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The MERRY MAGAZINE



207

Vol. IV Madras, 8th February, '36 No. 6

V. Vyasa Rao
A. A. Roland
- Artiji -

- Embusque -
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Shock - Tactics



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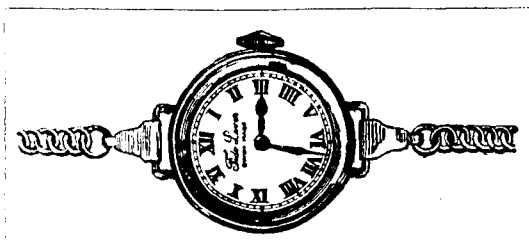
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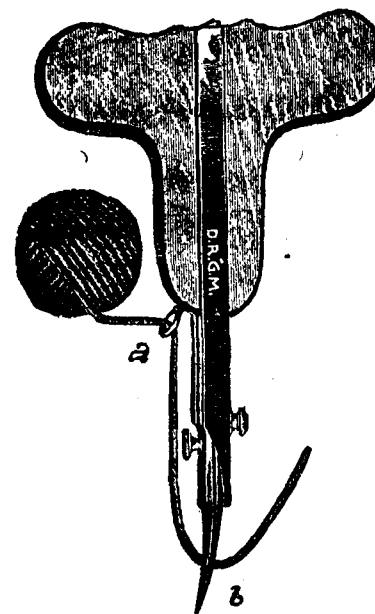
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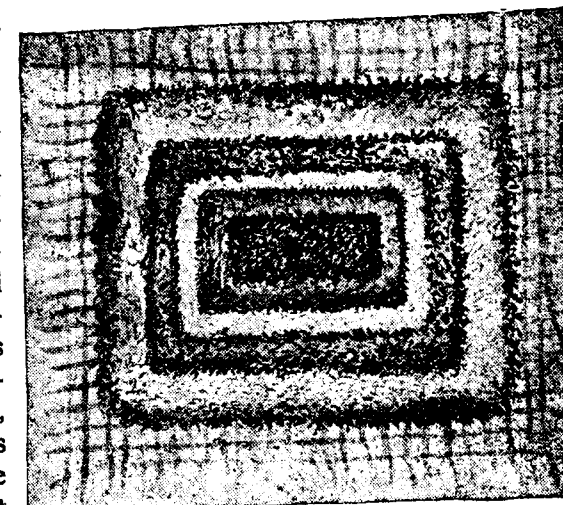
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The
MERRY
MAGAZINE



Madras, Feb. 8, '36

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Gloria Cornflakes

My Theory of Happiness

We sent a bright reporter (who is of course a girl) all the way to Hollywood, because we wanted to know things firsthand; also because these guys in the publicity racket are giving us a definite pain in the neck. So don't miss Gloria next week.

V. V. Narayanan

The Perfect Murder

Here is a crime perfect in every detail. But the best-laid plans of men and mice—you know the rest.

Mie

Oils and Italy

It was Oil, says Mie, which made Mussolini what he is. Will it be Oil that will make him what he will be? Let us wait and see, as Disraeli said (or whoever it was that said it.)

A. A. Roland

Consider The Kangaroo

The author considers the Kangaroo from various angles, with satisfactory results. We commissioned A. A. Roland to write this specially to cheer up the Australian Cricketers now amidst us.

SPARKS FROM OUR ANVIL

Commenting on the match against the Hyderabad team, Jack Ryder says that Indians should give up their fondness for matting wickets.

And the visitors, their aversion for them!

At question-time in the local Council, the Education Minister remarked that he would not be so stupid as to participate in the C. D. Movement.

It however remains to be seen whether he will be clever enough to continue as Minister.

The following occurs in the course of the official pamphleteering in favour of the Ottawa Pact: 'Restrictions by foreign countries affecting adversely India's export trade are not inspired by animus against India.'

Thus proving our own view that we are made to suffer on account of their animus against Britain.

The Bengal Government proposes to solve unemployment among the educated youths by giving them training in the shoe-trade.

This cannot teach them anything new: for they already know where it pinches!

Mr. George Arliss's next role is said to be that of a sinister, oriental despot.

But he will however play the part with his usual dexterity.

A news-item says that Dante's Inferno is coming to Madras on February 8th.

We are confident that Madras heat can hold its own.

London Indians have written to Herr Hitler protesting against his recent reference to India, and point out that he is ignorant of Indian History.

This does not mean that he knows at least European History!

'Tennis Pair to Wed'—says a head-line.

Probably the result of a love match!

Speaking at what he called a farewell address to lawyers, Mr. S. Srinivasa Aiyangar advocated the abolition of all personal laws.

If he should re-enter politics, we hope he will advocate the abolition of all personal property!

Reuter reports that General Kondylis, ex-Dictator of Greece has died of heart-failure.

This should serve to discredit the popular belief that dictators have no hearts to fail!

From a lecture on 'Proverbs—their sense and nonsense': 'They could collect proverbs dealing for instance with women, marriage and the devil. The trilogy is of course accidental.'

At any rate, it is full of accidents!

The Provincial Conference at Karaikudy passed a resolution stating that the Chief Minister is unfit to hold office.

In that case, it must be office that is holding him!

It is said that the question of an oil-embargo is being carefully explored.

Every effort will be made to prevent its exploding!

On the occasion of the celebration of the All-India Independence Day, the Congress President said that India's goal of Purna Swaraj still stood.

It is time we made a move towards it.

Another Order-in-Council publishes a long list of 'excluded areas'.

We are unable to determine which will be worse off,—they or the rest of the country!

The Next Congress President :

THE almost unanimous election of Pundit Jawaharlal Nehru to the Presidential gadi is a fitting tribute to the most romantic personality in Indian politics. His name is a house-hold word in the land, next only to that of Gandhiji. His accession to the supreme command, while solving some of the pressing problems of internal discipline, creates others which bid fair to raise fundamental issues of a far-reaching character. We have often re-iterated in these columns that party alignments will shift with the shifting conditions of national life, and the faith of the orthodox will be sorely tried in the coming struggle. Jawaharlal is an intellectual radical with a blinding clarity of vision, which enables him to brush aside the accidents surrounding any issue, and go straight to the heart of the matter. He stands, as we all know, for Socialism. Many front rank leaders of present-day Congress are either silent on this issue or merely pay lip-service to it. A small minority is frankly and boldly against the doctrine and all its implications. The coming Congress is bound to precipitate the formation of new groups wedded to local or temporary policies designed to keep the prestige of the Congress in the country undiminished. What line the Pundit will take, it is too early to guess. But his recent utterances give ample room for disquietude among the Moderates within the Congress. It is not at all unlikely that these latter may provide the nucleus of a party prepared to accept office under the new dispensation. Their disillusionment proceeding side by side with the education of the country in the ideas of Socialism will perhaps contribute to the momentum of the national struggle in the next phase.

The Tobacco Bill :

It is understood that the Justice Party has decided to oppose this bill, and have already

seen the Revenue Member in a deputation. If the Government withdraw the bill, we shall have had an example of much ado about nothing. But if they should press forward with it, it is bound to place the party in office, but not in power, in a quandary. There is already some talk of giving the members of the Party freedom to vote on it as they choose. If true, it throws a lurid light on the ethics of a party, which exists as a party only on condition that it is never forced to act as a party. Then too, the subservience of the party to the Reserved Half is manifest in the party men appealing to the Government to withdraw it. If things were the other way about, and the Revenue Member had to come round and appeal to the Party-leader, it would show the solidarity of the Party more effectively and creditably. However, whatever the motives, if the unwanted bill goes, we shall very gladly congratulate the men responsible for it.

Blue Books and—Black Lies ?

There was a time when blue-books were considered highly respectable, if generally unreadable. Bald-headed professors, and anaemic young men a-thirst for a doctorate were supposed to revel in them, and represent in more attractive garb the valuable information contained in them. But the cleavage between the Government and the people has long been unhappily manifested in this country in a thousand ways. The most odious of these was recently exposed by Pundit Jawaharlal Nehru whose commanding position forced the Bengal Government into a shame-faced apology. We made no reference to it, as we hoped it was a stray instance. But now the Government of India itself is known to have set this unhealthy example. We do not know what the fate of the adjournment motions in the Assembly is to be. But we hope the Government will show some gesture which will re-assure the public that they have a sense of fairness, if not of abstract truth !

The Reason



Seenu : Father, why does a lion have a bushy mane ?
Absent-minded Father : Eh ? Oh, I suppose it is because he couldn't find a barber to trim it !

The March of Events

by The Man On The Move



Mr. S. Srinivasa Iyengar says that Hindu marriages should be made monogamous. It was a crying shame that it had not been made monogamous so far.

Yes, it is a howling shame. I heartily agree with Mr. S. S. I. Not because he was a Congress President, not because he is an authority on Hindu Law and Constitutional Law, but because I and Mr. Iyengar think almost always alike.

Even babies born out of monogamous wedlock are no angels, if I might use a Mae-Westism, when they start howling. They howl because they are born in sin. If the contrary were the case they should be grinning right through their babyhood. Now, if monogamous babies are no angels, what do you call babies resulting from polygamous wedlock? You would call them demons. That's only logic.

My present neighbour is a funny chap. He has got three wives, I don't know why. Nor does he. He is such a shrimp of a fellow. Before he realised what he was in for, he got five babies in quick succession. These five babies hold the record for howling in the dead hours of night. You might even call them Marathon Yellers. They go about their business so lustily. This is an acquired trait. Not a day passes, but the three wives of the chap aforesaid have a row.

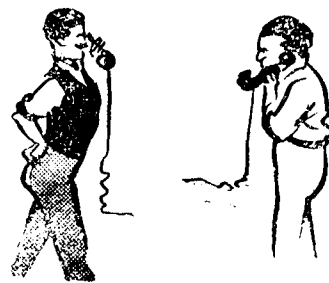
So I say with Mr. S. Srinivasa Iyengar that it is a darned shame. We ought to forbid polygamous marriages by statute.

★

Yesterday I was reading a full report of the speech of Anthony Eden at Lamington, his constituency, delivered a few days ago. As he and I sport the same dear old school tie, I got him on the long-distance 'phone and asked:

"Look here, old man, as between pals, what about that binge about the League of Nations?"

"What do you mean, binge?"



"Oh come, tell us privately. I'll keep mum, honest."

"You may howl like the very devil for aught I care. Don't get any silly ideas into your nut, old chap. I stand by collective action. Despite all obstacles the League has stuck its roots steadily deeper."

"Gee! I thought the old school-tie....."

"Shut up.....I say Munusamy, excuse me. The Afghan Minister is tapping on my door. Ring you up later, cheerio!"

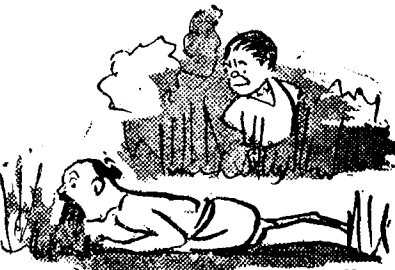
I forgot all about it. I was having my constitutional in my

back garden this morning. I observed a thick root sticking out of the ground. It was not there yesterday. I was of course puzzled. There is no big tree within a radius of five hundred yards capable of producing such a hefty root. So I called in a man from the Botanical Gardens and showed him the root. He examined it closely and shook his head. He said, "I am damned if I know what it is a root of. It has an outlandish smell. Tell you what, sir. I'll bring round a man who attended the Third Round Table Conference. He might know."

"Very well," I said.

In due course the Third Round Table-wallah came along. He regarded the root severely. I gave him a cup of hot *cha*. He thanked me and lay on the ground on his tummy. He bit off a part of the root and ate it. His face brightened. He sprang up with an exclamation. "I am damned if it is not a root of the League of Nations!"

"What!" I gasped and thought of my telephonic conversation with Anthony Eden. My aunt came on the scene. When she grasped the salient points (fine expression) of the situation, she said that she would not live another minute in that house. So we packed our household gods and are now living in the local dharamshala. Women are queer customers, what?



The Assembly is in session. More than fifteen hundred interpellations were given notice of, and are being answered. I was wanting to ask a question or two of the Foreign Department. Unfortunately I am not an M. L. A., because I didn't contest any seat. So I requested the department concerned to shelve the conventions just this once and answer these three questions:—

I Will the Member in charge of Dominion and Foreign Affairs be pleased to state:—

- Whether Sir Samuel Hoare is O. K. generally, and particularly in regard to the unfortunate accident he has had?
- If not, why not?

II Will the Hon'ble the Home Member be pleased to state:—

- If it is a fact that the Poet Laureate was requested to write an Ode to the Bifurcated District Boards of the Madras Presidency?
- If not, will the Government open negotiations with some Oriental Poet, preferably Poet Noguchi?

III Will the Hon'ble the Home Member be pleased to state:—

- Whether his attention has been drawn to the statement of Mr. Satyamurti to the effect that Australia plays better cricket than England?
- If so, will the Government be pleased to recommend to the Secretary of State for India in Council to consider the name of C. G. Macartney as a successor to Lord Linlithgow?
- If not, why not?

I have not heard anything from the Government. After all red-tape is red-tape, don't you think? Anyhow if my interpellations militate

against parliamentary procedure, I apologise abjectly.

★

Speaking to pressmen, Jawaharlal said in London that the India Act was an insult to India and that the Act was a trivial affair.

The Pandit is a bit hard on the India Act. We are non-violent chaps, believers in *Satyagraha* and *Truth* which is the same thing; and both jointly and severally mean God. So we shouldn't mind an insult. On the other hand we should welcome insults, just as Christians turn the other cheek. Every bird of passage insulted us from the sixth century after Christ. There is something in us which calls for insults. I am not sure if it is not a virtue.

But what grieves me is that Jawaharlal should call the India Act a trivial affair. That is unkind. Long before the various sections of the Act have become operative, the Act has passed through nine editions! I say it is a best-seller, the book of the year. I am only wondering why the Book Society haven't given their first vote to it. I call the India Act a ripper of a book. I am sorry I have to disagree with the President-Elect of the forthcoming Lucknow Congress.



Reuter reports that *concrete* (Italics ours) suggestions to limit the size of warships were advanced by Lord Monsell at the meeting of the First Committee of the Naval Conference.

Oh, yes. Lord Monsell's suggestions were so delicate that the First Lord of the Admiralty reinforced them with concrete and wheeled them to the Conference Hall in a pram of Japanese manufacture. In spite of Nippon's stand-down from the Naval pourparlers, these concrete suggestions have cheered up the delegates. Great things are now expected of them.

★



In a weighty speech delivered at the Senate House last week, Mr. Satyamurti said:

"In order to get the best of representative democracy, the voters must keep a watch on the doings of the representatives, and the latter must explain and expound their work from time to time to their electors."

This keeping watch already obtains in our villages. I am so glad Mr. Satyamurti is trying to enlarge the idea into the framework of our national politics.

A little while ago trouble arose between the two factions of our village over an irrigation channel. As a preliminary to a settlement, each party broke a few heads of the other party. Then we set up a *panchayat* and our party sent up two delegates. To guard against unforeseen developments, (human nature is frail, you know) we followed our delegates all the time in an unconcerned way holding serviceable lathis, to remind the delegates of their duty to their electors. Needless to say our delegates acquitted themselves quite creditably. Yes, the idea is a corker. No doubt about it.

Where, How & What?

God lives in His magic house—
 "Where is it, Mother, pray?"
 The sincere seeker finds it, child,
 You cannot miss the way.

God lives in His magic house—
 "How looks it, Mother, pray?"
 Perhaps like the Taj, or a hermitage,
 Or a Doll's House, any day.

God lives in His magic house—
 "How many gates, Mother, pray?"
 Ten thousand gates with wide-open doors
 Choose any one you may!

God lives in His magic house—
 "What shall I wear, Mother, pray?"
 Wear what you like, He is good and kind,
 Go just as you go to play.

"What shall I take with me, Mother dear?"
 Asked the eager child.
 "A basket of fruits—of Love and Service!"
 And the happy mother smiled.

—G. K. Pillai.

Fun For All



"Is your husband a bookworm, Mrs. Hawkins?"
 "No; only the ordinary worm, Mrs. Hopkins."

An angry customer, with proofs of his photograph, shouted at the photographer:

"Do I look like this picture? Have I a squint? And do I look like a prize-fighter? I ask you, is this a good likeness?"

The photographer replied with telling meekness:
 "The answer, sir, is in the negative."

A young recruit had spent the morning firing at the range and as he left, he turned to the Officer in charge and said: "Do you know, sir, I sometimes feel that I should prefer to be shot myself, rather than shoot my fellowmen?"

"You probably will be," replied the Officer.

"Do you know how to tell a professor from a student?"

"How?"

"Ask him what 'It' is, and if he says it's a pronoun, well, he is a professor."

A haughty lady had purchased a postage stamp. "Must I stick it on myself?" she asked.

"Positively not, madam," replied the post-office clerk. "It will accomplish more if you stick it on the letter."

Old Lady: Aren't you ashamed to ask for money?

Tramp: I got six months for taking it without asking, madam.

Woman: I'm not prejudiced at all. I'm going with a perfectly open and unbiassed mind to listen to what I'm convinced is pure rubbish!

The temperance man, meeting the regular inebriate, as he was leaving a tavern, lectured him on the iniquities of drink.

"And now, my dear man," said he in conclusion, "after all this, I'm sure you will coincide with me."

"Moshth shertainly, sher. You're very kind; mine's a pint of bitter."

"Are you sure you killed all the germs in this milk?"

"Oh, yes! I put strychnine in it."

The famous detective arrived at the scene of the crime.

"Gracious!" he exclaimed, "this is more serious than I thought! This window has been broken on both sides!"

Pat: Do you believe in dreams, man?

Mike: I do. Last night I dreamt I was awake and in the morning my dream came true.

Booking Clerk (at small village station): You'll have to change twice before you get to York.

Villager (unused to travelling): Goodness me! And I've only brought the clothes I be standing up in!

A Scotsman was going on the excursion to New York by way of the Reading Rail Road. He asked the agent for a round trip ticket and handed the agent a ten dollar bill. "Change at Jersey City," said the Agent. "No jokes, now!" said the Scotsman, "I want my change right away."

The Laws of Diminishing, Vanishing

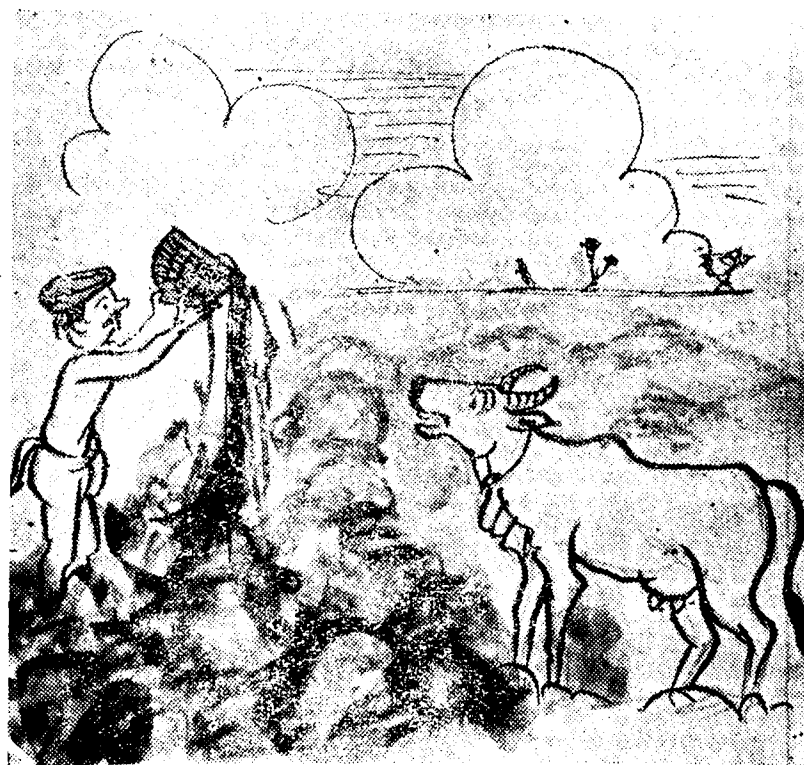
Reading Time • About 6 Minutes

I have never been able to understand either history or historians. We have all read about the Elusive Pimpernel. I think that he was or must have been a historian. History is said to be a science or an art or both or neither. History pokes its nose into everything, and everything, in its turn, pokes its nose into history. History says in one breath that it repeats itself and in another breath that it never repeats itself. If it repeats itself it would be a nuisance, and if it does not repeat itself it would be a monster. It is very feminine as it does not know its own mind and as it changes its mind many times a day. Yesterday it praised Demosthenes for being a patriot and to-day it blames him for not being an Imperialist. In his *Endymion* Keats calls it "the swart planet in the universe of deeds". I rather think that it's not a planet at all. It is a comet or a shooting star or a mass of nebulae. Some historians are sure that India has been a home of democracy all along and had even full-blown republics once upon a time. Others give as imposing an array of what are

called facts and figures, (mostly dressed-up fictions) and prove that India has always been a den of auto-cracy and tyranny and never had and will never be fit for a democratic form of government at any time before the advent of Halley's comet at the time of Resurrection.

Economics is an equally bewildering Chinese puzzle. Carlyle called it a dismal science. It is certainly dismal. But it is more. It not only makes us dismal; it makes us full of dismay. It announces a large number of laws as if they are laws of Nature or laws of God and adds a footnote stating that no one need be afraid of them as they are only approximations and are only tentative statements. They are like the huge mammoth pith figures that we see in Hindu religious processions. They have fierce moustaches and fiercer eyes but their height is determined by the height of the bearer beneath. The footnotes generally devitalise, if they do not destroy the text. The resounding battles of Free Trade and Protection, mono-metallism and bimetallism, inflation and deflation of currency, tariffs and quotas etc., fill the air with sound and fury. But the caravan marches on through the desert, now facing the typhoon and now resting in an oasis, amidst a general, nay universal, Sahara of economic life.

I have been studying intensively of late the Law of Diminishing Returns. This law has a special appeal and applicability to modern India where returns are not only diminishing but are vanishing rapidly beyond sight. What a beautiful law it is and how well illustrated and proved it is! If you use one ton of fertilisers you get two tons of fruit. If you use two tons of fertilisers, you get four tons of fruit. If you use three tons of fertilisers, the laws of arithmetic refuse to work and you get three tons of fruit. If



The cow looked on in disapproval

& Astonishing Returns

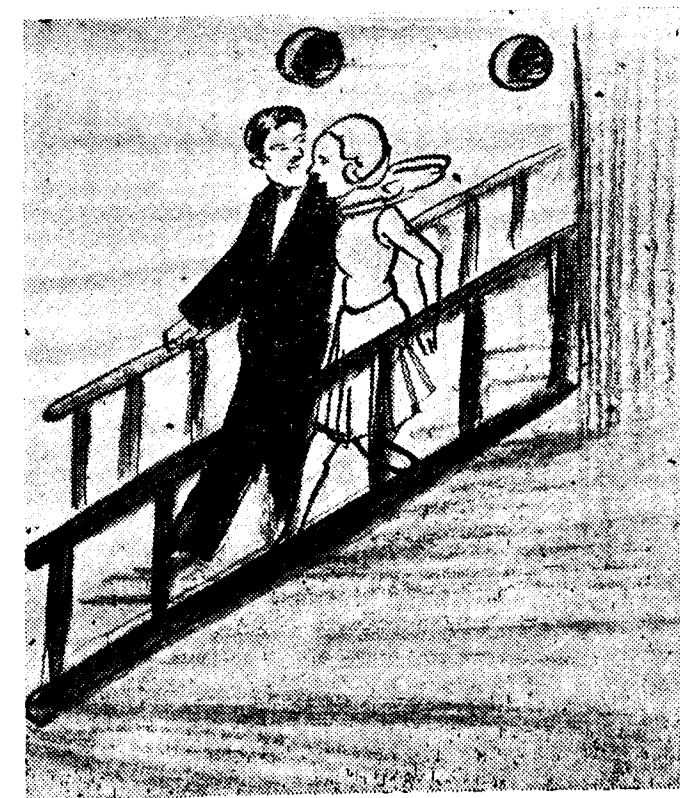
by Dewan Bahadur K. S. Ramaswami Sastri

you use four tons of fertilisers, Arithmetic kicks back like an ass and you get two tons of fruit. My friend Mr. Nesan went through all these processes and became furious over the laws of economics and arithmetic. He heaved five tons of fertilisers and got only one ton of fruit. He became blue in the face and sold away his wife's *tali* and bought ten tons of fertilisers once for all and heaved them in a tremendous mood of desperation at his paternal five acres. The paternal cow looked on in disapproval. Mr. Nesan waited with a heart thumping away at the rate of five hundred beats a minute and found that the manure remained unchanged and there was no fruit at all. He went away to South Africa and was not heard of for a long time.

If, instead of trying to learn in the dreadful school of experience, he came to me for advice, I would have taken him to the theorists. They would have shown him the way in, though not the way out. All specialists do so. That is why they are called specialists. I have heard about one specialist who over-manured the plantain so as to get two young plantains where one grew before. He did not succeed in this but his fame as a specialist grew. When Mr. Nesan was repatriated to India—a benign South African Government is kindly sending the prodigal sons to eat fatted calves under the paternal roof—he came straight on to me and said to me that he had discovered a new law in economics. That is the Law of Vanishing Returns. When sane education was pumped into the Indian brain fifty years ago, the result was quick and sufficient employment. Then more education was pumped in, and the result was slower but ampler employment. That was the age of the Dewans. Then yet more education was pumped in. The result was the age of diminishing employment. That was the age of the Durwans. Mr. Nesan's period was the period of maximum education. All the available fertilisers were heaved simultan-

ously and in tremendous quantities. The result was a maximum number of degrees. That was also the period of vanishing—nay, vanished—returns. Thus Indian Economics has added to universal economics—the Law of Vanishing Returns.

There is also another addition by India viz., the Law of Astonishing Returns. It very often happens that a young man is sent to England to return with a degree and that he returns with a degree and a lady to boot. Sometimes he returns with the lady but without the degree. He very often returns with a shipload of western books and curios and motorcars. By way of compensation he very kindly leaves his native tongue in England and comes here with a cavernous mouth. But after all the exemplifications of the Law of Astonishing Returns are very few compared with the stupendous roll of honour containing the exemplifications of the Law of Vanishing Returns.



Returns with a lady



Shock-Tactics—

by Thirupathi

Illustrated by Varma

Reading Time • About 7 Minutes

SHANTI was a darling. She was not just a darling. She was a darling with brains. She was brought up amidst liberal traditions. By which is meant not the Liberal Party which Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru and Mr. Sastri adorn with such grace and distinction—but the other thing. Her parents were modern. Naturally therefore Shanti was ultra-modern.

The old folks gave her a free hand in every thing; her pleasures, her company, her dress, her comings-in and goings-out. They even gave her a free hand in choosing a husband. But she did not choose one. She was in no great hurry. Darling that she was, she gave her parents no cause for anxiety.

Such a darling flame must needs attract quite a crowd of misguided and mistaken moths. They came in a swarm like butterflies in a festive mood and fluttered around her. If she smiled, they had almost a glimpse of that beatific state which the blessed master Buddha experienced. If she frowned, they got indigestion.

Among this admiring, worshipping swarm of moths and butterflies was one moth who, except for fluttering around the flame, kept a cool head, which was uncommon. This moth realised, as Dickens did, that the course of true love never did run like a railway. So he neither glimpsed *nirvana* nor got indigestion with the varying fortunes of his Odyssey.

The moth desired the flame for its own sake. His sentiments were deep and sound. He was Nirmal, Shanti's *mama*, her mother's younger brother.

To his countless declarations of love, she had two answers which she used as occasion demanded. One was "Oh, *mama*. Now, don't be silly." She used the other when the Assembly was in session. "Oh, *mama*, Notice." But deep in her heart, she did like and respect Nirmal. In all that turbid sea of fulsome praise and adoration, he was like a beacon warning her against unseen rocks.

"For the one thousand seven hundred and eighty-ninth time," said Nirmal to her one day, when they were alone, "what about me?"

"You? Why, you are a dear. Oh, *mama*, don't be silly."

"I know I am a dear. I know, too, that I am not silly. Now, Shanti, don't play with men's affections. You have had enough." He said that banteringly; but Shanti detected an alien note in the inflection of his voice.

"Are you wanting me to marry you?" she asked naively, relapsing into flippancy: "What a bright girl you are!"

"Why do you want to marry me, *mama*?"

"Why do other fellows marry other fel—er—I mean girls?"

"I don't know. Tell me."

"You will know it pretty soon if you marry me."

"Oh, *mama*....." She began the old formula.

"Don't be silly. Think of something new."

They fell silent. Shanti regarded Nirmal amusedly. Nirmal regarded Shanti sourly.

He broke the silence. "You can never get a better fellow than me in the way of husbands. Look at me, Shanti! Here I am, tall of stature, robust, rather clever at things and—er—good-looking. I....."

"Have a cold bath, *mama*. Your head....."

"Damn my head. I mean, leave it alone. As I was saying...what was I saying?"

"Never mind what you were saying, *mama*. You don't understand. You don't understand a woman's soul. You are not...not..."

"Cave man enough, you mean? Well, I don't know. I can wield a heavy club, but that might spoil the poise of your lovely head. If you want any jungle tricks, I think I can manage a few."

"Oh, you brute! I don't mean that. Don't you know that a girl brought up as I am brought up requires a few thrills from her husband? What have you ever done to give me a good enjoyable, thrill? Nothing."

"So you want thrills, do you? Very well. I will give you a few. When shall we begin?"

"You cannot. I have waited for three years for you to produce a thrill in me. You have not even produced a gasp."

Nirmal smiled.

"Suppose I give you the biggest thrill of your life."

"I will marry you the next moment."

(Continued on page 15)



Dr. Johnson in Delirium

by Mrs. Kamala

Reading Time • About 6 Minutes

I quote from 'Kleiser's Hits'

"IN promulgating your esoteric cogitations, or articulating your superficial sentimentalities and amicable, philosophical or psychological



observations, beware of platitudinous ponderosity. Let your conversational communications possess a clarified conciseness, a compact comprehensibility, coalescent consistency, and a concatenated cogency. Eschew all conglomerations of flatulent garrulity, jejune babblement and asinine affectations. Let your extemporaneous descantings and unpremeditated expatiations have intelligibility and veracious vivacity, without rhodomontade or thrasonical bombast. Sedulously avoid all polysyllabic profundity, pompous prolixity, psittaceous vacuity, ventriloquial verbosity, and vaniloquent vapidity. Shun double-entendres, prurient jocosity and pestiferous profanity, obscurant and apparent."

Perhaps this looks like an extract from Mr. U. P. Krishnamachariar's lecture; or an editorial from some of the leading dailies of Madras, of interest only to shorthand-typewriting students, or even probably like Dr. Johnson revived and in delirium. The L. C. M. and the H. C. F. of that mouthful passage are this:—"Talk plainly, briefly, naturally, sensibly, truthfully, purely. Keep from slang; don't put on airs; say what you mean; mean what you say; And don't use big words." What is the cause of this liking that we all have for euphuism and euphemism?

Impenetrable Latin names have also replaced the deeply coloured and dramatic words which told a terror-stricken people in what guise death was knocking at their door. The 'Plague' a strong and simple vocable, was bad enough; but think how the 'Black death' must have numbed the heart with fright. We don't know the simple English name for our vegetables and indigenous trees and are content to be frightened by Latin names, or at best as 'a kind of vegetable', 'a kind of tree' etc. 'Amarantus gangeticus' is Latin for our 'Thandu Keerai', 'Hibiscus esculantus' for 'Lady's finger' vegetable, 'Thespesia populnea' for 'Poovarasu', 'Ficus Bengaleusis' for 'Banyan' tree 'Caesalpine pulcherrima' for 'Mayjil-Konnai'. All these look like the names of certain rivers and mountains in Addis Ababa. This is how we are deteriorating.

Why then is our liking for Euphemism? Must we dismiss it as mere word-snobbishness? Must we confess that we do not care to call a spade a spade because something else sounds grander? Or is this tendency to call things by fine names no

more than a symbol of man's willingness not only to be reconciled to his fate but to make a virtue of necessity? Or again, is it something in even the most matter-of-fact and unsuperstitious of us that would have us be on the safe side of things, that would have us, whenever possible, placate the hostile powers?

Perhaps it is all three. None of us is so strong and so wise but he harbours in him a patch of soil fertile for the sprouts of foolishness. Ever since the Black Sea was called Euxine, or 'kind to the stranger', on account of its extreme inhospitality, ever since the Cape of Good Hope was so named, apparently because there was so little hope of rounding it, ever since Good Friday was called Good Friday, because it commemorates the worst of Fridays—ever since 'homo sapiens' has existed and called himself sapient, he has fortified himself with the Dutch courage of palliative expressions, approached danger and unpleasantness with a diplomatic language, and sought to flatter the heartless Moloch who waits impatiently but knows that at last he will swallow up each one of us.

It is common in Mohammedan countries for wise men to enchant cobras by uttering the melodious names of Allah; but it is still commoner for hard-headed men of the West to bemuse themselves and each other with verbal incantations. Politicians and publicists, to cast their spells, continue to rely on the force of vacuous words; and the day is not long past, in Europe at least, when doctors baffled and amazed their innocent patients with great words ill-digested from the Greek. English History is marvellous in one way. When severely licked by Germans during the Great War, the historians wrote; "While everywhere there was smoke, chaos, gloom and cloud, and when everywhere one could see only soldiers running helter-skelter and in great pellmell under the Satanic onslaughts of the Enemy, English soldiers beat an orderly retreat." That is to the consolation of their countrymen.

S. Satyamurthi could not refer to one of the bare-faced lies of a political opponent. He ought to have said, and so violent was he, "Out of Pandora's Box came Pestilence, Plague and Brinjal Raja," but he did not. He referred nicely to it as: "The Hon'ble Minister's terminological inexactitude etc." That is by the way. Indeed, if doctors no longer practise this facile art of verbosity, at least the maker of patent foods and medicines has clung to his ancient tradition, for he well knows that almost anything can be sold for almost any purpose as long as he affirms that it is hygienic, prophylactic, antiseptic, vitaminous, or rich in harmones.

Why, then, say that things are what they are? Why call them by their least complicated names? Why not acknowledge the infinite riches of language and its power to make life more acceptable? In this vale of tears we all have need of charms, mysteries, symbols, poetry. Let us therefore continue to tickle Destiny and ourselves with all the sweetness of speech.

THE END

SHOCK-TACTICS—(Continued from page 13)

"Honest?"

"Honest."

A fortnight passed. Nirmal accosted Shanti again. "When is the thrill coming, mama?" she teased.

"You wait, my girl. It is coming. By the way, Shanti, I have arranged a little excursion for you into the Mussorie Hills. A party of my friends, college-mates and all that, are coming over from Shyamnagar. A grand picknic is in the offing. Get ready, will you?"

"Delighted, mama! When do we start?"

"Directly you get ready."

Nirmal and Shanti drove in their car to the hills fifteen miles away. As they neared the camp, they saw a party of about twenty youths—young men and women. As their car stopped beside the waiting party, a great joyous shout rent the silent hill-side.

All of them began to look queerly at Shanti. She felt a creepy sensation all over her skin. Everybody treated her with great deference. All this mystery was getting on her. They ate an enjoyable meal. The party gathered under the branches of an outspreading tree.

One of the party, a bold young man, produced a little ivory casket and flourishing it in his right hand, addressed the gathering:

"Ladies and—er—gentlemen,

I am extremely happy to have been given the opportunity of becoming your tribune on this felicitous occasion. We all know Nirmal is a brick—I don't mean the thing made of earth. He is an all-gold brick. (Cheers). Fate, a kind fate, I am sure, made him a husband. I congratulate him on getting such a lovely lady to partner him in all his joys. I have not mentioned sorrows because, with such a girl by his side, sorrows can never enter his door."

Looking at Shanti the speaker said:

"Madam, use him kindly. If it were not bad taste, I should have congratulated you on getting such a topping fellow. Our only regret is that we were not present at your wedding.

"We, Nirmal's friends, beg you to accept this small token of our love and esteem to you both.

"May the angels bless you!"

He approached Shanti and placed in her lap the little ivory casket. It contained a diamond necklace.

Nirmal sat grinning through the speech. It was his handiwork.

That night in their garden Nirmal waited for Shanti. She approached him coyly. He gathered her to him.

"How about that thrill, Shanti?" he asked.

"It was more than a thrill. You have won me, mama."

THE END

The Cannibal Maiden

by Embusque

Illustrated by Varma



THERE was once a cannibal maiden who was greatly admired for her beauty, and for the excellence of her cooking. Of her many suitors, there were two who found favour in her eyes; and the maiden was quite unable to choose between them. She interviewed the gentlemen, and explained her difficulty. The young men agreed that it was very awkward, and delicately suggested that the matter might be settled by single combat. The young lady thanked them for their considerateness, and gave the proposal her cordial approval. She stipulated, however, that the affair must be kept a close secret. She did not wish to expose her unblemished reputation to notoriety and scandal.

At the appointed hour, the young men repaired to a lonely spot, and, after the customary preliminaries, proceeded to batter each other over the head with their ingeniously-designed war-clubs. The only witness was the cannibal maiden. She sat on a rock attending to her complexion, using a powder-puff and looking-glass that had recently been the property of a lady missionary. Nothing is known of this lady, except that the local epicures considered her rather tough.

When the maiden's features were adequately arranged, she raised her eyes to see how the

combat was progressing. To her surprise, both contestants lay on the sand, lifeless.

The damsel was alarmed at the possible consequences to her reputation, and decided that all trace of the business must be removed. She returned stealthily to the village, and invited her girl-friends to dinner, warning them not to reveal the rendezvous to anyone.

Soon an appetising aroma came from the scene of the duel. The girl-friends were loud in their praise of the cooking, and the succulence of the viands.

And the moral of this tale is, if you must fall in love with a cannibal maiden, don't choose one who is a good cook.



THE END

My Washerman

by R. Bangaruswami

Reading Time • About 3 Minutes

HE is a compound of three personalities.

A very clean shirt—a very nice crop—a beedi in his mouth—an air of jollity in his looks: that's his special, holiday happy-go-lucky personality.

Not-so-very-clean-a-shirt—not-so-very-nice-a-crop—a tidy bundle of clothes on his head—an air of questionable pride in his countenance: that's his purely business weekly-go-round personality.

Clumsy looks—a loose turban on his young head—a sense of duty to be done weighing heavily, literally and metaphorically, on his back: it's the picture of his ordinary work-a-day personality.

His duties are also three-fold—to his donkeys, to his customers, and to his family.

His duty to his donkeys consists of belabouring them with bone-cracking blows, loading them with back-breaking bundles, and tying together their forelegs when he is not in active service. As for feeding and sheltering them—Good Heavens! Who ever heard of such a thing. A washerman-donkey is—by the way—according to accepted definition, a creature capable of maintaining and finding shelter by itself. Its philosophy is simple. If it lives it works; if it dies, well,

it dies, it feeds crows and jackals. It doesn't pick and choose but eats everything it gets. It eats anything—be it a drama-notice or a card-board box or a cast-off mango-nut or a forgotten promissory note or the manuscript of a treatise on astronomy. It is frisky in infancy, lusty in youth, and testy in old age. It is the most useful tool of my washerman or for the matter of fact any washerman.

His duty to his family begins and ends with enlarging it. Obviously, my washerman is no believer in birth-control.

His duty to his customers is to see that new clothes are returned properly torn, and to give promises without any idea of keeping them.

My washerman's economics and politics are all deduced from his business. From the nature and the number of washables given to him—in other words from the quality and quantity of the stuff that he handles—he draws his conclusions about many things. More khaddar—greater spirit of swadeshi; more suits—greater fancy for western methods of dress; less number of washables—economic depression. And so on and so forth.

Laundry-wallas are his pet aversion.

He has plenty of pluck that pulls him through life. He also hopes for better days. Who doesn't?



THE END



The Guru & His Chela

by Mrs. J. M. Lochana
Illustrated by Sekar

Reading Time • About 5 Minutes

RAMDAS was born of middle-class parents. His father, Suryaji Pandit was a Brahmin who lived in the village of Jambava, on the banks of the Godavari. Ramdas's original name was Narayan. He was invested with the sacred thread at the early age of five, and immediately thereafter he began to study the *Vedas*. His father died when he was six.

Oftentimes Narayan would go to the banks of the river and meditate. His mother Ramu Bai, and his elder brother did not understand him. They thought he was idling away useful time and chastised him. But he never cared for what they did or said to him. Sometimes he would forget his house, mother, brother and all. Once when he was absent from home for two days, his family grew anxious. A search party

set out. They found him in the forest of Nasik.

His one passion was to relieve India from the incubus of alien domination. He became an ascetic that the Mother may be free.

Narayan's asceticism frightened his elder brother. To wean him away from the difficult path of monasticism, it was arranged to yoke him to a beautiful girl in marriage. The old, futile story.

When Narayan heard of what was being got ready for him, he ran away and jumped into the river. They rescued him with great difficulty and ceased to talk to him about marriage.

When Narayan was in a calmer state of mind his mother asked him: "Child! You have studied the *Vedas* and *Sastras*. Can you go against your mother's wish?"

Quick as lightning came the retort: "Then, is the Mother's pain to be left unalleviated?"

His mother said: "You admit that the mother's wish is also sacred. Obey me and marry. If you care for your mother, you must marry." Narayan didn't reply. His mother interpreted Narayan's silence as acquiescence. Arrangements for his marriage were set afoot. But just at the 'psychological' moment, when the bride and the bridegroom were to be tied up irrevocably, he woke up as from a trance, and ran away. He hid himself in the woods. He gave himself a spiritual alias—Ramdas. He rambled in the forests for twelve years, intensely thinking, studying, meditating.

During the later part of this period of study and meditation, he propagated his ideas by pamphlets, books and direct teaching. His gentility, his all-embracing love, his divine patriotism, his deep learning drew to him many disciples.

In 1659, Sivaji became one of his disciples. Ramdas fanned his patriotism and love of freedom and dreams of a 'Hindu India' by his teachings and preachings.

In kindness and charity, in that noble chivalry towards a fallen foe, in that reverence to the weaker sex, Sivaji might be said to represent the temporal part of his guru, Ramdas.

One day Sivaji's scouts brought the news that a convoy transporting great treasure was on its way from the fort of Kalian to Bijapur. Sivaji immediately made arrangements to ambush the carriers and plunder the treasure. The coup was a success. The Mussulman guard of a hundred soldiers threw down the treasure and ran away in panic, at the sudden appearance from nowhere of Mahratta soldiers, roaring *Bhavani Ki Jai!*

The Governor at Kalian as well as the Court at Bijapur was wild at this successful raid of the Mahrattas, and determined upon crushing the hitherto neglected but growing power of that arch thug, Sivaji. Sivaji heard of these threats. He made the first move. He stormed Kalian. The fort was in a strategic position between the Mahratta Kingdom and the Bijapur territory. He despatched a contingent under Abaji to capture the fort.

The fort was captured. The custodians of the fort

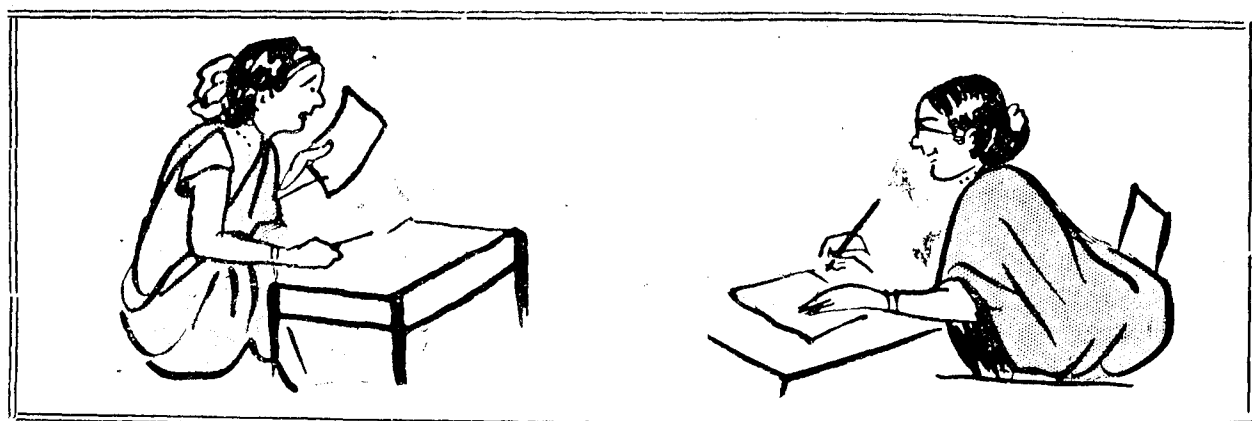
either fell in battle or ran away. The Governor's daughter was left behind. Abaji presented her to Sivaji. The girl was so lovely that all the Mahratta captains cast lustful, furtive glances at her. Sivaji observing this, said: "Ravana, the most powerful *rakshasa* of the ancient days fell by a similar sin. How would you all feel, if your wife or sister were in the hands of your enemy and he tried to ravish her? If you care for honour and fame, respect woman, for she is the Mother. Every woman must be a mother to you as she is to me. Every woman is a mortal edition of Goddess Bhavani." So saying, Sivaji sent the captured girl to her parents in a covered palanquin and with costly gifts.

THE END

DO YOU KNOW?

1. When did King John sign the Magna Charta?
2. When was the Pacific Ocean discovered?
3. What is a 'noddy'?
4. What is Nostalgia?

Answers on page 35



Cupid Gets A Smack!

by V. Vyasa Rao

Sketches by Mali

Reading Time • About 7 Minutes

Calcutta, 1st January, 1935.

DEAR SAVITRI,

IT will be a life-long regret for me, dear, that I could not attend your wedding yesterday. I have been in indifferent health of late. For the past fortnight I am obliged to keep to my bed. The doctor called my ailment by a formidable Latin name. He ordered complete rest for two weeks. I am much better now, and hope to move about in a week's time.

So, Savitri, you 'belong to another'? Did you feel a thrill when you lost your 'individuality' before God and man? Of course you did. To me, that moment, when the hubby ties the mystic knot, while sitting opposite you, austere, plump pundits invoke in chorus the gods of the Pantheon and the assembled guests in imposing benedictional hymns to witness the union, is the most solemn in a Hindu girl's life. It was, three years ago to me.

A thousand smiling, sympathetic eyes focus on you; you are seized with a fright, and bend down your poor head unable to bear the weight of that collective, intense gaze. In spite of that awful pressure on you ego, in spite of strange hands blundering over your gold and flower-laden neck, you look back on your past life with an incongruous sensation of regret and pleasure. You linger a moment on past incidents sacred to your memory; regretfully on phases of your life that might have been lived in a 'better way. The

past is shut off; you project yourself into the future, unleashing your imagination to roam in advance of time, at its will. You picture happy hours, days, years, in the company of the man behind the hands still tickling your neck over that knot which only death could really undo. You see little unsteady feet running about you; chubby, darling hands tugging at your saree; baby eyes raised up in devotion to your beaming face. Time moves on. You are a grandma fondling another set of strange arrivals, giving you an encore of the blessed moments of your early motherhood.

That blundering young man has tied the knot at last! You are a wife. The next few days are a dream, happy beyond words.

How far does the picture I conjured up square with the facts as we know them, with the lives we are living? Is it all worth.....there, I am afraid this long illness of mine is fouling my thoughts with a touch of morbidity.

Savitri dear, may your *mangalya* be preserved to the last. May your life be a merry-go-round of unalloyed happiness.

Write to me, dear, all the funny incidents of your wedding and nuptial night. What about *him*? Is he the beautiful caveman that you used to say at college you would marry?

doubt if you will have the time to read this rigmarole, your husband claiming you all the while.

I claim the privilege and perform the duty of a married woman. I bless you and your husband.

Ever yours,
SHANTI.

Calcutta, 27th January, 1935.

DEAR SAVITRI,

Your kind letter. Except for a queer sort of helpless laziness (the doctor calls it 'a passing local weakness') I am now my old self again. I have not replied sooner, because I did not want to spoil your honeymoon by retailing my sorrows to you.

Yes, you have guessed it. I am unhappy.

Marriage, my dear, is all a gamble. That may be scoffed at as a cheap platitude. But in the ultimate analysis it amounts to nothing more. What is the secret of married success? Is there married success? I can't believe there is. If first attractions do not abide, and imagination, either in the case of wives or husbands, poaches in forbidden parks, are we any better than beasts?

Three years ago today, I married Nirmal. The voice that transported me to heaven, the touch that thrilled me to the point of pain, are today nothing but a voice and a touch. You know what drew me to him. His sublime humanity. I saw him amidst those poor waifs, those little orphans in the Bangalakhmi Orphanage of which he is the Manager. I saw him fondling them, playing with them. I thought: "Here is a noble man, living a noble life." The mother in our kind stirred in me. I longed to help him in his mission of love. I married him.

He is today the same as he was three years ago. No harsh word, not so much as an unkind look, the same old devotion. But why have I changed? There is a man. God help me.

Six months ago Nirmal brought home a friend of his, a successful architect. Ever since, he is a constant visitor at my home. Before three months passed over our heads, I found myself yearning for him, and he for me. I have



Plump pundits

is coming tomorrow to plead, to trot out the old familiar arguments. Can I preserve my *pathi-vrathyam*? I doubt it.

This may be good bye, dear. Try to think kindly of me. Dishonoured? I do not know. By the work-a-day conventions of this artificial world, perhaps.

Yours,
SHANTI.

Calcutta, 10th February, 1935.

DEAR SAVITRI,

Where my will has failed me, where the traditions of my faith let me down, your pleading and sympathy have sustained me.

When a woman is floating indecisive between duty and reason, she should follow duty, however logical the contrary indication might be. That is your argument. You say, too, that beyond seeing this man through the glamorous haze of sex-attraction, I know nothing of the *man* in him. It is true. You ask me to read the ageless lesson which Tolstoy taught, to benefit by the tragedy of Anna Karenina. I will.

He came to-day as usual. I told him finally not to pursue me further. One long look, whether of pity or disgust, I do not know—possibly both, and he was gone. That was the end of the beginning of this unhappy affair.

Do you realise, Savitri, you have rekindled the dying fires of my home? Nirmal will never know what he owes to you. You have saved two souls, possibly more, from something more than hell.

You are my guardian angel.

Ever,
SHANTI.



The blundering hubby



Holiday-Makers—

by A. M. Menon

Illustrated by Varma

Reading Time • About 6 Minutes

PROVINCIAL life was telling upon us. Dull, colourless. And what was more, having a standing invitation from our friends, the Pillays, life in our third-rate town was made all the more unbearable. The Pillays lived in Trivandrum, and I used to think of that standing invitation longingly.

We decided to go in May. Mr. Pillay would be enjoying his summer vacation then. I told my wife:

"We had better start tomorrow, by the morning train."

"What!" Kamala was shocked. "Without writing to them? We should give Mrs. Pillay at least a notice!"

"Oh, come!" I said, not to be outdone in my bright little plan. "We shall give them a surprise visit, which would delight them all the more."

Women are really sensational, however much they may try to pretend to be creatures of commonsense.

The term 'surprise visit' completely broke down all Kamala's objections.

"Rather a good idea," she said. "But what about the children?"

We had three—two girls and a boy.

"Why, take them with us, of course!" I said.

"I know!" Kamala was obviously worried about something. At length she said: "The boy has joined a badminton club, and he is quite crazy about it. We can take the girls, of course."

I considered.

"Well, I'll persuade the boy. We can't possibly leave him here!"

A little bribing was necessary. I promised the boy a good coat, which meant at least thirty rupees out of my purse. He took to my idea with sudden patronising enthusiasm.

"Who will look after the house?" queried Kamala already in the throes of packing.

"Our garden-man and the cook-fellow, of course."

So next morning, leaving our house in charge of the garden-man and the cook-fellow, we entrained for Trivandrum, to give our friends a surprise visit.

During the journey the children wanted to have coffee three times within two hours, and my wife thought we should have really travelled first.

I nursed my breast-pocket fondly.

"Travel first?" I asked, gulping. "But my dear, don't you see—travelling second is quite as respectable—"

"It's not what you call *respecta*—" began Kamala, peevishly. Then I knew that she was beginning to lose her holiday temper.

"There are," broke in one of the boys, seconded by the girl, "more fans in a first-class compartment—are there not, papa?"

"Stupid!" I cried. "Our fans are quite good."

I went up and set the fan going with a whirr—whirr—whirr which, I regret to say, got on my wife's nerves.

"See—" I was demonstrating. But Kamala interrupted.

"For goodness' sake stop fiddling with those things like a child!" And she added, with a note of finality—and calamity—in her tone:

"I forgot to pack our mosquito-curtains!"

That was it, then!

"Don't you worry about it," I assured her heroically.

"Do you mean to suggest," she demanded, "that we are to go and beg for mosquito nets from our hosts?"

"Of course not. The first thing we reach Trivandrum, we shall buy five mosquito nets."

Kamala relapsed into a sort of brooding silence. At Maniyachi Junction, things began to happen. First, our girls were having temperature. Then our boy started sulking, and talking about his badminton, and hinting darkly about a certain coat which had been promised him. The rest of the trip was pretty vile. But we reached Trivandrum at last. We sent on our luggage in a jutka, and proceeded in a taxi behind.

"Mosquito nets," whispered Kamala.

I felt miserable.

On the way we stopped and bought the mosquito nets.

"Papa, there is *nice* coating to be had here—see, fine chocolate."

"No—the other one, dark brown—," suggested the girls.

Well, one might as well finish with it. I bought them their coating.

There was a strange stillness about the residence of Mr. and Mrs. Pillay when we got down before their house.

Venu, their garden-man, was there. He was an old friend of ours, by long experience. He seemed surprised to see us.

"How are your master and mistress, Venu!" I asked, affably.

"They are quite well, sir. They—er—they—they are *quite* well, sir," he said. Strained, was it? Yes, 'strained' is the word to describe Venu's attitude.

We went in. All our luggage was there. We

paid off the jutka and taxi, and looked around.

"Why," my wife remarked, innocently, "how silent! Where are your master and mistress?—the house looks as if there is nobody here!"

Venu coughed.

"There is nobody here, madam," said Venu, "except the cook and me."

He was quite sympathetic.

"Shall I tell cook to get some coffee, sir?"

"But where *have* they gone?" I asked, sitting down on the biggest trunk.

The children began to enjoy the situation. Our girls almost lost their temperature.

"Master said he was going to pay a surprise visit to one of his friends near Tanjore. Madam objected at first; but they left yesterday morning," explained Venu.

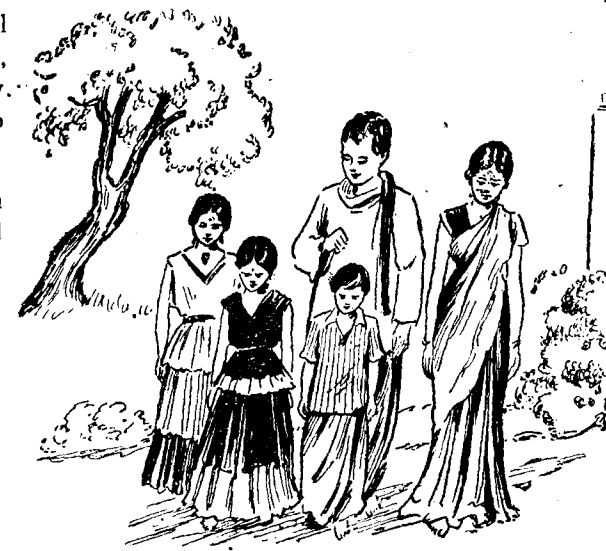
Venu produced a slip of paper.

"I am to give this at the post-office. I forgot to redirect the letters."

I looked at the address. So did Kamala.

It was *our* Tanjore address.

THE END



Which is Which in Philosophy

by J. B. Saxena

Reading Time • About 3 Minutes

Absolute :—An asylum for contradictions.

Adam :—Born in Infinity, married to Eve, the greatest blunderer of the world, sent to perpetual exile in the year of Chaos.

Ahimsa :—A fit. Symptoms: Pupils dilated, arms hanging, head shaking with folly and mind prepared to turn the other cheek when slapped on one.

Being :—A philosopher's stone, commonly known as self-mover.

Beggar :—One who begs for his stomach and not for himself.

Bible :—An infallible tonic for human weakness.

Brain :—The most sensitive instrument of the world.

Change :—A trifling aspect of matter.

Devil :—A word of praise.

Eve :—Born in solitude, married to Adam in pre-barbaric age, famous for her charms and quick at instigating men to commit suicide.

Evil :—The first word that Eve uttered.

Folly :—An instinct by which one knows the right thing where wise men fail.

God :—A Doctor of Religion, born out of necessity.

Good :—A cover for ignorance.

Happiness :—An abstract quality acquired after flirtation.

Heaven :—A house of absurdities and curios.

Hell :—A paradise for fools.

Idea :—About which we know nothing.

Intuition :—A Derangement of mind, when one sees beautiful objects instead of rats.

Man :—A pulpy substance moulded due to the 'shocks of circumstances'.

Matter :—That which changes.

Mind :—A chemical combination open to fermentation.

Mystic :—One who can see a tree where there is none.

Philosopher :—A mixture of opposites, or a man of special breed.

Religion :—A kind of opium useful for heart diseases.

Reason :—A sharp instrument which strikes at the root of faith, yet serves the purpose of God.

Reality :—That which few realize, yet all conceive.

Soul :—A pretty combination of subjectivity.

Saint :—One who catches the substance and proclaims the shadow.

Sinner :—A man who does not cover his mistake by raising a storm.

Sadhu :—Younger in years, though older in experience.

Sanyasi :—One who resigns the world for want of proper control.

Satan :—A nickname for boys. Also a kind of cloth.

Space :—Any place beyond your nose.

Time :—An object of universal mourning.

Universe :—Radius of the brain.

World :—Maya.

Wisdom :—A sensation that passes to the mind and ends in something unusual.

Yogi :—A kind of two-legged creature, seen mostly doing odds and ends.



Susila's Latest—

by M. K. Srinivasan
Illustrated by Sekar

Reading Time • About 8 Minutes

I STOOD before the large toilet mirror and counted fifteen chunam patches on my chin, cheeks and forehead, and cursed the wretchedness of my luck three times over, when Susila slowly came from behind and stood horror-struck at the spectacle presented by my reflection.

"What's all this?" she asked, placing a gentle hand over my shoulder.

I turned round and moved towards the window so that she might have the benefit of a complete view of my erstwhile handsome countenance now ravaged beyond repair. As she looked at me, the rosy hue of

her beautiful face turned to a deeper colour, registering repentance, regret and pity, all in one.

"What has happened?" she asked again, her tone choked with grief.

"All that you see on me," I replied, stiff and unmoved. Two pearl-like tear drops rolled down her cheeks. My heart melted. After all she was my Susila, and I felt that I was boorish in my reply. "Don't weep. It is nothing," I said.

"Then what is this?" she asked.

"Stings," I said.

"Stings?"

"Yes. Stings from your honey bees."

"Oh what happened to them?" she asked.

"Buzzed off," I replied.

"What!" she said and ran towards the garden, her love for the runaway bees now gaining the upper hand over her love for a martyred husband.

Such is the latest whim of my dear Susila and such her love for the bees. It is her present hobby and ninth on the list of her hobbies. She has been successively a Girl-guide, a philatelist, a numismatist, an autograph hunter, an amateur photographer, an album collector, a fret-work designer and an ink-well artist, but nothing appealed to her so much as apiculture.

"Nothing impresses me like bee-keeping," she said one fine morning, as she finished her first article on bee-keeping for a local daily.

"Exactly," I said.

"We must buy a hive and start bee-keeping," she said. "It will be such fun, so very entertaining."

"But should we not know something more about bee-keeping before we start keeping bees?"

"Oh, no; start doing the thing and you learn everything as you proceed."

I gave up argument. We drove to a local apiculturist and found to our surprise four of our friends waiting there already to be shown the way to the wonderland of bees, honey and easy money. The expert enlightened us on the theory and practice of bee-keeping and gave us a box, a book on practical bee-keeping and other necessary and unnecessary accessories and also supplied us with the necessary hints as to how we must set about catching bees. I felt that some experience was necessary before we began catching bees. But the expert said that we could not gain experience unless we caught a few colonies. My friends and my wife favoured his view and commented that he was a practical man for giving us such practical hints. We paid our bills and

were about to return home when, as though out of pity for me, he offered us each a colony to start with.

I requested him to pack it up—the drone, the queen and all—in a card-board box, lest they should begin stinging us in right earnest before we could show them the way to our gardens. The expert laughed and remarked that I would prove a very bad apiculturist if I dreaded the stings so much as I did. "If you want honey, sir, you must brave a few stings," he said. "They are good for rheumatism, too." Upon which I ordered for another colony and requested him to send it to my uncle who is a rheumatic.

"What is the antidote for the stings?" asked a friend of mine who was a brave but wise man.

"Apply chunam, sir, and it goes," the expert said.



My wife who was attentive from the very beginning suddenly getting anxious to ask a question, asked whether we must apply chunam before we introduced the bees inside the hive or as they come out of it. I was sorry for her, and before the whole company caught the humour of the situation, explained to her that we must wait for the bees to sting us and then apply chunam on the spot, taking care to wash it off of course.

The expert was glad that I had grasped the point. As a parting word of advice, the expert warned us not to pry into their affairs often, as that would make them suspicious. He further said that he had chosen a fine variety of bees for us—an excellent and costly 'cross' between the Italian and the Ethiopian bees. My curiosity being roused, I asked him what led to this excellent choice of parents: upon which he said that the one was a good honey gatherer, but was too easily provoked, so that apiculturists who dealt with it had to receive far too many stings for the value of honey they got and so they 'crossed' it with the other, a milder type of bee whose stings were few and far between. "The result is, sir," he said, "you get a specimen with the large honey-gathering tendency of the one and the mildness of the other."

I asked him what guarantee was there that he did not get an offspring with the slow honey-gathering

tendency of the one and the easy irascibility of the other.

"One in a hundred, sir, one in a hundred," he said, and hurried to assure us that it was not the one that he had sold us. We felt sufficiently equipped to start bee-keeping, and thanking the expert for his instructions, returned home.

My wife took a real interest in the whole thing and often discussed with me the means of disposing of the surplus honey that might be left over. I said that instead of selling it, it was only just to replace it in the hive itself for the use of the bees.

Things went on well indeed, and everything was really interesting and all that, till one fine morning the bees as a colony decided to go on an outing, apparently to see the rest of the town. I did not note this at first, but my wife did. She was all the while near about the hive, playing with her pet calf which on some provocation seems to have knocked her against the hive, thus bringing about the desertion. She fled from the spot in time to save her skin from anti-rheumatic injections and called to me to run to the spot with the book to see what should be done under the circumstances. Having misplaced the book, I ran to the spot without it and joined my wife, in time to see the whole colony on wings.



It was a fine sight, and I said that. But my wife feeling differently, I decided to enjoy by myself, when to my dismay they alighted on the top-most branch of a neighbouring tree. My wife asked me to go there and catch the bees, but I said that they recognised her better (since she was always near them) and that she was the proper person to venture. A discussion ensued upon our relative merits, as a result of which it was decided that the expert who sold us the bees was the best-fitted of the three. So we sent for him. He surveyed the situation with the eye of an expert and felt that, all things considered, it would have been better had they occupied a lesser altitude than they did at the moment. I picked up a stone and was about to aim it at the bees with a view to bringing them down, when the expert advised me against the procedure and my wife held my arm in check.

"How do you know they will not go up still higher instead of coming down?" she asked.

I said I was sorry not to have thought of that side of the question. The expert advanced a few paces and clapped his hands, presumably to draw their attention to his presence there, but the bees seemed to have forgotten him completely. So as a last resort he got up the tree, and was within a few feet from the quarry when I called to him and said: "Beware of the stings!" But being a little dull of hearing, he misunderstood my warning. He thought I was cheering him up not to mind a few stings, and proceeded and actually captured the truant colony. He got down with the speed of lightning which we attributed to his supreme satisfaction at the success of his enterprise, but things proved different as he reached ground. He was frantically calling for chunam which my wife got him with betels and nuts, my mother having objected to chunam being given alone.

A week passed and once again everything was ripping. "Should you not see whether any honey is collected?" she asked me one evening. I said it was not good to pry in to their affairs often.

"But how are we to know?" she asked, and I turned to the book for enlightenment on the question.

"You must see tomorrow morning," she said, and showed me a red dot on her right

cheek as a sufficient excuse for her not doing it herself. She told me that had happened the day before.

I convinced her that the bee meant no harm to her but that it only wished to kiss her out of gratitude and even pretended to be jealous of the intruder. She agreed that might have been so, but refused to have anything to do with such a rascally horde of bees.

So I went this morning and not finding honey on the top of the hive as I first expected, I slowly tilted and finally upturned the hive when lo! to my horror they rushed out all on a sudden and directed with unerring accuracy their onslaughts on my chin, cheeks and forehead. I rushed into the house to save myself from annihilation and applied chunam wherever it burned, and standing before the large toilet mirror I looked sorrowfully at myself.

THE END

Adventure With

Reading Time • About 9 Minutes

MR. Meek lolled on the deserted palm-fringed sands and gazed expectantly out to sea.

In a husky but not unmelodious voice he found himself singing the chorus of: "Was it a Dream?"

Mr. Meek was anything but a Romeo in appearance, being meagre of build and somewhat bald of cranium, with a wistful, gentle face embellished with thin and droopy whiskers.

But Mr. Meek was incurably romantic at heart. And to-night, had he not every reason to feel that life was thrillingly wonderful? Blithely he sang:

"Was it a dream, was it a dream

We were alone,

And you were in my arms last night?

Was it a dream, was it a dream

We dallied long

Beneath the pale moonlight?"

Mr. Meek momentarily wrenched his gaze from the sea and glanced back at the thick belt of palm trees some fifty yards behind.

"I never knew, I never thought,

Such bliss

As this

Would fill me with a love divine—"

It was a bright starlit night, and in a little while the moon would rise over the low hill immediately behind those palms.

It would make its appearance, he judged, in another three minutes. And then, if she had meant what she said—if she hadn't been fooling him—if the whole thing hadn't been a dream—

As he resumed his eager scrutiny of the sea and went on singing, an anxious note crept into his voice.

"I'm afraid I'll wake and find

It was only in my mind.

Was it a dream,

Or are you *really* mine?"

Well, he would know for certain in another two minutes. And meanwhile, for the thousandth time

since meeting her that evening, he went over the whole amazing adventure in his mind.

The exigencies of business had recently brought Mr. Meek, a childless widower of several years' standing, from Northern India to Bombay. Beyond a few business acquaintances, he had so far made no friends, and his uninteresting existence was beginning to get on his nerves—for, as had already been hinted, Mr. Meek's soul hankered after Romance.

So that afternoon, he suddenly made up his mind to hire a taxi and drive out to Juhu. He had heard many glowing accounts of the Brighton of Bombay. Intuition whispered to him that if Romance was going begging anywhere, it would be at Juhu.

And intuition had not whispered a lie...

Things had been a trifle discouraging at first, but in the end Romance, with a capital 'R', had very definitely come to Mr. Meek...

Having arrived at four o'clock, Mr. Meek's gastric juices, egged on by the bracing sea-breeze, clamorously informed him that it was high time for tea. The taxi-driver, who obviously knew his Juhu, selected a pleasant bivouac under some palms, and his fare was presently making short work of the tea and sandwiches provided by his landlady.

Little groups of gay picnickers were to right and left and fore and aft of him, and he reflected, very sadly, on the adage: "Water, water everywhere, and not a drop to drink."

Quite close to him was one particularly happy party, whose nucleus, to Mr. Meek's way of thinking, was a particularly ravishing blonde. So close were they, in fact, that Mr. Meek found himself catching the sparkling blue eye of the adorable damsel more than once. And presently, it seemed to his hopeful nature, a gleam of interest shone in that eye...

He observed once that she bent and whispered something into the ear of an elderly woman in their party, and next moment the elderly woman looked in his direction with a friendly smile. The blonde, Mr. Meek told himself confidently, must have whispered something like this: "Nice little man that seems—but so lonely. Couldn't we invite him over..."

A Mermaid

Words and Picture
by Albert A. Roland



"I shall meet you again."

But Mr. Meek wasn't invited over, alas, and the party presently broke up, disappeared into various bathing huts, emerged therefrom in swimming costumes, and made off towards the sea.

Mr. Meek had also armed himself with a bathing costume, and a few minutes later he was walking determinedly across the beach to the water.

As he was about to enter therein, his attention was attracted by a beautiful brunette who appeared to be as lonely as himself. Had she wandered away from her party, or was she in the same boat as he was? He was on the point of mentioning that it was a nice evening, when to his chagrin a magnificent young Adonis butted into the picture.

"I say!" quoth the Adonis, "do let me teach you to swim!"

The brunette rewarded him with a disdainful look that gladdened the heart of Mr. Meek. She said coldly:

"It's quite unnecessary, thank you. I already know how to swim."

But the magnificent Adonis wasn't abashed in the slightest.

Grinning cheerfully (and Mr. Meek had to confess, his grin was most attractive) he simply said:

"Oh well, in that case, would you mind teaching me?"

For one instant the brunette hesitated, the frown deepening on her lovely brow, and then she smiled and laughed very prettily. A moment later the young man and she were running joyously into the surf...

Mr. Meek was astounded. But thrilled and pleased. He had seen romance materialise before his very eyes. What had happened to others could happen to him...

Hearing a light footfall on the sand behind him, he spun round, and his heart leaped with excitement.

She was a dream. Her beauty eclipsed that of the blonde and the brunette, this Titian vision. She was clad in the daintiest of beach pyjamas, and in her hand she carried a book. Mr. Meek instantly noted the title of the book, and was surprised to discover that it was a volume on Corals. He smiled...

Was it his imagination, or had she smiled in return?

"Pardon me," cooed Mr. Meek, "are you pursuing any studies down here?"

"No," said the Titian beauty, "and I've no wish to study any pursuers either!" And with a toss of her auburn curls she drifted on.

"Hell!" groaned Mr. Meek, and felt as an old fishing smack must when every particle of wind has been taken out of its sails. A sadder and wiser man,

he plunged dejectedly into the sea. Ridiculous ideas of suicide in a watery grave, and visions of a remorseful red-head bending tearfully over his poor drowned body, accompanied Mr. Meek into the briny.

Yes, things had certainly been a trifle discouraging at first, but in the end (as we have already observed) Romance, with a capital 'R', enfolded Mr. Meek in no uncertain embrace.

He swam out to sea, unhappy and forlorn. He made for some rocks that were projecting about four feet from the water. Having gained his objective, he drew himself up on to the rocks, and lay there basking in the pleasant six o'clock sun...

It was then that it happened...

A sweet voice, vibrant with melody, fell lightly on his ears. Amazed—there had been no one on the little promontory when he reached it—he turned, half-expecting to find the voice had been imaginary.

What he saw made him gasp with astonishment, and it was all that he could do to prevent himself from sliding back into the sea. Frantically, he clutched at the rock—and retained his hold.

The most beautiful girl he had ever seen or dreamed of in his life! Long flowing golden hair, peach-bloom complexion, eyes of bluest blue, fringed with long dark lashes, entrancing red lips parted in a ravishing smile which revealed gleaming pearly teeth. But what had struck Mr. Meek absolutely dumb and caused him almost to lose consciousness was the girl's amazing costume—or rather, absence of costume.

Such portion of her glorious body as was in view above the sea, from which she had not fully emerged, was thrillingly and unashamedly naked. Even on the walls of a picture gallery, Mr. Meek had never encountered such loveliness.

Nor, wonder of wonders, was this enchanting Aphrodite aloof and unfriendly. For the words she had musically spoken were: "Mr. Meek—or may I call you Robert—Bobbie?—is there room up there beside you?"

As soon as the faculty of speech had returned to Mr. Meek, he assured her, brokenly, that there was room a-plenty...

There was still another surprise in store for him, for as he gallantly gave her a helping hand out of the water (trying hard the while to avert his gaze from her wondrous body)—he was stupefied to discover that in place of the white tapering legs and dainty feet he had expected, the damsel was possessed of a beautifully proportioned fish-like tail which sparkled and coruscated in the light of the setting sun...

A Mermaid! A real, live, 'in-the-flesh' Mermaid!

When darkness fell, she told him he must return to the shore—it was dangerous to remain longer. The tide was rising fast and soon the rocks would be submerged...

But she had made him a promise.

"When the moon rises over that hill, Bobbie, come down into the sea, and I shall meet you again... And Bobbie dear, I shall bring with me a magic necklace, to put round your throat: this will enable you to come down into the sea with me to my home in the ocean-bed. It will enable you to live under water for as long as you desire—for as long as you desire, Bobbie darling—"

"I shall wear it always, dearest," he had murmured.

And now the moon had risen, and Mr. Meek was wading into sea, his heart fluttering wildly, his eyes peering into the distance where the rock had been, and where he fancied she would probably reappear.

O, doubting reader! You are expecting every moment to learn that Mr. Meek woke up and found that this was all a dream! O, have you such little faith in writers of the romantic and the adventurous? Fie, fie on you, sceptical one!

Mr. Meek did *not* wake up to find the episode 'of such stuff as dreams are made of'. Mr. Meek presently met his Mermaid again, gladly allowed the magic necklace to decorate his rather scraggy neck, and together they dived and swam deep, deep down into a world which was new and glorious to him, and sweetened and beautified for her. For she loved Bobbie with all her heart, with all the intensity of her primitive yet beautiful nature...

At eleven o'clock the taxi-driver reported the matter to the life-guard, and by midnight that portion of the beach was thronged with helpers. But it wasn't until next morning that Mr. Meek re-appeared.

Strange, was it not, that the Titian beauty actually did bend remorsefully over his poor drowned body with tears in her eyes...?

Then suddenly her attention was caught by a coral necklace imbedded firmly in Mr. Meek's poor swollen neck.

"How remarkable!" she said, her sobs diminishing as her interest in corals reasserted itself. "A perfect specimen of *Corallium rubium*—and in one integral piece. However did it get there?"

THE END



Auntie Awful



“WHY is it,” demands a learned correspondent, “that on the Yankee films an Englishman is always shown as an absurd and solemn aristocrat with an eyeglass?”

This, my dears, raises that ancient controversy. What is a joke? Auntie once analysed all the jokes in the world, and it took only half a page in the magazine. The jokes that everyone considers funny went into a single paragraph. All the other jokes in the world are regional.

One of the best regional jokes is to attribute preposterous characteristics to your neighbours. On the Indian stage, an Englishman is a fussy, interfering, irascible clown. He asks nonsensical questions in a squeaky voice, and gives ridiculous orders. In France, the Briton is essentially phlegmatic; a cold-blooded tradesman who sells his wife by auction. In Germany, the British are a lot of fox-hunting islanders, lacking patriotic fervour and social discipline. In Spain, the Englishman is an extravagant nobleman who wears loud clothes and has no artistry or grace. In America he is an effete aristocrat without money, sociability, or sense of humour.

American humour is enshrined in wisecracks and custard-pie comedies. The people on the European side do not think these things particularly funny. American humour is too brutal for them. Wisecracks mercilessly exploit the victim's physical misfortunes and moral weaknesses. The American figure of fun is a 'boob' who may be swindled and maltreated without mercy. The American joker is an ingenious fellow who gets the better of guys who are not so smart.

British humour is heavier, but kindlier. The victim is a respectable figure who gets into difficulties by his own efforts. The joke keeps nearer to life, and is not so cruel. In fact, the Yankee would not call it a joke at all. Here is an example:

Mr. John Doe and Mr. Thomas Roe were driving along a lonely country road late at night. They did not encounter a soul all the way. At their destination, Thomas Roe got out of the car, and walked round the back of it towards the door of his friend's house. Suddenly he noticed that the tail-lamp of the car was out. “Goodness!” he said to his companion. “Here is a state of affairs! We, a couple of respectable magistrates, have been breaking the law by driving along the King's highway without a rear light.”

John Doe got out of the car and examined the lamp. “You are right,” he said. “I wonder how long we have been driving like this?”

The two magistrates held a lengthy discussion, and decided that the light had been out from the beginning of the journey.

“This is serious, John,” said Mr. Thomas Roe. “You were the owner of the car, and I was the driver. In my opinion, we are both liable.”

After consideration, Mr. John Doe agreed with his friend. There was nothing to do but to send for the constable, and give each other into custody.

As the constable was a tenant of Mr. John Doe, there was no difficulty about summoning him from his bed in the middle of the night. The constable respectfully compiled the charge-sheets. Then the two friends bailed each other out, and went to bed.

In the morning, Mr. John Doe convened a special sitting of the magistrates, consisting of his friend and himself. Mr. John Doe took the bench, and Mr. Thomas Roe was brought before him. The worthy magistrate gave his friend a lecture on the heinous-

ness of law-breaking, and fined him one pound. He then took his place in the dock, while Thomas Roe occupied the seat of judgement. After a wiggling of unprecedented severity, Thomas Roe sentenced his friend to pay a fine of five pounds.

“My dear chap!” protested the man in the dock. “Play the game, old fellow! That is rather a heavy fine for so trivial an offence.”

The constable cried, “Silence in court!” and dropped a pile of books with a resounding crash.

“Remember yourself, sir!” replied the magistrate, reprovingly. “This class of offence is becoming so frequent that I must make an example of you. Why, there has already been a similar case before the court this very day?”

Auntie once told this joke to an American, and he did not laugh at all. “Say,” he remarked, “those guys must have been a couple of boobs. Don't the magistrates in your country have any racket?”

* * * *

Ramamoorthy (Teppakulam). “Is it a compliment to describe a person or a community as ‘aloof’?” Not altogether, dear boy. In the language of Chaucer, to turn a ship aloof is to turn her towards the wind. An aloof person is one who keeps to windward of the rest of the human race, so that no taint of their objectionable presence shall reach his nostrils.

Dubious (Thambikkottai). “Even if Mussolini does come to terms with Ethiopia, I am afraid that there will not be a lasting solution.” Well, dear boy, in order to save time, and to conform with modern diplomatic practice, it is thought that any treaty between Italy and Abyssinia will be written on scraps of paper that have been already torn up.

History IVa (Itarsi). “They are celebrating the 900th anniversary of King Canute in England. Please tell me about this monarch, as my history book starts at 1066.” He was a Danish conqueror of England, dear boy, and a very strong ruler. On one occasion his courtiers flattered him by saying that even the sea would recede at his command. In order to reprove them, his throne was set up on the sea-shore, and he commanded the ocean to recede. Of course, the tide came in as usual, and gave the courtiers a soaking. As you see, unlike some modern rulers, Canute lacked a shrewd press-agent. A smart

publicity-man would have brought off the miracle by staging the ceremony at high tide.

Puzzled Copper (Madras). “I saw two men in a car. I went and asked the driver for his license. Immediately, the other occupant of the car got out and ran away. I caught him after a long pursuit, and meanwhile the car disappeared. My prisoner said he was the owner of the car, and said he got out and ran for the sake of exercise. I verified his registration-book, and found it correct. Why did he run away? Everything was in order, and he had a driving-license of his own.” Yes, dear Sergeant; but did the driver have a license?

Teacher (S. India). “I am harassed by influential persons who come into the school and force me to adopt old-fashioned ideas.” Cheer up, dear boy; it might be worse. In Mexico, there is a conflict between religious and secular education, and all the bandits are orthodox gentlemen and fervid supporters of religion. They have raided so many secular schools that all the teachers are now provided with fire-arms.

Verb Sap (Dadar). “It is useless to fight against fate. Money talks.” Yes, dear sir. It generally says ‘good-bye’.

Sheik (Colombo). “I am improving my love-making technique by studying the American movies.” Indeed, dear boy? Auntie's experience is that the film always switches off just when a vamping-episode is beginning to get really instructive.

Jane (Penang). “Your men are different to ours. If a girl slaps an Englishman's face, he will not hit back.” The coward!

Catastrophe (Gadag). “Please advise me what to do. My son has been playing with my camera, and has swallowed a roll of film.” You had better wait, dear sir, and see if anything develops.

Master Awful (A. C. G. S.). “What is the meaning of Copyright?” It means, my dear, that if you copy another writer's work, you must not copy right.

What is Wrong (Conjeevaram). “Dear madam, I present you with the following poem. Please criticise it for me in your splendid Magazine.”

*There was a young girl by the name of Nelly,
She fell in the water and wetted her feet.*

There is only one thing wrong, dear sir. The water is not deep enough.

THE END



Falling In Love

Reading Time

About 10 Minutes

by Shepherd of the Pot

Illustrated by Varma

MAD men are usually recruited from three categories for the greater part; philosophers, poets and lovers. If a nihilist goes 'soft' you get a homicidal maniac. There may be a poet who writes volumes of poetry which none reads; you can always expect to get a suicidal maniac out of him at sometime or another. Lovers produce these melancholic kind of insane men, who sit and mope in a corner of their cells, trying to wrestle with the mighty complications of love and life; the sort of customers the keepers always like much; very quiet and inoffensive, what you call nobody's enemies but their own.

Swift, I think, says somewhere that none but fools ever marry. Coming from him, one is tempted to

suspect some tinge of sourgrapeism in that. But it seems more or less axiomatic that one cannot love and be wise, as the great philosopher has said. He ought to know, for he was a married man himself, and was a rejected suitor before his marriage. Think of all the volumes and volumes of the ravings of the authors who had been in love. They are enough to give one the shivers. But there is a greater menace in these mad poets than there is in the most homicidal lunatic. I do not think I am much of a believer in the old world spells, charms and black or white magic. I am not even a believer in the miracles of these Prophets. I honestly refuse to believe that Jesus Christ rose up from his coffin after a three days' snug

sleep six feet beneath the ground, far from the maddening crowd's ignoble strife. Like the pirates of old, I believe in the discreetness of dead men. But there is one thing in the world of which I am mortally afraid: the spell of love poetry. I say to all legislators in embryos and out of them, to beware of this growing menace to civilisation and society. There is poison in it; neutralise it with an antidote while yet it is not too late.

Shelley was expelled from his college because he was an atheist. But he went on weaving thousands of spells with luscious soul-stealing words, which paralysed the minds of the youth of the country: but not one learned don, or clear-headed statesman could recognise the greater danger to the world. After all, atheism, and theism for the matter of that, are mere words connoting some purely speculative, certainly academic wranglings. One set of ecstatic chaps wastes its lungs and livers and life-times in crying out that there is a God up above in the fleecy clouds whom no one can see and every one will have to believe in if they want to escape damnation and hell. Another set of equally enthusiastic blisters stops on the spot at the cry, looks up at the sky,

finds nothing, and sets up a howl that it is being hoodwinked and hypnotised, that there is no God and no Hell. But both of them are inoffensive in themselves, until and unless they lead on to a religious war. But it takes some time for the fanatical fools to become so hot and furious as to cut each other's throats. But it is not so with your love poetry; there is a world of subtle suggestion in it; they work in the system unsuspected, and in the long run prove ineradicable.

Now, I am a student of literature. I have gone through the whole gamut of these poets and I was very near completely succumbing to the fatal spell. At the end of the course, I came to the indisputable conclusion that a man's life was not worth a thought

if he had never fallen in love in his life. I wanted to fall in love somehow. It was, however, more easily said than done. The poets would tell you that it would come on you arushing like a hailstorm or a wild bull without your anticipating it; but now that I was deliberately out for a plunge, I found it to be a more difficult task than I imagined at first. For, falling in love, unlike playing *patience*, involves two persons. You have to have somebody to fall in love with, to be sure. Like Narcissus, you cannot love yourself. In the case of Greek gods, they could do anything, but for a human being like me and you, the thing is clearly impossible. But I was determined to love, and love to distraction.

I graduated from an orthodox mufussil college, and entered in one of the premier co-educational colleges in the city for post-graduate study. Lord, I can never forget the first day I spent in the new atmosphere, bright lit up with gay *saris* and muffled gigglings in the corridors. Precisely as the clock struck ten, I entered the English lecture hall; I did not enter, I put my right foot in and was in the process of following it with my left when my eyes fell on the first bench in the hall. There were some half-

a-dozen powdered, lipsticked, merrily giggling faces. I tried to bring down my blood to the heart where it was much in requirement, and ambled in between two adjacent benches of girls who were unpleasantly staring at my tufted head, and blushing face. After going one or two steps up the gallery, I found something pulling me back, and I heard a half-suppressed scream, evidently from one of the girls. I turned round, and saw to my extreme embarrassment that I had caught someone's sari-fringe in my toes. I stooped down, and with uncertain dignity extricated my toe from the enmeshing *sari*, inaudibly muttering an 'I'm sorry', I went up and sat down with the firm determination not to look in the direction of the first bench, but I kept hearing a confused whisper broken

YES, I KNOW

Answers to Questions on page 19

1. King John did *not* sign the *Magna Charta* because he could not read or write. He was compelled to affix his seal on the Charta by the Barons at Runnymede on June, 15, 1215.
2. The Pacific Ocean was discovered in 1513, by Vasco Nurney de Balboa and received its name from Magellan in 1521. Sir Francis Drake was the first Englishman who sailed upon it.
3. A simpleton; two-wheeled vehicles; a sea bird.
4. Homesickness.

by suppressed laughter, and right on my downcast face, I instinctively felt the amused stare of half-a-dozen females of the species.

But today, I marched in with a new resolution to see a slice of life, and that evidently the most creamy slice of life. It so happened that day that I broke the point of my pencil, and my neighbour, Mary, offered a spare pencil. With the quaint unreason of a mediaeval lover, I decided to improve my acquaintance with Mary. She was a Catholic, and I was a Protestant, a protestant in the sense that I protested and do protest at the meaningless gibber of life. Still, she was very sweet to me. She talked with a soft, cooing melody, at least I thought it sounded like melody in my ears. She told me she was sick of the noise and bustle of the world and wished she could find a sequestered spot where neither nymphs nor fauns, not to mention human boys and girls, haunted. I was not sure at the time whether

she was aspiring to try a holiday in Mars. She loved books, she told me, and she loved the saints and the martyrs. I wondered whether she had an earthly of becoming the one or the other if she married me. I shook my head sadly. I pitied my poor rivals. We went now and then to the pictures, though she again and again insisted she hated the modern plays. She had related at least a hundred times in the course of a couple of months the thrilling story of St. Francis of Assisi, with a religious fervour which was entirely lost on me. Thus sailed the love-

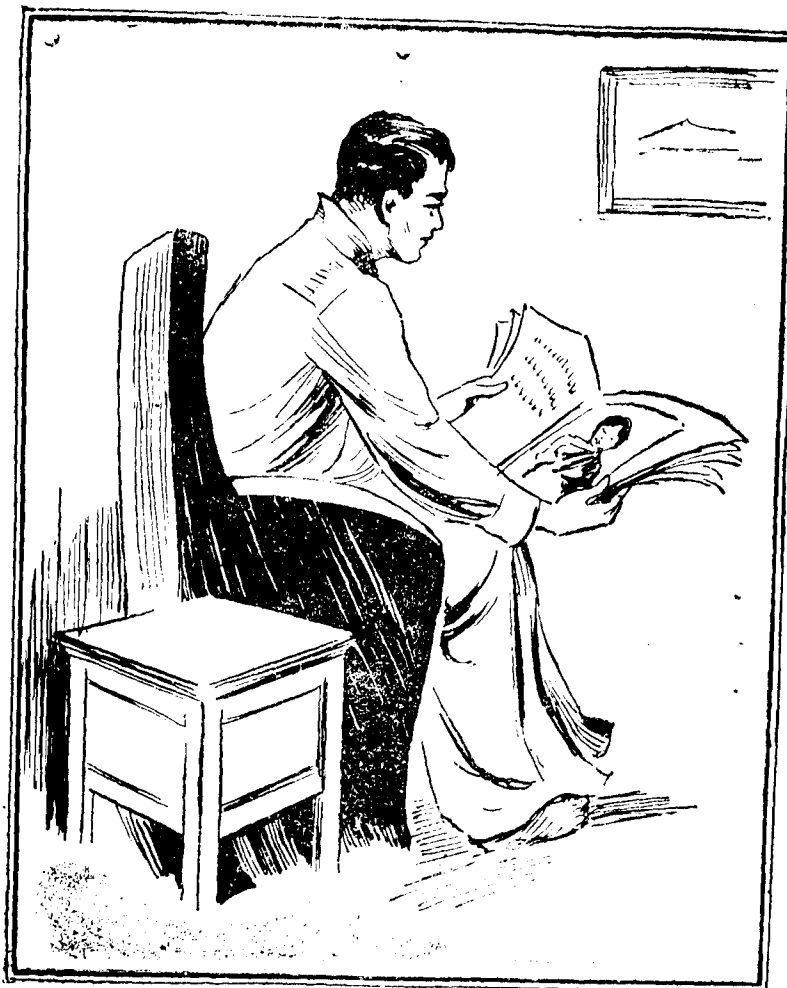
boat till Christmas came and I came home. Mary promised to write, and did not, and I did not at all mind. For, when I came home and began to chew the cud, I realised that this could not be love. I had not lost a pound of weight, I had not given up one ounce of my usual food; I was more than three hundred miles from my 'birdie', and still I enjoyed my every meal and went at it with gusto. I had in fact fallen into the habit of sleeping more than was

good for my health. All this was quite against the poets' descriptions. So after all, I was not in love!

When we re-assembled after the holidays, I had I shock—honestly and in the light of after thoughts, I should not quite call it a shock. I saw a new figure in the class, clad completely in white, with a white hood on. I recognised Mary. She told me—and I heard as in a dream, half in pleasure, half in sleep—how she heard the Lord calling, how she could not resist it, how in the end she succumb-

ed to it, and had dedicated her life to His service. It had saved me a lot of embarrassment, I felt, and thanked the Lord for calling so persistently. I murmured something about the self-sacrifice of a nun's life, about those who stand and wait, about the pleasure of the Lord, and vaguely hinted at what might have been, at which she burst into tears, and I remembered an important engagement.

Evelyn was a Protestant like me, and a girl full of life. She was always up to some mischief or other. She was ultra-modern in her outlook, and used to lie



glibly about London and Paris life. She had a quaint vocabulary, and called me, not very euphoniously and certainly not to my gratification, 'my Billy', and many other words rhyming with it. She was a thorough sport, and would take any amount of chaffing. We got on swimmingly, and I was feeling sure that I was getting it in right earnest. The classrooms and the books were becoming odious, not that they were interesting at any time. I was wondering if I was going off my food and sleep, and whether I would take to sonnet writing, and walking backwards gazing at the window of her house, to the extreme merriment of street-urchins and in defiance of all traffic signals. But unfortunately for my ambitions, this was not to be. I found out too soon that Evelyn had one grave defect in her composition. She could never take a disappointment sportingly, philosophically or in whatever way it should be taken. If you made an appointment with her for six in the evening, at six past meridian, you had to be on the spot, rain or thunder, dead or alive, dinner or no dinner.

Well, there was the rub, as you might say. I am not one of those automatons who are always unromantically punctual. I believe it is the sign of divinity in man to be charmingly late now and then. So it was all off. I failed to keep an appointment.

Yes, there it was, I was not in love. At the time, however, I was afraid my heart was breaking and I took to eating a little more breakfast in the morning to keep up my sinking heart. But soon, after a time, with the consolations whispered into my willing ears by time and my cigarettes, I came to think that she was far from the perfection I imagined her to be. I set my shoulder straight and addressed my image in the mirror: "Look here, old chap, don't you go breaking any hearts for nothing. What is the virtue in keeping away from your billiards because of a woman who does not know how to take a disappointment or two, a random off-shot or two?" I murmured resignedly: "If she slights me when I woo, I can scorn and let her go; for, if she be not for me, what care I for whom she be?"

After these two sad experiences, with my heart battered and bruised by these constant introspections, I decided to let well alone, and take things as they came. Fortune and love knock at every man's door at least once in his life, and I waited for the knock, alert so as not to miss it, for it was not certain whether it would be a lusty, doubleknock or a mild, guilty-like rap on the window-pane. I was prepared for all emergencies, as they say. But a rap came in a

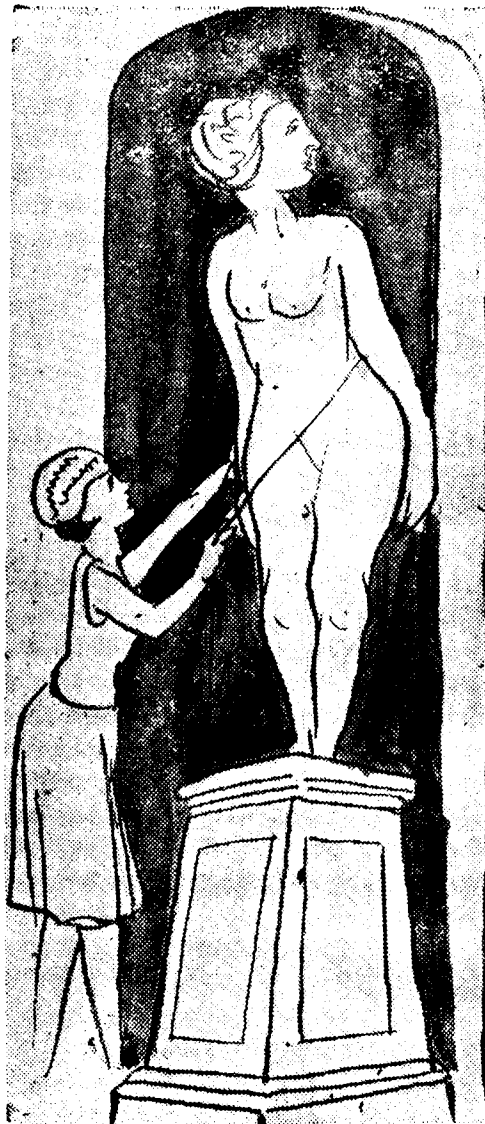
quaint and unexpected way, though in the end it proved to be a mere false alarm. It was but a picture; I mean, I heard the expected knock, or thought I heard it, when I saw her picture. Now it is a most unreasonable, and quixotic habit to publish a girl's portrait alongside of her article in a magazine. Yet, that was what one Editor had done. Composed as I am of very malleable material, I am very susceptible to the stabs of a pair of merry eyes, twinkling at you from a picture, half drooping in a delicious languor. When the outlines of a perfectly moulded chin and lips try to draw your soul out of your fleshy body, I cannot resist the subtle spell. I sort of run mad, probably with the instinct of self-preservation, and I flee as the hopeful warrior who wanted to live to fight another day.

I sat gazing at the picture, after reading through the humorous skit at least thirteen times without understanding anything except that it was charming. Such a sympathetic face was looking at me through the picture that I wanted to weep. And then, the name! There was the sound of victory and wealth in it. I laid the flattering unction to my soul that it was going to bring victory in my quest for love, and the wealth of undiluted love. She was but a name to me, but I began to compose sonnets and love-epistles which I never sent to her for the very simple explanation that I knew not her address.

I have the greatest objection to this sort of publishing the portrait of the author, especially if it be a girl, along with his or her writing. A work should be judged impersonally, without any prejudice, and how could you do it with a pair of ravishing eyes twinkling mischievously at you, and a pair of throbbing lips enticing your soul out of you? Of course, you are likely to be prejudiced on the other side if it happens to be the portrait of a gaunt old woman with cheeks like a village-pond. Coming back to the picture, there must be, as I said, two parties to a love-affair, as to a quarrel. A picture cannot be a party, if you know what I mean. My heart is sinking down again, and I am applying the old treatment.

Love seems to me now to be a perverse woman who flies away the more, the more you court her favours. I have resolved to turn round sharp and pursue my path undisturbed by these quests. Perhaps, who knows, the perverse woman could be courted only in this way; perhaps one of these days, love might overtake me and bowl me clean over!

THE END



BACKED as it is by a wealth of historical tradition, Paris is undoubtedly the most interesting capital in Europe. Apart from the fact that its population numbers three million, apart from the knowledge that there are twenty-five hotels in the recommended list—and apart from the realisation that each of these hotels is guaranteed to dent the pocket-book of the most eligible millionaire in America—there is a good deal to be said and done about it.

Paris can be divided into three sections. Montmartre, Versailles, and Paris proper. The chief sights to be seen are the beautiful Arc de Triomphe, the magnificent Place de la Concorde, the stupendous Palais de Louvre, the colossal Cathedral of Notre Dame, the titanic 'Tour d' Eiffel', the majestic Tomb

Sightseeing

Reading Time • About 6 Minutes

of Napoleon and a good hearty meal upon the breakfast table. We will start with the breakfast, because it is the most logical course of action. After that we will proceed in the direction of the Arc de Triomphe. Provided your constitution is strong, your eyesight unimpaired, and your sense of perfection reasonably acute, you will eventually arrive beneath that famous edifice. Examine the famous edifice. Walk six times around it. Try to discover the significance of the bas reliefs. Three hundred and sixty-three steps lead from the cornice to the base. Count the number of steps to verify the assertion. Remove one piece of staircase (to be preserved as Parisian memento).

If the alcohol in your system is not in excess, you may now follow the avenue leading to the Place de la Concorde. The Place de la Concorde is the most beautiful square in Europe and is backed by the Jardin des Tuileries, also the most artistic in Europe. In the centre lies the Obelisk of Luxor, the Parisian equivalent of Cleopatra's Needle. To one side stands the Louvre which houses the world's most comprehensive art collection. It is so vast in fact that it necessitates being seen on the instalment system. Intending visitors to the Louvre are advised to bring their breakfast, luncheon, dinner and foreign correspondence.

Much has been said about the artistic merits of the Louvre. They are certainly there for those who wish to see them. But there is another aspect about the Louvre, an elemental and pedestrian aspect, an aspect which builds its foundations on the deepest instincts of human nature. The press has not noticed it because the press, despite its pretensions, is sometimes remarkably devoid of the sense of reason. It needs a woman's intellect and a woman's instinct to perceive that in all this turmoil and chaos and fluster and bustle, pushing men and inquisitive boys, guiding, cajoling, and explaining, is the ideal show place for her armadillo hat. There may be a Venus de Milo in the Louvre and there certainly is a Mona Lisa. But very few seem to be interested in either the Venus de Milo or the Mona Lisa. A casual visitor to the Louvre sees many a hat and many a coat, and if he is extremely lucky he occasionally sees a picture. But

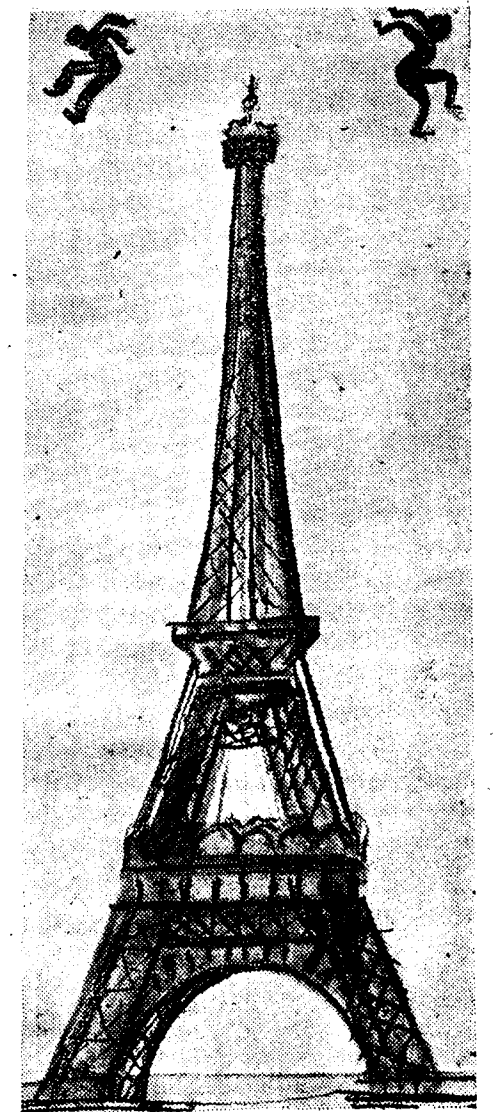
in Paris by Artiji

no visitor, superficial or intense, has ever seen a woman snooping round the Venus de Milo with a tape measure in one hand and that haunted look in her eyes which indicates that her hip measurements are a couple of inches on the wrong side of perfection. And surely, if the Mona Lisa is genuinely, earnestly admired, a tithe of its characteristics would have passed down to the race which conserved it? The point is that a good many people go to the Louvre to be seen but not to see; to be heard but not to hear; to plead, to shout, to scramble, but never to appreciate art for its own essentials.

And now to grow a little more personal. Somewhere in the neighbourhood (I don't know exactly where) there stands a shop. And in that shop there is a surgery. And in that surgery there lives a dentist. I want you to go up and see this dentist. I want you to sit down before his handsome face and in slow, deliberate, carefully chosen English, explain why he constitutes such a disgrace to the human community. And when you go out don't forget to leave your penknife in his throat. Generally speaking I adore dentists. They are so nice and calm and gentle. But I am convinced that this particular gentleman is a type the nation could manage without.

The next item on the programme is the world famous Eiffel Tower. It stands, a disfiguring mass of steel and iron, on one bank of the River Seine, defiling an otherwise artistic locality by the blatant obtrusiveness of its presence. It is nine hundred and eighty-four feet in height. People who wish to do so can reach the top with the assistance of a lift. Here they will find a radio station, half a dozen penny in the slot machines, and a convenient jumping-off place for prospective suicides. This method of putting an end to your earthly existence has the advantage of being both inexpensive and dramatic.

The War Museum lies a hundred yards away. It seems to be composed of old relics, guns, lead shot and Victoria Crosses. In a dinky plush container, edged with a little fount of purple ribbon, lies the clarion which stopped the War. Every Sunday the Sergeant Major takes it out and blows Ave Maria on the Champs Elysees to the accompaniment of an operatic choir.



Speaking of music, there is an opera house in Paris. It is of course the finest in Europe. I cannot personally vouch for its delights, but I refer you to the words of Mr. H. L. Menchen: "The Parisian audience is extremely frank. It reveals its passion for tone by standing up naively on its hind-legs and staring at the boxes."

I nearly forgot this. There are so many hats in Paris, so many coats, and so many dresses, that it becomes a dangerous place for any woman, particularly one with a bank deposit. So hie thee from this accursed city ere the dressmakers lay their hands upon you. And remember one thing. Tailors, insurance agents, and bulldogs are all essentially alike. Once they get hold of your cheque-book, they never let it go.

THE END

STAR SNAPS



Clark Gable

Will Rogers

Claudette Colbert

Shirley Temple

Norma Shearer

Stellar stock-taking has set in again. Statistics are being taken of star-values of 1935. 'The Madras Film League has, for the second time, begun canvassing local fan opinions on the best pictures and actors and actresses of 1935, both Indian and foreign.

U.S.A. as usual, has already made its choice. The following list of ten greatest motion picture stars of 1935, according to a ballot conducted by a film-trade publication, represents the judgement of New York and Hollywood.

(1) Charles Laughton, (2) Claudette Colbert, (3) George Arliss, (4) Clark Gable, (5) Leslie Howard, (6) Norma Shearer, (7) Greta Garbo, (8) Will Rogers, (9) Shirley Temple and (10) Helen Hayes.

Then, there is another set of the first 'Ten', taken in the 'Middle West' of U. S. A. which is diametrically opposite to this. That list is compiled by A. H. Blank, President of two motion picture theatre corporations in America, controlling over 80 picture palaces. He has taken into consideration the response of his box offices. (1) Will Rogers, (2) Shirley Temple, (3) Clark Gable, (4) Mae West, (5) Norma Shearer, (6) Bing Crosby, (7) Claudette Colbert, (8) Myrna Loy, (9) Joan Crawford and (10) Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers. In this list, Madras is sure to leave out Mae West, Crosby and Myrna Loy.

Charlie Chaplin, Buster Keaton, Harold Lloyd, Laurel and Hardy and Wheeler and Woolsey are not included in the list as they make very few pictures in a year.

The reasons for the selection of each star, apart from their money-getting value, are their characteristics.

(1) *Will Rogers* was a beloved genius. His portrayals were a happy synthesis of humanism and humour. Millions of Americans were his 'fans' and most of them were inconsolable when that genius died.

(2) *Shirley Temple* is a beautiful, cute child of extraordinary talents, yet utterly unspoiled.

(3) *Clark Gable* is a real he-man, with ability to be rough and tough, albeit kind and gentle.

(4) *Mae West* is No. 4 because she puts on no airs and is always herself. Besides she is lovably gushy and bold.

(5) *Norma Shearer* is in the middle in both the lists. Her attractions are her aristocratic yet friendly charm, her gowns, her beauty, and the fact that her pictures always tell an exceptionally good story.

(6) *Bing Crosby* is a popular singer who never takes himself seriously. A really talented comedian.

(7) *Claudette Colbert*, no matter how often she pretends she is a bad girl, her fans feel she is really a grand person with a delightful sense of humour.

(8) *Myrna Loy* began to catch the public by her performance in *The Thin Man*. That is an excellent piece of acting. It has thrilled picturegoers. She acted the kind of tolerant, trusting, loving and companionable wife every man would like to have. She has the poise of a competent princess but is neither cold nor distant.

(9) *Joan Crawford*, is popular because of her clothes, her vivid and active personality and her stories which are always adventures which really every modern-minded girl would like to experience.

(10) *Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers* are delightful folks, great. Another picture as good as *Top Hat*, and they will come up second or third.



Charles Laughton

George Arliss

Mae West

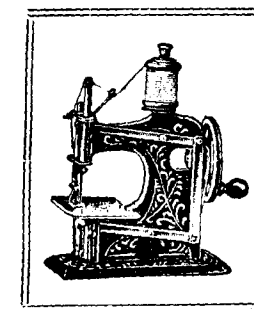
Leslie Howard

Bing Crosby

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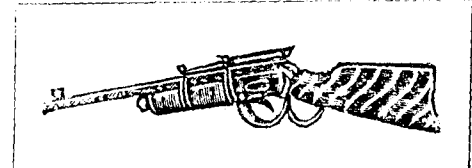
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