keep so many people in suspense as a cricketer. He never starts at the scheduled hour. He has no sympathy for you. He does not know how you suffer. He sits in the pavilion smoking cigarettes and talking shop. When he sees that he can no longer keep hidden, and that the dramatic moment has come, he steps out with his weapons.

Does he go out and start playing immediately? Not on your life. The captains of the two sides go out alone and walk out to the pitch (the name of the rectangular plot mentioned) and look at it with their hands in their pockets (presumably to see if they are any ants or grasshoppers about) like Stout Cortez with eagle eyes staring at the pacific while all his men looked at one another with a wild surmise. They don't like it. It is seldom they do. They shake their heads in distrust, knowing that if not properly managed the pitch will do mischief. Sadder, but wiser, they walk back to the pavilion and have some more tea. You lick your lips.

But a word is necessary about these captains of cricket. Reading the newspapers one would think that the captain is everything in cricket. Months before the selection of the team and the captain, well-meaning experts offer suggestions about the personnel of the team and the captain. Newspapers of their own draw up tables of 'averages' and point out that

N—ought to be the captain. When the selection committee announces the team there is jubilation among one section of the populace and uproar in the other. Newspapers are full of congratulations and protests. After all this noise, when you see the thing actually played, what do you see? That the captain is just as good or as bad as any other player. Of course he has certain privileges. He can go out and inspect the pitch before the game—that is, he can enter the stage before the rest and thus extort some applause. When the game starts, too, you can see him making gestures to the others, like signals in platoon drill. And his photograph will be the topmost in the newspapers. But that's all.



The neighbour's leg in your eye

Well, coming back to the game, you have seen the two generals inspecting the battle-field together—Oh, I forgot to mention one ritual, tossing. On this depends the chance of winning the match. If your captain says 'heads' and it's heads and he goes out to bat, there will be many a critic to shake his head and say "H'm, I don't know"; and "All

I can say is it's risky," and other dark things. If your captain in the end loses, these critics will say, "I told you," "Bad tactics lost the match," "He should have put them in first," "Anyone who has seen the wicket....." etc. But if he won they will say, "Lucky feller," "He might have," "Risky thing to do." These people are never satisfied. They are harmless folk really, if you don't mind what they say. A captain who cares a damn for what the public or the newspapers say is really a good captain.

Well, tossing is over, and the captains return for a brief while. Meanwhile the news spreads like wildfire, "L.C.C. have won the toss," or something.

At last you see two chaps with overalls step out. They are small persons and they put their hands in their pockets. They don't carry a bat or anything. They are not players, kind readers, but are umpires whose business it is to say, "Shut up" or "Mind your business" or "Not on your life and be hanged to you" or "My eye" when the bowler asks "Zat?" These people solemnly take their stand and then you watch the pavilion again.

Now you see the fielding team. Here I admit the captain has some importance, for it is he that leads the men into the field, though I cannot see why there should be anybody to lead them at all unless they are blind or are strangers, even in which case one can't mistake the field. But that is what newspapers say and newspapers are an honourable—sorry.

Your neighbour again tries to pick a quarrel with you. He would say nasty things about his own favourites to lead you on and then turn on you. But don't pay any heed. Another of your neighbours makes a comparative estimate of the good looks of the team; somebody contradicts him and he quotes his girl friend or a girl to prove that P— is very handsome.

What are the team (they are 11 in number if you don't know that) doing now? They are smiling, and grinning, for there are cameramen before them. They are also juggling with a ball, throwing it playfully at one another, trying to catch it and looking complacently all round if they catch it, or pretending they are not trying really, if they fail to catch it. And thus they saunter forth to the wicket.

Having reached there they disperse and each goes to a different spot on the ground, one of them standing behind the wicket with thick gloves on and another standing opposite him on the other side of the opposite wicket. Then again you await things.

Now you see two men emerge out of the pavilion with bats in their hands. They walk briskly to the wickets and on arrival there, go to each end. They adjust their gloves, tuck in their shirt sleeves, take off their caps and wipe their brows and stare all round. Then one of them bends forwards and marks something on the wicket, possibly some secret black magic chanting.

Now things are going to begin. Your boredom is gone; you forget your neighbour's appendages underneath you, forget his sweat, forget your thirst, in fact everything and sit up and look on in pleasurable anticipation.

All on a sudden a man at one end starts running and he stops abruptly, making a movement with his arm. When he is doing this every one on the field bends forward and you see the seats of their trousers vividly. The man with the bat swings the bat, his eyes closed (at least I used to when I occasionally stood in that unenviable position). You don't see any ball, though your neighbour has again started with "leg break", "the ball pitched in a soft spot" etc. You see the batsmen running to and fro while the men on the field are scurrying like rabbits. After a bit they all come to their original positions (or so, my memory is vague on these points) and you see a repetition of this process.

After the gesticulating man (who flings his arm about) has done his bit half-a-dozen times, people walk over and another man starts doing it from the other end. This goes on endlessly. You don't see why people near you are shouting and crying out. You don't know why one of the men with bats is bowing to you all with his cap raised. You are just enjoying it all.

Every half-hour drinks are brought by a waiter to the field and the men drink in their fill. Lemo-

nade? Iced sherbet? You smack your lips again and realise the tragedy of your position more than ever.

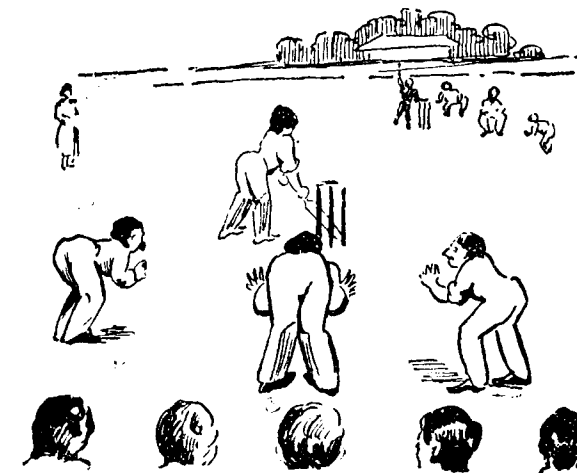
These people either drink or have lunch or tea. They are having a picnic with some dumb show in between the drinks.

I really can't yet understand why so much fuss is being made about this game. When you open your evening paper you see it all there and try to compare your account of the match with the reporter's.

What the reporter says is:

"20,000 enthusiastic spectators assembled at the Ramsami ground this morning to witness the match between the Egyptians and an All-India XI. The weather was glorious (!) and Pharoah winning the toss elected to bat on a perfect wicket. Punctually at eleven (!!) Kai Lung and Chin Chin opened the visitors' innings, the former facing

(Continued on page 18)



You see the seats of their trousers

The Letters of Private Joyfull

Reading Time • About 10 Minutes

The Fire-Fighters

Madras, 11th January, 1936.

DEAR MOTHER,

A few days ago, a paragraph appeared in Detail concerning our platoon. We were appointed fire-fighters for the ensuing month.

Sergeant Oldbold gathered us together, and read the orders regarding outbreaks of fire. The introductory section was addressed to everybody, and concerned general precautions against fire. For instance, people were advised not to drop matches into petrol-tanks, place braziers in sheds full of straw, or hang explosives on Christmas-trees. In fact, it was assumed that in the ordinary way, people behave like a lot of raving lunatics.

The next section concerned the action of an individual who discovered an outbreak of fire. "Any person who discovers a fire," it began, "will immediately try to put it out."

This might seem a bit obvious, to you and me; but it is surprising how often it is necessary to remind people what is the obvious thing to do.

If the outbreak proved too large for one man, he had to shout for assistance. Those who heard him were to come running with hand-appliances. If these were insufficient, the alarm was to be sounded.

The third section described the general action when the alarm had been given. The fire-fighters would bring the fire-engine, another platoon stand round the fire as a guard, and the rest of the troops form working parties and salvage-squads.

"There you are," said the sergeant. "Now you know the general plan for a fire."

"Yes, sergeant," agreed Boggins, "but suppose the fire did not happen according to plan?"

"Everything in the Army happens according to plan," replied the sergeant, severely. "If the fire was extinguished in an irregular manner, we would have to light it again, and put it out according to regulations."

After this, we were marched to the fire-engine shed, and the sergeant introduced us to the mysteries. At

first, I thought we had been taken to a museum of antiquities by mistake. "Is *that* the fire-engine, sergeant?" asked Boggins, in a tone of mild surprise.

"Of course it is," said the sergeant. "What did you think it was?"

"Well, sergeant, I thought it might be a kind of old-fashioned machine for squirting flit."

"She's all right," said the sergeant, affectionately patting the fire-engine, as if it were a favourite child. "Run her out."

We tugged the lumbering old thing out of its shed, nearly knocking down the door-post. "Here, go steady with her," said Boggins, in alarm. "Remember she is Sergeant Oldbold's best girl." We all burst out laughing, and a committee of godfathers bestowed on her the name of Spouting Susie.

"Now, lads," said the sergeant, "you will observe that this appliance consists chiefly of a large tank on wheels. The tank is filled by a suction-pipe at this end. When sufficient pressure has been obtained, the discharge-pipe at the other end will deliver a strong jet of water—in theory. This jet of water will extinguish the conflagration—we hope. The pumping in both directions is obtained by working the long rocking-bars at both sides of the engine. In short, it is a manual fire-engine."

"Please, sergeant, *where* is the engine?" asked Useless Eustace.

"You are looking at it!" howled the sergeant.

"I mean, the *engine* of the fire-engine," piped Useless Eustace.

"It hasn't got an engine," bawled the sergeant. "Didn't I tell you it worked on a manual principle?"

"I haven't got a copy of the manual, and I want to know how the engine works," complained Eustace.

"You'll soon know how it works," said the sergeant, grimly. "To work a manual fire-engine, we get a dozen fellows like you, with more beef than brains. Come along, General Nuisance, and we'll promote you captain of the galley-slaves."

The sergeant began to appoint us to different tasks. By good luck, Boggins and I were made the nozzle-men. We had charge of a long reel of hose, mounted on an immense bobbin consisting of a pair of cart-wheels on an axle. We had to connect one end of the hose to the delivery-pipe, run the hose towards the fire and direct the jet of water on to the flames.

"Right. Do you all understand your jobs?" said the sergeant. "Very well, we will have some dry fire-drill."

"Please, sergeant," asked Boggins. "What shall we pretend is on fire?"

"Oh, anything," replied the sergeant. "The sentry over there will do."

We ran our hose to the sentry, who was standing like a very bored wooden image. "Right!" howled Boggins. "Right!" howled the men at the outlet-valve. "Right!" howled the man at the suction-pipe. "Right!" howled the man at the hydrant. "Right!" howled the man with the big T-shaped water-key. "Right!" howled the sergeant, addressing the galley-slaves.

The galley-slaves began to heave up and down rhythmically. It was quite an interesting sight. At one moment, their hands were stretched to the sun in supplication; at the next, their rumps were derisively presented to Heaven. As one side raised their arms in unison, the other side bowed unanimously to the ground. After only a few strokes, the galley-slaves began to pant and sweat.

Meanwhile, the empty fire-engine was sucking and belching, like an immense old lady with wind in the abdomen. Meanwhile, too, we were having a little trouble with the sentry. He objected to the threat of the nozzle pointed at him, and began to march up and down indignantly. We followed, dragging the hose to and fro, and begging him to stand still.

"That is all right," said the sergeant, regarding Spouting Susie with affection. "Stop. Reel up. Now we'll try filling her with water." The necessary valve was opened, and the galley-slaves recommenced their supplications and prostrations. Water gushed into the tank.

"Fine!" said the sergeant. "Now try pumping some water on to the Cornwallis statue. It needs a wash."

We ran the hose in the required direction, and braced ourselves against the expected shock of the spouting water. Everybody shouted "Right!" and last of all the sergeant shouted "Right!" and we all waited breathlessly.

Nothing happened. After a while, Boggins and I got tired of bracing ourselves against a shock that did not arrive, so we lowered the nozzle and looked round. Water was rushing into the tank, and overflowing the sides; but none came through the delivery-pipe.

Sergeant Oldbold rushed to investigate. "You idiot!" he howled to Fred Stokes, who was in charge of the outlet valve. "You are turning the wheel the wrong way!"

"I'm turning it towards the letter F," said Freddie. "That means 'fire', doesn't it, sergeant?"

"Can't you see where the engine was made?" demanded the sergeant, pointing to a brass plate on the body of the vehicle.

Everybody dropped his work and went to read the brass plate. It said something about '*pompier*' and '*Paris*'. "This is an old engine of French manufacture," said the sergeant. "All the valves are marked F and O."

"Yes, sergeant; F for 'fire' and O for 'out'," insisted Fred Stokes.

"You ignorant yokel!" said the sergeant, crushingly. "F stands for *ferme*, which means closed, and O stands for *ouvert*, which means open. Do you think you will be able to remember that?"

"I don't know any foreign languages," replied Freddie.

"Do you understand plain English?" bawled the sergeant. "We'll say that F stands for 'finished', and O stands for 'open'. Will that suit you?"

"Oh, yes, sergeant," said Fred Stokes, turning the wheel to the 'open' position.

"Look out!" howled the sergeant. "He's opened the valve!" We all rushed to our places, expecting Spouting Susie to live up to her name. There was a breathless pause, and then we realised that Spouting Susie was not going to spout.

"Pump harder!" cried the sergeant to the galley-slaves. He wrenched at the valve, and muttered: "Why doesn't the water flow?"

"Please, sergeant—" said Fred Stokes.

"Yes, what?" bawled the sergeant. "Do you know what's wrong?"

"The water won't flow—" began Freddie.

"Indeed?" said the sergeant, with heavy sarcasm.

"—Because you are standing on the hose," suggested Fred, mildly.

The sergeant uttered a coarse word, and hastily stepped backwards. The hose immediately rose in the air, and smote him with the pressure of several tons of water. His *topee* fell off, rolled under the feet of the galley-slaves, and was trampled to pulp. The sergeant rushed after his *topee*, and the rocker-bar came up and hit him under the chin, and sent him sprawling. He fell back into the open hydrant-sump, and became wedged.

"Pull me out!" bawled the sergeant; but the fire-fighters had let go the pumps, and were standing stiffly to attention with scared faces, while Sergeant-Major Quirt lashed them with a dreadful flow of words.

Sergeant-Major Quirt happened to be passing when the sergeant stepped off the hose. Boggins and I were taken by surprise by the sudden gush of water. The heavy nozzle of the hose jumped in our hands, and directed a powerful stream of water on to the Sergeant-Major, who was all dressed up in full regimentals, ready to inspect the guard. His lovely suit was ruined.

"What do you mean, playing with the fire-engine like this?" shrieked old Mossy-Face to our unfortunate sergeant. "Get up! How dare you go clowning with your men? Are you in your second childhood?"

"S—sorry, Sir, I c—can't get up," moaned Sergeant Oldbold.

"Disgraceful!" cried the Sergeant-Major, a wintry smile slowly spreading over his features. "Two of you men, heave him out."

The two fellows were so terror-stricken that they seized the sergeant's arms and gave a frantic tug. But the sergeant was so firmly wedged into the iron rim of the man-hole, that when he came free, he left the greater part of his trousers behind.

"So you've turned nudist as well?" roared Mossy-Face to the wretched sergeant. "Go and change your trousers, and report to me in my office!"

Under the awful eye of the Sergeant-Major, we restored the appliances to their places as quickly as we could, and ran Spouting Susie back into her shed.

"A fine lot of fire-fighters you are!" said the Sergeant-Major. "I'll hold a regimental fire-practice tomorrow, and put you through your paces!" We trembled at the threat.

"A—tishoo!" added Mossy-Face, with startling suddenness. Fortunately for us, it reminded him he had better go and change his clothes as soon as possible.

Your Loving Son,
OBEAH JOYFULL.

CRICKET—(Continued from page 15)

Bhander, the formidable home bowler. Kai Lung flicked the first ball to the leg boundary, the ball piercing the trap that the fast bowler had placed with the hope of getting an early wicket. Kai Lung repeated the stroke in his second ball and sent the third past mid off for two. The first decade was signalled when the play was in progress for five minutes

And then how the other batsman faced the bowler, and then how both faced the bowlers, and then what the captain did, how the score 'mounted', how the crowd behaved, what so and so said, and so on.

Not only my days but my newspaper reading is going to be spoilt by this cricket talk. The accounts of some nice murder where the corpse had been tampered with or an elopement or a kidnapping are all going to be replaced by cricket, because a section of the many-headed monster is hungry.

And this is what is going to happen to you, my young friend, if you go cricket mad. Take my advice. Let us go to the pictures. They are cheaper, pleasanter, more interesting and less unpleasant.

THE END



Beware of Babies !

By P. P. Samuel

Reading Time • About 6 Minutes

THE other day I jumped out of my skin—anyway the policeman I dashed against jumped clean out of his helmet—when a woman-driver suddenly did something to the gear of her Baby car. I was standing just behind the policeman, waiting for his horizontal left arm to drop to the vertical, when the woman did it. Perhaps you would deem it silly of me to have allowed myself to be rattled by a mere mite (not the woman—she was big); but, honestly, it did sound like a circular saw going through a sheet of corrugated iron. Naturally, there was a violent reflex action, and before I knew what I was doing the policeman was wiping his helmet on his bags.

To this day I do not know what make of Baby it was. I asked the cop if it was a Baby Austin, but his answer wasn't quite helpful. And what he told me in a crowded half-minute would have set the Cooum on fire. I had always fancied Tamil for a language to swear in, but when I asked him to lend me his pencil to take down his number I realized how rich and vibrant the language can be. Of course, I am a Christian and I have almost forgiven him, but I never can forget the Baby.

And the tiny tots on the roads do not help me to forget it either. Bless the little gears of the wayward little dears, if you don't mind my being slightly poetical. But we have far too many of them. India never had any dearth of Babies even before British, French, American and Italian Babies began to scamper and scuttle about on the roads, causing damage to pedestrians, pillar-boxes, policemen, etc. I have a friend who was once assaulted by a drunken little Baby Martin with such disastrous results that he has turned a poet and put all the accidents and incidents of his life into liquid verse. Here is the one he has written about the Martin thing :

The Charge of the Light Baby.

It bumped into my trouser-seat
And tossed me up so high;
And cracked my floating ribs (a feat!
I mean for second try.)
Was that th' unkindest butt of all?
I wish it was, I do!
The screeching horn and radio (on)
My ear-drum cracked in two.

Then bumped a blushing pillar-box
 With scarce any restraint!
 And quite a few persistent knocks
 Scraped half the ruddy paint.
 "Hurrah!" it cried, "haven't I tried
 With all my might and main!
 Ah me, I'm done! I've had such fun!"
 And lay down on its side.

I never can understand why these vest-pocket runabouts are so popular. Is it just a passing fancy like the present Italian craze for babies—the ones with hearts and lungs instead of magnetos and carburettors? Perhaps it is the sheer discomfort of sitting all cramped up and cracking the shin against a lever or button or some other gadget every time the car bumps that attracts the average Indian. For it is an incontrovertible fact that the little fellow is a Yogi at heart and delights to sit in an unnatural posture with his limbs bent and twisted in fancy shapes about his person. The more unnatural the posture the greater is the merit, because isn't it a telling instance of the triumph of Mind over Matter? I know a big fellow (physically speaking) who comes out of his little car all of a heap, rubs his shin tenderly, and slowly unfolds himself like a carpenter's rule. And bless me if the fellow doesn't enjoy it hugely.

And then again the little midgets have a remarkable tendency to leave the road at the slightest provocation and romp along the pavement. Perhaps they disapprove of the colour of your turban or the way you've done your tuft or, more likely, they just can't bear the way you click your tongue when you chew *pan*. The other day I asked an automobile engineer why the little nuisances are so unaccountably wayward. He talked for an hour or so on wheel-base, temperament, centre of gravity, character, stable equilibrium, acceleration and investment, until, finally, I suddenly realized that he was trying to unload his whacking big Austin (1927) on me. Anyway, to come back to the little dears, I suppose it is after all a case of temperament. Women and babies, as almost every husband knows to his cost, are nothing if not temperamental. That is to say, mutton-headed.

And expensive. In spite of what the Bright Young Fellows between Round Tanna and Spencer's say. A good salesman (especially if he has had a three-barrelled postal course in Personal Magnetism, Resourcefulness

and Salesmanship from an Institute of Practical Psychology) is well-nigh irresistible. Much has been said and written about Insurance Agents, but their staying power is nothing in comparison with the tenacity of the motor salesman. The average insurance man is 'mousy' and gives you the impression that he is capable of doing a 100 yards in even time if he is challenged; but the sleek-haired, well-tailored automobile gentleman stalks up to you with his smooth chin in the air and his hands in his trouser-pockets. And his silver tongue can seldom fail to convince you that maintaining a Martin Eight is just as inexpensive as keeping a goat. In other words, it costs just an old song. The car may be had for an old song, and it can be maintained in tip-top condition for another old song—well, dash it, you expand your chest and tell the fellow that you have half a mind to give their Hire Purchase System a trial.

But when you actually become the owner of the midget you realize that you have caught a Tartar, for the monthly bill contains certain heavy recurring items.

Items.		Rs.	As.	Ps.
1. Petrol	...	4	0	0
2. Tax	...	6	4	0
3. Oil	...	8	0	0
4. Cleaning and garaging	...	16	0	0
5. Compensation for damages to pedestrians, owners of livestock, etc.	...	50	0	0
Total Rs.	...	84	4	0

N.B.—As statistics say that about 1.6 of the population of Madras are lawyers, there is a chance of your including an advocate in the monthly bag, in which case he would immediately begin to talk of assault and battery and compensation and what-not, and you shouldn't be surprised if item 5 mounts up to Rs. 100. And if he happens to hail from down Mylapore way it would easily be a trifle more.

Well, well, I have come to the end of my resources, as Solomon said when No. 1599 asked for a diamond tiara or something. But, my gentle readers, (all the three of you, please, including the Editor), **BEWARE OF BABIES!**

THE END



Sightseeing in Killarney

By Artiji

Reading Time • About 6 Minutes

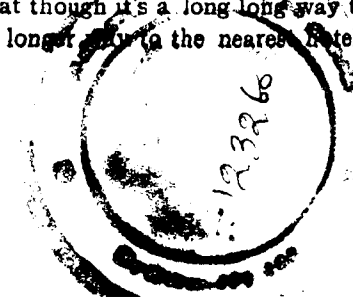
Illustrated by Varma

YOU may have heard about Killarney. To put it more precisely you ought to have heard about Killarney. However, since you are so obviously an ass—and since your conceptions of geography extend no further than the fact that Africa lies NORTH of the equator—I will proceed to enlighten you.

Killarney is the scenic spot par excellence, the brightest gem in De Valera's crown. It is beautiful. It is romantic. It is glorious. Wandering bards have sung its praises. Moon-struck crooners have echoed its delights. Under the cool shade of its purple warbleth the artist and the tenor. Strong men grow poetic when they look upon Killarney. Flirtatious women sigh and await the moon's arising. The pine

tree nods by its yet unruffled waters. The sweet cadence of giggling tourists mingles with the majestic chords of Railway Propaganda.

On receipt of a minor consideration, the G. W. R. is willing to transport your omnipotent self to Cardiff. The Irish Sea will cradle you to sleep on the dark waters of its heaving bosom. The Irish State Railway backed by the worst locomotive in the British Isles will hurl you through a mixture of peat, coal dust, and fogs into the region where Killarney leads its existence. After a considerable degree of meandering in the vicinity of the station you will come to the conclusion that though it's a long long way to Tipperary it's a still longer way to the nearest hotel. However,



there are hotels in Killarney (surprising phenomenon) though to the average eye they can well be mistaken for something less ambitious.

When you are safely ensconced in your apartment, and freed from the salubrious atmosphere that prevails without, it is time to investigate your position. This will naturally be a little obscure. There is the guide book tells us a number of lakes in Killarney. There is also (of which delectable fact the book does NOT inform us) a particularly thick and refractory fog—presumably the mist which clings to Lady Erin's bower. Under the circumstances I can't help having a low opinion of Lady Erin's bower.

Messrs. Cook and Son however appear to take a different view of the matter. Killarney is a haven of loveliness, a rhapsody of sunshine. The soft enchantment of its magical presence beggars description, assists the economic status of the country and reduces the percentage of English tourists in St. Moritz. In deference to the hard commercial logic of Mr. Cook we bow our dejected craniums. Ireland shall have a second chance.

Ireland however does not seem to be particularly enthusiastic about second chances, for the fog increases, increases, and still continues to increase. A little rain falls to celebrate the occasion. Your appetite grows, your benevolence disappears. Your temperament develops to film-starric proportions and your face resembles an over-heated tomato. Stealing down the corridor like a bilious beefsteak you humbly request your breakfast. The landlady glares at you with a peculiar light in her optic as if you were a novel and unfamiliar beast. In a tone that is reminiscent of Judgement Day she remarks that it's a fine day for walking and she specially recommends the view from Tinker's Hillock. That settles the question. You may feel like insulting the landlady, but being a weak-minded male, you refrain from these gymnastics. Instead you hoist on your most substantial coat, shove a bowler across your eye and step out into an intriguing mixture of slush and asphalt. The slush and asphalt concoction lasts all the way down the side street and all the way up the main. It clings to your boots with appalling tenacity. It swirls and grates and grinds around you. Meanwhile an obliging Sou-Wester bent on proving its propensities seeks an entry into the back of your shirt.

As an Indian, however, you are bent on asserting the superiority of the Congress. It is not meet that a little thing like an autumn breeze should flout the

glories of a mighty nation. Most certainly not. The dignity of the Motherland is going to be upheld. Never, never, will it be said that this Son of India, this swain of the black pagoda, turned back his dimpled brow upon Killarney (etc. etc. etc.).

Like a true hero you yank your shirt down a little further, mutter a few unprintable remarks about the weather and set off in the direction of Tinker's Hillock. After a quarter of an hour's continuous labour you have advanced a hundred yards. By midday your superior stamina and the effects of a vegetarian diet begin to tell. The three-mile mark is passed with no appreciable decrease in your spirits. But Killarney is not to be despised. The fact that your consumption of rice is the second largest in India will not make you infallible. The strain of battle begins to tell on your chromium constitution. You contemplate returning. Patriotism urges you forward. An appetite pulls you back. You lie in the grip of a titanic emotional upheaval. Torn by the twin calls of duty and hunger—the desire to conquer and the wish to dine—what can a poor vegetarian soul accomplish? Here is turmoil, chaos, conflict, the glories of a nation and the climax of endeavour. It is India—versus a hot potato.

And so at this critical juncture when the cause of the Congress has surrendered to the echo of humanity—at this juncture, I repeat, when patriotism plays second fiddle to a teaspoon—you notice that the ground in the vicinity is suspiciously moist. Sooner or later you will rid yourself of the delusion that your fountain pen is leaking and proceed to a more scientific analysis. You will discover that when you place your finger on the spot it reveals undeniable traces of dampness. This definitely proves that there is water in the neighbourhood. The next step obviously is to find its source. It is not as you may suspect the result of a broken soda-water bottle. Nor does it accrue from an inverted bucket. This little stretch of green is, believe it or not, something infinitely more important. It is the pearl of Ireland, the fireside of romance, the home sweet home of lyrical adventure, the glamorous, the melodious, the lovely, platinum ringlet in De Valera's crown. It is—Killarney Lake.

After this stupendous discovery you may do whatever you please but I personally advise a trip to the mental hospital.

THE END

A Good Murder

by Mrs. Kamala

Reading Time • About 6 Minutes

OBSCURITY will be obviously the opposite of publicity.

I say it will be, because I don't think the thing at present exists. I conceive myself to be inventing it, offering it to a sorely tried world, which, I earnestly hope, will hail it as at least meeting a long-felt want.

For publicity, while an object of much human endeavour, is not surely that good-in-itself which is in all circumstances and at all times and in all places supremely good and infinitely to be desired. It is, for instance, possible to have too much of it. Mahatmaji, for example, must at times feel—but if he does so feel, what can he do about it? At present, nothing. But with obscurity, much.

Publicity is the organised effort for the purpose of keeping some person or thing 'public'. (If you don't like Ambedkar, ask any Justice Party leaders about it.) It is the tenth Muse, the chief of 20th century civilisation. Obscurity will be simply the opposite—organised effort for the purpose of keeping some person or thing private. I am particularly known, through the Editor of this good Mag, to give this suggestion and that, always. I think it will be a nobler, more subtle, and more exquisite art.

This obscurity agent will certainly have to be an infinitely more accomplished, more dexterous, more resourceful person than the publicity agent of the present day. The truly great publicity agent is the man who can persuade the public that it wants to hear about the person whom he is paid to serve. Once that is done, the newspapers and other

organs of publicity are his slaves; for they cannot refuse to let the public have what it wants.

The obscurity agent, if he is to succeed in the highest way, will have to teach the public that it does *not* want to hear anything about his client. And to do that he will have to teach his client to behave in such a way that the public will not want to hear about him. That, of course, will often be very difficult; it will sometimes be impossible, but in most cases where it is impossible the reason will be that the client does not really want obscurity—he only thinks he does. No self-respecting obscurity agent would ever 'take on' Jawaharlal Nehru or Babu Rajendra Prasad; as obscurity clients they would be a joke.

There will be cases, also, when even the best organised campaign of obscurity will result only in a moderate degree of quietude for its subject, not on account of any defects in himself, but because of the tremendous potentialities for publicity involved in some position in which he finds himself. This, Greta Garbo knows well enough. To be respectable and moderately well-to-do and a trifle exclusive socially, and yet to be concerned in an interesting sex-

murder—that is the kind of situation which will set almost any intelligent person looking in the telephone book for the best obscurity agents; but it is also the kind of situation before which all but the most courageous and resourceful of the brotherhood would recoil in alarm and despair. What *can* be done to keep such unfortunates out of the public eye? Well, at present, not much. The art is in its infancy; I have only just invented it. But



there are methods which present themselves to me as feasible and likely to result in at least a mitigation of the horrors of publicity.

The best I can think of at the moment, but also the most expensive—is to go out—I mean for the obscurity agent to go out—and commit, or procure to be committed, an even better murder than that on which the public eyes are presently fixed. (Two recent famous murders are matters, more or less of to-day.) It will be difficult in many

ways, but it can be done, and the great artist of obscurity, like his brother and enemy, the great artist of publicity, will shrink at nothing to accomplish his end. The chief difficulty will be in the necessarily high quality of the second murder. The public is a far better judge of murders than of plays; and those on which it fixes its hungry gaze and from which it refuses to be lured away will assuredly

be murders of genuine excellence and profound interest. To get a new murder done is not, I am confident, unreasonably difficult even in the metropolis; in more civilised countries it is merely a matter of telephone call and a cheque for a small amount. But a good murder is another thing. It requires imagination, a touch perhaps of genius, and a suspicion of art-for-art's-sake contempt for consequences. But all that, surely, has no effect except to make my new calling more alluring to the ablest and most daring minds. I am confident that before obscurity has been a recognised art for twelve months, half the best intellects in the publicity business will have crossed the street to set up in the new profession.

By that time every Midas will consider an obscurity agent an essential part of his household—even if there is a publicity agent to sit on the opposite side of the

same table. For, one of the most appalling consequences of wealth (and there are many, I am told), especially in countries where there are not many other differences between the inhabitants, is that it subjects not only its acquirer but all the members of his family to a pitiless amount of exposure to the public eye. The acquirer is usually a fairly thick-skinned person and can stand it, and may even profit by it if he is still engaged in the business of acquiring; but his wife and the younger generation are entitled to such protection as the obscurity agent can afford.

Already, indeed, a few members of wealthy families have shown an inkling of the idea that obscurity is needed, and have attempted to practise it themselves, but always in the most primitive fashion. I read of a case of one admirable lady, who imbued with the correct idea that something ought to be done to protect her family from the ravages of the press photographers, adopted the preposterous method

of dashing at their appliances with a stout stick. Needless to say, the results were the precise opposite of what she desired.

Publicity pays for itself, or it is no good and nobody wants it; obscurity will have to be paid for by those who seek to enjoy its benefits. In the latter case there must be concessional rates for those who cannot afford and yet who want it badly. Even before that day comes I have no doubt that eminent obscurity practitioners, in receipt of an ample salary from some Midas client, will spare a portion of their time and talents for the relief of the destitute. But, taking it by and large, obscurity will be an appanage of the well-to-do. For, after all, much of a rich man's income must always be spent on avoiding the unpleasant consequences of being a rich man.



Scientific Eating—

By P. A. Menon

Reading Time • About 4 Minutes

FROM birth I had a partiality for scientific eating. My partiality for rich metallic foods was apparent from the very beginning and my mother too was not slow to notice it as she had seen me six months old swallowing an iron key before she could do anything about it. But that's not the end of the story. Since I learnt to read and write I did more reading than was good for my eyes, and what with the loud noise made by the vitamin family, I found myself confronted with the problem of selection. My learning had been so advanced that I could tell the chemical contents of fruits and vegetables before trying them and could exactly measure the vitamin value of almost every vegetable that came home. Mother was rather worried about it all and thought my life was at best a waste.

But this domestic discouragement didn't deter me. I went from success to success with experiments and piled up knowledge by reading books that have any bearing on the subject. The time-old formulae were not, however, very encouraging. For instance, I tried an apple-a-day stunt with our family doctor, and instead of the fellow being kept away, he was a regular visitor demanding his daily apple.

By now I had made considerable progress with my garden crops. The big idea was to produce an ideal vegetable that would contain all the vitamins so far known to man. I had nearly succeeded when the whole thing bust.

It was like this. You know cucumber? It is the king of the vegetable garden. Cool, clean and all

(Continued on page 32)

Tips for Speaking

By Omega

Reading Time • About 7 Minutes

IN the days when 'hobble skirts' were fashionable, a wit remarked that a speech should be like a lady's dress—long enough to cover the subject and short enough to be interesting. I have not come across a better characterization of a good speech.

In these days of democracy and parliamentary institutions the art of public speaking is so largely practised that all types of speakers have made their appearance. Young John was really proud of his performance when he spoke of his rhetorical effort in confidence to his friend. "Well, Tom," he said, "do you know I made a real hit last evening? My speech was moving, soothing and satisfying." Intrigued to hear these adjectives, Tom asked him to explain what he meant. "Well, Tom, it was like this. I began my speech, and after five minutes of speaking I noticed that half the audience had left the hall. That was *moving*. I went on and soon I noticed that the remaining half was asleep. That was *soothing*. When I finished, a number of my hearers came to me and said that they had enough of me and they would not like to hear me again. That was, indeed, *satisfying*." John's was really a star performance, but I am sure many would not like to emulate his example or feel jealous of his reputation.

For a beginner in the art of speaking, the best advice is: "Make sure of your first sentence and make quite sure of your last sentence and then bring them close together." Many promising careers have been spoiled for ever simply because the speaker had thought over his first few sentences. An oft-quoted story is of Addison who began his address thus: "Ladies and Gentlemen, I conceive—er—I conceive—er—I conceived." This taxed the patience of a hearer who said that when a woman conceived, she brought forth a child but Mr. Addison had conceived thrice without bringing forth anything. Addison was floored and he never recovered from that shock.

It is very important for a speaker to be well-prepared. The impression that the unprepared speaker can make upon an audience was given in acid terms

by Mr. Winston Churchill when replying to Sir Charles Beresford in the House of Commons. He said that the honourable member, when he rose, had not the least idea of what he was going to say, while he was speaking did not know what he was saying, and when he sat down did not know what he had said.

The second point is that a good speaker should never commit the mistake of talking too long. Prolivity is the besetting sin of most speakers in India. In the words of a great orator, they suffer from the delusion that they can make their speeches immortal by making them ever-lasting. Many jokes have been practised at the expense of long-winded speakers. At the end of an unconscionably long speech, a speaker remarked rather apologetically: "Excuse me, gentlemen, I have been talking a bit too long. I forgot to bring my watch and there was no clock in this hall." "But there is a calendar behind you," came a voice from the audience. It is said of a clergyman that he talked so long that all the parishioners left, one by one. At last the sexton alone remained. But the minister continued. After hearing for some more time the sexton rose from his seat, went to the speaker and said: "Here is the key of the hall; when you have finished, please lock the doors yourself." Which reminds me of another. It is the story of a minister who was preaching on 'Prophecy' and whose sermon proved a long and boring one. He had devoted half an hour each to Ezekiel, Isaiah and Jeremiah, and then came Hosea. "Now," he said, "what place shall we give to Hosea?" A weary-looking man thereupon got up, seized umbrella, hat, gloves and overcoat and said: "Here let him have my place; I am going."

A good speaker should not forget that brevity may or may not be the soul of wit; it is certainly a consolation for its absence. The time for non-stop oratory is now definitely gone. People like short programmes. The theatre has given place to the cinema, the three-volumed novel has been replaced by short stories, and long oratorical efforts have become out-of-date.

Yet another point in a good speech is that the speaker must be absolutely clear. He should call a spade a spade and not an oblong instrument of manual husbandry. There should be no circumlocutions, no beatings about the bush. An ornate and grandiloquent style is absolutely unsuitable for a popular speech. Verbosity must be avoided. In his 'Art of Public Speaking' Mr. Spencer Leigh says:

"Mr. Asquith would be content to say when addressing the House, 'Two and two make four,' but Mr. Chaplin would prefer to put it somewhat in this way. 'Sir, I will venture to affirm, I will go so far as to assert, and I do not hesitate to declare, having come down to the House for that purpose and risen in my place with that intention—a fixed and unalterable intention—and my assertion, I imagine and opine, will meet with the general concurrence of all honourable gentlemen in whatever part of the House they may sit, that if you take the numeral 2 and increase it to the extent of 2 more by the process, I may say, the well-known process, entitled addition, the result will be found to be 4—no more on the one hand, while on the other hand, it will be no less.'"

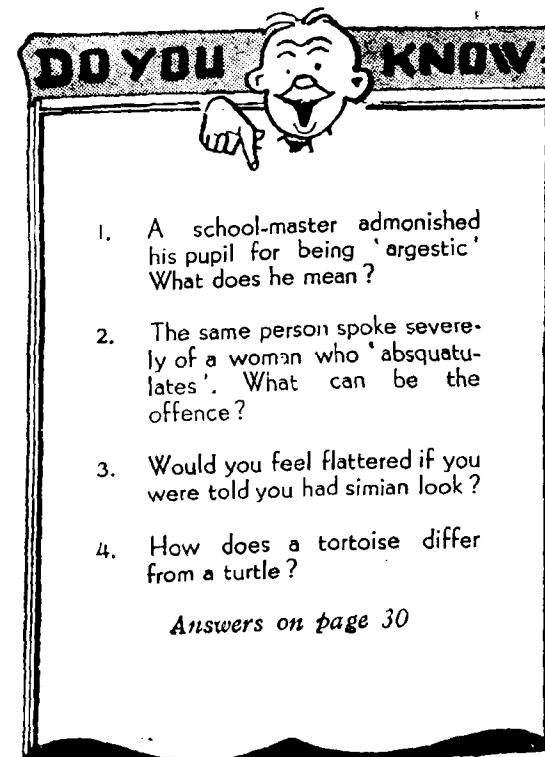
A great terror for a popular speaker is the heckler. Many promising speeches have been cut short by an inconvenient or insolent remark from the audience. There are speakers, however, who thrive on interruptions. They are in their best element when they are heckled, for a smart retort at once ingratiates the speaker with the audience. It is recorded of a worthy barrister who had reached a stage in his career when much whisky and soda had wrought palpable havoc with his complexion, that when he concluded an eloquent speech, a working man in the audience got

up and said: "Aspinall, tell me what makes your face so red." "Blushing at your impudence," was the quick reply. It carried the meeting. A similar victory was once scored by Lloyd George who is a great master of repartee. L. G. was once interrupted in the course of an election speech with the remark: "Well Mr. Lloyd George, do you remember that your grandfather was a donkey-cart driver?" Lloyd

George kept quiet for 30 seconds and then said: "Ladies and Gentlemen, you will have to forgive me, the cart has gone out of my memory, but I find that the donkey is still living." The effect was instantaneous. A smart reply is the most effective weapon in the armoury of a public speaker.

The subject of public speaking is very fascinating; and so many are the anecdotes which come tripping to my memory that I must now resist the temptation of writing more. I cannot, however, close without referring to the gestures of speakers who face an audience. All mannerisms must be scrupulously

avoided, for they invariably divert the attention from the speech to the speaker which is fatal. Take care to see that your voice is audible to all parts of the house and present a cheerful face. The moment you become inaudible, there will be trouble. Keep the pot boiling and you will not be disgraced. Half the audience does not care for what you are saying. As long as you keep on speaking, it is all right. But if you stop or falter in the middle of a speech, God help you. It is a formidable task to make a speech and whenever I receive a call, I mutter for my satisfaction the proverb—'Silence is golden', why speak at all?



1. A school-master admonished his pupil for being 'argestic'. What does he mean?
2. The same person spoke severely of a woman who 'absquatulates'. What can be the offence?
3. Would you feel flattered if you were told you had simian look?
4. How does a tortoise differ from a turtle?

Answers on page 30





A Matter of A Wig

By Embusque

Reading Time • About 9 Minutes

THOSE of my readers who, passing the High Court in Madras, are led to marvel at the ponderous and majestic machinery of justice, will be interested in the story of John Loloby's wig. But for John Loloby's wig, the terrific mechanism of Occidental justice might never have come to India.

John Loloby was a Lieutenant-Fireworker employed by the Company of Merchant Adventurers trading to the East Indies. That is to say, he commanded the Portuguese lascars who tended the six antiquated guns mounted on the flimsy mud wall of Fort St. George.

In 1720, the description 'fort' was a misnomer. The place was a crowded settlement of traders, and was practically indefensible. The mercantile community dominated everything. The Governor was a

merchant. He dealt in hides, tallow, and betel-nut. His Council was a council of clerks, employees of a trading-company. When not attending to the overseas trade which was the Company's monopoly, the employees pursued inland commerce on their own account.

They seem to have been quite good clerks, and honest traders. The day of the English Nabobs was not yet. These earlier employees did not dream of farming the revenues of provinces. They had no thought of aspiring to territorial power, and scarcely hoped ever to return to England. They received only small salaries from the Company, and made a steady ten to fifteen per cent on their private trade. They were dull fellows, stolid and God-fearing. Their receipts and bills-of-lading were pious documents, full of references to the dispensations of Providence.

In such a community, social rank went by mercantile eminence. A dealer in ground-nuts was accounted much higher than a collector of the Nawab's revenues, and the supercargo of a ship was of far better standing than a military officer. A military officer, in fact, was considered scarcely a gentleman. He ranked after the humblest clerk. Before the time of Clive, the Company gave no higher rank than Lieutenant to the commanders of its paltry garrisons. When Clive, the covenanted clerk, condescended to become a man of war, he was made Captain at once, and was thus senior to all the regular officers of the Company's forces.

In the days of Lieutenant-Fireworker John Loloby, the merchants compelled their employees to attend divine service. On Sunday mornings, John Loloby used to array himself in heavy broadcloth, laced hat, and full-bottomed wig, and march off to St. Mary's, with his colleague, Ensign Wildbent. Wildbent commanded the Free Guard, a motley force of nondescript Europeans.

Loloby and Wildbent might be described as soldiers of misfortune. Loloby had drifted into the Company's service by way of a post as gunner's mate on an East Indiaman. He was formerly an officer of the Royal Regiment of Artillery, but had been forced to sell his commission to pay his gambling-debts. Wildbent, an attorney's clerk, had shipped himself to India following a small matter of embezzlement.

On the Sunday morning in question, the discourse of the Chaplain was of extreme length. When the goodly man turned his hour-glass for the second time, Lieutenant Loloby openly yawned. Overcome by the insufferable heat, he thoughtlessly removed his full-bottomed wig, and fanned himself with it. A scandalised congregation beheld his bare head, as shaven and shiny as a billiard-ball.

The Senior Factor was charged with the good behaviour of the Company's servants. Rising, he bade the Chaplain pause; for a clergyman was accounted but little better than a menial. The worthy merchant admonished the irreverent military man in the face of the congregation. Loloby replied by inviting the Senior Factor to step outside.

Unfortunately, both disputants were early examples of the eighteenth-century 'man of honour'. Loloby had held the King's commission. The Senior Factor was the cadet of a good family, one of the first of his kind to come to India to retrieve the ancestral fortunes. Only a few minutes later, while the clergyman droned on, they faced each other on the burning sands beyond

the Sea Gate. They were still in full European dress and heavy wig. At the first discharge, the Factor was shot dead.

Loloby was arrested by the Pedda Naik, whose armed slaves brought him before the Mayor's court. The appointment of Mayor had been created by a charter of Charles II; and a later *firman* from the Nawab had delegated to the Mayor the power of trying cases arising within the settlement. The court was one of petty sessions, of doubtful powers and jurisdiction. The only practising advocate was a broken-down linen-draper who possessed an ancient book of jurisprudence.

Ensign Wildbent appeared on behalf of his accused friend. He challenged the jurisdiction of the court, and its competence to try a felony. The Mayor swept these arguments aside, convicted the prisoner of murder, and condemned him to death. There was definitely no power to carry out the sentence, so the Lieutenant was remitted to the Black Hole, 'until the pleasure of His Majesty be known'.

This was the usual procedure, and one which saved a lot of trouble. Prisoners confined in the Black Hole did not live long. It was a dungeon ten feet square, half underground. The straw was changed twice a week, 'on account of the intolerable stench and increase of vermin, which was unwholesome for the sentinels'.

Ensign Wildbent would not allow his comrade to die in that dreadful place. He determined to set up the Nawab's courts as the superior jurisdiction. He sent a petition to Arcot, accompanied by a bag of pagodas.

As Wildbent had calculated, the Governor would brook no threat to his supremacy within the English pale. The Governor relied on a *caul* granted by the Nawab's predecessor, the Raja of Vizianagram. This invested the settlement with full sovereign rights; but the Raja was long since a dethroned fugitive. The grants of the Moghul powers were of conflicting interpretation and uncertain validity.

In such cases, the Governor generally evaded the issue by sending the prisoner to England for trial. This, however, would fulfil Wildbent's object of getting his friend out of the Black Hole; and the prisoner would probably secure an acquittal in far-off Westminster. English juries were notoriously unwilling to enforce the harsh penal laws of the time; at least, on persons of any quality. A jury would sometimes value a stolen diamond at elevenpence-half

penny, to keep the charge outside the limits of felony, and permit a sentence milder than death. At Westminster, Loloby could plead benefit of clergy, and suffer no worse punishment than the confiscation of his non-existent property.

In his desire to make an example of the Godless and swashbuckling Lieutenant, the Governor listened to a wily suggestion on the part of his Indian man of business, the *dubash*. This gentleman reminded his master that there was always one court in Fort St. George that could execute a man without legal uncertainty. This was the Court of Admiralty, set up in Madras for the trial of pirates. Its writ ran on the high seas, and in any haven, creek, or waterside. If it could be shown that the duel took place below high-water mark, Loloby could be declared a pirate, condemned, and executed!

The duel took place while all the residents were still in church. The only eye-witnesses were Ensign Wildbent, who acted as second for his friend, and a young writer who had been the second of the deceased. Neither of these dare testify, under pain of condemnation as accessories. There was no one to rebut

the evidence of the professional perjurers procured by the *dubash*. A swarm of them came to the Admiralty Court, primed with an account of how they saw Lieutenant Loloby practically slay the Senior Factor on the sands, between high and low-water mark.

Without warning, the accused was produced before the Mayor, who withdrew his judgement, and committed the Lieutenant to the Admiralty Court for trial as a pirate. The procedure of those days permitted no adjournments, and a case had to be disposed of in a single sitting. In despair, Ensign Wildbent advised his friend not to plead until some remedy had been found. Under the cumbersome rules, a trial could not go forward until the accused had pleaded guilty or not guilty, and had consented to be tried by God and his Country.

The Court, confronted with a mute prisoner, applied the Common Law procedure appropriate to such

cases. First the accused was examined by the surgeon (an ex-private who had acquired skill in Hindu medicines), who decided that he was mute "fraudulently, wilfully, and obstinately; and not by the Providence and Act of God". This being determined, the judge uttered the dreadful formula of the *peine forte et dure*:

"You shall go to the prison from whence you came, and shall be laid there in your dark and low house.....and there shall be laid on your body iron and stone, so much as you may bear, and more..... and you shall drink of the water next unto the prison, except running water; and this shall be your diet until you are dead."

Meanwhile, Ensign Wildbent was feverishly searching the book of the broken-down linen-draper. The pigs of iron were already being laid on the body of his friend, before a way of escape was discovered. Triumphantly, Ensign Wildbent forbade the torture to proceed, in the name of the Law!

The Admiralty Court was part of the ancient ecclesiastical jurisdiction; and the ecclesiastical courts abstained from torture. If such a process was neces-

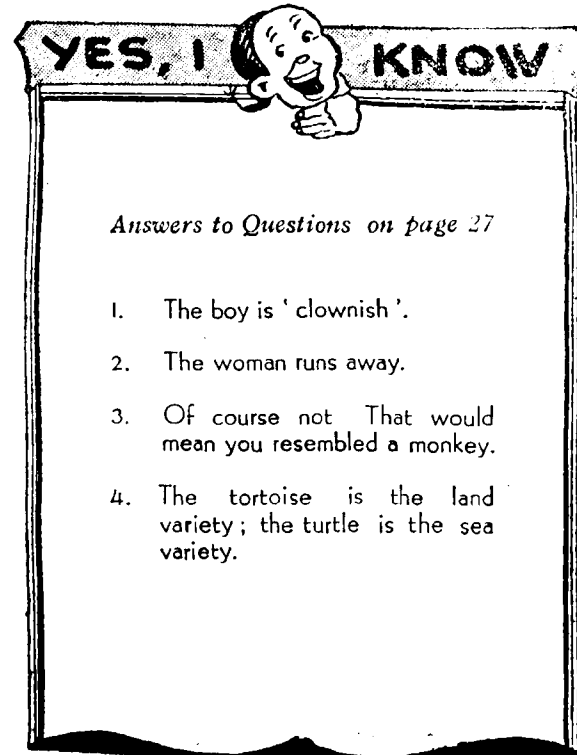
sary, the prisoner had to be handed over to the King's courts for the purpose. Lieutenant Loloby must be sent to England to suffer his *peine forte et dure*!

The Governor was helpless. When the accused reached England, he pleaded—pleaded self-defence. The depositions of the Governor's witnesses were discounted by the depositions of an even larger number of perjurers for the defence, whom Wildbent had had time to hire. Lieutenant Loloby walked out of Westminster Hall a free man.

And the Governor, determined that no one should ever again defy his authority, made such representations to the Directors of the Company, that in 1726 there arrived Royal Letters Patent, establishing the King's civil and criminal courts in all the Company's settlements.

Thus, over the matter of the wig of Lieutenant Fire-worker Loloby, the majesty of English Law came to India.

THE END



Drama in the Park

By John A. Henry

Reading Time • About 4 Minutes

Illustrated by Varma

THE night was dark and the sky overcast with a pall of low clouds that hid the stars. Just the sort of night that suited burglars, murderers, and human vampires. A night that was so still that it was enough to make your flesh creep.

The City was silent, and the Park was even more eerie in its stillness. One could almost imagine spooks and ghouls flitting through the trees.

The man seated on the Park bench passed his fingers over his companion's throat in a manner that in some men would be accounted as horribly caressing. The girl shivered at his touch, a sort of mad ecstasy thrilling through her being.

He looked at the dim oval of her face, his eyes gleaming. In his right hand was an object that glinted dully. She could just see it. It was the shape of a small, nickel-plated revolver.

"It was on nights like this that Jack the Ripper claimed his victims," he said softly, his fingers still caressing her throat.

"Jim—don't!" There was horror and fear in her voice.

"And Dracula chose such nights for the sucking of his victim's blood," he went on, a light note in his tone that was strangely incongruous in that setting.

"Jim—please," she shivered.

"And it's the night I choose for asking you something—what have you done with the money?" he asked the question commandingly. "Tell me or—" he broke off and twirled the object in his hand.

She racked her pretty head for an answer. She had never dreamed that this would happen. Jim—who had always given in to her slightest wish—and now—

"But I can't tell you," she almost wailed.

A passing policeman turned his head the other way, oblivious of the little drama being enacted by these two, whom he labelled as sweethearts.

"I must know!" he went on. "I wanted that money. It was a mistake that you got it. It was mine—mine by right."

"But you said I could do what I liked with it. And, after all, I worked the crossword out."

"And I sent it in. If I hadn't—"

"And if I hadn't worked it out—"

"But anyway, I have changed my mind. I want that money."

"But it's gone!" she wailed. "I've spent it."

"You haven't!" There was a fierce note in his voice now. "What on, anyway?"

"I can't tell you—you know it's your birthday to-morrow, and you mustn't know what it is."

"All rot! You're telling me that as a blind to prevent me from using it. When I said you could have the five hundred, I had forgotten that—well, it's all over now—if what you say is true."

There was a note of finality in his voice that made her heart sink.

"There are almost no lengths to which I would not go to get five hundred," he muttered, and she saw him twirl the object in his hand once more. "Any lengths."

"What do you want it for?" she asked. She had suddenly remembered something and felt uneasy qualms of conscience.

"I can't tell you," he sounded sullen. He had stopped caressing her throat, and was now stroking the small revolver.

"Then why should I tell you?"

"I just wanted to make sure that you *had* spent it. And now, well," he fumbled in his pocket and held a cigarette case out to her, "have a cigarette before I use this." He indicated the revolver.

She selected a cigarette, as did he.

"Well, I might as well own up," he said quietly. "There was a beautiful fur coat in Whiteaway's that I wanted to buy you. Five hundred of the best for it. But you've evidently forgotten, like me, that it's *your* birthday the day after to-morrow. But now," there was almost a hysterical note in his voice, "you've spoilt it all—ruined it! As a wife you should have thought of such a contingency. But, darling, you didn't—and now—" his finger tightened suddenly on the trigger of the revolver, "kiss me!" The last words were almost a command. She kissed him and then coolly placed the cigarette between her lips.

Then he brought the revolver up towards her face. It stopped, gleaming dully, level with her mouth.

"They're good smokes—these DeReszkes," he said and pressed the trigger of his novelty petrol lighter.

THE END

SCIENTIFIC EATING—(Continued from page 25)

that, and hundred percent swadeshi too. But oh, God, its skin! It digests only when you hear you failed in your examination or when you see your creditor at the door. So that my main effort was to grow the fruit without the skin. I spent weeks on a programme and finally decided to sow the seed without its skin.

The thing sprouted well, and in a couple of weeks gave two fruits too. Those were very anxious days. Cucumber gets its cooling qualities from the fact that the plant itself never worries about anything. To ensure this state of the mind I had provided plenty of food and a bucket of water near the plant, and also supplied illustrated literature to engage its attention. The early days of the young fruits were very troublesome, but I never expected the final crash in the fashion it came.

On the 14th day of the fruits they developed slight temperature. On the thermometer it was only a degree or so, but I knew the little ones suffered a lot. The next morning the fever took a serious turn and I suspected it was pneumonia. Well, my accumulated knowledge of plants and their pests couldn't help a jot, and to cut the story short, everything was over by the following morning. The fruits and the mother-plant were dead.

With potatoes I had similar trouble. One rule about them, and I quote from the latest book of Backeriaproteinski, is to plant the seeds four inches deep and eight apart. I admit I had no callipers at home, but I did my best with a scale. Yet, that was the main objection raised by the plants when I asked for their roots.

For once I thought that after all I should have taken my mother's advice and led a normal life as she or my father did. But you know there is no progress without trials and failures, and I believe it fully. Leaving the garden for a while I went in for a little dieting. The Calorie was my guide, if it does not take it an offence, and I know and believe that 3000 units of this worthy should be sufficient to maintain your vitality if you are not an idiot. And I am not an idiot. After careful consideration I made a selection which consisted of four grains of Vitamin B, two tea-spoonsful of ultra violet nitrophosphate, half an ounce of yellow protein and a pint of distilled water. This went on for quite a fortnight to the alarm of my parents, and finally I reached the hospital.

Now is the real problem. Can you suggest what I should do next? (You should marry—Ed.)

THE END

Mlle. le Normand

Maas J. Majid

Reading Time • About 4½ Minutes

IN the days of the first French Revolution there was a young woman famous for her ability to read the decrees of fate. Thousands of men and women flocked to her and listened with awe to her Delphic revelations. She lived to a good old age. And toward's the end of her life it was her proud boast that emperors and empresses, kings, queens, and high-born nobles had consulted her.

That famous *devineresse* was Mademoiselle le Normand who began her career early in life. She was short of stature and of immense bulk, but was not a person of ordinary or vulgar aspect. Her bright blue eyes possessed a cunning restlessness and never failed to observe every peculiarity of the consultant. She surrounded herself with all the accessories which could intensify the awe of her visitors.

Her divination was by means of cards. She had a separate set, though not of the ordinary type, for love matters and similar concerns. For affairs of life and death she had a frightful set called the *grand jeu*. Few people dared to test their fate thereby. This set consisted of cards which were large and presented pictures of duellists, suicides, cross-bones, skulls, drops of blood, and the halter. Mademoiselle le Normand used to assert that she could have no share in the decision arrived at and that Fate alone gave the answers.

On one occasion Robespierre went to her in disguise. He turned death-pale and trembled when she told him who he was, and what would be his fate. She was often heard to relate with malicious glee how his hideous countenance changed colour when at each shuffle turned up the *grand pendu*—the card depicting a human figure in the agonies of a violent death. "Fate had fixed what was to befall Robespierre," she declared, "and he knew and feared it ever."

The Emperor Alexander of Russia is known to have visited and consulted Mademoiselle le Normand while he was in Paris. The Empress Josephine and the whole train of the imperial courtiers were among her most enthusiastic clients. They consulted this sibyl in all emergencies, private and public, amatory and political.

Napoleon was among the few exceptions who did not bow before the shrine of Mademoiselle le Normand. He rebuked the Empress for her traffickings with this pythoness. He even forbade the latter entering the palace or communicating with the Empress on penalty of imprisonment or exile. "But it was useless," said the *devineresse* subsequently; "I could not let the poor daughter of the isles rush on her fate without advice

and solace." So Mademoiselle le Normand did actually see the Empress in a smuggled way.

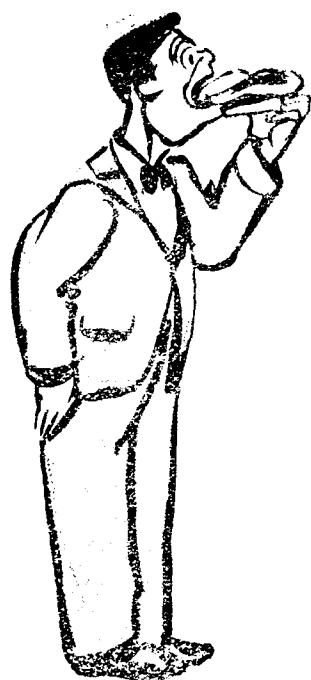
Josephine lavished costly gifts on this fortune-teller. A gold cup of great value and a miniature portrait of the Empress herself in a red morocco case were among the presents bestowed on her. Speaking of Josephine, Mademoiselle le Normand said: "I prophesied that she would become a queen and more, and as to her fall I could warn, but not save her. It made me laugh to hear people talk of her patience and resignation under the misery that befell her. Why, she knew it all before. I told her all."

Even after the restoration of the Bourbons, the noble dames of the court patronised Mademoiselle le Normand. Memories of the hideous past made them apprehensive of the future. And rumour of change terrified them so much that they rushed to consult her. The one question asked her by hundreds of people during the momentous Three Days of July 1830 was: "Shall we fly or stay?" She was eighty years old at that time and this gave added weight to her predictions. She pacified her trembling visitors and foretold that they would be safe under the rule of Louis Philippe.

The name of Mademoiselle le Normand figured prominently in a case in which one Alexander Humphreys was charged for forgery. For about twenty years Humphreys styled himself the Earl of Stirling and brought a civil action for recovery of the estates in Scotland, once the property of the Stirling Earldom, against their existing possessors. He also contested the rights of the British Crown, on similar grounds, to the whole of Nova Scotia.

It was his attempt to bolster up his pretensions by documentary evidence which led to his undoing. An old map of Canada with letters pasted thereon was his chief document. This had come from Mademoiselle le Normand who had been offered a large share when Humphreys won his suit. The forgery had been so cleverly done that it nearly escaped detection. The jury who tried the case declared the document to be forged, but added that it was not proved that Humphreys was the forger or knew it to be forged. Here, at least, Mademoiselle le Normand failed in her predictions. She had foretold that Humphreys would win his suit and secure the Stirling title and properties.

She died at the age of 87 and left a large fortune, which she had acquired solely by her trade of divination. This went to a nephew, an officer of the army in Africa.



Eating his hat

few minutes, as that will give you complete mastery and professional skill. If, on your attainments, you are not called a great warlock (*copyright*) and if people do not fall over each other in inviting you to their dinner-parties, you are at perfect liberty to call me whatever name that is found in the current G. I. P. Railway time-table.

Trick No. 1: Fire-Eating: Recently Kudu Bux won fame in England by walking on fire. This trick is more difficult and more arduous than fire-walking. You cannot perform this trick effectively without being a seasoned politician. You must be able to hurl invectives, thunder denunciations, make lofty promises, differ from everybody, in short, you must be adept at political ballistics. Now that Senator Huey Long is dead, you can take a postal course from those great fire-eaters—Winston Churchill and Lloyd George.

Trick No. II: Eating One's Words: If all could be made to eat their own words, everyone would be having an acute attack of dyspepsia! To perform this trick, you make accusations which are unfounded or you make promises which you cannot fulfil or you utter dogmatic statements resting on bare authority. When you are proved that you are wrong, you then, solemnly and

A Short

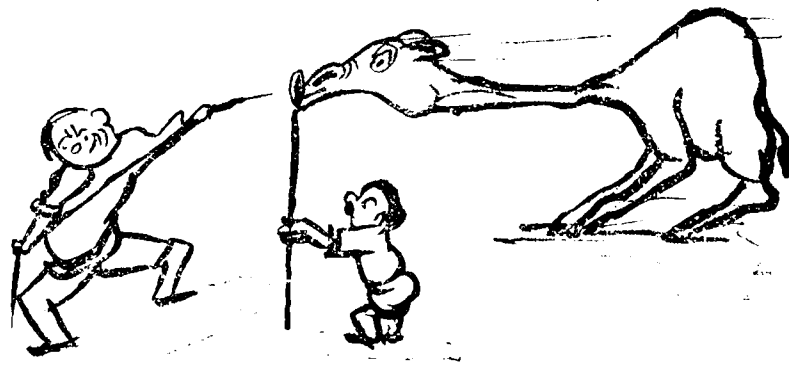
Reading Time • About 6 Minutes

unabashedly eat your own words. Quite simple as that! I do admit that this will be an unpleasant experience for you but please consider the entertainment-value of it. To attain mastery over this trick, go to any elected member of the legislature at the election-time, who will gladly put you through your paces in the art of eating your words.

Trick No. III: Eating One's Hat: This trick should be contradistinguished from *Speaking through the Hat*. In *Eating One's Words*, you are more or less compelled to perform the trick, whereas in *Eating One's Hat*, you volunteer to do it with the greatest pleasure. In this simple trick, the conjuror informs the audience that if what he asseverates is proved wrong, he would eat his hat as a challenge. Now, in eating the hat, it all depends on what sort of hat the conjuror is wearing at the moment. The following hints, I trust, will come in vastly useful for the amateur conjuror.

(A) **Opera-hat:** Never say that you will eat your opera-hat. With all those steel springs and flippers and things, you can never make a decent job of it. Therefore, cut out opera-hats from the programme.

(B) **Sun-hat:** You are in honour bound to eat the band, ventilators, lining, strap, cork and the maker's name. If the hat is of Indian make, palmyra strips



The Camel and the Needle

Course to Wizardry

By A. T. M. Thomas

Sketches by Mali

will not be unlike the sand-wiches you get in railway refreshment-rooms.

(E) **Bowler-hat:** Prepare as above; but soak it previously in vinegar for three hours.

(F) **Top-hat:** Bake for ten minutes and then have it done in fish sauce. Flavour it with a suspicion of ginger. If it is not then as edible as stewed cycle-tyres, *I will eat my hat*. Wash it down with Burgundy, 1817.

(G) **Panama-hat:** This innutritious article of head-wear can be made easily digestible if you first soak it in hot water and then broil it in ghee. With plenty of pepper and sliced onions stuffed into the brim and a *soupçon* of mint to flavour, it can be a very good basis for lunch if served with mashed potatoes to correspond. Now, don't try to confound Panama-hat with *Suez hat*, the recipe for which will be given later.

N. B. Always consult your cook first before you commit yourself to a performance of this trick.

Trick No. IV: The Camel and the Needle: This trick will give you the reputation of being a great illusionist. To make a camel pass through the eye of a needle is not only a spectacular but also a breathtaking performance. To perform this trick successfully, the amateur conjuror must be a stockbroker. But I know you are not a stockbroker and therefore, why bother your silly head over it?

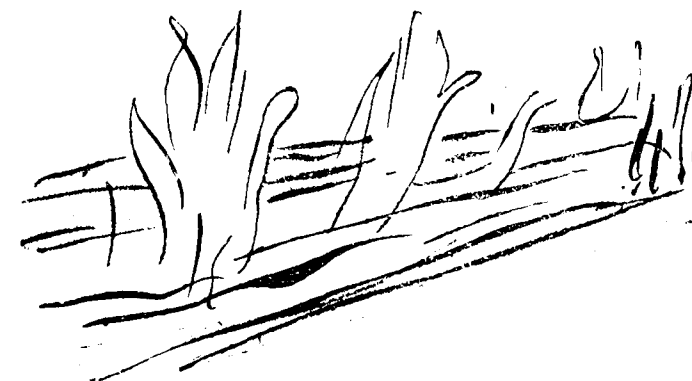


Making money fly

go along inside you. I think, you can about manage to gulp it down with a little butter and a dash of paper.

(C) **Straw-hat:** Generally straw-hats are flyblown and moth-eaten. If success is the thing you desire, you needn't be pernickety, fussing about flies and moths. Though this tramineous head-wear may look unappetising, we have it on the best medical authority that straw is an exceedingly healthy tuff—if taken with bovine complacence.

(D) **Felt-hat:** Slice it into thin strips. Fry it in Cocogem and dress it with bread-rums. Eat hot with tomato ketchup. It



Thames on fire

Trick No. V: Making the Money Fly: A masterpiece of legerdemain. Everybody can perform this sleight-of-hand trick, especially if it happens to be other people's money. This trick is different, of course from a trick of similar *genre*, where money by a chemical action, burns hole in pocket and disappears. To perform this trick, you take money—preferably your pocket-money or your salary—and go to any shop or hotel or race-course or gambling-den or place of amusement and say, 'Hey, Presto'. The spectators will be mildly amused—since most of them are also expert at this trick—to see your money taking wings and vanish from view.

N.B. Scotchmen, Jews, Komities and Baniyas should not attempt this trick as they would only bungle.

Trick No. VI: Eating One's Heart Out: An anatomical trick that will further enhance your reputation as an illusionist. In this trick, under stress of vexation or distress, you proceed to conjure your heart out of its residence and eat it up. If you are a jilted lover you can perform this trick in an expert manner.

Trick No. VII: Producing a Goose out of a Mongoose: Decapitate the first syllable, wave the wand three times, chant 'Hey presto! Booli boo!' and there emerges the goose triumphantly. Very tricky, isn't it?

Trick No. VIII: Setting the Thames on Fire: This trick is the *magnumopus* of our repertoire. Since many of our readers cannot pay their fare to England to perform this trick, they can as well set the Ganges or the Indus or the Cauvery on fire. To perform this seemingly-impossible trick, you must have plenty of gumption and 'go'. Again a politician is the person who can most effectively perform this trick. President Roosevelt's N.R.A., the Rajah of Bobbili's Five-Year Plan and Mr. Satyamurthi's promise of getting rain under the Congress regime in the *Bhagiratha* fashion, clearly entitle these worthies to a successful performance of the most difficult of all tricks.

Trick No. IX: Cooking Fish in a Thimble: To perform this trick, you—All right. All right. I know when to take a hint. Sufficient unto day is the magic thereof.

THE END

Woman's Friend

The natives of Southern Rhodesia have a little story which shows how the cat became domesticated. It is told by the old grannies. Just where the tale ends depends upon whether father is present.

Once upon a time, the story goes, a cat, being naturally lazy and feeling itself defenceless among so many larger creatures, thought it would attach itself to some other animal.

So it made friends with a jackal. When the jackal killed a hare the cat rubbed itself against its protector and was allowed to share its food.

But one day a leopard sprang on the jackal and killed it, so the cat, realising it must have a stronger friend and protector than a jackal, made friends with the leopard.

All went well until a lion killed the leopard, and once more the cat transferred its affections to the mightier beast. Then came a day when the lion fought an elephant and was crushed to death.

The cat, therefore, chose the elephant for its new protector, and this time felt sure it would be safe from everything that roamed the field.

But the cat was wrong, for one early morning a native hunter hidden in the bush, stabbed the elephant with a spear, and cutting off a large lump of meat, carried it on his head to the kraal.

"Now, at last," thought the cat, as it ran meowing behind the man, "I have found the lord of creation and will live in perfect safety with him."

And this is where the story stops when father is at home. But if he is out it goes on as follows:

The hunter entered his hut while the cat sat on the top to wait for any pieces of meat that it might filch. After a few moments there was a loud noise in the hut and the hunter rushed out, followed by several domestic articles—and in Southern Rhodesia these are as heavy as anywhere else.

And ever since the cat has been the friend of woman.

Humour Among Lawyers

By S. I. Rasool

Reading Time • About 6 Minutes

DURING my short career at the Inns of Court I have heard some very amusing stories which, like life itself, are packed with paradoxes, incongruities, absurdities; laughter jostling the heels of despair, sunshine peeping through clouds and shadows, yet everything seeming just as it ought to be.

Few of the general public, or indeed of the legal fraternity, know that the Law has its patron saint. About A. D. 1300 there lived in England a famous lawyer, Evona or Ives, whose one great regret in life was that this profession had no patron saint. Accordingly, he journeyed to Rome and interviewed the Pope, who granted his request, ordering that he should go round the church of St. John de Lateran blindfolded, and after he had

said a certain number of specified prayers, the saintly figure he should first lay his hands upon should be the lawyer's patron. Evona carried out his instructions to the letter, in the presence of witnesses, and after some groping, catching hold of what he thought was a saintly image, he said: "This is our saint, this shall be our patron." Then, tearing off the bandage, he found to his horror that he had laid hold of the figure of the devil under the feet of St. Michael. After Evona's death, however (so good had been his record) he was himself considered as the patron saint of lawyers.

In the battle of wits that often takes place between the Bench and the Bar, however, victory does not always go to the former. A very interesting story was told us by one of our lecturers, of a distinguished Irish barrister, who was addressing the Court on a fine summer afternoon when suddenly a donkey in an adjoining field began to bray loudly. "Excuse me, one at a time, please," said the Judge to the lawyer. To this remark counsel simply bowed, and continued his



speech. Later on, when the Judge was summing up to the jury, the donkey came once more into action, upon which counsel rose and said: "I am sorry, my Lord, out there seems to be such an echo that I can scarcely make out what your Lordship is saying."

Another equally interesting story is told of an Irish woman who was suing another for slander, and the plaintiff, when put in the box, was asked by her counsel to tell the Court what defendant said about her. "Oh, I cannot!" she exclaimed in alarm. "But you must," counsel replied, "the whole case hangs on your testimony." "But it isn't fit for any decent person to hear," expostulated the plaintiff. "Well, in that case," answered counsel, "just step up to the Judge and whisper it in his ear."

A similar story was told us by another lecturer, of a well-known Judge who was trying a prisoner for stealing. Among the witnesses for the defence was a doctor, who said that in his opinion the accused was suffering from kleptomania, adding in a rather grandiloquent manner. "And, your Lordship, of course, knows what that is." "Yes," said the Judge quietly, "it is what I am sent here to cure."

In contrast to this is another story of a Judge in a certain trial who consistently ignored plaintiff's counsel. At intervals during the proceedings the young barrister would arise and say, "But I represent the plaintiff," to all of which the Judge took no notice beyond telling the speaker to sit down. At length, stung to fury at his treatment, the counsel jumped to his feet and shouted out, "But, my Lord, I represent the plaintiff and must do the best I can for my client." "Quite so," replied the Judge calmly, "that's why I told you to sit down."

Strange as it may seem, there are times when, even on the Bench, the Judges do not inspire the awe that we would expect. On one occasion when a Judge was trying a case, the prisoner was observed to speak to the warder beside him in the dock. On this, counsel for the Crown immediately asked that the warder should disclose what the prisoner had said. To this the warder demurred, but on receiving the Judge's order to repeat the conversation, he announced that the prisoner had pointed to his Lordship and asked: "Who is that moth-eaten old heathen? I've often seen him hanging round the race-courses."

The witness-box has ever been a fruitful subject for the cynic beginning with the one who defined witnesses as 'persons on whom an advocate relies to prove his case—they lie, he relies.'

It is a strange fact that in no place are the distinguishing characteristics of sex so fully brought out as

in the witness-box. One sex characteristic is that under cross-examination women invariably grow angry much sooner than men. The reason for this, apparently, is that the rules of evidence are particularly repressive of extraneous matter, and being checked in her flow of speech, a woman looks upon them as laws designed by man for the repression of her sex, and is accordingly hostile. She fails to understand why the opinion of her friend should not be a potent factor in the case.

A famous example of this occurred in a will case where the will was alleged to be a forgery concocted after the testator's death. A very eminent lawyer was retained in the case and in his examination of one of the witnesses who had witnessed the will, the only answer he could get was that at the time the testator signed 'The life was in him.' "Was the testator alive at the time he signed the will?" he demanded. "The life was in him," came the reply. "Now," thundered the lawyer, "answer me at your peril. Was there not a live fly in the dead man's mouth when his hand was placed on the pen?" The witness collapsed, and immediately confessed to the trick.

It is a strange circumstance that lawyers' wills have always been notorious for giving rise to litigation, and that lawyers themselves only too often make bad witnesses. It is said of one lawyer how on one occasion he had to appear on behalf of another counsel, who was prosecuting a man for threats and said: "He who ought to have been a scientific witness was about the worst I ever had on my hands. Instead of giving simple answers to the questions, he did what counsel and judges always scold witnesses for doing—he made statements."

Similar stories have been told of people in the jury which are not without humorous aspects.

There is a good story told of a very eminent lawyer which happened to him personally. He was defending a man accused of murder, and so strong was the circumstantial evidence against the prisoner that it was clear the jury had determined upon a verdict of guilty. At the last moment, however, the man supposed to be murdered was brought into court, alive and unhurt, whereupon the jury were asked, as a matter of form, to return their verdict at once. To the astonishment of everyone, it was 'guilty.' "What do you mean?" asked the astonished Judge. "If the man has not been murdered, how can you hold the man guilty?" "Please, Your Honour," replied the foreman, "he's guilty. He stole my horse three years ago."

THE END

Auntie Awful



"**S**ORRY, no ink in the fountain," says an Auntie fan from Madras, who evidently expects the public parks to spout blue-black writing-fluid.

So there is no letter for Auntie? Indeed, there is. Undeterred by the negligence of the city fathers, our indefatigable nephew continues in pencil. But Tragedy still overhangs the bowed head of Industry. Only two lines later, the catastrophe arrives. "Alas!" mourns our nephew. "The lead has gone away!"

Surely the young man is now foiled in his determination to write to Auntie? Surely he is worsted in his combat with the demons that reside in ink-fountains and black-lead pencils? Not a bit of it. Aid is forthcoming. The next report from the scene of operations brings the glad news that all is well. A servant has arrived, and filled the ink-pot! Surely this is a serial as breathless as anything penned by Deisvi?

"When a person's mind is wandering," says our nephew, getting down to business, "why do we say he is wool-gathering?"

Not so difficult after all, is it, my dears? In the old days, when large areas of land were uncultivated and covered with thorny hedges, wandering sheep roved in search of pasture, leaving tufts of their wool on the thorns. It was the privilege of the feeble-minded and the idle to wander after the sheep, gathering the wool. The wool thus gleaned was carded, and sold to cloth-makers at a cheap rate.

Our nephew is further puzzled by the expression: 'I don't care a fig for it'.

Well, my dears, a fig, by its shape, is the traditional symbol for a part of the organs of male reproduction. One can 'make a fig' by thrusting the thumb between the fingers, a gesture employed by Ancient Pistol to the fiery Fleuellen in *Henry V.* It is a gesture of coarse contempt. 'Not to care a fig', however, is a phrase occurring in quite polite literature.

Finally, demands this insatiable nephew, why does the water in a drinking-fountain usually pour out of a lion's mouth?

Here we have another piece of ancient symbolism, my chickabiddies. Water is the fluid of life, possessing powerful properties. What more appropriate than that it should issue from the mouth of the Lord of Strength?

To turn to other matters, a valued correspondent has been scanning the make-up of the *Merry* with more than usual care. "I notice," she says, "that lately there has been at least one article from the fair sex in each issue. Has the editor experienced a change of heart, or was he influenced by the photographs these ladies sent him?"

To this alarming insinuation, our dear niece adds a suggestion that verges on the ribald. "Do you think that the editor would print more articles by feminine writers," she continues, "if they enclosed pictures of themselves in semi-nude poses?"

Alas, dear boys and girls, the stony hearts of editors are not so easily influenced. Editors have an ingrained prejudice for printing the best literary work available, whether written by a charming girl like our niece, or a chimpanzee like Auntie.

There is a story to the effect that a certain magazine achieved an enormous success owing to the contributions of an anonymous writer. The editor asked no questions, but dispatched monthly cheques to the contributor's home address, which was in the Infernal Regions.

There was a lot of gossip in Heaven to the effect that the Devil was making a name for himself as a writer. This aroused the jealousy of the Angel Gabriel,

who prepared an article on the best Heavenly models, and sent it to the editor, with particulars of the writer's powers, titles, and Heavenly whereabouts. A few weeks later, the contribution came back with a printed rejection-slip.

Gabriel wrote to the editor in furious remonstrance. Owing to the eminent position of his correspondent, the editor broke a rule, and dealt with the complaint by sending a personal reply.

"My Dear Archangel Gabriel," he said, "Your contribution, though of great merit, was not up to our requirements. If you want to know how to write a good article, please apply to the undermentioned for advice." And he enclosed the address of His Satanic Majesty!

Yes, my dears. Editors are like sailors. Editors don't care.

Sandpaper (Mylapore). "Dear Auntie, what is the modern girl's favourite fruit?" Dates, dear boy.

Jane (Penang). "I have seen Laurel and Hardy in a film called 'Close Shave'. Laurel wrote a letter to a rich widow, and on the back of the envelope wrote 'S. W. A. K.' What do these initials mean?" They mean, 'Sealed with a Kiss', my dear. This mystic message is often used by little boys and girls when sending childish love-notes to each other; so it was a great joke for the lugubrious Laurel to put such a thing on an envelope addressed to an elderly widow.

Club Member (Poona). "There is a dining-room at our club, but the staff refuse to serve a meal to me except within the authorised hours. As my work prevents me from taking some meals at the fixed times, I think an exception ought to be made, especially as I am a member of the General Committee. I enclose the club rules." From a study of the rules, dear sir, Auntie considers you are entitled to dine at whatever hour you please. Rule seven distinctly says: 'The General Committee are at liberty to fill a vacancy in their body at any time'.

'Master Awful's Brother'. "Why did you not thank me for the jokes I sent?" Please forgive your poor Auntie. The editor has an objection to her using jokes from other papers. However, if you read the column carefully, you will see that Auntie does manage to use some of the ideas you send. Thank you, dear nephew.

Humorist (Velapadi). "What do they call a man who makes-up jokes?" A beauty-specialist, dear boy.

Crossed in Love (Tadanandi). "The girl I love has deserted me. I cannot sleep at night, and I am full of misery. Shall I take poison?" No, dear boy. Take another girl.

Bioscope (Nellore). "Has Marlene Deitrich appeared in any comic shorts?" Yes, dear boy. She has also been seen in masculine trousers, lace-edged scanties, and even as an artist's model all ready for business.

Old Friend (A.C.G.S.) Thank you, my dear, for the postage stamps, and the little balloons in the shape of various animals. Do the kiddies play with the latter in the class-room when your back is turned? Perhaps that is how you collected them? Your little Saw Ean (whose photo Auntie is returning) is very sweet; and Santhamma is a wonderful little artist.

Strict Business (Kottayam). "I am entering into partnership with a man. What provision should be made in the event of fire or bankruptcy?" Have a clause put into the agreement, dear sir, that all profits arising from fire or bankruptcy shall be equally divided between the partners.

'Henry J.' "There is only one European I admire, and that is the true Irishman, Mr. De Valera." Quite so, my dear. In true Irish fashion, Mr. De Valera had himself born a Spaniard.

Birthday (Royapuram). "I have been given a telescope as a present. What do you think of that?" Auntie thinks, dear boy, that it needs looking into.

Philology (Perak Road). "Why do the Americans say 'yeh' for 'yes'?" It is the result of climatic influence. The North American climate affects the nasal passages, making sibilants and open vowels difficult to pronounce.

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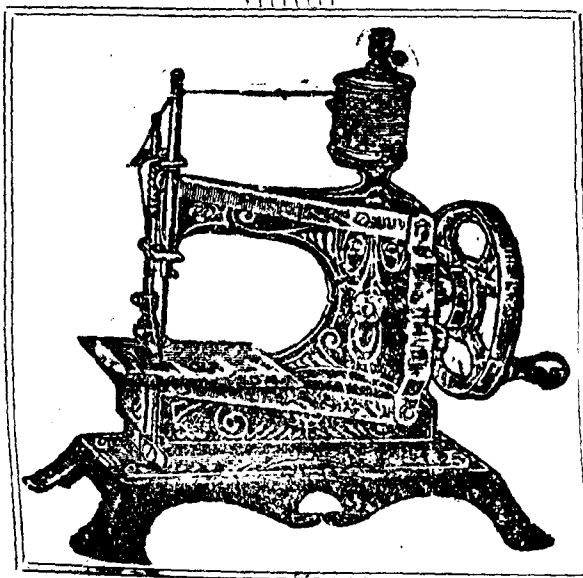
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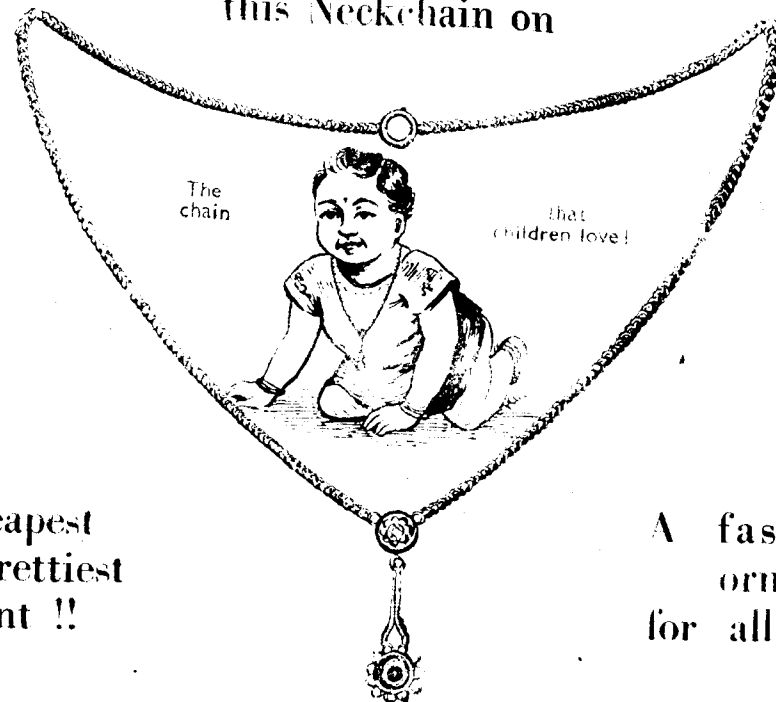
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