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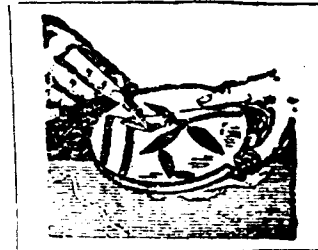
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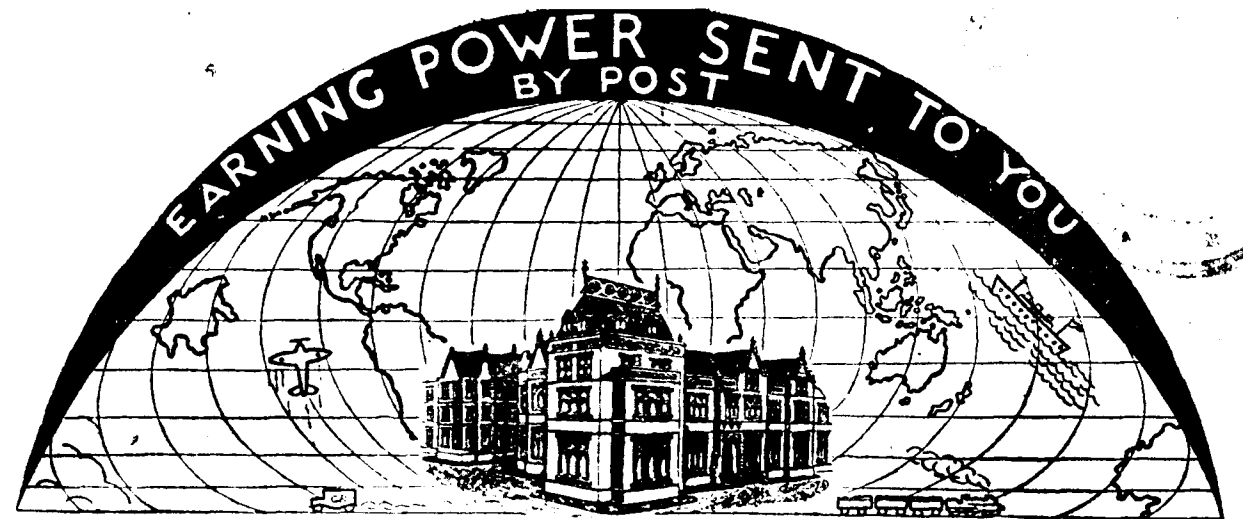
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OPEN LETTER TO PARENTS

Dear Sir or Madam,—When your children first arrived they brought with them a wonderful lot of sunshine. Later, you became proud of the intelligence they displayed, but, still later, you became anxious as to what would become of them in the future. Perhaps you were anxious when you visualised them as grown men and women. Even with plenty of money it is not always easy to select the right career, and a parent is sometimes inclined to ask advice of some relative, and in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred that relative knows nothing at all about the possibilities of employment.

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J. Bennett

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MERRY MAGAZINE

1320
Woman—Or The Weed?

Jayalakshmi Varadachar

★

Eamon De Valera

V. V. Narayanan

★

Real Indian Village

K. S. R. Sastri

★

The Hashish-Eater

Embasque

★

VOX POPULI!

Vol. IV No. 26

27th June '36

ANNAS TWO

The Birth of an Empire

People who, a few months ago, rejoiced that the heart of Britain was sound, and its democratic soul lived, must have received a rude shock at the trend of arguments, not events, leading up to the fateful, if not fatal decision to raise Sanctions which was announced in the Commons. We do not propose to comment on the debate itself, and unprofitably waste our moral indignation. It was an exquisitely ironic contrivance of the Gods above to make Mr. Eden's the voice propounding maxims which have the shallow wisdom of a pompous Polonius. It has been truly remarked that of all canting, the most disgusting is that of the man who recants! When this 'best-dressed man in Europe' stepped gracefully into the shoes of Hoare a few months ago, there were fulsome praises of his tact, his manners and his determination to restore British prestige by pursuing a foreign policy inspired by the highest considerations of altruism and national honour. We are told he made a vigorous speech. That speech marked, more truly and essentially, the founding of the Italian Empire than the Italian entry into Addis Ababa or the flight of the Negus from his country. It must necessarily have put heart into the malefactors who are responsible for the dismemberment of a helpless State, and confirmed them in the attitude of mind which provoked the original act of aggression. The conquest of Abyssinia is not the end of Italian dreams; it is the beginning of them.

Anti-imperialists all the world over have no reason to take the condonation of Italy too tragically. Italy's success makes the emergence of Germany inevitable. The decline of democracy, specially its power of initiative is painfully made evident by the backsliding of Britain. When Sir Samuel Hoare put forward his proposals, he was hustled out, as he took his public unawares. Now it has been dragooned, and will no doubt acquiesce in the new decision tamely enough.

This is the clearest proof that the Fascist mentality has crept into England. Diplomacy is drifting back into its old, discredited channels. But would Britain be any the better, morally or materially under the so-called Four Power Pact? The four powers are to include Italy and Germany. Germany has one eye on her lost colonies, and the other on Austria as a means to a bigger end. Italy will be a satisfied partner, for some time to come. How is Britain going to keep them together without surrendering something to everybody? How does she propose to do it and save her face? The answers to these questions will unfold themselves in the next few months. One thing is clear; she has lost her leadership on the continent, for the time being at any rate.

At the same time, she has her own hands full. Palestine is giving trouble; negotiations with Egypt are going on behind the scenes and South Africa threatens to break away by demanding a protectorate over the Native area. Who knows? The pressure from outside may be a blessing to the component parts, and Britain may yield out of policy before she is forced to do so by necessity. The rise of Italy may thus still be a blessing to Egypt and Palestine by inducing a relaxation of Britain's hold over them.

As for the League, it will continue to provide confirmed cynics and disillusioned idealists with a target for invective. It will be bolstered up in some other ridiculous posture, and its praises sung by a band of hired intellectual mercenaries, preferably as now, drafted from all the countries of the world. And most ignominious of all, it may continue to be made the subject of an essay, not less than three pages in length for immature young men blundering their confused way through the chaos which we mis-call our educational curriculum!

The Radio-Punter Is Late



Announcer: I regret to have to announce that Mr. Narayanan has not yet arrived at the studio to give his talk on the Steward's Cup race, as he has had to walk back from the race-course.

The
MERRY
MAGAZINE



Madras, June 27, '36

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Contents
STORIES & ARTICLES

The Hashish-Eater	Embusque	...	10
Everest Reverse (A Poem)	G. K. Pillai	...	17
Woman—Or The Weed?	Jayalakshmi Varadachar	...	18
Eamon De Valera	V. V. Narayanan	...	21
The Ghost Goes West	Jyeshtha	...	23
Kissing & Germs	Omega	...	25
Saroja's Story	V. Subramanian	...	26
A Basket Of Silver & A Broken Toe!	Emkay	...	29
Mosquitoes Are Pests	M. V. Mathew	...	32
Eye-Witness	Diana Don	...	34
The Real Indian Village		...	36

Dewan Bahadur K. S. Ramaswami Sastri

FEATURES

Sparks From Our Anvil	...	3
Mr. Merry, His Page	...	4
The March of Events	...	6
Laugh With The World	...	8
Vox Populi!	...	9
Auntie J. J.	...	14
Do You Know?	...	15
Fun For All	...	16
Merry's Film-Folio	...	39



Louisa Dyer
The Lawyer And The Moneylender

This yarn presents a ticklish problem. Don't lend money to would-be lawyers, if you are a Marwadi. Of course, if you want to give it away, the whole argument falls to pieces.

★

Albert A. Roland
The Chance of A Lifetime

It is sad to think that the slim, streamlined darlings of today are going to be the fat, triple-chinned terrors of tomorrow. Let Mr. Happy's experience be a warning to you, young men. Mr. Happy, by the way, is the hub of this story, and his part of the bed has nothing to do with roses. We are almost tempted to say, choose fat girls as your wives, it would save a lot of heart-burning later.

★

Jayalakshmi Varadachar
The Sequel

This story would never have been written (1) if a certain husband were not very far gone in the ways of smoke; (2) if that husband were not a ready liar and (3) if English magazines carrying cigarette advertisements were not in existence. With apologies to Hilton Brown.

★

Emkay
The Renegade

This touches Birth-control in a rather tender spot, and describes how it all came uncontrolled.

SPARKS FROM OUR ANVIL

The Cambridge Union Society has voted down the proposition: 'That a strong British Empire is an invaluable aid to peace.'

We are sorry to note that peace should share the discredit of its association with the Empire.

Mr. Michael Foot who opposed the motion referred to Sir Samuel Hoare as the 'only honest man in the Cabinet'.

It is apparently proved by the fact that his policy has now been adopted by Britain as the best.

Mr. Eden announced that he would recommend the raising of the Sanctions at the next meeting of the League.

All eyes are now turned—away from Britain!

He however added that there was no question of modifying or cancelling the stigma on Italy as the aggressor.

This has caused some irritation in Italy where an apology for imposing Sanctions was being looked forward to.

Mr. Lloyd George regretted the Government was going to Geneva to smash the League.

This is not strictly true; it is going there to bury it.

A correspondent in an Italian newspaper says that Englishmen at home stink on account of the bad food they eat.

Just now they also stink abroad as a result of swallowing their principles.

At a reception in his honour, the Mollisons offered their services as pilots to the Emperor of Abyssinia; he said he would remember it if ever the occasion should arise.

We hope however that he won't be driven to the necessity of flying from England!

Sgr. Mussolini is understood to have approved a two-year plan costing £20,000,000 for the development of Ethiopia.

Now that the Sanctions are to be raised, there is little doubt that the City of London will also approve!

Replying to the municipal address of congratulation, H. E. Sir K. V. Reddy is reported to have said: "I approach my task knowing that no greater responsibilities could be mine than those which I am about to undertake."

However there should be comfort in the fact that they are only for three months!

Mr. George Bernard Shaw has announced that he would make no more public speeches.

This is neither too good to be true, nor too true to be good!

Mr. Ramsay Macdonald recently spoke in favour of the League of Nations.

It was as futile as speaking in favour of himself!

The Government of India announce the abolition of the Tariff Board as a superfluity.

That view can only be described as egregious!

Dewan Bahadur Ramaswami Mudaliar has been appointed a Member of the India Council.

We hope it foreshadows the abolition of that body too after the Dewan Bahadur's term!

A fashion writer says that sarees and blouses are becoming prettier and prettier every day.

We hope our ladies will take up the challenge and beat the sarees and blouses at the game!

It is understood that Executive Councillors will also be allowed, like Ministers, to contest in the coming provincial elections.

That is, of course, if the electorate will let them!

Hollywood stars are taking to the air, says a film-gossip.

Probably due to the purity campaign; it would certainly bring them nearer heaven!

Amarnath is returning to India.

The others will be returning to the—pavilion for some more time!

Mr. Lloyd George opened a farming estate at Churt, Surrey. The farming was so successful that he has now opened a shop to dispose of the surplus farm-produce—honey, fruits, vegetables, eggs, etc.

Emulating this great Liberal example, our own Liberals ought to open up farms in this country. Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru might open a farm in Northern India, and the Rt. Hon. V. S. Srinivasa Sastri might open another farm in South India, somewhere near Annamalai. Further, this would be in accord with the rural uplift scheme that is so much in the air these days. I will do all I can to help Sir Tej Bahadur and the Rt. Hon. Gentleman to dispose of their surplus produce. If they think that I smell too much like Jawaharlal's Civil Liberties Union, they may take on lease the Madras Corporation Fruit Market which is one of the biggest jokes in South Indian municipal endeavour. One would expect to see fruits in a fruit market. But in this Fruit Market the majority of the stalls sell not fruit but hosiery, piece-goods, sports-goods, stationery etc. I asked a Municipal Councillor to explain the joke. "Joke!" he snorted. "There is no joke. All these goods are the fruit of labour. We are justified in calling this market the Fruit Market."

★

A Christian gentleman speaking before the Simla Y. M. C. A. traced the appalling poverty of India to the caste system, the belief in the theory of the transmigration of souls, fatalism and women's position in society.

It is extremely lucky for this gentleman that our friends, the



BY THE MAN

darling Sanatanists, don't favour American gangster methods in their arguments. Otherwise I shudder to think what would happen to this gentleman.

Retaining its economic aspect and kicking aside its mendacious religiosity, the Hindu caste system would present a spectacle not unlike the social divisions under a Christian, Capitalistic dispensation. I am not a Sanatanist even in my maddest moments (and my mad moments are many). As a matter of fact, I don't go near a Sanatanist, not within twenty yards of one. I don't know why, but a Sanatanist gives me a very uncomfortable feeling. I am sorry for the Sanatanists. But I don't think that the caste system is at the back of India's poverty. We are poor because we are very fond of poverty. Our Shastras preach it with all the accumulated authority of the ages. Look at me, for instance. I refuse to become rich. If you don't believe me, leave me your property in properly drawn-up wills. And judge me by what I will do with that property. I will simply pass

on the property to the temples where God has His being, or to God's own Englishmen.

Regarding the theory of transmigration of souls, this Christian gentleman has missed the bus again. Nobody questions the transmigration of bodies, which are real enough. So to cavil at the doings of poor immaterial souls is meaningless hooley. The Italian bodies are migrating to Abyssinia. The Japanese bodies are migrating to China. What happens to these bodies after migration? Undeniably they will become prosperous. So, don't let us hear any nonsense about transmigration of souls. Anyhow they ought to migrate at least for reasons of health. A sedentary life is as bad for souls as for bodies.

★

Mr. Jamnadas Mehta was telling a Madras audience the other day a few straight-from-the-shoulder things about acceptance of office by Congress. Referring to Satyamurti's ardour, he said,



ON THE MOVE

"Where Ramsays failed, Satyamurtis are not likely to succeed."

Naughty, naughty, Jamnadasji! Who told you that Ramsay Macdonald was a failure? The world knows that the only two people who have a title to that magic word 'success' are Ramsay and Jimmy. Wait and see, you big, bad man. Wait till we get hold of a few minister-ships. We are going to be such roaring successes that you've got to find out a new word to describe me and Satyamurti.

★

Here is a beautiful report of a Panchayat Board meeting for which I am indebted to *The Madras Mail*.

Karaikudi, June 8.

An ordinary meeting of the Devakottah Panchayat Board was held on Saturday, Mr. Mtt. Kr. Ar. Kr. Arunachalam Chettiar, President, presiding. Eight members, including the President and the Adi-Dravida member, were present. As usual the Harijan member entered the meeting-hall and, after wishing the

Board meeting and see how beautifully the one matches the other. Like a tight blouse on a stout woman, eh?

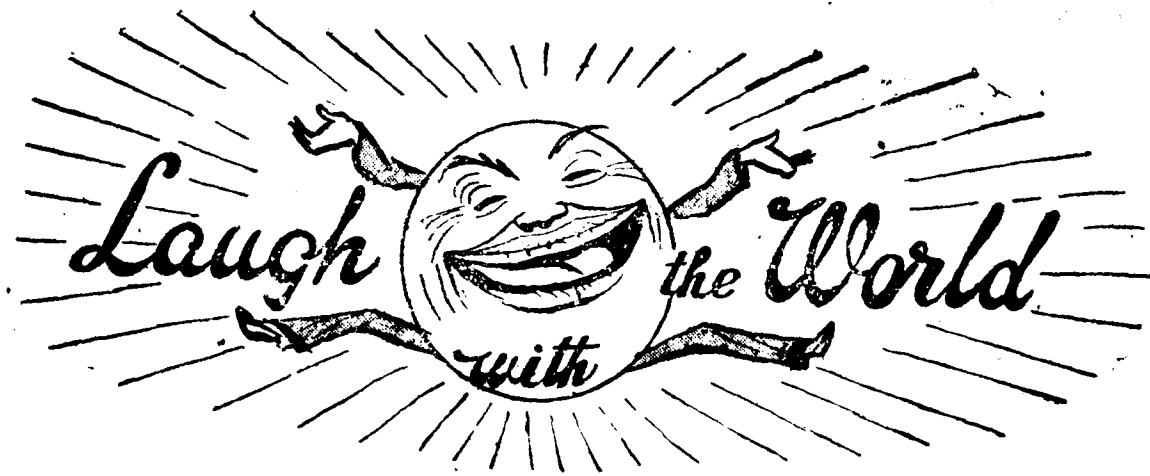
★

In mail week, a wedding was solemnised in the Church of Our Lady of Seven Dolours, Peckham, S.E. The girl friends of the couple turned up hatless and in shorts and socks to see the wedding. They were stopped at the entrance by the Verger. Apparently the reason was that the girls were not properly dressed.

By the dress they affected, the girls exhibited a little bit of broad open space round about their necks, a few assorted knees and elbows, the permanent waves of their hair in various stages of dissolution. Now the author of the broad open spaces, the assorted knees, elbows etc., is God. (I know the Atheists will yell their dissent. Let them yell, I don't care). Again a church is the house of God. Surely God will not be ashamed to see his own handiwork, grown up beyond the age of consent, in His own house. The moral of this unfortunate incident is, let not man (including Vergers) turn up his nose at his Maker's work.

★

"Municipal Council Meeting Ends In Pandemonium"—says a headline in a Madras paper. I have heard of Municipal meetings ending in so many things, including suppression by the Department of Local Self-Government, but never of their ending in Hell! Poor chaps, it must be very hot over there! What was the Chief Minister doing? He ought to have suppressed the Municipality instead of letting it end in pandemonium. Here is a splendid reason why the Congress should take up all ministerial positions.



Vox Populi !

[Ever since this Magazine started on its pilgrimage of fun, friends and admirers have been writing to me, some humorously, some seriously, and not a few flip-pantly. Some of the letters I receive are so diverting that I decided to share them with the readers. This feature is the result of that decision. If enterprising readers wish to answer any of the letters appearing below, they are heartily welcome to do so. If the replies are interesting enough, they will be published.—Ed. M.M.]

"Son," wrote a busy father, "emulate Benjamin Franklin, who said: 'To learn the value of money, borrow some'."

In due course the boy at college replied: "Dear Dad, I did as you suggested. Borrowed 5 sh. from my room-mate. What do I do next?"

—Toronto Globe

Coo-ed: Is he fresh? Why I had to slap him three times before I gave in!

—Rice Owl

They laughed when I started to make a new kind of dynamite, but when I dropped it, they exploded.

—Cornell Widow

Ace: What's Mabel Burlap doing out of jail?

Deuce: Oh, she was tried and found wanton.

—Okla. A. & M. Aggievator

The large number of impoverished foreign blue-bloods said to be living in New York at present inspired a new novel, *The Royal Famine on Broadway*.

—Notre Dame Juggler

North: There won't be any circus today.

South: No?

North: Naw, they fed coffee to the elephants and they ate the grounds.

—Drexel Drexard

"Cheese, what a trick!" said the rat, as the trap shut on him.

—M. I. T. Voo Doo

Barber (To new assistant): This man wants a shave.

Assistant: Let me practise on him.

Barber: Well, all right; but be careful and don't cut yourself!

—Boston Transcript

The young wife was heart-broken.

"What's the matter?" asked a friend.

"Oh, my husband is so absent-minded. After breakfast he left a tip on the table, and when I handed him his hat and coat, he gave me another tip."

"Well, that's nothing to worry about. Just force of habit!"

"That's what worries me. He kissed me, too, when I gave him his coat and hat."

—Hudson Star

A young man at the sea-side boarding-house had been banging the piano and disturbing everybody.

"I've tried every key," he said, proudly.

"Now try this one," said the landlady, grimly.

"It locks the piano."

—El Paso World News

Guide: These magnificent mountains are 2,000,000 years and four months old.

Traveller: How do you know their exact age?

Guide: A geologist studied them four months ago and he told me they were 2,000,000 years old then.

—Royal Academy Bulletin

I Want To Be A Dog!

Kasaragod:—I came down to Madras two weeks ago in search of a job. Of course, I am a graduate. Look, what college education has done for me! What college education has taught me is that college education is a cheat, a dud and a ?????!!! My aunt! I never thought that there were so many unemployed graduates in Madras. Had I known it, I should never have come within one hundred miles of Madras. Sir, I have walked every street in Madras looking for work, and I am broken in spirit. Indeed I am so broken that I have not even the energy to look at the beautiful girls on your wonderful Marina with anything but a brotherly interest. Need I say more?

Even the dogs are leading a better life than we poor unemployed do! I was hanging around Broadway watching a Christian minstrel singing his way into the pagan hearts of a few assorted Hindus, when I saw a beautiful motor car coming on. As the car flew past me, I was staggered at what was happening inside that car. The glimpse I had of the inside of the car was less than momentary, but I shall remember that scene bitterly for a long day to come. Three young women, dressed in the most marvellous silk saris, their ears, noses and fingers a blaze of diamonds, were sitting in the back seat. A huge dog was sitting on the lap of the girl in the middle. The dog was licking the cheek of

the girl with evident relish. And all the three girls were kissing the dog's head at the same time.

Now what I want to know is, am I, a graduate of the Mysore University, less in status than that dog which the three girls are smothering with kisses? Where is justice in this world? Sir, I want to be a dog. How can I become one?

—Nanjund Rao

Give 'Em Gum

Patiala:—I suppose you have read what the Nawab of Pataudi said when interviewed about our cricketers who are doing brave things in England. The Nawab Saheb says that the trouble with the team in England is lack of cohesion. If that is all the trouble with them, I suggest you ask Auntie to send Vizzy a few pounds of gum. Even the gum of a margosa tree will do. I know from experience. It sticks awfully. The cohesive quality of margosa gum, in its raw condition, is remarkably tough.

—Sant Singh

Is This Ours?

Trichy:—Your new feature *Vox Populi* is a brilliant idea. They say that truth is funnier than fiction. I used to laugh at this droll definition. But after reading *Vox Populi*, I subscribe to this

definition of truth with all my heart. Do you really mean to say that this page is ours—absolutely ours?

—Vanchinathan

(Yes, this page is absolutely yours, and your fellow-readers'.—*Ed. Vox Populi*)

★

Leave Everest Alone!

Govindapalem:—I don't know whether this letter comes up to your idea of the word 'interesting'. I am hoping it does. On the other hand, I am not going to lose my beauty sleep if you don't publish this.

Now, do you know anything about this Everest business? I mean, why are the Britishers so keen on getting to the top of that tall mountain? I remember to have read in my old school-days, that the Everest is somewhat over 19,000 feet high. I submit that this altitude can be reached with out even thinking of such a thing as Everest, let alone going near it! There is in my village a beautiful hill which is exactly 1,000 feet high. Anybody who wants to boast that he has climbed 19,000 feet can come to my village and climb our hill nineteen times, or even twenty times, to make it a sure thing. Please pass on the tip to 'all whom it may concern', and particularly to Lady Houston for whom I have unbounded admiration.

—Satyanarayana

The Hashish-Eater—

Reading Time • About 8 Minutes

FORMERLY there lived in the city of Delhi a carpet-dealer by the name of Ibrahim. This worthy citizen was the husband of a wife named Zukiah. Ibrahim prospered in his business, for carpet-dealing is the most deceitful of trades.

Zukiah was the mother of four children; and she praised Allah that she possessed a husband who had hearkened to the word of the Prophet, and was attentive to his wife, as the Book ordains.

But alas, Ibrahim fell into the way of solacing his evening hours with *hashish*; and this rendered him less attentive to Zukiah. The fellow sat on the bed communing with the *hashish*, instead of the wife of his bosom.

One evening, when Ibrahim was deep in meditation, he was disturbed by an outbreak of noise. His

sons, Hassan and Ishak, were playing at robbers. The interruption was particularly infuriating, as the *hashish* was just telling Ibrahim about a fairy palace made of beautifully-coloured sweetmeats, and populated by *houris* dressed in rainbows.

"O spawn of a perverted demon!" shouted the merchant. "Keep silent!"



(A STORY WITH A MORAL)

by Embusque

"Be careful! Be cunning!" whispered the *hashish*. "Did you notice? The floor is hollow! There is treasure buried beneath!"

"Treasure?" whispered Ibrahim in reply. "What shall I do? How shall I get it?"

"Be cunning. Be secretive," said the *hashish*. "Trust nobody. Tell nobody."

"But my wife will find out. You know what women are," objected the carpet-dealer.

"You must get her out of the house," suggested the *hashish*.

All this conversation went on in the twinkling of an eye, for when a man is communing with *hashish*, his mind spins with the swiftness of a clock running down. The merchant had no sooner banged on the floor, than he raised his fingers towards his wife and screamed: "I divorce you, I divorce you, I divorce you!"

At these words, poor Zukiah rushed out of doors and fetched her mother. The girl had not far to go, for her parents lived next door. "Come quickly!" she panted. "My husband has gone mad!"

The mother and some relatives crowded to the door of Ibrahim's house; but as soon as the dealer saw them, he repeated the dreadful words. And, being thus uttered in the presence of witnesses, they were binding. The weeping wife departed, and took refuge with her relatives next door.

"Indeed!" retorted Zukiah with spirit. "They are your own children, so you should well know of what spawn they came."

This retort maddened the carpet-dealer; for at the sound of his wife's voice the fairy palace became a noisome factory where the bones of swine were made into gelatine. There were grinning devils peeping and grimacing from every window.

"Silence, woman!" he howled; and banged with his stick on the stoneflagged floor.

Now that Ibrahim was alone with the *hashish*, he could prise up the flagstone and remove the treasure. "There are pearls, and jewels, and bags of gold!" he gloated.

"Not so fast!" cried the *hashish*. "How long would you live, if it were known that you possessed



"Such a treasure? The officers of the Sultan would come, and torture you. Could you bear such torture? Before lifting the stone, you must test your staunchness and fidelity."

"True, true," muttered Ibrahim. He arose, and went to the *Kotwal* of the city. "Peace be upon you," he said. "Look, here is a bag of gold. I pray you, give me a hundred stripes of the bastinado."

"That you can have, without charge," laughed the official.

"Take the gold," urged Ibrahim. "I desire a special service. Between each blow, you must ask me: 'Do you know anything? Have you found anything?'"

The *Kotwal* fingered the bag of gold, and grinned, and called the executioners. In a trice, Ibrahim's feet were secured to the pole, and the lashes began to descend on the soles of his feet. At each blow, Ibrahim shrieked aloud, while the executioners could scarcely contain their mirth. The *Kotwal* stood holding his sides, with tears of laughter rolling down his cheeks.

"Go on, ask me," gasped Ibrahim.

"Ho, master merchant, do you know anything?" gurgled the official. "Say, worthy carpet-dealer, have you seen anything?—Excuse me, but it is too funny." And the *Kotwal* wiped his streaming eyes.

"I know nothing—eeeah!" shrieked the unfortunate merchant.

When the hundred stripes were completed, Ibrahim was so bruised that he had to be lifted on to his donkey. Thus supported, he returned to his house. Despite the pain, he was triumphant. He had not

revealed his secret, even under the bastinado. "Now I can lift the stone," he boasted to his old friend, the *hashish*. "Come, let there be no more delay."

"Be careful! Be secretive!" replied the *hashish*. "After all, the bastinado is a gentleman's punishment. Anybody can hold his tongue under the bastinado. But could you stand a real flogging? You must put yourself to the test."

So the merchant climbed painfully on to his donkey and went back to the *Kotwal*. "Ho, there, do you want some more bastinado?" asked that worthy.

"I have no more gold," said the carpet-dealer, "but if you would consent to act without fee, I would be most grateful for a severe flogging."

"By all means," replied the *Kotwal*. "I will flog you for nothing." And he motioned to the executioners.

This time, the brawny slaves lay on the whips with such force that the soul of the merchant almost departed from his body. But he did not reveal his secret. His mangled, insensible body was taken down from the triangle, and sent home on a litter.

Zukiah, peeping from the doorway of her parents' house, beheld her former husband being carried past; and her heart was moved to pity. "The poor man is demented," she told her mother. "He should not be left alone, or he will destroy himself. Let us make a hole in the wall, so that we can keep watch over him."

The hole was made, and Zukiah saw her husband lying with his face to the floor, groaning most piteously.

Towards evening, the merchant raised himself, and began to commune with the *hashish*. "I have passed every test," he whispered. "Surely, now I can lift the stone and take the treasure?"

"Lift, then," replied the *hashish*. "Wounded as you are, I will give you the strength of ten men."

Ibrahim crawled to the hollow-sounding stone, and with a mighty effort prised it up. A square dark opening was revealed. Ibrahim could not see the bottom. He felt with his stick, but he could not touch the bottom. "You observe, it is a treasure-cavern," whispered the *hashish*. "There are diamonds, rubies, and bags of gold down there!"

Ibrahim gazed down eagerly, leaning far over the edge. In his weakened state, he could not support himself. He toppled over, and fell into the depths.

At this, Zukiah removed her eye from the spy-hole. "Come quickly," she called to her brothers. "Bring a rope. My poor husband has fallen into a cavern beneath the house."

In a moment, the rescue-party were at the edge of the cavity. "Are you there, my husband?" called Zukiah, anxiously.

"A poor deluded fool is down here," was the mournful reply. "Alas, that I am no longer your husband! Who would take such a bridegroom as I am?"

"I would," replied Zukiah. "I would marry you again."

"Leave me here to die," groaned Ibrahim, in great distress. "You cannot imagine what has befallen me."

"Not so," answered Zukiah. "Come up, and be my husband again, and eat no more *hashish*."

"I will never touch the cursed drug again," swore the merchant.

"Good. Then come up, and my brother will fetch the *mufti* and the witnesses."

"I will not come up," said Ibrahim, obstinately. "I will make the responses from where I am."

The authorities were hastily summoned, and the formalities began. But what with the shouting down into the cavern, and the deafness of the *mufti*, and his slowness of reading, and his defective memory, the recital seemed interminable.

"Hasten, hasten!" cried Ibrahim. "I cannot support this much longer."

At last the ceremony was over, and Ibrahim was extricated from the depths. He came up with a noise like a cork being drawn from a bottle. A dreadful smell arose.

In a moment, Zukiah was alone with her newly-made bridegroom. None of the guests were anxious to remain and felicitate the couple.

"What is down there?" gasped Zukiah, faintly.

"It is the city sewer," groaned the unfortunate merchant.

And the moral of this story is that buried treasure does not always smell of violets.



THE END



Auntie J.J.

A nephew writes from Coimbatore:—

DEAR AUNTIE,

During a recent excavation, an old copper coin was dug out at a place three miles from Tanjore. On the coin is marked 253 B.C. May I know in whose reign the coin must have been struck?

Yours,
ARCHEOLOGIST.

It is passing strange, dear girls and boys, that of all people, this nephew should ask me this question! The ways of providence are indeed strange! That coin unearthed near Tanjore and marked 253 B. C. is intimately connected with the history of my family. Let me explain by drawing on my family's moth-eaten archives.

I told you already that I come of Nordic stock and that the home of my fore-fathers was somewhere in the Baltic Circle. About the year 272 B. C. the main branch of my family were living on the bank of a dirty canal. Perhaps this was the same canal from which the present Kiel Canal was evolved. Into this happy family was born, on a fine starry night, a son and heir. They christened him, though Christ was yet in the womb of the future, Adolf Holstein Aeohfuhl. The early rogueries of Adolf were so atrocious that people predicted that he would one day blossom out into a great empire builder. Unfortunately these wise prognostications didn't come true. As a young man, Adolf was as great a rascal as he was in his boyhood years, without the saving graces inherent in every empire builder. He used to steal the poultry, pigs and the daughters of the neighbouring families. His depredations became so scandalous that Adolf's father kicked

him out of the house and commanded him not to darken his door again. The irreverent reprobate blew his nose at his old father derisively and trekked southward.

At this time in the year 253 B. C. the Proconsul of Piedmont (which was, as you know, a principality under Imperial Rome) was the great Marcus Melvius Afflatus, who staggered the populace around the Mediterranean Basin by producing the first set of quintuplets known to History. This Proconsul was always hard up for cash owing to the prodigality of his wife. He could not meet, for two years running, his tributary obligations to his principals at Rome. Nor could he settle the bills for donkeys' milk in which his wife bathed. One day the harassed Proconsul betook himself to a wood in the purlieus of Piedmont and sat under a tree. He sighed dolorously and cried: "How the hell am I to pay the old bandicoots at Rome, and meet the overdue donkeys' milk bills? Ah me! If only I have an Oracle to advise me."

"*Multum in parvo!*" said a soft voice from the sky.

Afflatus jumped up as if two scorpions bit him in his pants, and cried excitedly, what in Shakespeare's time would be rendered thus: "Prithee Kind Voice, who art thou; and what dost thou mean by *Multum in parvo?*"

Quoth the voice: "I am the sister of the Oracle of Delphi, in masculine form. *Multum in parvo* means 'much in little.' Good man, my sister sent me to help you. Stand out of the way, I am jumping down."

A human form, a man, jumped down from the tree. It was none but my ancestor Adolf. He patted Afflatus's back encouragingly and elaborated his plan for producing easy money. Afflatus was in raptures. He brought Adolf to his Capital and appointed him to the dual role of his official Oracle and Chancellor of the

Exchequer. Adolf made lightning improvement in the idle mint almost overnight and started minting coins in three metals—copper, silver and gold. The copper was blameless, but the silver and gold were not. The silver used was an alloy of 30% silver and 70% German silver. The gold was an alloy of .40% gold, 30% copper and 30% brass. These coins the Proconsul palmed off on his subjects, the donkey milk merchants and Rome, as genuine currency. Thus Afflatus and Adolf were the first great experts in currency questions.

An year later, the Emperor at Rome detected the fraud and called for an explanation from Afflatus, and his Chancellor of the Exchequer. The silly idiots, instead of sticking to their guns, ran away. Afflatus ran South without looking where he was going. The poor fellow fell into the sea and was drowned. Adolf ran North with a waggon-load of currency which he stole from the coffers and settled in Brannau. Oddly enough, Herr Adolf Hitler was born in Brannau about twenty centuries later.

Now research has established that a large volume of trade passed between the Mediterranean ports and India long before Christ. Naturally some of my

Adolf's coins found their way into India. As the descendants of Proconsul Afflatus could not be traced, and as I am the sole descendant of Adolf, all coins bearing the imprint '253 B. C.' belong to me. So, whenever you nieces and nephews chance upon these coins, please send them on to me.

★

Private Awful (Fort St. George): "Say, dear Auntie, exactly what is a mare's nest? And while you are at it, you may as well tell me what is a valetudinarian?"

A mare's nest, dear chap, is a place where female horses have their babies. A valetudinarian is a man who trains valets for Maharajahs.

DO YOU KNOW?

1. What was Kipling's first name?
2. How is the sound of eggs frying reproduced for the radio?
3. Where was a man recently jailed for refusing to shave his Hitler moustache?
4. Do any fish guard their eggs and young in their mouths?

Answers on page 22

Fun For All



"Racing's like that, my dear. You win one day and lose the next."

"Why not come every other day, uncle?"

Small boy: Ma, can I go out in the street? Pa says there is going to be an Eclipse of the Sun.

Mother: Yes, but don't get too close.

A coloured passenger in the steerage who was seasick, was bantered by his friend as being a landlubber.

"Dat's correct," said the seasick victim weakly. "Dey ain't no argument there. Ah's a landlubber and ah's jes' findin' out jes' how much ah lubs it."

Two spinsters were discussing young men.

"Which would you most desire in your husband, brains, wealth or appearance?" asked one.

"Appearance," snapped the other. "The sooner the better."

Two men from the city were camping out and the very first night they were attacked by a swarm of mosquitoes. Hastily they took refuge under the blankets. After a long interval, one of them ventured to uncover his head, and the first thing he saw was a glow-worm.

"Oo-er! Take cover!" he exclaimed, diving under the blankets again. "One of those horrid insects is looking for us with a lantern!"

Don: Come up to my house to-night and we'll talk over old times.

Fun: I'll be there at eight o'clock.

Don: When you arrive, put your elbow to the button and push it hard and when it rings, I'll know it's you.

Fun: Why do I have to push the button with my elbow?

Don: You're not coming up empty-handed, are you?

"I've just seen your daughter going down to bath with her costume over her arm."

"Great Scot! Is that the latest fashion?"

Girl: You make me think of Venus De Milo.

Young Man: But I have arms!

Girl: Oh, have you? I hadn't noticed!

"Do you believe in free speech?"

"That depends on whether the other fellow's bigger than I am."

"Everest Reverse"

(A tete-a-tete at Kailas, the abode of
* Siva and Uma.)

["For climbing in higher altitudes weather conditions have taken a turn for the worse."]

—Morning Paper.

"Why these people disturb us?
What is it they want?
Panting up with so much fuss!
All bleak and bare our haunt!"

Uma spoke. The great Lord replied:
"It's an uppish business, you see,
Once before, I guess, they tried
To catch a glimpse of me!"

"It's mighty fun to watch these folks:
They'd plumb our water-tubs;
They'd scale to the moon; no end to jokes;
They are ne'er annoyed by rubs."

The goddess interrupted here.
"Great Lord! the way of Thy talk!
It gets on my nerve! I almost fear,
Thy next will be: 'cheese and chalk'!"

"No harm done, Love," the Lord replied,
"Must you and I be snobs?
Nothing defiles us, whoever tried;
I have friends among Kates and Bobs!"

"And, after all, what's it to us,
Why they toil or worry;
Just watch, with Me, the fun and fuss;
Ours is just to be merry!"

"Perhaps, they want to ride the clouds;
Or, build a bridge to moon;
Wait, I'll send to ask these Prouds—
'Hulloa there! monsoon!!!!'"

* Note: Shiva, 'the Destroyer', is one of the high gods of the Hindu Trinity. Uma is his goddess consort.

—G. K. Pillai

Woman—

Reading Time • About 8 Minutes

ONE of the most beautiful and enduring of friendships suffered the other day—all on account of a simple weed.

With a perplexed expression in my eyes and a puckered forehead, I mused on the old German legend—"First the Lord made man, then he made woman, then he felt sorry for the man and made tobacco."

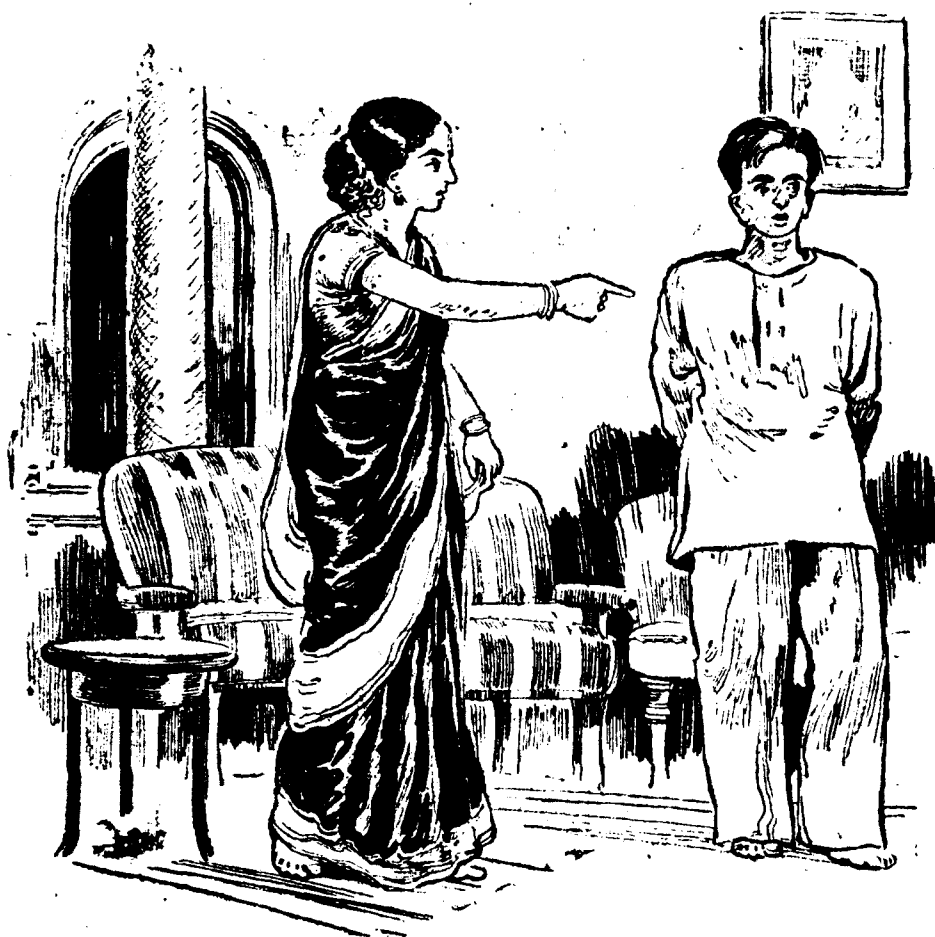
Could this be true? I pondered. No—it could not be, I was convinced. It was one of those gross insults levelled at the whole of womankind by the patrons of tobacco.

We had been married several years, and nothing but smoke had come out of the marriage. In vain had I used all the persuasive eloquence of Pussyfoot Johnson to cure my husband of the malady. True, I did not lecture to him with lantern slides about laryngitis and lungs beset with bacteria, but I was old-fashioned enough to believe that real Christian-like charity began at home. Could not a good woman reform a man—especially when stories were current that he was mere clay in her hands, and that she usually made a 'mug' of him?

My husband has occasional brain-waves—he attributes them to puffs of smoke curling up in a never-ending series of

rings. To him, smoking has a historical background. The Elizabethan period in English History, he avows, is illustrious, not because of its Tudors and its seamen, but because of Sir Walter Raleigh—the blessed man who invented smoke. Never is he tired of praying for the soul of this Samaritan to rest in peace.

He also attributes the glory of Tennyson to his pipe, and some day, if you should walk into his study, hanging over his desk is a piece of tobacco-wrapping framed in silver, with the rather cryptic reading:



Or The Weed?

by Jayalakshmi Varadachar

2 cigarettes	...	1 hour
2 hours	...	1 idea
1 idea	...	3 paragraphs
3 paragraphs	...	1 leading article
1 leading article	...	A gold mine in California —or in Kolar.

Rarely does he take his eyes off this rectangular thing. When under the influence of tobacco, he is guilty of anything—even of quick repartee. Time and again have I pointed out to him that the habit is both unseemly and uncleanly, and that even a pig would

not smoke. On all those occasions he has had but one question to ask. "You are not, by any chance, partial to the yellow packet?" My answer, like the photographer's, has always been in the negative. "Then who is more like the pig?" would be his crushing rejoinder. Such is he!

His firm creed is that there is no more harm in a cigarette than there is in a cup of tea. You may poison yourself by drinking too much green tea, or kill yourself by an over-generous quantity of assorted cakes. But tobacco! Why, it is a sweetener and equalizer of the temper!

He is the official defamer of all anti-tobacconists, and in him is marked the complete triumph of all smokers.

To me, the meanest man is not the one who split up his wife's tombstone, or the one who gave into his wife's hands a roller to mow the lawn when she was doing a bit of somnambulist sleep-walking during the nights. It is the inveterate tobacco-smoker whose path lies towards perdition. If his wife detests the practice and makes home tempestuous and stormy for him when he indulges in the habit there, he smokes when away from home, and swears to his wife most solemnly by all the holy saints in Heaven that he has shaken off the vicious habit permanently.

It is difficult to deceive your wife that you have not smoked, especially when you have had four of the choicest of Wills'! Much more so when she is an affectionate wife who insists on letting you know that she is fond of you the first thing when you return home after an evening out. The most graceful thing to do in the circumstances is to send up a heartfelt prayer to Heaven and say like Brutus: "O Ye Gods! Render me worthy of this noble wife!"

Husbands, take my tip. Don't you go about trying to buy peppermint—extra strong though it be, in the



fond hope that after you have chewed it, you are going to convince your wife that you have given up smoking for good—for your *own* good, as she has so often pointed out to you.

When my husband attempted the stunt, he over-looked one little detail—with drastic results. While drawing out his handkerchief, two cigarettes accidentally rolled down the floor. I was not slow in picking them up, and fixing him with a piercing look. I asked him if he knew who those belonged to.

With great presence of mind, he turned scowling to his younger brother who was standing there, looking more innocent than a new-born babe, and said in a severe voice: "Immortal gods! Is it possible that you have begun to smoke tobacco, you unemployed, young reprobate! Where did you get that nasty stuff? What do you mean by such conduct, you villain? Do you know that by such indiscretions you are almost making your mother feel that she had died barren! Haven't I told you often enough to let the tobacco alone?"

Then he threw the cigarettes over the fence of casuarina shrubs which surrounds our garden, wherefrom he retrieved them later in the day.

"Merciful gods!" he exclaimed, when he confessed to me of his sin later in the evening. "What should I have done if all my brothers had been sisters! It makes me feel proud of my parents to think that they have given me a brother to depend upon in such emergencies."

So the next time he tells me that he has given up tobacco, I will know that it is all fable, fiction and falsehood. And if at any time he should have the candour to ask me the rhetorical question: "Would you mind if I smoked?" I am going to tell him: "Not at all,



THE END

you can burst into flame if you like." In his enthusiasm, I can almost hear him swear that Wordsworth must have referred to a few puffs that he had had when he spoke of the 'Trailing clouds of glory'.

When all my eloquent entreaties have failed, I shall feel that I am not justified in depriving a man of his sole happiness on earth. And what cosmic influence smoking seems to wield on humanity!

"Smoke—and the world smokes with you.
Don't—and you are alone."

Not for nothing could the sage have said of this round world of ours 'It is all smoke'!

And there are always appealing arguments in favour of tobacco. "He who doth not smoke hath either known no great griefs, or refuseth himself the softest consolation, next to that which comes from Heaven!"

"What, softer than woman?" whispers the youthful optimist. Young reader, the smoker will tell you that woman teases as well as consoles. That woman makes half the sorrows which she boasts the privilege to soothe. That woman consoles men while they are young and handsome, it is true. But when they grow old and ugly, the patron of the weed will tell you that she will not. She will, instead, snub and swear and scold.

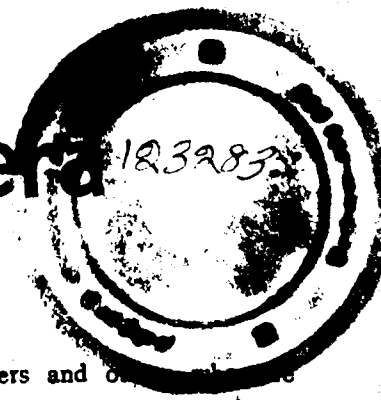
On the whole, then, woman in this scale, the weed in that. Jupiter, hang out thy balance, and weigh them both. And if you give the preference to woman, all I can say is, the next time Juno ruffles you—O Jupiter! try the weed.

And the moral of this story is, if you feel your affections swaying between the woman of your heart and Lady Nicotine, brethren, cast in your lot with the aristocrat. You have blue blood in your veins—yourself, and remember that God in His infinite mercy gave you lips—to hold the weed between, so that they may be blue too!

Eamon De Valera

by V. V. Narayanan

Reading Time • About 6 Minutes



THE later phases of the Anglo-Irish differences were intimately bound up with Jimmy Thomas. Jimmy is gone, but De Valera is there. De Valera, Ireland's 'Man of Destiny', has again leapt into the news over the scrapping of that august body, the Senate. While Indian politicians are wrangling as usual over words and phrases, this remarkable man is performing the hottest things in the coolest manner.

The Irish Senate, the last stronghold of British Conservatism, is stormed, and stormed into dust. It would be interesting to study this 'strong silent man'.

Eamon De Valera was born in 1882 in New York City. His father was a Spanish emigrant. His mother was an Irish emigrant. Originally he was christened Edward. The Irish in his mother evidently could not look kindly upon this decidedly English name. So she translated Edward into Gaelic and called him Eamon. The lad lost his father when he was barely two years old. Very soon after this calamity, Eamon was taken to the south of Ireland where his grandmother lived. He was educated there. Very early in life, De Valera showed great proficiency in Mathematics; and later as a teacher of Mathematics and Physics at Blackrock College, he distinguished himself in no small measure.

Nurtured in the religious fervour of early Irish Republicanism, De Valera views everything British as he would view, to put it mildly, a strong disagreeable smell. His efforts to free Ireland from England is by and far the most radical ever adopted by any Irish Nationalist before him. In Ireland, as it is in this

country, the big landholders and capitalists are described as having a 'stake in the country' are against the anti-British policy of De Valera. They particularly object to his relentless economic quarrel with Britain. No wonder that these propertied gentry and big businessmen do not harbour kindly thoughts

towards their President. Ireland's trade with England was more than £102,000,000 in 1933. Today it is less than half of it. Notwithstanding the opposition of the 'men of stakes', De Valera is going about his business cooler than the proverbial cucumber. The secret of his success and popularity is not far to seek. Whenever his opponents kick up trouble, he goes direct to the people and explains to them what for he was doing what. Also Ireland is solidly behind De Valera because the depression has touched Ireland

least. The reason for Ireland's happy immunity from the fire of depression is not that the depression grew cool when it reached Ireland. De Valera's 'cheeky' economic policy, as it touches Britain, has left Ireland with an almost inexhaustible surplus in food stuffs—cattle, butter, eggs, sheep, etc. Thus it is not an exaggeration to say that there are very few hungry families in Ireland.

One admirable feature of Irish public life is the absence of graft. That this is due to De Valera's great example is unquestionable.

The early political life of De Valera was not a bed of roses. He belonged to the last battalion to surrender in the famous Easter Rebellion of 1916. He was



the one leader of that ill-starred coup who did not forfeit his life. His American citizenship stepped between him and an early Eternity. However, he was awarded a life-sentence, but was released in the General Amnesty of 1917. An year later, De Valera was again arrested for initiating a plot against the Government. He was imprisoned in the Lincoln Gaol in England. He escaped under dramatic circumstances and reached Liverpool. Disguised as a fisherman, he crossed the Atlantic on a liner. Already Ireland hailed him as its President. What De Valera did in America in the cause of Ireland, is now history. He collected huge sums of money from willing and generous donors.

At last in 1927, at the head of a new party called the Fianna Fail, with forty-five delegates behind him in the Dail, De Valera took the Oath of Allegiance to England. He made it plain, however, that the oath was an 'empty political formula'. In 1932 he became the President of the Irish Free State. And in that same year, the League of Nations honoured itself by choosing him as its President.

This tall, gaunt man, with a long nose on which perch horn-rimmed spectacles that do not add any beauty to his none too beautiful face, dressed in

clothes that look as if he had borrowed them from an obliging friend, is not the least important problem to the Empire Builders at home.

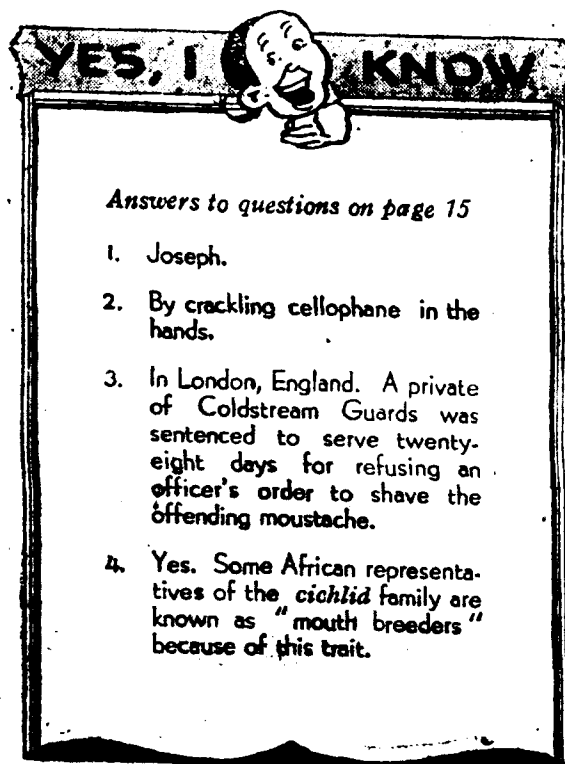
He has repudiated the Land Annuities to Britain which was binding on Ireland under the Free State Treaty. England retaliated by high tariffs. De Valera put up his tariffs a bit higher. These high grim tariff-walls have, between them, brought one great result. They have stimulated the dying home industries of Ireland.

It is said that De Valera, while on tours, copies the methods of the American gangsters. A retinue of three cars, in which nervy, unobtrusive men sit with guns handy, follows him. That is not to be wondered at. Political opponents in old Erin have a very bad habit of saying things with lead.

Today, this man lives a quiet life amidst his family—his wife and six children in Dublin. The

pomp of colourful Proconsuls is conspicuous by its absence in the day-to-day life, official or domestic, of this simple, great man.

To those whom a cruel fate has placed on the lower rungs of human values, De Valera's life is at once a hope and an inspiration.



The Ghost Goes West

by Jyeshta

Reading Time • About 7 Minutes

IN the summer of 1933, I happened to visit Jullundher on business. It was my third visit to that city that year. It was already night when my train steamed into Jullundher platform. I drove to the Government rest-house where I always stayed during my visit to that city. The *tonga-wallah* who drove me to the rest-house regaled me with a few grisly yarns about ghosts. His yarns were inspired by the route we took. It ran past the burning-ghat to the north of the city. These ghost stories were highly imaginative, but lacked the essential of a story, namely, dramatic verve.

While the *tonga-wallah* was in the midst of one of his silly stories, just as we were passing the lonely bit of road that ran past the burning-ghat, I yelled with all the strength of my lungs: "Look, *tonga-wallah*!" I shouted, my voice tremulous with fright, "look, oh God! that headless white-clad figure on the road....."

"Where, *huzur*? Ram, Ram, Ram.....where *huzur*?" blubbered the fellow. He was thoroughly frightened.

"There, in the middle of the road, just ahead of us! Look, look, it is carrying its own head in its hand!... There it is, running away towards the burning-ghat!..."

The *tonga-wallah*'s teeth were knocking against one another. He kept on chanting Ram-nam, and whipped his pony frantically. We reached the rest-house in record time.

I paid the *tonga-wallah* double fare. The ride was worth it. I frightened the fellow out of his wits. He will never mention ghosts to his 'fares' after the fright I gave him. Of course, there was no headless ghost.

At the rest-house, the caretaker, old Mahabir, welcomed me as a father would welcome his son. Mahabir was over sixty years, with a patriarchal beard, and straight as a dart. He was a retired sepoy. He had large smiling eyes set deep in a deep-lined face, that somehow made you think of an India dead and past.

Mahabir brought me a few *puris* from a neighbouring hotel, and while I was eating them, he spread my camp cot on the veranda of the rest-house. Presently, I came out on the veranda and sat down on my cot. Mahabir, with whom I shared my *puris*, spread his bed on the floor and began to hum some of those grand old songs from *Thulsi Ramayan*.

As I mentally reviewed the events of the day, the *tonga-wallah* episode came to my memory. I burst out laughing.

"What are you laughing at, *huzur*?" asked Mahabir.

I told him how I frightened the *tonga-wallah*, and was amused to see a peculiar look come into the face of the old sepoy.

"Why, Mahabir!" I bantered. "You are not frightened are you?"

"No, *huzur*. Ghosts are not a fit subject for laughter. I will tell you a ghost story. And it is a real ghost."

I lit a cigarette and stretched myself comfortably on the cot to enjoy Mahabir's yarn. "Go ahead, Mahabir. I shan't laugh."

Thirty years ago, (began Mahabir), I had a great friend in my platoon which was stationed in this very city. His name was Lakhan Singh. He was married, and I was not. The depth of our friendship, our devotion to each other, was a by-word in our Company. Lakhan rented a small cheap house in Sukia Galli, then a humble quarter of the city. In that house, he kept his wife, Bannu. My friend took me to his house very often, and made me partake of all the nice things which his wife cooked. A year passed. The fact dawned on me, that I was madly in love with Bannu. I am not educated enough to describe her properly, but I say that I have not seen a woman, then or since, more adorable than Bannu. I discovered presently that my love was not unrequited. I was delirious with joy. And very soon both of us fell. She surrendered to me her noblest heritage, her chastity. I committed a crime more heinous than murder. I had abused the sacred trust of a dear comrade. This sinful liaison went on for three months. I was happy beyond words, but one thing was rankling in me. I could not be with my love as often as I wished. Lakhan Singh passed most nights with his wife. I hated him. In my blind love, I did not recognise that he had a right to his wife! This hatred worked itself up to white-heat. If only I could remove him!

At this time, without warning, our Company was rushed to the Frontier where trouble broke out. The very next night, during a bloody engagement with those lawless tribes, I shot down Lakhan Singh. He was crouching behind a boulder some fifty feet below me. The crime went undetected. Within the week, the enemy were routed and we returned to head-quarters.

I rushed to Bannu's house at the first opportunity. It would not do to tell her that I had murdered her husband. It would serve no purpose. And women are so strange. Bannu was already notified of her husband's death. She welcomed me with a mute look and began to sob.



I was about to bend down and gather her in my arms when the door opened, and in walked Lakhan Singh. I could not believe my eyes. I backed out and stood against the wall, tense with fright. The woman uttered a cry of indescribable pleasure. "Lakhan, Lakhan, you are alive! Thank Matha!" Whatever her sins, a Hindu woman's greatest asset is her husband.

Lakhan Singh did not look at her. He was regarding me sadly all the while. "Mahabir," he said with a gentleness in his voice that cut right through me, "Mahabir, look at me! We are bosom friends. I trusted you. Would you steal my wife?"

I was glued to where I stood. I wanted to yell. I could not even open my mouth. Lakhan Singh spoke again. "Mahabir, I forgive you the past. Go in peace."

He turned to this wife. "Come, Bannu," he said with a sad smile. "I will take you far far away, where temptation is not, and friends are friends."

He opened his arms. Bannu rushed at him as a released calf would run to her mother to drink what little the milkman had left. Bannu passed through the arms, through the body of her husband, and hit the opposite wall. She sagged down to the floor, blood trickling from a gash in her forehead. She looked up wildly. "Where is my Lakhan, where is my husband?" she screamed.

The room was empty but for me and Bannu. "That was your husband's ghost, Bannu!..." I cried hoarsely.

I shot up from my camp-cot, rushed into my room and brought out my portable typewriter. "Come on, you old sinner," I howled at Mahabir. "What happened after that?"

"Nothing, huzur," said the murderer, grinning abominably. "When you were last here, you were telling me you could not think of a good plot for a story to the *Merry Magazine*. So I thought out a plot, huzur. What do you think of it?"

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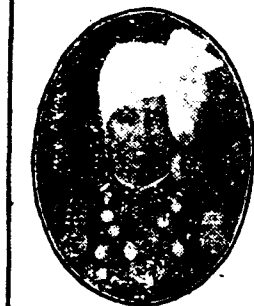
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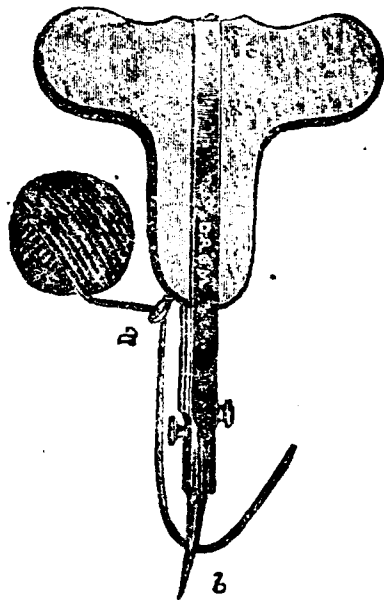
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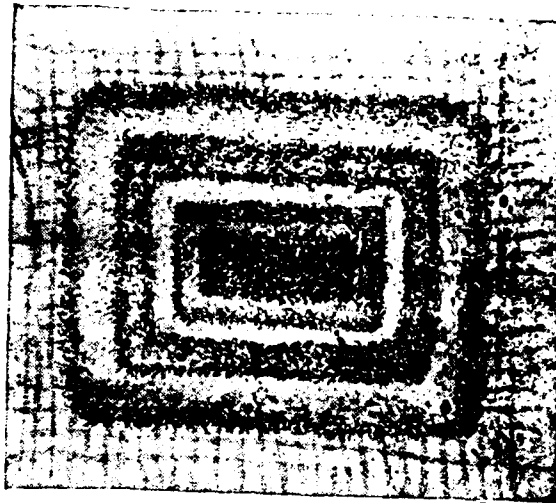
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Kissing & Germs

by Omega

Reading Time • About 4 Minutes

I have absolutely no patience with the sanitary crusade against kissing. The doctor who made the discovery that kissing shortened life has no reason to be proud of his achievement. I greatly enjoyed the reply of a romantic young man who was assailed with the suggestion that kissing had germs. Like a brave man, undaunted by the steam-roller of modern scientific research, he declared that he kissed hard enough to kill the germs.

The mischief, however, is that the anti-kissing fad is gaining strength in some ignorant quarters. Here is a piece of news. In the State of Kansas, thirteen (unlucky number again!) young men have formed an Anti-kissing League. Each member has put his signature to the following declaration: "We agree among ourselves that in future we will not kiss either our wives, daughters, or any woman whatsoever. We believe that kissing is an unnecessary act in expressing affection and further that it is a criminal

and unhealthy habit. We solemnly vow to adhere to our intention, no matter how much trouble it may cause in our families, and we will use every means to convert the members of our household to the belief that kissing is not proper for sensible people." Such a resolve would probably bring joy to the soul of Mr. Sri Prakash, M.L.A., who made the astounding statement on the floor of the Indian Legislative Assembly that more than 90% of Indian husbands did not kiss their wives. I don't believe it is true, but even if there is an iota of truth in this statement, I am sorry for Indian husbands. They are ignorant of, or insensible to, one of the greatest felicities of human existence.

But let me come back to the people of Kansas. What a pitiful instance of misdirected zeal! Is this mischievous resolution a result of microbe-phobia? This horror of the microbe-laden kiss is mere

(Continued on page 31)



Saroja's Story

by V. Subramanian

Reading Time • About 6 Minutes

66 **I** have just written a wonderful story," wrote my sister Saroja, "and I want you to criticise it for me. I was going to send it to you, but haven't got an envelope that will take it. So come for the birthday of your nephew, a day earlier, and you can read it here."

"If you haven't an envelope that will fit your story," I replied, "you should write a story that would fit your envelope. However I'll come."

I found Saroja in her room sitting in one arm chair, in an obviously rehearsed attitude. At the moment

of my entry she was writhing, it was made to appear, in the throes of incipient inspiration.

"So glad you could come!" she said. "Now have something to eat, and then you can read the story. Only don't take too long over your tiffin. I am sure you will like it."

"I'm certain I shall," I replied. "Fortunately I had a light lunch when I started."

"I meant the story. Potatoes?"

"Several. What delicious *puries*!" Saroja who took nothing herself, eyed every morsel I ate with

impatience. "Finished?" she asked when I had had but a few *puries*.

I dislike being hurried over my food; besides, I really was hungry and there were *therattippal* and coffee to come. So I munched resolutely on, until Saroja was on the verge of tears.

"What an ass you are!" she exclaimed. "Drink the coffee and pass on the *kuja* to the cook. It is time for your brother-in-law to return."

I passed the *kuja* in injured silence, pouring the coffee in a tumbler and then heaved a sigh of satisfaction. Saroja hailed the movement with undisguised relief. "Now to the story," she said, as she took a pile of smudged and blotted paper out of a drawer and put the pages in order. "Here it is, and there is a blue pencil for you."

"Why a blue pencil?" I asked.

"You must have a blue pencil to make the alterations. All the best editors use them."

"But I never can write with a blue pencil," I protested. "Besides their marks are so unpleasant on the manuscript."

She threw the implement with a gesture of contempt into the waste-paper basket and handed me the manuscript. Saroja's writing is evil enough at the best of times, but here there was hardly a sentence that had not been crossed out and re-written—some of them several times over. The whole thing was a nightmare palimpsest.

"Supposing," I suggested politely, "you were to read it to me instead; I could get the hang of the thing better. Or better still, supposing you were to begin with an outline of the plot."

"If you like. Well, it is all about the struggle between two men for the love of a girl. Do you like it?"

"It sounds fresh," I said.

"Well, listen. The hero's name is Munuswami and the villain is Satyanathan."

"Good heavens!" I cried. "That will never do. No hero is ever called Munuswami and no Satyanathan could possibly be a villain—not in a story. You must make it the other way about."

"But why?" asked Saroja.

"It is one of the laws of literature. No magazine would accept your story if you trifled with tradition like that. You will be telling me next that your hero is dark-complexioned and your villain curly-haired and beautiful."

"Well, why shouldn't they be? I like dark men and I hate curly-haired, fair persons."

When Saroja clinches an argument thus, it is useless to argue the matter further. Meekly, I invited her to continue her synopsis.

"The heroine," she resumed, "is Janaki. Both her parents died when she was a child. Her mother was a good songstress and her father, Brahmanantha Barathi a talented composer of music. Their marriage was a romantic one. Brahmanantha Barathi was really a great composer but was not properly appreciated until after his death. He used to have awful rows with the critics. He wouldn't sell any of his later compositions but left them all to Janaki when he died of a broken heart a few months after his wife's death. And the compositions came to be worth some thousands of rupees and the publishers tried all means to make her sell them; but she wouldn't, because she worshipped her father's memory and was very strong-minded and wrote stories at ten rupees per page. Do you like it?"

I made a non-committal gurgle.

"I thought you would. Well, I was telling you about the romantic way in which Janaki's parents got married. He was singing as he was composing, while sitting on the green grass near the Courtalam Falls. Then he heard a most exquisite voice singing one of his old songs. The voice came from within a compound nearby, and he was so entranced that he climbed the wall and finished the song and—"

"Please leave Janaki's parents there and come to the plot."

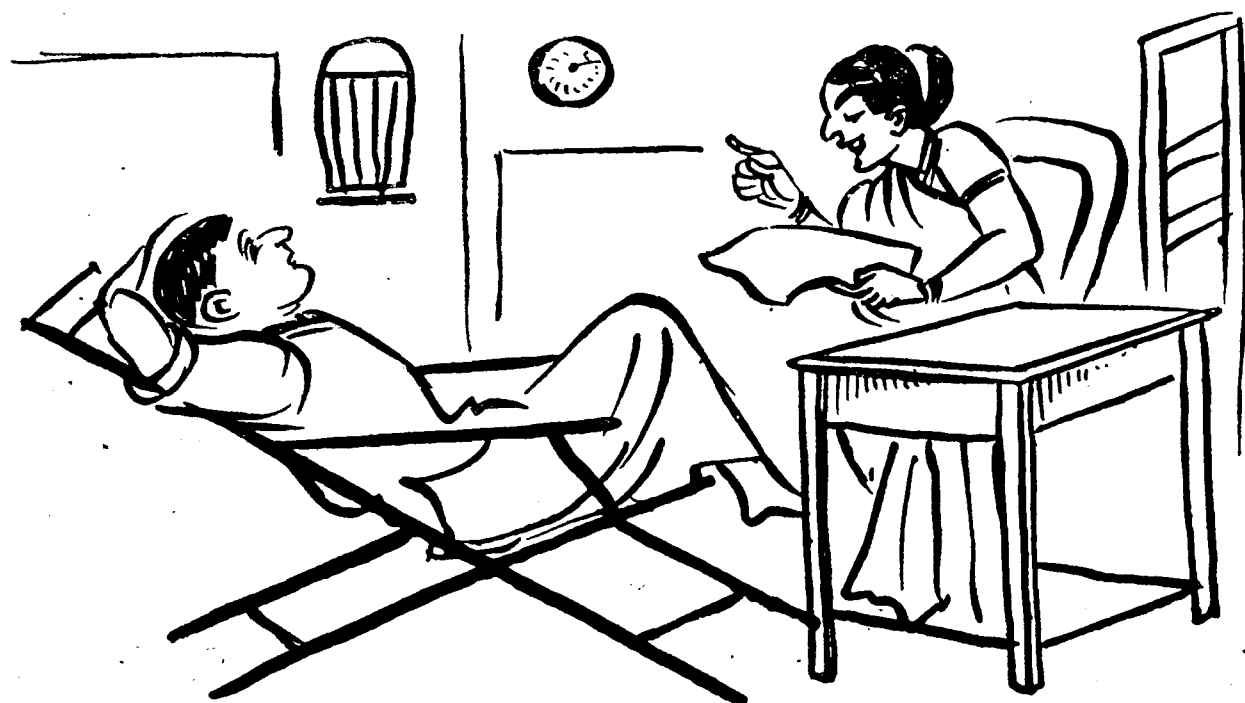
"I am telling you: you can't get a proper impression of Janaki's extraordinary character unless you know something about her parents and her upbringing. She was educated entirely on good lines until she was seventeen....."

"No, no," I insisted firmly. "I want the plot and nothing but it. What about Munuswami and Satyanathan?"

"I am coming to them. Munuswami is the editor of the magazine that takes Janaki's stories, and fell in love with her, long before he had ever seen her, through reading her manuscripts. Satyanathan was an educated youth and chose to become a critic of musical compositions and makes love to Janaki in order to obtain possession of her father's compositions which were worth thousands. Now you see how necessary the other part is."

"I am fearfully sorry," I said. "I haven't time to read it. Finish it off in your own lines and then send it to me neatly written and I may be able to make a few suggestions."

"I don't think you are very helpful. But if you really like the story I shall re-write it and send it, in a day or two."



"Yes, what do the rivals do? What of their struggle?"

"Well, that is as far as I have got at present. I have not thought out the rest of the plot except that Munuswami marries Janaki in the end, after a misunderstanding, because Satyanathan prompted Janaki to send in a story under an assumed name, and Munuswami had rejected it. Only it was no fault of his, for Satyanathan had altered it before it reached Munuswami, making it bad grammar and not quite the kind of story a nice girl would write. It is just here I want your help. But, of course, you should read the whole thing first so as to know exactly the sort of girl Janaki is and then suggest the best way to work out the plot."

A fortnight later I received an untidy brown paper parcel from Saroja. On opening it I found the manuscript in the self same state of disreputability that had so repelled me on the occasion of my visit, together with a note in Saroja's most impossible scrawl.

"I am afraid," she wrote, "that I shan't be able to find time to finish off the story as I have joined the 'Summer Music School for Women'. So let us collaborate over the story. You finish it and send it somewhere and we'll halve the profits."

But I never 'collaborate'—even with so versatile a creature as Saroja.

THE END



A Basket of Silver & A Broken Toe!

by Emkay

Reading Time • About 6 Minutes

"GUFFING and guffawing" the Trunk Express lay stretching itself along the Central platform. I peeped out of the window and looked blankly at her; she stood opposite

and smiled a pathetic smile, holding back a forcing flood of tears. The gong went, the whistle blew and the engine snorted. Suddenly she caught hold of my neck and rained a dozen kisses upon me. "Not quite

decent," you murmur if you are a purist. But that was the way with her—with my Aunt Ammu. It was fifteen years back; I was then five.

Aunt Ammu, like Marie Dressler (may their souls rest in peace!), was a dynamic personality. I cherish her memory. But it is not a memory that comes for things rare. She wasn't in other words my only aunt. Of them I have a dozen:

Tall aunts and tiny aunts,
Fair aunts and brown,
Fat aunts and flabby aunts,
And aunts without a crown.

But Aunt Ammu was the pick of the bunch, as you would call her, or the cream of the milk, for she had wealth; but, my friends, she had no offspring. And she had 'pep' and the commonsense to choose me out of the litterful of nephews, not to speak of nieces. Well, be it as it may, she loved me and I loved her and we parted fifteen years back. The memory of the parting scene came rushing to me the other day as I sat in my front room, head between hands and completely broke. A gentle breeze blew and, blowing, caused a file of traders' bills to rustle. The bravest heart bumps and sinks at the sight of traders' bills rustling. If payment is overdue, you are lucky if the heart doesn't stop. Considered in that light, I was lucky indeed except that a feeling of dejection took me in its grip and I sank into the lounge. "If only my Aunt Ammu had been here!" I groaned. But no consolation resulted. If only that 'if' had not been if!

Even Providence, they say, has pets and is to them partial. It was so in my case. I had not sat for full ten minutes in that lounge, when, who else should come to me than a kindly telegraph messenger with a fine, little topping message like this: "You inherit Aunt Ammu's wealth—Iyer, Iyengar and Row, Solicitors, Bangalore." It was a message worth celebrating. It meant so much of Aunt Ammu's wealth—that little bungalow alone was worth a twenty thousand, then the garden, the garages, the row of shops.....topping, I call it, topping. Aunt Ammu was such a duck—she was.

I slid my hands carelessly in my pants and threw the last silver coin I had with me into the grinning messenger's hands. He vanished leaving me to attack the gripping problem: "What to do with so much wealth?" The very idea of inheriting vast wealth satiated me. I felt I was happy with my own small lot. But still something could be done with money—couldn't something be?

I longed to consult an Efficiency Expert as how to deal with money—a cart-load of it too. But suddenly I remembered I was in India and not in New York where Efficiency Experts thrive. I then 'switched on' my thinking powers and thought. Initial attempts were a fiasco; such commonplace stuff as charity and all that. The weak man in me shot out and said: "Why not give half of it to the Girls' School and another to the Widows' Home?" No sooner had he said it, than the 'prudent-man' asserted in me. "You fool!" he said to the weak fellow, "then what will he do, sit and groan, as ever?" I backed the prudent man and dismissed the weak man's thoughts. Continuing, the 'prudent-man' said: "If he should give away everything to the Girls' School and Widows' Home, why should his aunt give it to him? Could she not have given it the Bangalore Girls' School?" It was a point worth noting.

"Then what do you suggest?" protested the 'weak man'.

"A little statue in honour of Aunt Ammu and the rest to the Imperial Bank." At this the 'aesthete' in me grew wild.

"You were always a log head—you always were," this third man said to the 'prudent' and struck him on the head. "When he doesn't know how to spend it, why do you want the poor fellow to bank it and accumulate? He must find ways to spend it. Come out, if you can, with sensible suggestions in that line. Spend, throw money to winds—to North, to South, to West and East. Spend it on wings, aye—spend it on wheels."

The 'prudent' by now had swooned. There was something in what this fellow, 'aesthete' suggested. I made a note of it. Thus:—

A nice roomy car, Hispano Suiza.
A little Moth 'plane.
A bungalow at Delhi near H. E.'s.
Another at Simla.
Summer in Kashmere or Switzerland.
Two bulls for stud purposes, to please H. E.

The 'weak man' made a last protest. He seemed to say: "You simply cannot forget the Quetta 'Quake sufferers. You must do something for them and the unemployment leagues."

"Ten rupees each," I said.

"That's a trifle; make it a hundred each," he replied.

This was 'cheek' and I felt like licking the weak fellow. He seemed to me to have taken shape into a beastly human form. There are moments when abstract ideas take human shape and hold 'tete-a-tete' with you. Such moments are when you are half-sleepy or when the news bursts on you that you—(a hack writer) are to become the master of thousands and thousands of currency which Mr. Taylor the good man that he is "promises to pay on demand at any office of issue." It was one such moment with me

"I will kick you, you fiddlestick! What for shall I give a hundred to the unemployed?" I thundered.

"That is a small drop in an ocean, my friend," he said.

"Damn it!" I roared and kicked him with a full swing.

"Oh, my!" I shrieked. What an agony it was to kick solid wood, I knew not till then. Susila came running from the next room and nursed my broken toe.

"You babble too much in sleep, my dear," she said. "To whom did you say 'damn it' just now?"

"Who said 'damn it'?"

"You."

"I didn't."

"You did; why did you kick the table? And why....."

By now something shiny on the floor had struck her eyes. She ran towards the object and picked it up. "You are a scamp, dear," she cooed. "You said you had not a copper with you and you have thrown this silver on the floor."

"The messenger didn't take it then?"

"Which messenger?"

I was still dizzy. "Oh, it is nothing; I was just thinking something," I said.

"And dreaming, eh!" she laughed.

Laughing, my dear Susila made herself the owner of the last silver coin I had with me. And dear reader! if you wish to hear a good word and avoid an injured leg, let your mind not be preoccupied when you sink down on the lounge, be it for an afternoon nap.

THE END

Kissing & Germs—(Continued from page 25)

moonshine, for when the poet Marlowe exclaimed: "Sweet Helen, make me immortal with a kiss!" he betrayed a culpable disregard of bacilli.

I have heard the argument that moustaches and beards are potential reservoirs for pathogenic bacilli. This raises the ticklish point—should one cultivate a beard or remain clean-shaven for purposes of kissing? My researches into this subject have furnished interesting data. Dr. Nyrop says: "It seems indisputable that a woman gives a decided preference to a man with a beard." In the Roumanian ballad a character sings: "I am still too young to marry; my beard has not yet sprouted. What married woman then will care about kissing me?" According to an old German view there is nothing in a kiss without a beard: "A kiss without a beard is like Vespers without the Magnificat." Yet another saying goes: "A kiss without a beard is like an egg without salt." But the Britishers have never taken kindly to beards for this reason, among others, that their damsels have looked at them with disfavour.

There is, at the root, a strong suspicion that beards are mischievous germ-carriers. For my own part, I hold no brief for them. Nor have I any fancy toward moustaches, short or long. But this reminds me of

an anecdote. A fond parent who was 'blessed with a quiverful of daughters' wrote to the *Lancet* asking if it was not true that a "Moustache is Nature's filter of the atmosphere before it passes through the mouth to the lungs and that it absorbs and retains large quantities of noxious microbes and disease germs." He enquired because, if that were so, "in the case of a man with a moustache imprinting a kiss on the lips of another person," the malefactor might "implant the seeds of disease and perhaps death!"

The *Lancet* in reply suggested that kissing on the lips should be avoided as far as possible, adding that "a moustache is not the completely insanitary appendage that our correspondent thinks."

I don't accept the recommendation (no sensible man will) that the Lip-kiss should be abolished. But moderation may be good in this as in other respects. Who has said: "Maiden's lips are cardamoms and cloves; sweet maidens offer them as presents to young men"? It would be indecorous to reject such offers. Kissing must go on, in spite of the doctors and their bacteriological experiments. For, is it not true:

"So to woman comes eclipse

When she is touched by no man's lips?"

THE END

Mosquitoes Are Pests

by M. V. Mathew

Reading Time • About 7 Minutes

HELL, with this year's summer, too, has arrived the usual battalion of mosquitoes. Personally I have nothing against them, poor dears and cheery fellows, who find it expedient to sing while at work, and make singing pay. But actually, I am certain I will not prefer their music to my neighbour's daughter's nor their proboscis to the human one of my wife. They lull me to a sort of 'booty-sleep'—at least, they certainly endeavour to do so—and then, they dig their pumps into me, and suck up the red oil. So, these little fellows are, really treacherous people; they mislead you and then double-cross you. No wonder I don't like 'em. No, sir, I don't like 'em.

But these little fellows don't care two hoots whether I like 'em or don't. That makes me doubt whether the first mosquito was the handiwork of God or of Diablos. Women, when I come to think of it, are a bit better, with all their hidden songs and stings. For one thing, they won't trouble you if you just frankly mutter: "Please, I don't like you!" or even, "Darling, your pretty lips don't charm me." But

mosquitoes are different; they are out for your blood! So there is no avoiding them by disappearing into baths or clubs. You have to face the ordeal, and suffer with fortitude.



And all this, despite the nude fact that there are a thousand and three methods of defeating and devastating their hordes! Mosquito curtains are deuced cheap, says the Sales Manager. He bullied me into buying one for seven rupees on Monday at Six-Thirty P.M. I burned it on Tuesday at One-Thirty A.M. That's a story. Within it, you feel like being closeted in a small six-foot-by-four prison cell; and though there are small, small holes punched on you in the curtain, you feel asphyxiated

and afraid. Still further, (these were my thoughts and feelings between Eleven P.M. Monday and One A.M. Tuesday) what if the whole thing gets on flames? My Gawd!.....And surely enough, what with this thought and that, I cremated the jolly good goods, some hours before sun-rise.

'Killit', they tell me, is an excellent deodoriser—I mean, an excellent mosquito remedy. I remember,

the first time I bought it, I rubbed it all over the spots where the pitched battles had been conducted. Then I was enlightened; and I began to spray. The pros and cons of spraying are worth mentioning. You can peacefully sleep in a bedroom wherein mosquitoes have been replaced by a none-too-pleasant smell. The disadvantages are really great. Suppose you want to smoke? Smoking strictly prohibited. Again, suppose when thou (s) prayest in thy closet, thy girl-friend, or worse, thy wife suddenly cometh in! O, to think of it! You will—I mean, thou wilt surely remove her powder, rouge and all her make-up; it is enough to give thee headache.

A friend of mine suggested a less costly, ingenious and excellent idea (all his words) for mosquito catching (killing included). You just take a big plate (wherefrom you eat your daily bread—I mean, rice) and smear the inside with oil: coconut oil, cheapest. Then..... I heard the plan, approved of it, and began to execute it in a jiffy. One evening, when my wife was out shopping or clubbing, I took up a big plate, smeared it with castor oil (I found the bottle easily) and holding one edge with my excited fingers, I began to wave it up and down, to and fro, round and round. The oil was a little too much, and my 'fanning' resulted in the oil being sprinkled on the floor, on the curtains, on books and on whatnots. The whole room began to reek castor oil...But I jumped with glee and 'whooped' as I saw on the plate two (really two; no lies like golfers' scores) mosquitoes dead, dead,

absolutely dead, and pitifully sticking to the plate. I caught them by the scruff of their necks and whacked and crushed them to pulp, very vengefully. Ah, what ecstasy!

I continued the waving with increased enthusiasm. I waved over the book-shelves, across the doorways, and by the bed-side. And sorrowfully enough, while waving



by the bed-side, the plate caught the whole bed (probably foolishly thinking it was a mosquito!) and the former was splintered and smashed to smithereens. I moaned with inside, but my ardour was not abated. I then took an unbreakable plate and smeared it with cocoanut oil, which I found near the fireplace. I began again, with fresh spirit, whoopeeing and whalloa-ing at every 'catch' of a mosquito. And every little catch was like a glass of stimulant. And by night-fall, I had not finished my successful bombing

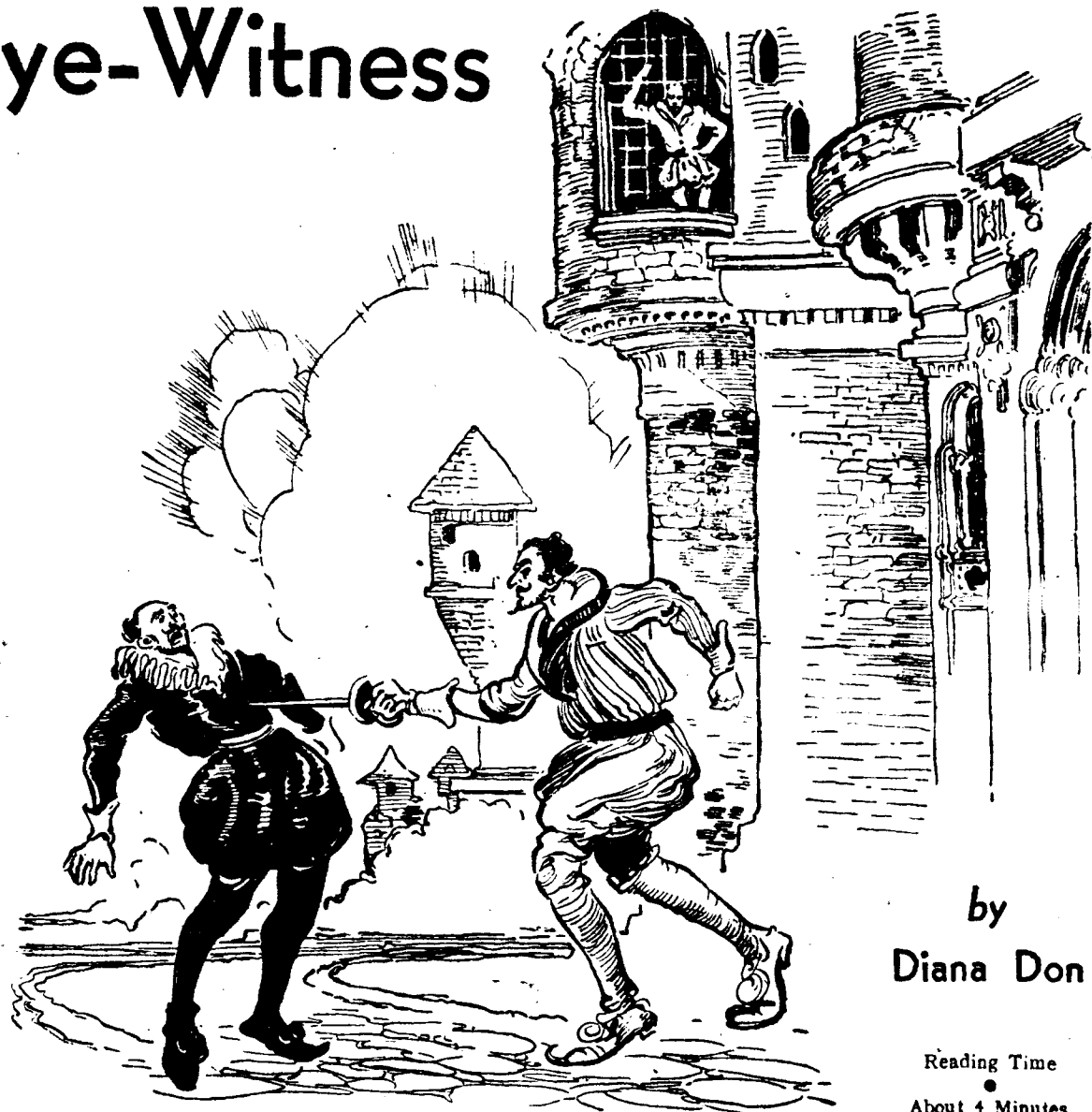
baiting. The doorway with the shy curtain—oh, how many hummers were there!

I opened frantic fire there. In the gathering dark, I was waving it up and down vigorously, when, before I knew what was happening, the curtains were pushed aside, and the plate cracked upon my returning wife's head! The unbreakable plate with cocoanut oil from the kitchen!

The row that started on her having been violently hair-oiled by cocoanut's oil, I had better leave out. But there ended my ingenious mosquito catching. And my net spoils were thirteen mosquitoes and one fire-fly! Poor Mathew!

THE END

Eye-Witness



by
Diana Don

Reading Time
About 4 Minutes

SIR Walter Raleigh was in the ninth year of his imprisonment in the Tower of London. He had completed Volume One of his History of the World, and the manuscript of Volume Two was nearly ready.

In writing his History, Sir Walter was most careful to go to original sources. He sought the accounts of eye-witnesses in preference to the accounts of historical reporters.

The Lieutenant of the Tower disagreed with his prisoner. "What does an eye-witness see of a battle, for example? He knows only what happens for a few yards on either side of himself. If you meet a

wounded man crawling away from a fight, what does he report? That the battle is lost, and he is the only survivor! What account does an eye-witness give of some great disturbance of nature? That he suffered a cut on the ear and a rent in his trousers! No—a much clearer and truer picture is obtained by the scholar, remote from the scene of action, who sifts all the circumstances, and reconstructs the sequence of events in the light of reason."

Sir Walter maintained his preference for eye-witnesses. "The whole system of English justice is founded on the reliability of eye-witnesses," he persisted.

"So much the worse for justice," growled the Lieutenant.

That afternoon, Sir Walter heard a scuffle in the courtyard outside his cell. Peeping through his window, Sir Walter saw two men facing each other. One seemed to be an officer of the Tower; the other, by his appearance, was a merchant.

The merchant raised his fist and struck the officer. The officer drew his sword and ran it through the body of the merchant.

The merchant, in a dying effort, raised his stick and felled the officer to the ground. The officer lay insensible; the merchant collapsed beside him. The guard came running, and bore both men away.

These events were of unusual interest to the lonely prisoner, who noted every detail. Next day, when the Lieutenant entered his cell, Sir Walter eagerly related the whole episode. The visitor listened in amazement.

"My dear sir, your account of the affair is entirely wrong. The person whom you call an officer was not an officer at all, but a servant. The person whom you describe as a merchant was really a page-boy. It was the page-boy who dealt the first blow. The servant did not draw his sword or offer any resistance.

The page-boy snatched the sword from the servant's side, and followed up

the blow with a mortal wound. The servant fell dead at once, and a bystander knocked down the murderer with a stick."

"Excuse me," said Sir Walter, "I cannot have been deceived as you think. I was an eye-witness of the whole affair, which took place right under my window. Look, there is the very spot where the dead man fell."

"My dear friend," replied the Lieutenant, "I was sitting on that seat (pointing in a different direction), and the servant fell dead at my feet. Look, I got this cut on my wrist when I took the sword out of the murderer's hand. A dozen persons will confirm the account I have given. Believe me, you are mistaken."

Sir Walter, when alone, took up the manuscript of

Volume Two, and destroyed it. "If I cannot believe my own eyes," he said, "how can I believe the eyes of men who have been dead for hundreds of years?" Instead of Volume Two of his History of the World Sir Walter Raleigh left only this story.

* * *

There came a day when Sir Walter was released, and permitted to go on an expedition to South America. The expedition failed. On his return, Sir Walter was arrested and executed on a charge of high treason. He was innocent, but was condemned on the evidence of eye-witnesses.

THE END



The Real Indian Village

by Dewan Bahadur K. S. Ramaswami Sastri

Reading Time • About 6 Minutes

LAST week I told you about the Ideal Indian Village. I say *about* because I merely stood at its border and went about and did not go in and would not go in because of the crowd of world-improvers who rushed in. I wanted to save the village from them. The most necessary and inevitable of all prayers in the world is the prayer, 'God save me from my friends'. We can prevent ruination by foes but we are helpless when we have to prevent ruination by our friends. To prevent the rural benefactors from smothering the Ideal Village with their cruel kindness, I fled so that they may not locate it. Since then I have not been able to locate it myself!

I have since then travelled *incognito* and disguised far and wide to locate that El Dorado and have a peep into Paradise. But my hunger has been unappeased and my thirst has been unslaked. I have been going about 'with wandering steps and slow'. I have become the shadow of my former self and many persons regard me as a second Alastor. But how can I subsist on mere 'solemn vision and bright silver dream'? It may be that it is good Alastorean fare. But how can an ordinary humdrum mortal like me be nurured on such a fanciful diet? I do not like to take part in mere Barmecide's feasts and be lapt in mere 'Lydian airs'.

So one day I said to myself that I might end like Alastor if I lived like Alastor. I shook myself and rubbed my eyes. I looked at my mirror. I consult it rarely unlike the beaux of to-day. These have the mirrors as their best friends. They can well say:

My days among mirrors are past
Around me I behold
Where'er my casual eyes are cast
The bright mirrors of old
My never failing friends are they
With whom I converse night and day.

My mirror, on the other hand, is seldom used and was covered with an inch-thick layer of dust. I wiped it with a duster. Do you know that I am the Gentleman with the Duster? You did not, is it? Please make a note of it now. I found that I was but a shadow of myself. So I resolved to smash the dreams about the ideal of the Ideal Village and go to a Real Village.



The shadow of my former self.

That very day the post brought me an invitation to attend a marriage in the village of Kodapakam. My friend Mr. Nesan had, after careering over both the hemispheres, in search of his job—the job of setting right the times which are out of joint—had temporarily settled down in that village. He had decided to celebrate his daughter's marriage there. He purchased a son-in-law with borrowed money. He robbed Peter to pay Paul. Peter rejoiced at taking interest beforehand at 36 per cent per annum for one year. Paul rejoiced at taking the remaining 64 per cent along with a lovely girl to boot. Nesan rejoiced at satisfying both Peter and Paul and pleasing his girl in addition. "And all" went merry as a marriage bell," and along with the twanging of marriage bells.

I went by train for one hundred miles and by bus for fifty miles. My feet which can divine the ideal village, have a curious way of turning away from real villages. They are like my distinguished friend Sankara Govindier's horse. Have you heard about it?

He was an advocate and he never went anywhere except to the court. So the horse developed its legal bump alone. It would go nowhere except to the High Court. One day he had to go to a house situated in the opposite direction. But the horse planted its feet firmly on the ground and would not budge an inch. "Budge!" said Sankara Govindier. "Budge not!" said the equine legal bump. You know who wins in

the tug-of-war: "Pull baker, pull devil." Eventually Sankara Govindier, who was an expert at fictions, adopted a legal stratagem. You know that law itself is a fiction. What then is a legal fiction? It means an atrocious and irredeemable fiction. He turned the horse's head courtward and made the horse go round and round a dozen times like a merry-go-round till the horse lost all

sense of space and time and space-time and time-space and went in the direction desired by its master, under the impression that it was going to the High Court.

When I stepped out of the bus and my feet would not budge, I went this side and that and that side and this and confused my feet and made them take me to Kodapakam.

Indeed there was no other go. Mr. Nesan had arranged some bullock carts to take his friends from the bus-stand to Kodapakam. But the bullocks and the wheels got stuck up in the slush and some of us had to pull and some to push. I have been always wanting to push and my friends have been blaming me for it. If they had seen my push that day, they would have eaten their words. But what avails human push? There is a village that shapes our ends, rough-hew them how we will. They talk about the aeroplane service from London to Karachi and are establishing aerodromes here and there. Aeroplane services are really necessary only to reach Indian villages and yet by an irony of fate the Indian villages are never thought of when aeroplane service schemes are propounded.

I dragged myself along somehow, anyhow, along with a few other marriage guests. We pulled one another's legs—not metaphorically, but literally. Each was swearing like a trooper as it was nearly noon and none of us had his morning coffee. After all we sighted the village. We received a very cheering welcome. Please do not think that Mr. Nesan stood there with *iddali* and coffee to welcome the conquering heroes. The village ass brayed welcome and the village dog barked his answer. Byron no doubt says:

"It is sweet to hear the watch-dog's
honest bark
Bay deep-mouthed welcome as we draw
near home."



"Budge not!" said the equine.....

But it was not a watch-dog. Nor did it bay deep-mouthed welcome. Nor did we draw near home. The dog was the usual village rowdy. It yapped and snapped, and snapped and yapped. We had left our homes like fools and were going away from home.

I had a sudden inspiration as I usually have. I administered a kick to the ass and gave a biscuit to the dog. We then passed

into the village. But at the *cheri* a fierce battle was in progress between some *Pallas* and some *Pariahs*, or, rather as I should say in modern civilised language, between some Harijans and some Harijans. The battle related to a well which was really a pit with just three ounces of water in it. One set of warriors said that the other set had polluted it. We pacified both of them by telling them that we would ask Mr. Nesan to give them free food that day.

We then passed on, guiding ourselves by our ears as a confused jumble of sounds came floating on the air. As we came nearer, we heard the village barber-musicians and the village band trying to drown one another's noise. Mr. Nesan stood there beaming upon us. He is a man whose face itself is an invitation. I told him that we had a warm dual welcome from the four-footed village musicians and asked him why he engaged both the *Nathaswaram* and the band on the marital occasion. He said that he expected that two negatives will cancel each other. But I told him that they were not negatives but were positives and even superlatives. He then brought a basketful of *iddalis* and a huge vessel full of coffee. I gave the same to the *Nathaswaram* set and the band set. The cacophony ceased at once and we got a momentary respite.

It was 2 P.M. when the *tali* was tied. We were all desperately hungry and had a gnawing and ravenous appetite. The cooks had already eaten up the most savoury portions of the items prepared for the guests. Just then, as luck would have it, there came a telegram to Mr. Nesan announcing that his party had succeeded in a litigation in the District Munsiff's Court at Madurantakam. That litigation related to a local temple at Kodapakam. The sole question for decision was whether the temple priest was to use his thumb

and four fingers or the four fingers alone when handing round the *sakkarai pongal*. Mr. Nesan belonged to the pro-thumb party and was its leader. The anti-thumb party, who after a show of temporary pacification, had come to the marriage *pandal*, staged a walk-out and arranged a mock-funeral and a paid lamentation next-door. Eventually a truce was patched up again by the kind efforts of the village peace-maker who gains both ways by hatching war and by hatching peace. We saw the colour of our food at 4 P.M.

At 5 P.M. the guests—nay Mr. Nesan himself—rushed out. There was a local election at 5 P.M. At that election the members of the village panchayat were to be elected. Brisk canvassing went on, and coins, big and small, changed hands. At last the village leaders were distilled after they were bled white. The village petition-writers had already begun writing election petitions to be filed next day to set aside the elections.

Fortunately or unfortunately, the Co-operative Inspector came in that day. The Village Kurnam was the Secretary of the Co-operative Credit Society in the village. It was a happy inspiration to organise village Co-operative Credit Societies on the unlimited liability basis. Do you know what that basis is? It means unlimited loans all round and unlimited use of such loans by a dominating village oligarchy in all sorts of *benami* names. None of the villagers know to read and write and the Kurnam is their sole literate representative. But let me not go into those details. The Co-operative Conferences that go on from day to day all over India will surely attend to all those thorny problems. The Kurnam of Kodapakam had converted the available cash of the Society into the Presidency of the village panchayat. He produced himself instead of pro-

ducing the money of which he was supposed to be the protective guardian. The Inspector preferred the purse to the person and went away in a huff. I shall tell you on another occasion about that matter.

Mr. Nesan was himself a rural reconstruction expert. He had tried his hand at many villages and had settled down in Kodapakam to improve it so that it may outshine Alamuru and Mayanur and become in fact an ideal Indian village. As I told you before, I was very near seeing the ideal Indian village but was prevented by the inrush of the rural re-construction experts. It has now vanished from the range of my attainment, though I have tried again and again to react it with my pilgrim feet. I shall tell you later on about Mr. Nesan's galvanising Kodapakam into perfection. That day he was engrossed by the marriage and had no time to tell us what he had done for Kodapakam.

We had our dinner at 11 P.M. and at about 2 A.M. we began the marriage procession. It had to go through the next street which was the Muslim quarter. When we turned into it with the barber playing his *Nathaswaram* and the band trying to drown his noise, we saw a serried phalanx of Muslims forbidding music and shouting *Allah-ho-Akbar*. They said that the procession should retrace its steps and go counter-clock-wise. Mr. Nesan delivered a harangue on the King's highway but it fell on deaf ears. He could

not go to a Magistrate at midnight and invoke the aid of section 144. So he let off the fireworks—the physical fireworks and not the literary fireworks—and went home. I left at once and walked to the bus-stand and got into the bus and then the train and came back to the city heaving a sigh of relief.



THE END

Merry's Filmfolio

MADRAS

Film Critics Association

A largely attended informal meeting was held preliminary to the establishment of an Association of Film Critics at the offices of the Fox Film corporation under the auspices of the *Silver Screen*, 1-17, Mount Road, Madras on 21-6-36. The meeting was presided over by Mr. M. V. Veeraraghavan of the *Cine-Art Review*.

Representatives of most of the journals in Madras, both English and Vernacular, who are connected with film-review work, took part in the discussions. It was resolved: that such an Association was necessary to guide the filmgoers; to make the reaction of the public felt by the producers; and to consolidate public opinion in favour of and to agitate for better films. It was also resolved that, immediately after the Trade Show of each new picture, the members should go into conference and arrive at an agreed opinion on the production, and to issue a bulletin to the Press. It was further resolved that each reviewer will be free to his individual expression in independent criticism, but there should be no divergence from the Association's views in dealing with the main features of a picture. After electing the Office-Bearers and the Executive Committee to conduct the work of the Association, the meeting terminated with a vote of thanks to the conveners.

Chitra Kala Films, Ltd., Madras.

As we had written in an early issue, Chitra Kala Films, Ltd., has been registered. Mr. A. Muthuswami, one of the Directors of the company has proceeded to Bombay to make final arrangements regarding equipments. We understand that they are bringing down some latest type of machines for editing and post-synchronising work.

An ideal site for a studio has been fixed at a place which is sufficiently far from the disturbance, noise and turmoil of the City, but yet within its limits and within easy reach of all concerned, situated amidst luxurious natural scenery, so that producers will not have to go far out to take outdoor scenes. Arrangements have been completed to have enough electric power to enable them to take outdoor scenes by night. This provision will be especially useful in making storm, rain and such other scenes that help to give realism to a picture.

An up-to-date laboratory is under construction, and we learn that it will be completely air-conditioned, so that complete control can be had over humidity and temperature, two of the most important factors in standard and successful processing of film.

It seems that two prominent producers of South India have already contracted with the Chitra Kala Films, Ltd., to have their pictures made by them, and shooting work is expected to begin early next month.

Oriental Films, Madras.

Mr. R. Padmanabhan intends shooting *Cavalier* in Tamil—a story replete with stunts and thrills. Shooting is likely to be begun very shortly and at Madras. They will control the distribution of *Viswamitra* of Sound City.

Prabhakar Pictures, Vizianagaram.

A new film concern has been started to produce and distribute Classical Talkies and Nagari Polegar T. Ramachandra Nayanam Varu is sole proprietor. The ultimate object of the concern is to construct a Studio of their own, equipped with all the up-to-date machines and to make it perfect in every respect to rank with the better-class studios of the country. They propose to shoot their first picture in Telugu in one of the leading film studios of Bombay or Calcutta.

Gopalakrishnamurthy Films, Cochin.

Their maiden production will be a mythological serial *Gopala Krishnavathar* or *Sampoorna Krishna Leela* covering the complete Avathar. The serial is estimated to cost 3 lakhs of rupees. It will be produced at Kolhapur with State resources and the first instalment, *Devaki Kalyanam*, is expected to be ready for release by the end of September. They will also produce *Pooram* festival, *Kathakali* dances, Cochin Harbour, Tripunithura Palaces and other State buildings and sceneries in the State. These topical, after synchronisation in English, will be sent to London for exhibition throughout Europe.

South Indian Sound Film Co.

This is another concern coming into the production line with its headquarters at Bangalore. The Managing Director is K. L. Singaravelu Pillai. They will produce *Chitravalli*.

HOT FROM HOLLYWOOD

When Hollywood Goes to Sea

The big boat you are looking at every time you see a movie heroine departing for Europe or coming back is on the Fox lot in Hollywood. The ship is a fake but it has six decks, a real bridge, a complete set of navigating instruments, real life-boats, winches, cargo rooms, etc. The ship doesn't budge, but a movable dock creates the effect of her putting to sea on arriving home. They can't rock her, either. So they rock the cameras, instead.



George Arliss

George Arliss never eats anything he can't pat. A strange custom? You can't pat a fish but you can pat a cow!

When Dogs Behave!

Madge Evans gave a dinner party and, to guard the jewels and other property of the guests as well as hers, she let loose her four big dogs. Just about the middle of the party a visitor arrived, not one of the invitees, however, planted himself in front of Madge, and pointed a gun quietly, at the table. He availed himself of all the money in the room and did not neglect the jewels and silver either. After verifying if he were in complete possession of all the valuable movables in the room, he thanked Miss Evans with a most polite bow, and left. You ask: what were the four powerful hounds doing, meanwhile? Well, they just looked on and wagged their tails!

Breaking Romances

Romances and marriages fade out more quickly in Hollywood than in any other part of the world. There is nothing to wonder at in this statement. This is how they happen.

A large picture of Grace Bradley and Addison Randall appeared in all the local papers bearing evidence that Grace had been thrown over her fiancé, Frank Pierce. But the fact was that Mr. Pierce had been

panied Miss Bradley and had stopped a moment to speak to a friend while the picture was snapped. Hollywood camera-men!

Another is that a sweetheart of Josephine Hutchinson's had boarded her train at Pasadena and kept on patting her hands all the way to Los Angeles, and this picture was published and the 'change of heart' report read by thousands of people including Miss Hutchinson's family, friends and husband. The couple is continuing to be happy in spite of this. Do you know why? The hand-patting young man happened to be Miss Hutchinson's husband.

A cinema has been built in Moscow which seats 15,000 people. It has a screen about 1,800 square feet in area. The biggest cinema in Central London holds 3,200 people but the smallest in Madras holds as many!

Report has it that Garbo feels that there is nothing left for her in Hollywood but the ghosts of her past. In Stockholm she has people who understand her and whom she understands. There she is going after her two present pictures *Camille* and *Countess Mariska* are finished.

So Garbo, 'Tank I go home!' in fact.

Backstage Dictionary

California—derisive term for uninspired acting. *Carrying*—when a star builds up the part of a minor player whom he likes. *Dog*—an actor trying out new effects without warning those with whom he's playing. *Fly-catcher*—an actor who distracts attention from the central scene. *Office Actor*—a player who uses acting tricks on a producer to get an assignment. *Puncher*—an actor who emphasizes a line which leads up to a certain laugh, thus destroying the laugh. *Sight Gag*—something that's funny to see, loud costume or clownish make-up. *Strictly Minsky*—an actress miscast as a lady. *Turkey*—a failure, originating some years ago when bad shows were opened on Thanksgiving Day to clear expenses in the two or three holiday performances.



Grace Bradley

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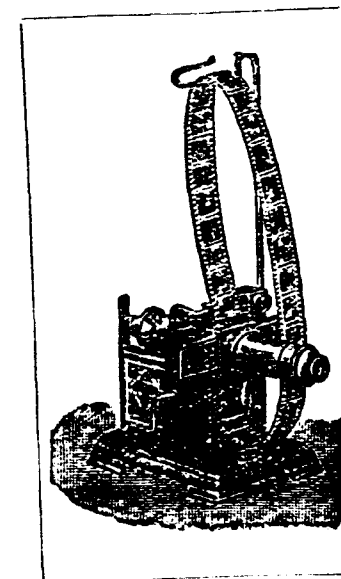
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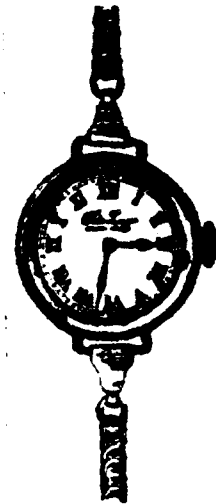
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