

MERRY

MAGAZINE

179

2054

John A. Henry
&

A. A. Roland

Jayalakshmi
Varadachar

- Jyeshta -

Embusque

Diana Don

Louisa Dyer

P. P. Samuel

- Yen Kay -

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ANNAS TWO

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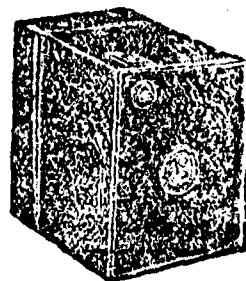
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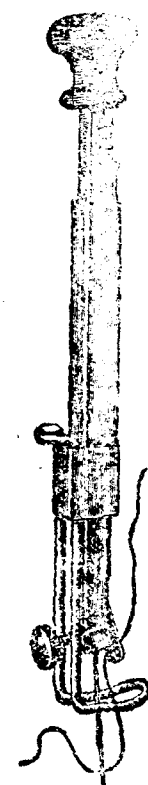
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The MERRY MAGAZINE



Madras, July 11, '36

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Embusque

★

V. V. Narayanan

★

Albert
A. Roland

★

Diana Don

★

John A. Henry

★

A. T. M. Thomas

SPARKS FROM OUR ANVIL

Reuter reports that in the course of a moving appeal to the League, the Negus asked: "Where is Article 16?"

We think that it may still be found between 15 and 17!

* * *

Referring to the disorders caused by certain Italian journalists at Geneva when the Negus delivered his speech, the president, Mr. Van Zeeland is reported to have said: "Anything that happened outside the League deliberations had no effect on the League itself."

And what happens inside has not the slightest effect outside!

* * *

It is said that Mr. Baldwin is suffering from insomnia on account of the recent heavy work he was faced with.

In addition to it, he was ill-advised we think, in undertaking to lift the Sanctions!

* * *

Answering criticisms of his policy, he further declared: "I am willing to be called a coward...for saving my people from a war."

Pity that he was not in evidence in 1914!

* * *

Referring to rumours of his impending retirement, he remarked that it was for him to decide, and for nobody to dictate to him.

Except, of course, the electorate!

Dr. Aldo Castellani, Inspector-General of Health in East Africa, says that Italians will find excellent conditions to live in East Africa.

It remains to be seen whether they can also live on it.

* * *

An American historian claims to have discovered the original of 'Uncle Sam'.

It still remains for the world to explode the myth of John Bull.

* * *

Replying to an address of congratulation on his appointment to the India Council, Mr. Ramaswamy Mudaliar claimed that one of his aims in life was "not to command success but to deserve it."

We are unable to infer from this whether he has or has not got his deserts!

* * *

A geological survey report of the Government of India records the discovery of a gold area in Burma.

This is presumably one of the direct consequences of its separation from India.

* * *

The Maharajkumar of Vizianagaram opines that the Marquis of Willingdon has been our greatest Viceroy of all times.

It is doubtful however if the Marquis of Willingdon thinks

'Vizzy' to be the greatest Indian Captain of all times!

* * *

Writing before the First Test Match, Mr. C. G. Macartney says: "The performance of the Indian players in the coming test matches will, I hope, also reveal the real strength of England."

Independently of the test matches, we may say that it lies mainly in the *English weather*!

* * *

Winning the Wimbledon Championship for the third time, Perry is reported to have said that he had never played better in his life.

It would have been more accurate if he had said that his opponent had never played worse!

* * *

From an advertisement: "—'s Famous watches. Thousands sold yearly."

The watches or the purchasers!?

* * *

Opening his presidential campaign, Mr. Roosevelt declared that economic royalists must go.

They are no doubt willing—with royalties!

* * *

Speaking at a farewell function, Sir B. N. Mitra, is reported to have said: "My country wants me back."

It is so magnanimous of him to oblige!



The Ordeal Of The League

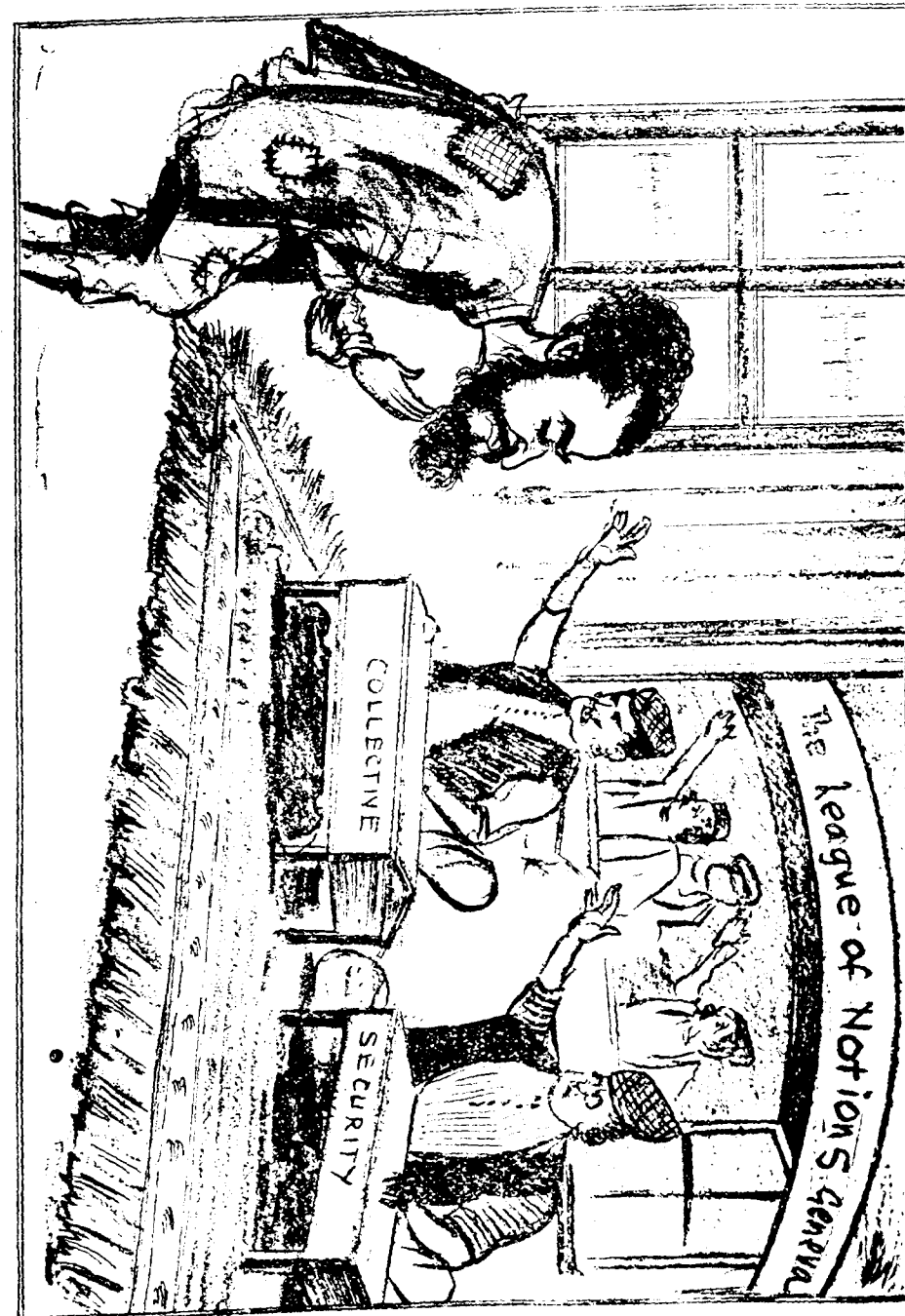
The events which have happened in Geneva during the last week, do not seem to have served any other purpose than to provide copy for the diurnal mental pabulum of the multitude. The Negus made an effective and affecting speech. But its immediate effect was precisely nil; it will go down in records as a testimony to the cowardly vacillation of powers who held out promises to the ear and broke them to the heart. They will no doubt recall their sins in the day of reckoning which awaits them. The tortuousness of League policy is but a reflection of the confusion, both moral and mental, which has overtaken the big powers. The Negus has been gratified a childish whim; but his specific demands have been turned down. His appeal for a loan has been 'eliminated'. It would have been so rude to give an Emperor, albeit a fallen one, a blunt refusal. So the League which is impotent for action discovers a surprising fecundity for phrase with which to soothe its jangled nerves. The Italian journalists who misbehaved were at least in character. Of the two offences, those against good manners are not so heinous as those against humanity. But that is a matter of detail. What is more significant is that the League has not yet discovered a formula for pronouncing on the dismemberment of Abyssinia. The poor Negus must have realised that there is no scope for initiative to come from Geneva. It is said that he is determined to go back and

continue the fight, and perhaps fall—a frail victim to foreign levy or domestic treachery.

The First Test Match

It required no special or skilled correspondents to point out the exciting turns of the First Test Match. Public interest in the doings of our men had, from the beginning, been severely handicapped by the unedifying disclosures of internecine broils; and, frankly speaking, nobody expected any other result. It is melancholy to compare the record of the touring team up-to-date with that of the previous tour for the same period. Our men then gave a much better account of themselves, and proved more than equal to many first-class counties. It cannot be seriously stated that we have deteriorated in the interval, specially if it is remembered that English Cricket was itself in the doldrums during the last three years. We have therefore no other explanation to offer than to suppose that the team as a whole has gone to pieces, with each part indifferent, if not hostile, to the rest. We dread to think what further developments are in store. We hope the lessons of this tour will burn themselves into the consciousness of the arm-chair cricketers who constitute the high-command of Indian Cricket, and a self-denying ordinance will be taken not to send out any touring team for the next decade or so. As in politics, so in cricket; it is not the dearth of talent, but the lack of a unifying principle that makes us so weak at home, such a laughing-stock abroad.

The League has turned down the Negus's request for
a £10,000,000 sterling loan



Moolchand Leaguemand: Loan indeed! Go away!

The Aga Khan writing to the *Sunday Express* sets out what he would do if he were dictator of the world. Among other things, he would do the following:—

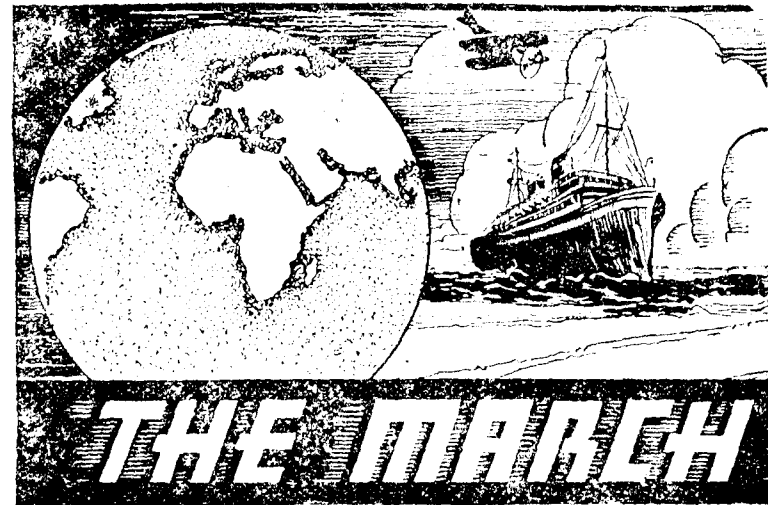
1. Redraw the map, particularly that part of the map which concerns Central Europe and the Indian States.
2. Rebuild the world by bending the energies of mankind to continual progress.
3. Drain and reclaim Africa, Siberia and the deserts of Central Asia; conquer the frozen North and the hot places round the Equator.

4. And a lot of things besides,



I am glad that the Aga would redraw the map of Europe. Please, sir, so redraw the map, that Hitler and Mussolini might, on waking up one fine day, find themselves outside the map. They are making such a hell of a noise, that most people, including Honest Baldwin, are getting insomnia. Regarding the Indian States, please redraw them so that all our beautiful princes may be neighbours. I mean, put all the Indian States in one part of India. Now, in their scattered condition, there is not much unity among them. As witness, the recent row in the Chamber of Princes.

But regarding the draining and reclaiming of Africa, the Aga is a trifle too hard on the poor deserts, don't you think? If he is going to convert all the arid deserts into smiling fields, what will Shelley's ghost say? What are we going to do with these immortal lines?



*Full many a flower is born to
blush unseen
And waste its sweetness on the
desert air.*

It is obvious that if there are no deserts, there won't be any desert air either. And without the desert air, where are the poor flowers going to waste their sweetness and blush unseen?

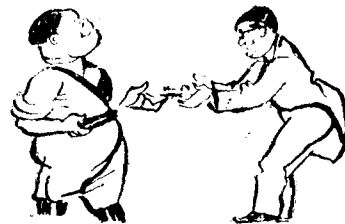
Luckily for us, the merciful thought comes to mind that the



Aga is drawing the bow a bit too blatantly. True, the Aga is descended from the Holy Prophet (peace be on him), but I don't think that even his divine origin would stand him in much stead in this business of draining of African deserts. The Aga would want the help of a Jinn in this herculean task. Jinns, you know, are powerful blokes living in sealed caskets thrown in the sea. Which caskets are reclaimed by poor fishermen. So if the Aga really means to repaint the Sahara with mud, he can go to the sea-

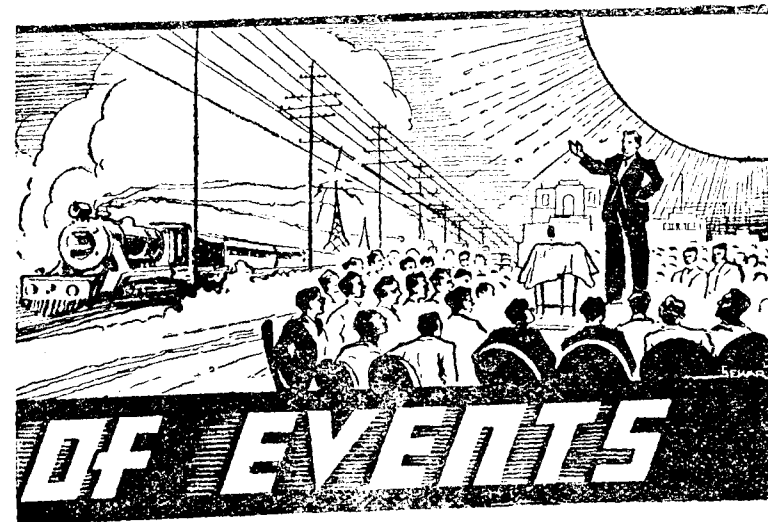
shore in the garb of a fisherman and cast his net into the sea. He will land an old brass casket hermetically sealed. He may bite off the lid, and lo! a Jinn pops out dressed in smoke. You know the rest of the story; if you don't, go to blazes, or if you object to hot places, read the *Alf Leila* which is popularly known as the *Arabian Nights*.

Joking apart, I am mighty glad that the Aga Khan has wandered into the almost virgin fields of speculative dictatorship. As a matter of fact, I was also tickling the old bean myself on identical lines, namely, what would I do if I became the dictator of the world? I haven't thought of any bright schemes, yet. Pending which I think I would ask the treasurer to the Government of India to hand



me over the keys and ask the rest of the world to go jump in the lake.

Addressing the League of Nations in person, the Negus



asked the members: "Where is article 16?"

What a question! Where is Article 16 indeed! It is precisely after Article 15, or rather it is between Articles 15 and 17. His poor Ethiopian Majesty! I am afraid he has gone all wonky over his misfortune.

Quite a crowd of cats are coming out of the bags. I am not saying that Dr. Moonje is a cat, though Mark Twain says that if you cross a man with a cat, the man will improve but the cat will



deteriorate. Replying to Jawaharlal, Dr. Moonje said the other day that he was a staunch Imperialist, that he did not want to break away from the Commonwealth Empire.

But the weather these days is rather squally, and the Doctor may find himself one day knocked apart from his Common-

wealth Empire in spite of himself, by these contrary winds. Little man, then what? Since Dr. Moonje feels so strongly about the Empire, I would advise him, for old times sake, to run to the post office and exchange himself for a postage stamp lick himself on the back on the gummy side and stick himself on to a bright red spot on the map of the world. I am sure he would add to the beauty and lustre of the Empire.

At the Mahila Hitwadi Mandali of Bellary, a startling resolution was passed. Srimathi M. Shanta Bai moved the following resolution:

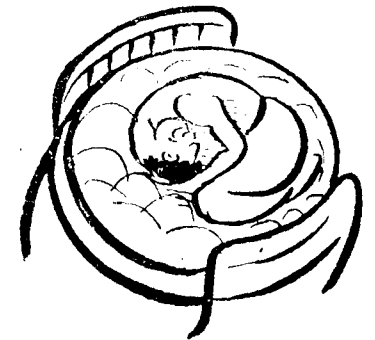
This meeting of the feminists of Bellary is of opinion that the marriage of a person over 40 with a minor under 21 years of age should be made an offence under the Indian Penal Code.

I am myself a feminist, in that I am fond of the ladies, though, unfortunately, the ladies are not fond of me. All the same, I cannot help feeling that the above resolution is an unkind cut, like cutting a young brinjal with a battle axe. The young brinjal here is, of course, the fellow over 40, and the battle axe the above resolution. What is wrong with a chap forty years old? Seems to

me forty is the correct age for a husband, while a bride may be anything between sixteen and sixty. Broadly speaking, men over 40 have a nice bald circle on the top of their heads. That would be a lovely target whenever the wife feels like pulling some bodyline stuff. Do you have the same advantage with a callow youth? Echo begs the question contemptuously. Take Major C. K. Nayudu, for instance, who is about 40 years old. If I were a girl of sixteen, I would marry him offhand. Ah, Mahilas! Whoever put this mad idea into your heads! And listen, you girls are guilty of great discourtesy to the first Gentleman of the Empire! His Majesty King Edward VIII celebrated his 42nd birthday only ten days ago. Do you mean to suggest that His Britannic Majesty should go single all his life? Perish the thought!

Mae West is finished, says a critic in the *Daily Telegraph*. The Hearst Press of America started this racket against Mae, because Mae said (it is alleged) something catty about Marion Davies, one of the darlings whom Hearst have been consistently boosting up.

Mae West is finished, my nose! Mae West will never be finished so long as me and Hannen Swaffer and the majority of middle-aged



men in Madras are alive; so long as one man is alive in the world who is fond of curves. Indeed, I am so crazy after curves that I always make myself into a curve while sleeping. Mae West Ki Jai!

In Confidence

(To Monsieur Blum)

["A Bill for the prohibition of tips in hotels and restaurants is a startling reform undertaken by the Blum Government."]

—Daily Paper.

Oh, Themis, what is this, I hear?
War on waiters and restaurant girls!
Monsieur Blum! isn't it rather queer?
To forbid tips to lackeys and "curls"!
Really, really, good Monsieur Blum,
Your enterprise must strike one dumb!

Ever been to East, my good M. Blum?
(Our Restaurants display 'dhil-kush' dish!
Your Excellency! till 'Kingdom Come',
There, surely, will be *Salaam, Bakshish!*
You may change a country's Constitution;
But not this honoured institution!

From 'Chokrahs' up to stately clerks,
'Something'—bless the word—is the rule!
Even a street dog scarcely barks
At the silly, silly, silly fool
Who could not make his 'over-income',
That gilds his 'post' such a coveted plum!

Can you spare time, M. Blum, I wonder?
May I introduce some friends of mine?
Lofty Law will often surrender
Before these gents (who perpetually dine!)
Colleges have their Chapters and Deans;
But will they compare with our august 'Amins'!

—G. K. Pillai

Fun For All



Cuthbert: If you look at me like that much longer,
I shall kiss you.

Carol: Well, you'll have to hurry. I can't hold this
expression much longer.

* * *

Judge: You say the officer arrested you while you
were quietly minding your own business?

Prisoner: Yes, your Honour.

Judge: You were quietly attending to your own
business, making no noise or disturbance of any
kind?

Prisoner: None whatever, your Honour.

Judge: Just what is your business?

Prisoner: I'm a burglar.

* * *

Wife: I have bought you some more of those cigars,
dear. The tobacconist said you couldn't get better.

Hubby: Quite right! I haven't got over the last
lot yet!

* * *

Bertie was an ardent lover, but his spelling left a
lot to be desired. However, he thought it best to
write to his girl's father for her hand.

"Dear Sir," ran the note, "I wish for the hand of
your daughter, the flour of the family."

Back came a note from her father.

It ran: "The flour of the family, you say. Are
you sure it isn't my dough you're after?"

* * *

Bandit: I'm going to search the pair of you.

Tommy: Gee, daddy! I'm glad you hid your wallet
under the seat, ain't you?

* * *

First Doctor: I had a very interesting case the other
day. The diagnosis was all right, but the course
of the disease was decidedly abnormal.

Second Doctor: What course did it take?

First One: The patient recovered!

2—11-7-36

Teacher: How much does a twelve-pound turkey
weigh?

Boy: I dunno.

Teacher: Well, what time does the nine o'clock
train leave?

Boy: Nine o'clock.

Teacher: That's right. Now, how much does a
twelve-pound turkey weigh?

Boy: Oh, now I catch on—nine pounds!

* * *

He: But, darling, we arranged to keep our engage-
ment secret.

She: Yes, dear; but I could not help it. Yesterday
Elsie said no idiot could ever marry me and I had
to contradict her.

* * *

A concert in aid of one of the village charities had
been arranged, and all the local 'stars' were booked
to appear.

The baker's daughter, a soprano, was announced.
Before she began, she apologised for her cold.

The piano started.

"I'll hang my harp on a weeping willow tree—
ahem! On a weeping willow tree—e—Oh!" Her
voice cracked on the high notes each time. She tried
again, but was unsuccessful.

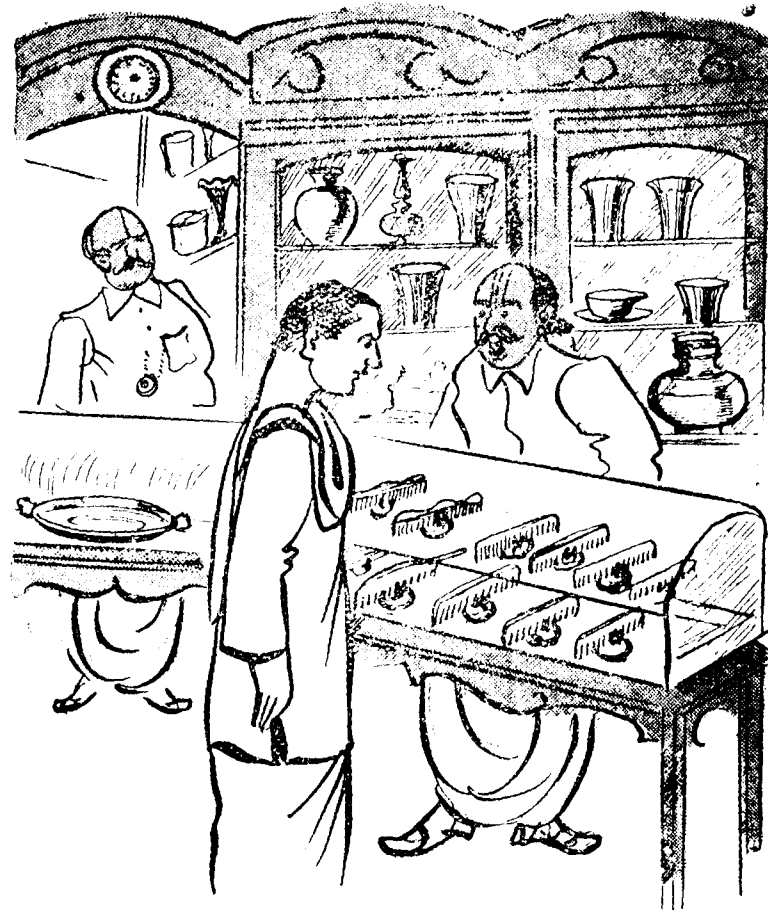
Then a voice chimed in from the back of the hall:
"Try 'anging it on a lower branch, Miss!"

9

The Comb

by
Jayalakshmi Varadachar

Reading Time
•
About 7 Minutes



THE comb has always been a perennial source of inspiration to poets, poetasters, and prose-writers from time immemorial. It is one of the most widely discussed subjects under the sun.

Prominent people in the public eye have thought it fit to call the store-house of the bees a honey-comb—where comb counts for more than the honey. From this, discerning people might deduce the potentialities of the comb, same as you can deduce the greatness of Gandhi when you name your grandchild after him.

We have had the origin of the comb and its evolution traced out to us. It might first have seen the dawn of day or felt the 'crowning glory' of a woman's head as a bunch of bristles belonging to a porcupine. But all great things have had humble beginnings.

What we now see is a highly artistic finish in ivory, ebony, or sandalwood, or sometimes of the less aristocratic materials, nicely sawed into fine 'teeth' that never suffer from gum-boils or pyorrhoëa. Combs are of various sizes and shapes, and my object here is

not so much to enter into an intricate discourse on their form as to interpret their message to the world.

We might safely call the comb the Messiah of the modern world. The modern world seems to have lost faith in the weekly head-baths that our ancestors so religiously believed in. But the modern world is a great believer in lice and dandruff. When you do away with your head-bath, the dandruff makes its debut, with the result that the lice start doing you in. You would envy these little creatures, the way they go about their work, cheerfully, fearlessly, sniffing their little snouts at Unemployment Problem and Margaret Sanger. For they have both the work and the incentive for it thereof. They are a diligent lot. They work their way to the root of things—meaning your hair, which is their Maternity Home. But no knighted Sir has assisted at the laying of the foundation stone there. That is where they lay their pretty little nits, and when these hatch, the mothers and the babies industriously feed off your scalp, without having to complain of hunger or starvation. Nor do you ever hear them grouching about nothing to do. They can always count upon the eggs that they can lay, and

these added up would form a grand total of many millions.

You would wonder what all this has to do with the comb. This is exactly where the comb comes in—between the hair and the lice, sifting them, as the swan does the milk from water, or as you do, pure honey from the heart of bee if you belong to the Rural Reconstruction Scheme, or gold from ore if you want to serve in the State Prison.

The comb is an effective cure for dandruff, but only temporarily. Execution, or having your head severed off, has been advocated as the most effective and permanent remedy for dandruff. That is why Charles I cheerfully submitted his head to the executioner's axe, saying: "Thank god! I am cured of my dandruff for ever now!"

The comb shares with Darwin and the early Spartans the theory of the Survival of the Fittest. It just does not allow thin, anaemic hair to remain on the head, even as the dentist does not suffer a decaying tooth to stay and contaminate the whole herd. So, for the general good, the good of the individual is sacrificed, and the comb goes straight to the root of all evil, and draws these poor specimens out. That is why we do *not* say: "A hair on the head is worth two on the comb." Yes, the comb shares too, with Jawaharlal, the Socialistic cult.

Love-propagandists seem to advocate the use of the comb as the best corrective in the circumstances. I was reading of the marvels wrought by a magical comb the other day. You had only to present it to your best beloved, the advertisements said, and she would fall for you like a

bag of down. Then, as the comb went on with its work, smoothening out all the knots in the said beloved's hair, it would help, too, the course of your love to run smooth, for once. The deeper the comb penetrated into the roots, the more strongly you got initiated into the lady's favour, and if her hair got disentangled eventually, why, by the time she had finished her toilet, you were irrevocably tied down to her!

Which reminds me of another. It was Chamanlal's advertisement this time, and it read: "Has the girl of your dreams given you up? Does her face fail to light up whenever she sees yours? Does she no longer smile at you? Then what she needs is a Chamanlal's Comb. (Not so much you! Poor man!) Win her back by walking straight into our show-room. It is the surest way to Hymen's altar."

I know of a friend of mine who is not blessed with much worldly wisdom. He treats the letter of advertisements as he would the word of God, and without further ado, he walked straight into Chamanlal's show-room, determined to take the girl of his heart by the hand and lead her into the latest model of an Adler that was waiting without and thence to Hymen's altar.

But what met his eyes in Chamanlal's show-room was not the girl he loved, but several combs of different signs, and shapes, artistically arranged in attractive glass-cases. The sight broke his heart, audibly enough, and Chamanlal and his staff hurried to the spot, thinking it was a glass-case that had crashed. When they were reassured that their shop had not suffered any damage, Chamanlal turned to my friend and told him that he had as good as won the girl, and with

(Continued on page 14)



The Scheming Vizier

by Embusque

Reading Time • About 8 Minutes

IN times of old, in one of the kingdoms of Hindustan, there was a worthy official whose name was Kumar Rao. Kumar Rao was the Chamberlain of the Palace, and was greatly trusted by his Royal master. Whenever there were grave and subtle matters afoot, the King consulted with Kumar Rao, whose advice was much valued, and whose faithfulness was rewarded with many favours.

The Vizier of the kingdom was one Nadin. Nadin hated Kumar Rao. "Am not I the Chief Minister?" muttered the Vizier. "Why should my Lord consult with this dog, this head-scullion, this Chamberlain, Kumar Rao? While the fellow enjoys the Royal favour, my position can never be secure, nor my heart rest for a moment in peace. Therefore I must scheme to deprive the Chamberlain of the King's reward."

In the city, there lived a deceitful old hag, who was well skilled in all sorts of cunning tricks. The Vizier sent for her, and showed her a bag of silver. "Old crow," he said, "the silver is yours, if you do my bidding. If you fail, your scaly back shall feel the whips of the tormentors."

"What is the wish or your Honour?" whined the hag.

"Go to the house of Kumar Rao, the Chamberlain, and seek out his wife. For my purpose, I require you, by whatever means you can, to bring me some trinket or garment personally worn by her."

"I will do my best," muttered the old crone.

Next day, the hag put on tattered clothes, and assumed the character of a beggar-woman. She went to the house of Kumar Rao, and stood whining on the porch.

The porter attempted to drive her away. Hereupon the old woman threw herself on the ground, scratched herself, covered herself with dust, and screamed: "The door-keeper has killed me! My bones are broken! Alas, my little ones will be orphans!"

When the wife of the Chamberlain heard the uproar, she sent a servant to enquire the cause. The servant returned, saying that a beggar-woman was at



the door, crying she had been unmercifully beaten by the porter.

"Bring the poor creature into the courtyard," said the kind-hearted lady. "I will by all means enquire into her complaint; for, to injure the weak and destitute, is to anger the Gods."

So the crone was brought into the courtyard, and her imaginary hurts attended to. After awhile the crafty hag opened her eyes, and began to praise the lady of the house. "Noble lady, may you obtain the approbation of Heaven, and may your future be prosperous! Had not my weak limbs been strengthened by the balm of your kindness, my life would surely have departed, and the guilt of my blood be laid at your door."

Then she began to weep and lament, crying: "O treacherous destiny! Once, madam, I was rich and respected, even as you are: for I come of a noble family. Once a thousand destitute but deserving persons fed at my gate; but now, alas, misfortune has brought me to this sorry state, in which I suffer



indignities at the hands of base persons, and have scarcely a rag to hide my nakedness. On an ill-omened day I sent a mendicant away from my house empty-handed, and on that account, I have been reduced to beggary. O respected and noble lady, may a like fate never befall you!"

The wife of Kumar Rao was greatly moved. She begged pardon for the violence of the porter, and offered the poor woman a present of money.

"Nay, good lady," answered the impostor. "Beggar that I am, I have sworn never to take money from the charitable, but only to be supplied with my urgent needs, for the love of Heaven. If you would avoid my fate, give me a mouthful of food, and something to cover my nakedness. As you see, my cloth is good enough, but this wretched bodice is scarcely decent."

"You shall have a new bodice, never worn," exclaimed the generous-hearted lady. "See, here is one of a set that my husband brought from Masulipatam."

"The Gods will reward you," muttered the old trout, seizing the intimate garment with talon-like fingers. She hastened to the Vizier, and said; "See, I have obtained a very evident token from the wife of Kumar Rao. Give me the bag of silver."

But the Vizier drove her away. "Hence, you brothel-keeping, old hag!" he cried. "It is reward enough that I refrain from having you flogged."

The Vizier sought an interview with the King. "O mighty potentate, the fountain of wisdom and honour," he began, "it is the duty of your humble Vizier ever to protect the integrity of your household and the honour of your person. With what regret, then, must I reveal that the sacred precincts of the palace are defiled by a person utterly unworthy of your Royal favour, a man of low extraction, a criminal notorious for his immorality, whose vile life daily blackens the fair name of the Royal house. Your Majesty, the Chamberlain is a traitor, and his wife is an adulteress, who shamelessly furthers her husband's plots by granting her favours to persons of influence."

As the King had many times tried the character of Kumar Rao, and knew him to be a man of the highest integrity, he was amazed. "These are hard words, Sir Vizier," said His Majesty. "Is it possible that I would associate my Royal person with a profligate criminal? You must establish your accusations, or it will be the worse for you."

"So vile and cunning is Kumar Rao, that he has hoodwinked even the perfection of Your Majesty's

wisdom," replied the Vizier, smoothly. "Even now, he is plotting the assassination of your sacred person, that he may usurp the throne. I have letters in his own hand that prove it."

"I am aware that your forgery-department is thoroughly efficient," said His Majesty, ominously.

"I have better proof than that," replied the Vizier. "These wicked proposals are carried to the chief officers of the kingdom by the wife of Kumar Rao, who shamelessly consorts with them to win them over to her husband's treacherous plans. She has even made advances to me, and that is how the documents came into my possession."

"I cannot believe it!"

"May the sun of prosperity ever shine on the glory of Your Highness," persisted the Vizier. "I have a token of the guilt of the abandoned woman. Last night she came to my house, with the plans of her husband's treachery. For the purpose of obtaining proof of her perfidy, I pretended to succumb to her allurements. She stayed with me until morning; and here is the sign of her presence. Let this bodice be shown to Kumar Rao, and let him acknowledge whose garment it is!"

The King was disturbed at last. He sent for the Chamberlain, and the bodice was exhibited. "Last night, the police met a gang of thieves," said His Majesty, "and took this garment from them. I wonder how it can be identified?"

As soon as Kumar Rao's eye lighted on the garment, he trembled and became pale. "The bodice belongs to my wife," he said. "I pray that messengers be sent to see that she is safe; for I was not at home last night."

"Vile wretch!" cried the King. "It is indeed your wife's bodice. Your plots are known; the adulteries of your wife are manifest. Cast him into the dungeon!"

Soon a servant carried the news to the house of Kumar Rao. When the lady had heard the story, she exclaimed: "I gave away the bodice in charity, and the Gods will not allow harm to come from such a deed. The Most High will inspire the means by which innocence shall be proved!"

The next day, when the King sat in *darbar*, a woman came before him, and cried for the redress of a great wrong.

"What wrong has been done you?" enquired the King.

"Your Majesty, I am a courtesan of high price," said the woman. "In that way I gain my livelihood.

For the past five years the Vizier has been one of my clients. He promised me a monthly stipend, but now he presumes on his high station, and gives me nothing. Last night, when I asked for what was due to me, he threatened to have me imprisoned and strangled."

The Vizier was amazed, and when questioned by the King, said: "This woman speaks falsely. I swear by the head of your Majesty that I have never seen her, nor do I know her."

The woman cast aside her veil. "False traitor, do you still swear that you do not know me?"

"Your Majesty, I swear it," cried the Vizier. "I swear by your sacred person that I have never seen this woman in all my days. If I speak falsely, may my life be forfeit, and my body cast to the dogs."

"Who are you, woman?" demanded the King.

"Your Majesty," said the suppliant, "I am no courtesan, but your faithful servant, the faithful wife of Kumar Rao."

THE END

THE COMB—(Continued from page 11)

the true elegance of a businessman palmed off on him an ebony comb with a silver rim, saying that he had only to present it to the girl of his dreams and all would be well. My friend was then presented with an expensive bill at the counter, and he departed, feeling a happier and a wiser man. He lost no time in packing up the ebony comb with the silver rim in a dainty little box, and, without further delay, despatched it to his beloved. When the postman delivered the packet duly at the girl's door and she saw what it contained, she stamped her foot angrily and made as if to fling it at the poor man's face, threatening to hit his eye. For, what she wanted was not an ebony comb with a silver rim, but an ivory one with a rim all done in gold, and she wrote and told the gentleman so.

The gentleman thanked the postal authorities kindly for letting him know what an expensive fiancée he had had, and he was secretly glad that she had ended with being just a fiancée.

And when again he repaired to Chamanlal's, a broken man now, and demanded refund because the advertisements had lied, Chamanlal calmly suggested that he should buy an ivory comb with a gold rim this time and send it on to the girl, now that everything was over between them. That, he said, would make the parting easier!

And that is all that I know about combs.

That is the message of this Messiah to this modern world.

THE END

G. K. C. Passes

by Louisa Dyer

Reading Time • About 4 Minutes

GILBERT Keith Chesterton was a writer who shared with George Bernard Shaw the distinction of being known by his initials. G. K. C. once wrote a book about G. B. S. It was a typically Chestertonian enterprise—a genial analysis of his arch-rival and antithesis. The book was received in frigid silence by its subject: a typically Shavian reaction.

George Bernard Shaw represents the Celtic genius in English literature. G.B.S. achieves his effects by standing on his head and making grimaces; and by being rude to anyone who expresses surprise. G. B. S. is a witty and insolent corner-boy who is very touchy about his dignity.

G.K.C. might be labelled Mediaeval English. He had the unaffected brotherly heart of an age when English beggars dined with English lords, high-born knights disputed under hedges with low-born scholars, and hospitable monks opened the doors of their guest houses to every stranger. G. K. C. affected no dignity. His dignity shone forth in the goodness and greatness of the man.

Most Englishmen did not see eye to eye with Chesterton; but they loved him. He had strong in him the tradition of the orthodox, cultured middle-class. This tradition is permanently stamped on the English character. On its better side it is a tradition of mercantile solidity and stolidity, good-fellowship, geniality, a touch of Puritanism, a love of common-

sense, and a passion for individuality and individual freedom.

Chesterton was loved where Shaw is merely admired. The cleverness and impudence of the Celt appeals to the mind; the sincerity and robust humour of the Briton to the heart.

As a writer, G.K.C. was so individual that it is impossible to define his charm or his method, except to say that it is English. He was unassumingly brilliant in everything he wrote; and he was amazingly versatile. Producing essays, humour, fiction, drama, dialectic, mystery-stories, he touched on almost every form of literature. One of the wonders of his friends was, that a man leading so full a social and public life could find time to produce so great a volume of brilliant work.

A quaint mark of the individual genius of Chesterton is that he was the only English writer to introduce God as a character in detective-stories, and that without either platitude or blasphemy.

He was anti-Jew, which most Englishmen are not; but to him even the Jew was a brother who had regrettably allowed himself to be born into a deplorable race, and who might be redeemed by good-humoured reasoning.

Chesterton excelled in rationality, though he was no rationalist, but a mediaeval Catholic. His lightest essays carry an undercurrent of close reasoning, set



down with persuasive charm. The wilder flights of his adventure-stories are based on strictly logical progression. Chesterton achieved the feat of making pigs fly, without violation of probabilities. Another of his characters swore to eat his hat, and ate it.

As a propagandist, G. K. C. hit hard, but never lost his temper. He could not hate persons; but he hated loose thinking, second-hand ideas, and the regimentation of life. He was at his best in corrective criticism; he set himself with gusto to unravel the knots into which he induced his opponents to tie themselves. He wrote and spoke in a spirit not merely of comprehension of his adversary, but of admiration for the good points of his case. This very winning characteristic appealed to friends and foes alike. He never turned a conflict of ideas into a battle of personalities.

The most strikingly mediaeval feature of the philosophy of G. K. C. was his refusal to recognise Law in the universe. He viewed events as a perpetual series of miracles. He recognised a Divine Will, but not a Divine Plan.

Chesterton was very ready to laugh at himself, particularly with reference to his enormous obesity. Once, the vegetarian Shaw suggested that the animal world should pay its respects at his (Shaw's) funeral by having the hearse drawn by a deputation of "all the grateful animals I have not eaten." Chesterton retorted, "I shall be very glad to attend your funeral—as the representative of the mastadons." The humour of the last half-dozen words, and the manner in which they remove the sting of the preceding sentence, are characteristic of Chesterton.

On another occasion, Chesterton was asked to support the Chelsea Arts Ball, a function representative of ultra-modern tendencies which he abhorred. In reply, he offered to pose in the pageant as Epstein's *Genesis*, or any similar piece of monstrous modern sculpture.

"People often wave me towards particular chairs in their drawing-rooms," he wrote, with reference to his bulk, "generally towards any massive seat of marble or granite, or to any cast-iron throne, firmly clamped to the floor. And they always say, with a beaming smile, that it will suit me better."

G. K. C. perpetrated countless scintillating phrases. Here are a few:

Journalism consists largely in saying 'Lord Jones is dead' to people who never knew that Lord Jones

was alive. (In a treatise written for a school of journalism.)

If a man cannot really make a fool of himself, we may be certain that the effort is superfluous. (In a controversial article.)

The only sure way of catching a train that I have ever discovered, is to miss the train before. (In a light essay.)

Humanity never produces optimists till it has ceased to produce happy men. (In a sociological novel.)

There are only three things in the world that women do not understand, and they are, Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity. (In a political essay.)

G. K. C. was a type only produced among a people with a long tradition of conservative culture. India produces such men—men representative of the ancient genius of the race, rather than its modern surface manifestations. G. K. C. appeals to the kindly conservatism of the world. By contrast, G. B. S. appeals to the slick, smart, unkindly knowingness of youthful collegians.

So has passed a loveable and much-loved master of the English language.

Are you reading what
your fellow-readers
say? Read the oppo-
site page—that is the
popular voice!

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.—Editor.]

Karma

Penang:—I have just finished reading a book on *Karma* by a German. It is all blah. I did not understand a bit of it. Hence this letter. Could you tell me how many times must I be born (presuming that I am a Harijan) before I could become a god, or at least a Brahmin?

Really, Mr. Editor, these Hindus believe in a lot of red rubbish. Whoever wishes to be born a Hindu in India a second time? So far how many Hindus in India have become gods? If you know them, give me their addresses. By the way, will Auntie J. J. become a goddess in any measurable distance of time? I have a sneaking idea that Auntie is a Harijan.

—Jane

Another Dog?

Kumbakonam:—That was a great letter you published under the title *I Want To Be A Dog* in *Vox Populi* dated 27th June. The author of that letter started with a sob and ended with a roar—of laughter. Well, sir, I am another unemployed, and I want to become another dog, with your permission. (Sorry, young man, I am not a dog-fancier—Ed. V. P.) Failing that I want to become a porter. I have read in last week's papers about an Italian porter named Anastassios Charlabos who married an Iraqi princess by name Princess Azzah. She is said to be the sister of King Gazi of Iraq. Do you think there is any chance for me to marry a girl like that if

I migrate to the Riviera and do portering?

—Padmanabhan

Where Are They?

Madras:—I always like Mr. Satyamurti's pungent way of putting things. It is a pity he has not taken to pugilism as a career. Ridiculing Mr. P. T. Rajan's boast that the Justice Party would fight tooth and nail if the Congress were to start its activities on the twin ideals of Socialism and Communism, Mr. Satyamurti asked "Where are its teeth and nails?" What a funny question! If a publicist of the calibre of Mr. Satyamurti is so ignorant of the rudiments of physiology, I am sorry for him. Will you please ask him to look into the mouth and at the fingers of Mr. Rajan? I am sure he will find the teeth and nails there.

—Medical Student

The Pick of The Bunch

Patna:—I believe I am reading the *Merry Magazine* since January 1935, and I have not missed one issue of the Magazine. I call your splendid efforts in producing this Magazine, the challenge of nascent India to British journalism. Some of the articles and stories which it has been our pleasure to read in the pages of the *Merry Magazine*, would adorn any leading magazine of the West. You did the right thing in throwing open one page for us readers. I have just laid down with a sigh of pleasure the issue dated

27th June, 1936. Leaving aside the 'Sparks' and 'March of Events' which are probably of Editorial origin, 'The Hashish-Eater,' by Embusque, 'Woman—or The Weed?' by Jayalakshmi Varadachar. 'The Ghost Goes West' by Jyeshta are the best of the lot. Regarding Auntie J. J., I think her burlesque is a bit too bold. By the way, is Auntie really a woman? I have seen women reading Auntie's weekly fun on the sly.

Your weak point appears to be your cover. Do change it often.

—Prem Kumar Sohani

Attention, Bhaskar Rao!

Bangalore:—One of the readers of the *Merry*, figuring in this feature on its debut in your issue dated 20—6—36, seems to have been bitten badly by that insect—inquisitiveness. If you profess to wield any influence over your readers, will you please write and tell this gentleman that curiosity killed a cat? He may, of course, argue that he isn't a cat, but you will let him know what I mean, won't you?

Now to his question. He wants to know whether the two ladies in question are the Editor's aunts. No, Mr. Bhaskar Rao. They are the nieces of Auntie J. J. She seems to be very fond of them, judging from the way she has been coaxing the Editor to publish their trash week after week in his magazine. But Mr. Editor, pray who is the other niece? I shall be indebted to you for an answer. Curiosity killed only cats.

—Belle of Bangalore
(One of the 'Aunts')



The Madman

Reading Time • About 6 Minutes

by Diana Don

MARIAN de l'Orme was a lady renowned for her beauty, her immoralities, and her longevity. This celebrated courtesan lived to the age of one hundred and thirty-four years. During the whole of her long life she wrote letters, diaries, and memoranda that still afford entertainment to posterity. Like many of her kind, she was an acute and truthful observer.

In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, France lost an empire in the West, and another in the East, from sheer inattention. Marian de l'Orme reveals that her country also neglected a discovery, later seized on by England, that would have given the French commercial and maritime supremacy over the world. The Industrial Revolution could have started in France, a hundred and fifty years before it started in

England. In that case there would have been a rich France; no French Revolution, no American Revolution, no Napoleonic Wars, and none of the present-day sequels to those events. The history of the world would have been changed.

These staggering possibilities are revealed in a light-hearted letter written by a courtesan, in the year 1641. At the time, Marian de l'Orme was showing the sights of Paris to an English nobleman, the Marquis of Worcester. They visited Notre Dame, the Chatelet, the Louvre, the catacombs, the markets, and all the sights of the day. Finally, they paid a visit to the state mad-house.

"We crossed the courtyard of the dismal establishment," relates the sprightly lady. "I was almost petrified with terror, and clung to the arm of my companion. The sights and sounds were lamentable."

At this moment, the visitors heard a voice, calling to them most earnestly, "Madame, madame!"

A frightful face was peering through the narrow grille of the door of a dark cell. Overcoming a feeling of disgust, the pretty lady approached the door. "What do you want, my poor fellow?"

"You are a woman," said the apparition. "The male keepers and visitors will not listen to me. Hardly any women come here. Madame, listen to me, for pity's sake!"

"Of course I will listen," said the tender-hearted coquette. "What is your trouble?"

"Madame," said the ghastly creature, "I want your help. I am not mad!"

The keeper laughed coarsely. "Take no notice, milady," he advised. "They all say that."

"Nevertheless, I will hear the poor fellow," insisted Madame de l'Orme.

"I am not mad," repeated the prisoner, earnestly. "I have made a discovery which will make France the leading nation of the world."

"And what might it be, my good man?" asked the Marquis of Worcester.

"Sir, have you ever observed a kettle boiling on the fire?"

"Well?" said the Marquis, wonderingly.

"When the kettle boils, does not the lid constantly rise, forced upwards by the escaping steam?" demanded the madman eagerly.

"No doubt, my dear fellow," replied the Marquis, whose knowledge of the behaviour of kettle-lids was probably very limited.

"Sir, I can prove that the power of steam is immense. With a very big kettle, and valves to regulate the steam, and a piston in place of a kettle-lid, I can make machines that will drive carriages, navigate the oceans, and supply factories with motive-power. With my machines, France will become the greatest nation in the world."

"You would drive carriages with kettles?" asked the Marquis, indulgently. "But tell me, would not the fire set light to the carriage?"

"I would have a fire-box, and a chimney," cried the madman. "It is quite easy to arrange. I have presented a working model to His Majesty. It works, I tell you, it works!" The voice of the prisoner rose to a scream.

"Poor fellow! Mad, quite mad," murmured the Marquis, turning away.

"One moment," said Marian de l'Orme. "Sir prisoner, would you also have fire boxes and kettles in ships? What would be the advantage?"

"The ship would be able to go against the wind, and maintain its speed in calms and light airs. It would go five leagues in an hour, and reach America in ten days."

"America in ten days!" scoffed the keeper. "And India in a month, I suppose?"

"A month, or a little longer," agreed the madman. "Not two years, as at present."

"How would the big kettle drive the ship?" asked Marian de l'Orme, curiously.

"It is simple, simple!" cried the madman. "The steam works a piston, and the piston turns a crank, and the crank moves two wheels in the water, one on each side of the ship."

"A ship, running on wheels in the water?" sneered the keeper.

"But the wheels have blades fixed to them, like paddles," screamed the prisoner. "The paddles drive the ship along. I have made a model, and given it to the King. It works, it works!"

"My good man, supposing your kettle and wheels could drive the ship, where would you carry all the wood required for the fire?"

"Sir, I would use coal. A hundred tons of coal would drive a thousand-ton ship across the Atlantic in ten days."

"Oh, come along, my dear," said the Marquis, impatiently. "The poor fellow is raving."

"I am not mad! I am not mad!" screamed the prisoner. "I can drive carriages, and ships, and mills, with steam. It is simple. All done by steam! Madame, for the love of God, take a copy of my pamphlet, and see if I am mad!"

The pretty lady took the pamphlet, and retired to the keeper's house to rest and recover from her experiences.

"How absurd!" remarked the elegant Marquis, glad to be away from the stench and horror of the mad-house. "Suppose that fellow did have carriages driven by fire and kettles, going twenty miles an hour. The terrific speed would suffocate the passengers, and the fumes from the chimney would destroy all animal and vegetable life in the region through which the carriage passed. Also the fearful velocity would cause the carriage to fall to pieces."

(Continued on page 27)

The Psychology of Carelessness

by Yen Kay

Reading Time • About 6 Minutes

CARELESSNESS composes the one that commits it and decomposes the one that suffers by it. The committer chuckles, clandestinely, while the sufferer openly foams at his mouth and flings fire about him. If, on the other hand, an act of carelessness is likely to recoil on its own doer, he or she generally takes care enough to leave it uncommitted.

Indeed, there is not another species of human lapse so universally indulged in and so universally loathed, so piquant and provocative, so irresponsibly perpetrated and so gravely censured, as carelessness, a word so uncanny in its encasement of sound that if you merely pronounce it, the thing would be most likely to appear!

When the housewife spills the milk and produces a cup of black, unpalatable, evil-looking coffee before her old man, what generally happens is a whacking tremendous shindy in which the man tries to catch the woman and the woman tries to elude him by jumping into the well. It may be that the man in his blithering rage strikes his head pretty sharply against the lintel of the kitchen-door or even comes a cropper from stubbing his toe against its sill; and then who knows but that the hunted, hard-pressed creature would be sure to look over her shoulder and drink in the scene unrepentantly.

I will cite a recent example from my own experience.

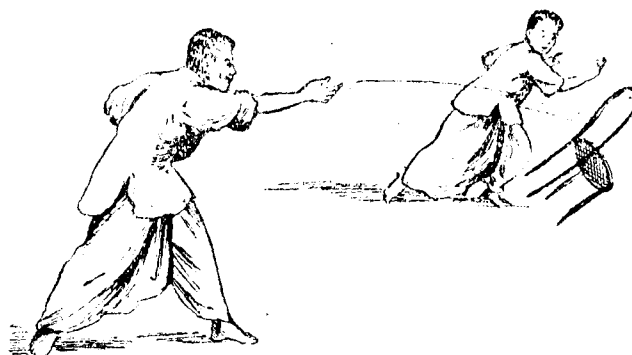
My son lost a letter when he was coming with it home from the post-office. And he took no end of

care to break the news gently to me, the considerate little man. At once, however, I pulled to pieces a book I was reading and should have also damaged the boy's head, had I not, with great presence of mind, forthwith run to the post-office along the way he had come, looking for the lost epistle. And it was well I did so, for I returned from the expedition something of a philosopher in respect of the calamitous circum-

tance brought about by the carelessness of the boy. But a few days later I discovered that he had lost not one but three letters, to say nothing of a money-order receipt! Angels and demigods! I seized and threw the chair I was sitting on so violently that had the child been standing where in my blind fero-

city I imagined him to be, I should have been straightway hauled up before a District Magistrate for manslaughter. As it was, the agile chip of the old block was half-way to school before I had wrought the clumsy piece of furniture to the manner and momentum of a catapult. For several weeks after this incident, I had to do my reading and writing, squatted stoically on the floor, as though I was not an educated man but a yoga-practitioner.

I have quoted so much 'scripture and verse' only in order to convince any likely incredulous reader that errors, omissions and commissions emanating from carelessness affect anybody but the men, women and children who commit them so cavalierly and frequently. I have even a suspicion that if you try to put down carelessness it will only rear its head with the greater temerity and, perhaps too, with the greater reason.



Let me exemplify, once more, since a single example often speaks better than a shower of argument.

I had a servant, thank goodness I had, with a remarkably deaf ear and an astigmatic eye, thank goodness again. "My dear man," I would say, "don't place the umbrella on the table." And he would poise it on the chair. Next time he came into the room, he would be sure to knock his shanks against that innocent article for sitting on and send the poor umbrella fluttering about the room. "Fill this pen," I would say, the ink having run out abruptly in the middle of a sentence I was hurrying on with. Neither pen or man would appear again for half an hour. Then in his own good time he would come, stealthily, cunningly, timidly, with a faint suggestion of a smile lurking in his looks. "What's the matter?" I would shout at him. Well, it would be all very simple. He had put the upper section of the instrument in some place and could not remember where. One day I told him to put my wrist-watch in my coat-pocket. He placed it on the bench, before he put it in the pocket, and of course forgot all about it. Then, naturally, I came along and sat on the bench, and on it too. Nevertheless, I liked him, for he was very sound at bottom.

In the beginning, every time he did anything carelessly, I used to erupt like a volcano and envelop him in flames. But he only grew worse. At last I decided to let him be, and what a wonderful change came over him then! Well, the point is this: If you try to suppress carelessness, carelessness will try and conquer you. Not until I had learnt this lesson had the children in my house any freedom and not until they had their due allowance of freedom to be careless if they liked did any of them begin to show any sign of wanting to be careful. My little boy no longer drops any letters on the public road just because he is no longer unaware that he might do so if he liked and that if he did it wouldn't make any difference in the scheme of things. Know, then, all who are interested, that the way to stop carelessness is to set it in motion! And indeed, those who are careless are better than those who might be the very embodiments of care, in the sense that men and women are better than machines.

I reckon that these propositions will cause keen annoyance in many quarters, but that is little to be wondered at in this age when the all-powerful science of matter has nearly snuffed the soul out of the quaint ancient organism of man. However the

be, I strongly suspect that the man or woman that flies into a rage at sight or sound of carelessness and who is never careless himself or herself is in desperate case. Perhaps it would be easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for such a person to enter the rich luscious kingdom of romance and joy. I certainly like the elder who when he stubbed his feet against an ewer in a wrong place in the house demanded vehemently: "Who the deuce placed it there?"; but who when his youngster stubbed his foot against the same vessel in the same place a little later as vehemently interrogated: "There! There! You lubber, have you no eyes in your head?" How human, excellent and immaculately frank an admission this, that everybody has the right to be careless, even though it includes a passionate and powerful proposition that only the superior folks may be careless with impunity.

THE END

THE MADMAN—(Continued from page 19)

"Who is the poor man?" asked Marian de l'Orme. "How did he get here?"

"He comes from Normandy, and his name is Solomon de Coste," replied the keeper. "He made some models of his machines, and brought them to Paris to give to the King. As you know, His Majesty is very interested in clocks and mechanical devices, and receives hundreds of such toys every year. No doubt the foolish models of this man are lying with thousands of similar articles in the palace armoury, where His Majesty plays with his clocks. The impudent fellow kept on insisting that special regard should be given to his models. He said his kettles and wheels would make France the strongest nation on earth. Receiving no attention, he followed Cardinal Richelieu everywhere, and wearied the Minister with his importunities. Finally, Richelieu had the fellow sent here as a lunatic."

"And this pamphlet?" enquired the pretty courtesan.

"De Coste passes his time making copies of it. It is supposed to explain and give proofs of his insane ideas. Of course, our good Cardinal was much too busy to read it."

"I will keep the pamphlet as a memento of my visit to your establishment," said the lady, brightly.

And so, among the papers of a seventeenth-century courtesan, there is an uncut pamphlet entitled *Motive*

Power by Solomon de Coste. It reveals, a hundred and fifty years before its time, the revolutionary things that may be done by the power of steam.

But it was never read.

THE END

Diary of a Goat

by John A. Henry

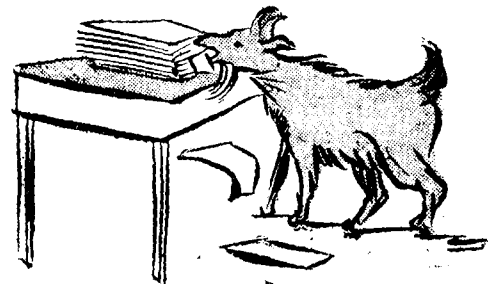
Reading Time • About 6 Minutes



I want to explode. I mean, explode the mistaken idea that only explorers, trans-Atlantic fliers, romantic old spinsters etc., keep diaries. We goats have our rotten pride too, and our lives, and we live them—the lives, I mean. Even a goat has romance to brighten the dull moments of its existence. Even a goat can bleat a song like some *prima donnas* and operatic baritones. Even a goat knows something of the follies of other goats with Parliamentary horns and beards. And so, a few days ago, I began my diary. It was rather a job scraping it with the points of my horns, word by word, on the faces of rocks, but I managed it at last, with true goat-like tenacity. Here it is, and if you don't believe me, come and see me sometime, up on my native heath, and I'll show you the works.

April 1st, 1936. 8 a.m. Awoke feeling rather drowsy due to warmth of weather. Bleated to Fanny Goat over the way and then combed beard on thorns of bramble bush. Heard, and totally agreed with, "the Call of the Cloak Room", after which much springier and full to the uvula with beans, which springiness and fullness somewhat detracted from when discovered bald patch on left shoulder and two grey hairs on right knee.

8-30 a.m. Leaped over several rocks and bushes in well-known Kruschen style, just to feel, and show

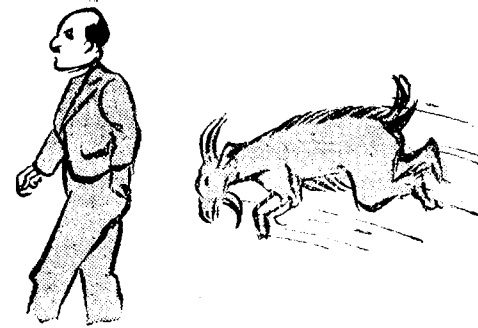


Fanny, that there was life in the old goat yet. Discovered that Fanny was taking no notice at all. Discovery rather a punch in the solar plexus. Always thought Fanny was absolutely gone on me and that there was no other goat in the world for her. She used to, last year, blissfully bleat that my beard was the smartest in the whole countryside and that my butting was a marvel of physical enterprise, strongly resembling the skilful fencing of that famous expert, D'Artagnan. She used to go into raptures over the Roman cut of my snout. In a huff, browsed for fifteen minutes, watching Fanny from corner of eyes.

8-45 a.m. Suddenly saw Danny Goat appearing from behind a bush. He is rather low-brow, belonging to Ram Nath, the least important water-carrier of the village. Danny approached Fanny, and the possessive angle of his horns got my dander up. Gave two or three sharp leaps, or buck jumps, and lowered my horns in his direction; coughed angrily and charged. Danny side-stepped and I butted Fanny on her rear light. Am now seriously in disgrace. Anyway, I charged Danny into the middle of next week. R.I.P.—or almost.

10 a.m. After uneventful hour and a quarter, hoping Fanny would chew the cud of peace, hummed to myself, "She was only a Butcher's Daughter but oh! How she could bleed!"—after which much more settled in mind. Gave Fanny up as a bad job for the day and decided to explore village.

10-15 a.m. Was approached, while helping myself to a mouthful of maize from the corn merchant's stall, by several determined-looking urchins, carrying tin cans and buckets. Eyed them warily, thoroughly on my guard. Put up a good struggle when they laid hands on me, but was eventually over-powered by strength of numbers. Was soon released, however,



leader of this lousy rabble telling his confederates that you couldn't milk a darned he-goat. They departed, evidently in search of more suitable victims. Rather un-Christianlike in my hope that they would find Fanny—the ungrateful jade! Have often given her gifts of delicious mint stolen from Ragnath's back garden. Ah well! The femininity of females is a wondrous thing!

10-30 a.m. Found small table in back-yard. On table piles of appetising-looking paper, almost like that rare delicacy, parchment. Had good hearty meal, as no one looking. Hiccoughed once or twice in appreciation. While back turned to table, however, suddenly felt blow on spine. Discovered blow caused by large housebrick heaved at me by man on verandah who shouted: "You have eaten the book it took me four years to write, you ass!" Can't understand these needlessly vicious human beings. Ass indeed! Me—the best goat in the vicinity! Elevated my tail in dignified manner and took my departure hastily—hastily because the morning was getting on and I had lots to do.

11 a.m. Saw man I didn't like the look of, walking down road. Butted him in seat of pants. Waited for him to get up and butted him again, knocking him out for the count. Didn't know human beings had their brains so low down. While he was unconscious, ate his beard.

11-30 a.m. Passed Danny on roadside. Turned nose up at him in disdainful manner, but felt rather sorry for him as one of his horns was missing, apparently knocked off by my earlier attack. His beard looked fairly limp. When at safe distance, however, gave me raspberry, which made the welkin ring!

12 noon. Terrible pains in digestive tracts. Most probably severe indigestion caused by first man's book and second man's beard. Am doubtful now whether much Vitamin "B" contained in books or beards. Collapsed for half an hour to allow indigestion to disappear in its own way.

12-30 p.m. Rose stiffly to feet and plodded along, wishing Fanny hadn't been giving me the cold wither,

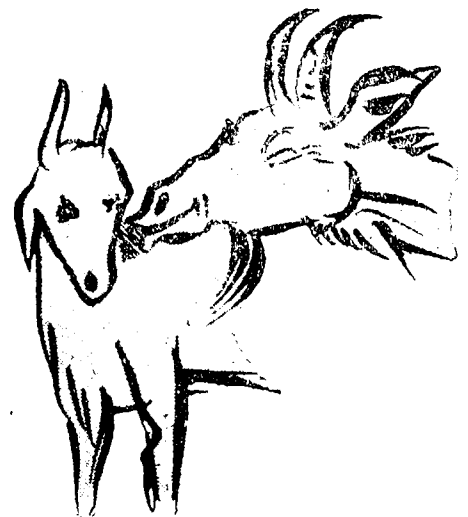
off and on, all the year. Couldn't understand her goat-like attitude. Suddenly realised that kiss from her sweet lips would send thrills and shivers of pleasure up and down my horns. Decided to find her some nice grass as conciliatory offering.

12-55 p.m. We cleared patch of grass without Fanny saying a word. Bee under her horns for some reason. Walked off without even thanking me. Can't understand this.

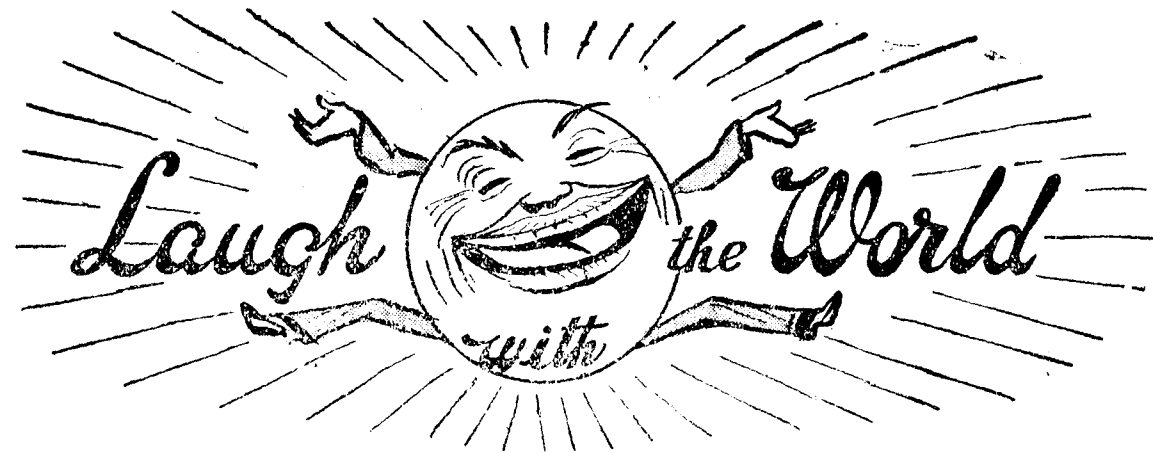
2 p.m. Butted tree to get a bit of practice for next meeting with Danny. Felt sure he was at bottom of Fanny's coldness towards me. Butted tree again. Saw stars. Decided tree not as soft as Danny. Butted ground. Saw more stars. Ceased practice. Saw bit of brown paper on ground. Ate it—paper, not ground. Peculiar taste in mouth. Brown paper not paper at all, but bit of leather. Don't know why these cows wander about so much.

4 p.m. Collapsed from pain caused by leather. Grunted and groaned several times. No relief. Feeling terribly ill, began to bleat 'Dead March in Saul'. Sudden rush of hooves through bushes and Fanny appeared. Came up to me where lying on death-bed and bleated motherly messages, stroking my fevered forehead, meanwhile, with her silky horns. Seized opportunity and asked why she had been avoiding me. At last discovered secret! She said: "Spring is here, my darling he-goat! And this is a Leap Year! You should have proposed long ago instead of bringing me silly grass and things!"

8 p.m. After four hours' horn-holding, kissing, and a modicum of necking and petting, proposed, and thrilled to roots of beard when accepted. And so to mossy marriage couch. Hey-ho!



THE END



Three sailors were spending their leave in the country. Presently two of them got into a heated argument over what kind of animal a heifer was.

"It's a sort of pig," said one.

"Not on your life," replied the other. "It's a kind of sheep."

Finally, they called in the third party.

"Bill," said the first sailor, "Wot's a heifer—is it a pig or a sheep?"

Bill scratched his head, nonplussed.

"To tell you the truth, shipmates," he said, "I dunno much about poultry."

—Star

He came upon her crying her heart out in a corner. She was sobbing uncontrollably, so, like the true gentleman that he was, he sought to comfort her. Putting his arms around her, and drawing her to him, he gently soothed her and soon had her fairly calm. Then thinking to clean up the matter if possible, he asked her what the trouble was.

Grimly she managed to blurt out:

"My mother was married, yesterday,"

He was relieved. This would be easy to settle.

"Why cry about it?" he asked. "There is nothing terrible in a second marriage!"

"I know," came the reply, "but this is her first!"

—Penn Punch Bowl

Sherlock Holmes: Ah, Watson, I see you have on your winter underwear.

Watson: Marvelous, Holmes, marvelous. How did you ever deduce that?

Sherlock: Well, you have forgotten to put on your trousers.

—Indian Inksense

Absent-minded Professor: Lady, what are you doing in my bed?

Lady: Well, I like this bed; I like this neighbourhood; I like this house and I like this room. And anyway I'm your wife!

—Penn State Froth

"But, mother, he treats me just like a father."
"What did you say his name was?"

—Northwestern Pimple Parrot

Head Clerk: I'm very sorry to hear of your partner's death. Would you like me to take his place?

Manager: Very much, if you can get the undertaker to arrange it.

—Pitt Panther

Modern Philosopher (teaching philosophy): Dear boys! so there is no God! It is a lie. But we are the man, we are the God and we are for everything.

A Student: Then dear master, please bring back my mother alive from Heaven!

—Mickey Mouse

Written In The Sands

by John A. Henry & Albert A. Roland

Decorations by Albert A. Roland

Reading Time • About 9 Minutes

IN THE SANDS OF FATE

ACT I.

Scene 1. [Drawing-room of Robert Jennings' house. Seated in armchairs are Jennings, tall and saturnine, his wife Lorna, slim, blonde and beautiful, and a short, stocky man, Martin, a friend of the couple. In the background hovers Abdul Khan, the chief servant of the home. The glances that Martin casts in Lorna's direction indicate that he takes more than a friendly interest in her, while her attitude indicates the same where he is concerned, but apparently not to her husband, who treats both of them genially, almost playfully.]

Martin. (Jokingly to Lorna): Mrs. Jennings, your husband and I were arguing in office this morning. I wonder if you could help us settle the question?

Lorna (smiling): It depends, of course, on the question. If it has anything to do with anthropology, well, I'm sorry!

Martin: No, no. We were discussing whether it is possible for a woman to love two men equally well at the same time. Bob says it is not possible.

Jennings (after lighting a cigarette and puffing luxuriously): And I still think so. What do you say, darling?

Lorna (hesitantly, her eyes on her husband's face, which shows nothing but benignity): Well, as a woman, I say it is!

Martin (jovially exultant): Two to one, old man! There you are! From the lips of Eve.....

Jennings (still smiling and benign): Rot! But of course, in fiction.....

Martin: Yes. I was reading a story only the other day. Very touching and really absorbing from the human nature point of view. The husband nobly stepped out of the picture, giving place to the other man his wife loved, so that she should not be tortured by doubt and indecision.

Jennings (laughing lightly): That was noble indeed! I'm afraid, now, that, under the same circumstances, I would have acted quite differently! I would have tried to trap them both and shot them or something!

Martin: Rot! You haven't that amount of viciousness in you! You're too darned good natured. Most probably do the very same thing!

Jennings (speculatively): Well, perhaps so! But it's wonderful what some men do when that sort of thing crops up! Now, as an illustration, if my wife learns to love you, well, well, I'm afraid I'll have to kill you outright, old man!

[They all laugh heartily, but Abdul smiles knowingly.]

(CURTAIN)

Scene 2. [Later that night in the servants' quarters. Abdul Khan holds the attention of his listeners.]

Abdul: Now it is written.....when a woman thinks she loves two men, shadows of trouble appear in the sky. I have watched the Mem Sahib grow up from a child. I have seen much of the world. Neither the Burra Sahib nor Martin Sahib are worth either of the small toes on her feet. She knoweth not the cunning smile. She knoweth not that cunningly hidden jealousy is no sign of love and proof of no love. She knoweth not that men who pursue other men's wives will always pursue other men's wives. I have seen much, and I know. I say unto you all, trouble

threatens! Now, if the Mem Sahib had been wise, she would have seen long ago that Warren Sahib—may the Captain Sahib's shadow never grow less!—worships the very earth she treads upon. Perhaps, some day, Allah may bring them together.....Allah and His instrument, Kismet. The Sahib suspects something, but he hides it well!

Zaidullah: Well spoken, oh Abdul! I, as lowly butler, could not have uttered more clearly the thoughts of all of us!

(CURTAIN)

Scene 3. [The drawing-room again the next night. Jennings stands in the doorway, his hat on, just about to leave the house. Martin and Lorna sit smiling as he speaks jovially.]

Jennings: Now, no romance between you two! Otherwise..... (draws finger playfully across throat, and his wife and Martin laugh).

Lorna: You cave-man, Bob!

Jennings: Well, cheerio! I won't be more than an hour. These business appointments are always curt—especially when I have a wife like Lorna to come back to!

[He disappears through the door, pulling it to behind him. Fifteen minutes pass in silence and, then Martin sud-

denly rises and seats himself, on the arm of Lorna's chair. She places a hand in his.]

Martin: Darling! I thought we were never going to be alone again! I love you—terribly! Want you terribly too. (Leans down and places his lips against hers. She returns the kiss half afraid, half willingly.)

Lorna: And I love you! But I love Bob too. Oh, what can we do?



Martin (softly): Take all the happiness what we can without his knowing it. In that way he will be happy too. These servants won't come in here, will they? (This last doubtfully.)

Lorna (breathlessly): No. I've given Abdul his orders.

[Martin kisses her again, more passionately. Her arms twine round his neck. In the background the figure of Abdul

flits away into the darkness as the front door opens slightly and admits Jennings' head. Jennings is smiling. He watches for a second and then disappears again, closing the door noiselessly.]

(CURTAIN)

Scene 4. [The hall of Martin's home at mid-night. Jennings, with the aid of a small torch, finds the telephone and wires the bell so that it cannot ring. Satisfies himself by going into Martin's room that Martin is asleep. Creeps out of the house. He does not know that he has been watched by a shadowy figure since he left his own home.]

Scene 5. [The bedroom of Jennings and his wife. He is standing by the bedside; she is sitting up amongst the bed-clothes, unspeakable horror on her face and in her eyes.]

Lorna: My God! It can't be true! You haven't...

Jennings (coldly and viciously): Yes—I have! (holds up blood-stained cloth bag containing some object.) I saw you and Martin making love to each other last night. I didn't go anywhere. I have suspected dirty play for a long time. I told you I would be desperate if anything like this ever happened! I killed him. This is his head. You loved both of us. Well, one is out of the picture now!

Lorna: Bob! For God's sake! Tell me you're only joking!

Jennings (even more coldly): I'm not joking. But I know you love me. That's all that matters. I'm putting this head into the cupboard till the



"Was it possible to love two men equally well at the same time?"

morning, when I am going to destroy it in my own way. I believe one can do a lot with Sulphuric Acid in its fullest strength. Now, darling, you just go to sleep and don't worry. If you can prove your love for me, well, I can very easily forgive that little bit of love-making I saw!

[Lorna sinks back in bed, overcome, while he places his grisly-looking bundle in the cupboard after carefully removing the clothes that were



"Oh!—hurry...I can't bear it!"

there. Turns out the light and undresses, getting into bed. All becomes silent.]

(CURTAIN)

Scene 6. [The same room two hours later. A shadowy figure slips through the door from inside and patters away.]

(CURTAIN)

Scene 7. [Lorna at the telephone in the drawing-room a few minutes later.]

Lorna (frantically): Is that the Police Station? I'm speaking from 10, Alipore Road. I have reason to believe my husband has killed a Mr. Martin. I—he told me he was placing Mr. Martin's head in—in the cupboard in our bedroom, but even then I could not believe him. I—I could not bear to uncover the object in that bloodstained cloth—but I've rung Mr. Martin's house repeatedly and can get no reply. Yes, yes—this is true! I know my evidence is supposed to count for nothing where my husband is

Jennings: Well, well, my pretty wife! What a nice little speech against the man you do love! I wonder how long the Police will be? It's so satisfying to know at last that the woman I married didn't love me at all! You've no idea what tortures I've been through lately! Doubt

.....wondering.....always wondering whether you did love me!

Lorna: Bob! Aren't you going to do anything? I.....

Jennings (laughing shortly): Why should I? Let them come! We'll sit here and wait for them.

[It is not long before the sound of a car is heard outside. Jennings opens the door to a Police Inspector who is accompanied by a Havildar and two plain-clothes men.]

Jennings: Ah! There you are, Inspector! You know the story so far.....my wife tells a story well. It but remains to see the damning evidence—of my crime I mean!

Inspector (surprised at his genial tones): You're either mad or there has been no murder!

Jennings: Exactly, Inspector. There has been no murder!—unless you call all sheep butchers murderers!

[Lorna sinks into a chair, her hands to her mouth.]

Jennings (continuing after glancing at her): You see, I just wanted to prove to my own satisfaction whether my wife did really love me or not. A natural failing in any husband, I think. Don't you? And I wanted to give her a scare to last her a life-time. So that she would never allow her affections to wander again!

[The Inspector nods in puzzled way, and Jennings continues.]

Well, first of all, I fixed Martin's phone so that it could not ring, knowing my wife would not believe my story at first and that she would ring him up as soon—or soon after—I had told her I'd killed him. Next, after a little trouble due to the lateness of the hour, I managed to buy a very nice sheep's head which had a convenient amount of blood oozing from it. This, I told my wife, was Martin's head.

[The Inspector nods again as Jennings pauses for breath and then goes on.]

Now, it is my theory that if a woman really loves her husband, she will not betray him under any circumstances. My wife betrayed me, but she has been disappointed. As if I would keep the head in a cupboard when I could have safely buried it at night! I think that's all, Inspector. And now, come along to the bedroom and I'll show you the head of 'Mr. Martin'! (Laughs and leads the way confidently and calmly from the room.)

(CURTAIN)

Scene 8. [The bedroom again. Jennings goes to the cupboard and takes the bloodstained bag from it, holding the bag by the neck and handing it to the Inspector, Lorna, trembling, covering her eyes.]

Jennings: There you are. Turn it out. And please don't laugh at my wife's discomfiture. You will find Mr. Martin sleeping comfortably at home.

[The Inspector unties the neck of the bag and turns its contents out on to the floor, the expression on his face changing to one of grim surprise. Lorna, uncovering her eyes, screams wildly as, WEIRDLY PALE IN THE ELECTRIC LIGHT, GLEAMS THE DEAD FACE OF MARTIN'S SEVERED HEAD! Jennings staggers back.]

Jennings: My God! How the devil.....I swear it was only a sheep's head.....but no, it isn't even the same bag! And those bloodstains must be... must be human blood! No sheep's blood to prove my statement! Didn't even notice the difference in weight! God! I.....

Inspector: I arrest you for this murder. Anything you say.....

(CURTAIN)

Scene 9. The servants' quarters again. Abdul holds the attention of his listeners.

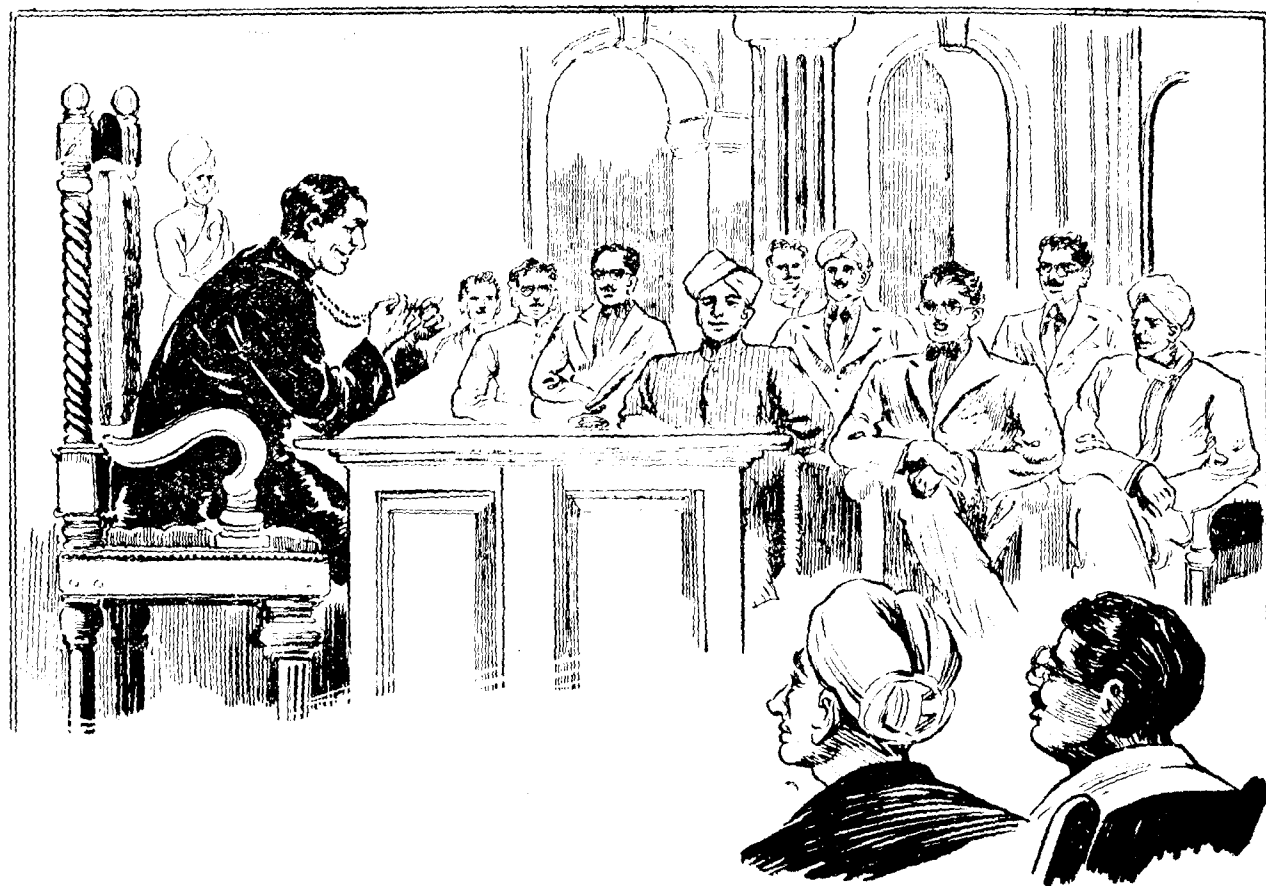
Abdul Khan: I prophesied trouble. It has come. It was written in the sands long ago. Kismet. Now, if Captain Warren Sahib has sense, he will comfort my Mem Sahib. And she will know at last the true meaning of love! Neither of them was worthy of her. Her thinking she loved them both was no sin, for she knew not the ways of men. But I.....ah.....I have seen much and know much! Many years ago I killed a man of low repute who began to steal my wife from me. She was grateful to me for my deed later. You are true sons of Islam. You know the honour of thus being the chosen instrument of Allah.

[He dismisses them all with a sudden wave of the hand, and, when alone, extends clenched fists upwards, his head bent back, his lips moving in a short prayer. Then, smiling, continues aloud.....]

Yes, it was written in the sands that Abdul Khan's Mem Sahib should be freed of two worthless men—by the hand of Abdul Khan!

(FINAL CURTAIN)

THE END



Long, Sweet Name

by P. P. Samuel

Reading Time • About 7 Minutes

“GENTLEMEN,” said the Mayor, toying with the mayoral chain, “we will now hear the recommendations of the Committee of Six appointed to choose a name for our new suburb.”

The silence that ensued was so profound that a councillor who was snoring sat up, looking slightly guilty.

Time passed.

“Will the convener of the Committee of Six,” said the Mayor, glaring fiercely in the direction of a small councillor, “be pleased—”

The little man peeped over the elaborate China Bazaar turban in front of him. “Next week,” he said simply.

“Ha-ha!” laughed the oldest councillor. “Ha-ha-ha! A pretty name, sir.”

“I meant the committee would meet next week,” the small councillor explained acidly.

The Mayor looked at the councillors; the councillors looked at the Mayor; then they all looked at the ceiling together. The silence was broken at last by a very young councillor. “Shouldn’t we appoint another committee or something to help us in the choice of a name for the new appendage or something?” he said brightly.

The Mayor tried on his pince-nez.

“No! No!” shouted an enthusiastic councillor; so the Mayor whisked off his modish spectacles from his chiselled nose and smiled like a chocolate-box.

“Gentlemen,” he beamed, “I am here to do your bidding.”

“My lord,” cried a lean, anaemic, vociferous councillor.

Then he corrected himself and, gesticulating like a clock-work doll, pointed out with a wealth of chapter and verse that a committee once appointed could not be superseded until it had fulfilled its function.

“Hear, hear!” came a husky voice from behind the China Bazaar turban.

A ripple of disapproval went round the chamber. Most of the councillors felt that the committee had failed to discharge its duty and something should be done about it. Lawyers might talk their heads off, but the Corporation of Madras expected every man to do his duty.

The Mayor sensed the feeling of the house.

“Gentlemen,” he said, “the matter of choosing a name for the new suburb has been receiving our attention for about six months now. I personally wish, and I hope the house will agree with me, that it would be—er—in—what’s the word I want—?”

“Judicious,” suggested the lawyer.

“Er—injudicious to postpone it any further. Has anyone any proposal to make?”

The very young councillor proposed that the name of the new suburb be chosen “here and now”. The motion was put to the council and carried, the lawyer entering a forlorn but throaty protest.

“Now then,” said the Mayor, flicking off a speck of dust from the mayoral robes with a bejewelled finger.

The councillors took up the glove immediately. Knitting their brows they gave themselves so furiously to thought that the friction of their thinking-machinery was almost audible.

The clock ticked on.

After about fifteen minutes the small councillor rose to his feet. No one seemed to take any notice of him

until a chesty shout made the other councillors stare in the general direction of the turban. The Mayor, who had been toying with his mayoral chain, let it drop with a rattle; the oldest councillor swallowed a quid of tobacco he had stowed away in his cheek.

“Does the Mayor,” boomed the small councillor, in a voice out of proportion to his inches, “have any suggestion for the name of the suburb?”

The Mayor put on his spectacles and ran through a fat file. “No,” he said at last. “And I would much rather not suggest a name. But, if precedent is a proper guide in such matters, I suppose it is my duty to remind you that on a former occasion a new suburb was named after the President. Of course,” he hastened to add, “those were days when Presidents were not Mayors.”

Five councillors rose simultaneously and spoke their minds but, as each tried to shout down the rest, the net impression was that one of those intimate Justice Party meetings was in progress.

The situation was saved by the Turban. With all the dignity and hauteur that characterises a Nominated Councillor he cowed down the J. P. men and asked the Mayor if the Government had been consulted in regard to the choice of a name:

“No,” said the Mayor firmly. “This House is competent to deal with the matter.” And he glanced at the oldest councillor, who gave a senile smile of approval.

“Quite so, quite so,” agreed an ovate councillor. “We are quite competent to deal with the matter. But in what ward is the new suburb?”

The Mayor and the Commissioner sat *tete-a-tete* for a while.

“Ward No. Twenty—” said the Mayor.

“—Three,” prompted the Commissioner.

“Twenty-three,” said the Mayor, waving his pince-nez.

The egg-shaped councillor rose to his feet again. “What about naming the suburb after the councillor for Ward 23?” he said.

“Who is the councillor for Ward 23?” the lawyer wanted to know.

"We are dealing with Principles—not Personalities," snapped the egg-shaped councillor, with a withering glance.

"Address the chair, please," said the Mayor.

"What has the councillor for Ward 23 done to deserve the honour of having a whole suburb named after him?" inquired the lawyer. "A 50-foot road may perhaps be all right, but a suburb is different."

The egg-shaped councillor rose up and walked off in a pet, leaving considerable electricity behind him.

The oldest councillor, who had been regarding the proceedings for a long time with the cynicism of rheumatic old age, suddenly came to life. "May I suggest a name?" he asked.

"Please," said the Mayor.

"The name I have thought of," he announced pompously, "is 'Willingdonpuram'."

"Ah, too late!" said the very young councillor.



"Why not name the suburb after a lady councillor or something?" said the very young councillor. "Has all our ancient chivalry gone west? Has—"

It was the lawyer who interrupted him. "What principle, if any, do they follow in Calcutta—?"

"If I may interrupt in return," said the very young councillor, "what principle, if any, do they follow in Uganda?"

"Now, now!" said the Mayor.

"Seven 'Willingdonpurams' already sprawl over the map of India."

"Make it eight," snapped the oldest councillor.

"A long, sweet name, I assure you, sir," said the Mayor, putting on his pince-nez and flicking it off with a flourish.

The motion was put to the vote and carried, the oldest member chuckling to himself that 'Willingdonpuram' has exactly the same number of letters in it as 'Thyagarayanagar'.

THE END

A Love Story



He: Every kiss of mine speaks a hundred words.

She: How nice! Tell me a nice long story!

Post-Obit Melody

Reading Time • About 6 Minutes

by Thirupathi

IN spite of 'snow-white' proofs coming from persons of unimpeachable integrity, it is still a fashion in certain quarters to laugh at spirits and the phenomena surrounding them. Almost every day, somewhere in the world, some strange happening is reported. Science tries to bluff through to an explanation, but leaves everybody cold.

Last year, I happened to be staying with an old friend, in Narsipatam, for a few days. It was a happy family—the husband, a retired tahsildar, his wife, and an only child, a girl of fourteen years. Music was a passion with that family. My friend the tahsildar was an accomplished songster, his wife was a great hand at Thyagaraya kritis, at least that was her estimation of herself. The great gift was handed down to the daughter, Kamala Lochani.

They started the girl on her career of music with a harmonium, which at the age of ten, she learnt to play like a professional.

The pedantic, fastidious ring in the world of music in South India thinks that the harmonium is a plebeian. Indeed the place allotted to the harmonium in the community of musical instruments used in South India may be properly compared to the place of those unfortunates called Harijans in the hierarchy of Hindu caste system. Considering that all over India the harmonium is a very popular instrument, it is rather difficult to understand why these music 'toffs' of South India are so hard on the poor harmonium. Whatever the reason, the fact remains that the harmonium is looked at askance in this part of India.

My friend, the tahsildar was one such 'toff'. If he agreed to let his daughter learn to play the harmonium, it was not because his ideas about that instrument underwent a change, but because his wife vetoed most of his ideas, not only in music but also in the wider life of the family.

As soon as the harmonium career of the girl Kamala Lochani was finished, the husband and wife went into committee to think out a new music line for their daughter. The husband voted for the veena. The wife voted for the violin. They argued and argued for a whole day at the end of which they were as far

from agreement as they were at the beginning. The poor man quoted the *puranas* and *kavyams* to prove that the Veena was of heavenly origin, that the



gandharvas were extremely fond of it, that Goddess Saraswati always carried a veena. "And look at Veena Dhanam, woman!" said the Tahsildar, in a nasty tone. "The way she runs her fingers on the veena-strings can only be described as divine. Kamala shall learn to play the veena. You mind your cooking and don't interfere in matters which are above you."

"Above me, are they?" retorted the old lady. "Veena! Only fools will believe in all those fairy stories about the veena. Not being a fool, I don't think much of it. Kamala shall learn to play the violin, or nothing at all. Mind my cooking! I will mind it. I will mind it so much that I will make your stomach burn with chillies!"

The poor tahsildar lost his patience and temper. "Shut up, you stout, ugly, country woman!" he shouted. "What do you know about music? Did your father ever sing a song except braying like a donkey the wrong *mantrams* at religious ceremonies? Why did I ever marry the daughter of that brute? You . . . you . . . you!" he spluttered and choked and ended in a violent fit of coughing.

"My father is a brute, do you say?" screamed Mrs. Tahsildar. "And pray what was *your* father? He used to beg rice from door to door in Anakapalli, to educate you. There is a story in my father's place current to this day that your father used to carry corpses, for a consideration, to the burning place. And I am stout and ugly, am I? You..." She was about to say something very vulgar and unwifely, but checked herself and called upon all the gods of the

Hindu Pantheon to look at and enjoy the beauty of her husband. The poor man was not exactly a handsome man. He was over fifty, three-fourths bald, one-third of his teeth gone. He had a large nose which was a standing joke in the local revenue department circles.

The tahsildar wanted to whack his wife, but it was a futile wish. She was double his weight. So, he did the next best thing. He smote his nose and left his wife in great dudgeon.

For three days, this unhappy Brahmin family was a veritable armed camp. The husband and wife were armed to the teeth. The daughter Kamala Lochani assumed a benevolent neutrality. She applied sanctions impartially on the two belligerents. The fortunes of war were tantalisingly uncertain for three days. At last, the wife hit below the belt. She used mustard gas extensively, in the form of large doses of chilly powder in the cooking. After the tahsildar partook twice of this doctored meal, he capitulated. He went into the kitchen, shut the door, and kissed his wife who was past the kissing age. The olive branch was graciously accepted and it was settled that Kamala shall have lessons in violin.

Ramamurty Sastri was a great master of this instrument and a noted scholar. He was an old friend of the family and he readily agreed to teach the girl. This old musician and scholar, who was a lonely man, was invited to lodge and board in the family, which invitation he gratefully accepted.

Thus one year went by. Kamala was a willing and intelligent pupil and made rapid strides. The old man loved her as if she were his own daughter. In turn the girl loved and respected him as she loved and respected her own father.

Often at night the old musician, whose one surviving passion in life was his violin, would retire to the back-yard and play his instrument to himself.

One day, Ramamurty Sastry went to a neighbouring village to collect the little rent on the few acres of land which he owned. Before leaving, he told his friends, the tahsildar and his family, that he would be away a week.

Five days later, at about twelve in the



(Continued on page 37)



Auntie J.J.

The Lion in the Bath-room

YOU remember, my doves, in a recent discourse, I described my African adventures. A nephew hailing from Colombo who had apparently read that article sends me a cutting from a foreign journal. The cutting 'covers' a story about a young Spanish student who was all but eaten by a lion in his own bath-room—the young man's bath-room, not the lion's. "Was it ever your experience, dear Auntie," asks this nephew, "to have been confronted with a male lion amidst civilised surroundings, such as bath-rooms?"

On the other hand, we poor girls meet only goats in street-cars and public squares. Goats are all right in their sphere, namely feeding Mahatmas, but I don't think any girl ever got a kick out of a goat. On an average, I meet three goats a day; but as this discourse refers to lions, I shall leave the goats at that.

Yes, my chicks, I did have an adventure, I had almost said an affair, with a lion once. (Steady there, Aunie! Ed.) One day last year I went west, on a visit to a girl-friend in Nagpur. It was not a pleasure trip. I went there to compose a domestic difference. My friend Indubala and her husband fell out over a silly question, the circumstance of which is a bit.....but don't be inquisitive, you cats! I reached Nagpur just before nightfall. Within the hour I composed their differences and sent them to bed with a benediction. Soon after I retired to my room, eminently satisfied with myself.

It was a hot night. I lay on my bed, kicking the warm air with my legs in a futile attempt at sleep. My skin itched as if a million ants were crawling over me. That peculiar sensation may generally be taken, my dears, as the dawn of love in a girl's life. I

decided to have a cold bath, which Mahatma Gandhi so naively prescribes to people who are frequently assailed by a cognate sensation. Of course, being a *brahmacharini* (female bachelor), a cold bath was not indicated in my case. But you never can tell, can you? Armed with a large towel and a cake of soap, I slipped noiselessly into the bath-room downstairs. The bath-room was dark, and being a maiden, I hate dark rooms. I lit a lamp. Modesty forbids me to say what I did during the next minute..... I sat under the tap. As the cool tiny column of water cascaded on to my head, I felt so happy that I began to hum one of Tagore's immortal songs.

Outside the house, I heard people returning home noisily from the circus which was showing in the City. Just how long I sat blissfully under the tap, I cannot say. Maybe fifteen minutes, maybe more. I heard somebody descending the stairs heavily. The person, whoever it was, stopped right at the bath-room door and breathed heavily.

"Who is there?" I demanded, turning off the tap. There was no answer, except a snuffle, like a woman suppressing a sob. I covered myself with the large towel and ran to the door. I shot back the bolt, but did not open the door. Don't ask me the reason, you big, bad vulgarians! I spoke into the key-hole: "Who is there?" There was another snuffle. A funny smell came through the key-hole. I decided it was my friend Indubala. "Really, Indu," I said severely into the key-hole, "you girls do get on my nerves. Husbands will be husbands. Go back to him, my dear. I'll look into the trouble in the morning. Dear me! What can that smell be?"

Indubala didn't leave the place. She still snuffled. In a huff I opened the door with a wrench and—screamed. Standing in the doorway was a huge lion. I backed slowly into the room. The lion came in sniffing my aura with a wicked glint in his eyes.

The initial horror and fright of this strange encounter suddenly gave way to cosmic pity for the poor beast. His inside was so empty that its stomach and back touched each other. I remembered suddenly that I was an enthusiastic member of the Society For The Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. I felt utterly ashamed at myself for wanting to strangle the lion when I first saw him. Every man or woman must justify his or her existence by doing at least one good deed before he or she was called to final account. I decided to do a kind deed. I spoke in a gentle voice: "Come, poor lion! Eat me, my dear."

The lion opened his mouth and raised his paw to strike me. A ghastly thought flit across my brain. "Stop, unfortunate lion!" I screamed. "If you eat me along with the towel that envelops me, you will get colic, which would be bad for your poor, starved stomach. Wait till I discard this towel."

I discarded the towel and stood like Lady Godiva might have stood if she had no horse to ride. The towel had but reached the ground when the lion with a howl of agony turned his rump on me and went away with head bent and moaning in shame.

And the moral of this true story, my dear canards, is, Nudism is no joke.

THE END

Post-Obit Melody—(Continued from page 35)

night, the soul-stirring notes of Ramamurty Sastry's violin floated from the tahsildar's backyard and woke up the three sleeping people in the house. The tahsildar woke up first. Half reclining, he lay awhile drinking in that melody. Presently he nudged his wife. And both of them woke up their daughter, who was sleeping in the next room.

"Kamala! Kamala!" called the old woman, "Ramamurty Sastry has returned. Did he send word that he is returning today?"

"No, mother. I thought he was due to arrive two days hence."

All three approached the open window and looked out into the backyard. Under his favourite tree,

leaning against its trunk, was the old musician manipulating the bow.

"I will go and call him in. It is cold," said the Tahsildar.

"Don't, father!" demurred Kamala. "We may not disturb him. When the mood is past, he will come in himself."

They went back to their disturbed slumbers. With the first streak of dawn, a messenger appeared at the tahsildar's house. He told the family that Ramamurty Sastry died of heart failure at midnight the previous day, as he was playing on his violin in the village Rama Mandiram.

THE END

Merry's Filmfolio

DEVDas (Hindi)

Producers: New Theatres Ltd., Calcutta.

Showing At: Star Talkies, Triplicane, Madras.

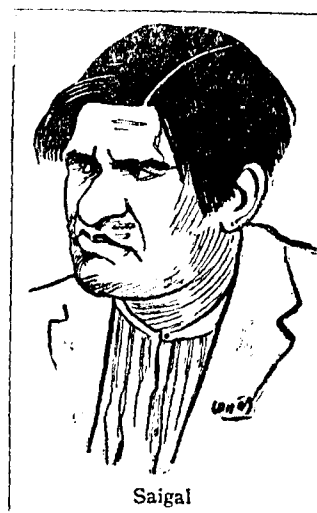


Jamuna

Devdas is not just a picture; it is a work of art, a New Theatres' gift to Indian filmland. You will see a picture which improves on every other filmstory produced in Hindi. It is LIFE in all its pathos and grim reality. Long after the sugar-coated, westernised, sex-laden, leg-shows have gone into the realm of the forgotten past, *Devdas* will live. If 'entertainment' must enchant, thrill, grip, divert, create thought, make you forget weep, laugh and renew yourself, then *Devdas* is entertainment par excellence. Here is a serious, thought-provoking piece of work—a daring, simple, honest picture. A moving story, simply told; the plot is fragile but unusual.

The chief characters are drawn from that strata of society called the upper middle-class which has no respect for the finer feelings of the 'lower'. They live on the surface, flit past the glare and make their exit 'Nothing doing, nothing done!' A few young hearts broken or a few slender flowers crushed in their trample have no concern for them.

This picture impresses without the decorative brilliance of super-variety and there is originality in the plot. Delicately treated and deftly handled, it is made eminently human.



Saigal

Devdas, the chief character, comes of a high family and Parbati his feminine interest, is of humble origin. Love is born but their birth stands between them. They part, in despair. Parbati enters her soulless life as the wife of a middle-aged landlord. She is everything to Devdas but they realise this truth too late.

To Devdas begins the days of travail and turmoil, in the path of the bad. He is falling into evil ways; and on evil days fallen, drink, debauchery and disease take their toll. Death lands him mercifully in the end at Parbati's door.

Jamuna, as Parbati, portrays the tragedy behind a disappointed girl's life with unusual grasp and imaginativeness. Saigal, as the plain Devdas, is telling and you will rejoice in his acting.

Blind K. C. Dey has a singing voice at once charming, rich and touching. No wonder his songs find echoes in every other Indian production.

Technically, *Devdas* is perfect. Highlighting the picture, in addition to the landscapes and beautiful natural sceneries, which the camera has recorded in superb fashion, is the sound-recording.

NADIRA (Urdu)

Producers: Ranjit Movietone Co., Bombay.

Showing At: The Select Talkies, Madras.

A welcome picture is *Nadira* and if you want a glimpse of the days of the warring gypsies here you have it a-plenty. The story centres

net in *Nadira* but Dilawar Khan wins. Luscious *Nadira* is an untamed spoiled darling—almost a shrew. Dilawar Khan tames her and his theme-song is:

Tender-hearted stroke a nettle,
It stings you for your pains.
Hold it like a man of mettle,
Soft as silk it remains.



E. Billimoria

The most popular member of the cast is 'Charlie' whose grand sense of comedy injects laughs into the most commonplace remarks. He receives competent support from Ghory and Dixit. It is a well-acted romance with entertaining singing and dancing. A bevy of beauty swing glittering stars around them and dance and sing and keep you star-gazing.

The director has seen to it that the dialogue is crisp and full of laughs and that the actual story has sufficient interest to bridge the gaps between the high-spots. But the synchronisation is poor in places, particularly in reproducing the sound of horse's galloping hooves.

The actors and actresses lend life and sparkle to a rather tall story.

round three gypsy chiefs—Amir, the father of the beautiful *Nadira* (Miss Madhuri), Pasha, the haughty one who wants his son Dilawar Khan (E. Billimoria) should make *Nadira* his wife, and Kalman the unscrupulous schemer who has designs upon *Nadira* for his idiot son. There are rivalry, intrigue and treachery to

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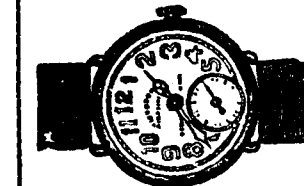


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HOT FROM HOLLYWOOD

How would you feel if your boss came round every evening when you started home from office, patted you on the back and said 'Go home and be happy, my dear fellow! You need rest after your hard day's work and here's to cheer you up! (Here a five-rupee note comes into your pocket in spite of your mild protestations)?' Well, what would you do? At any rate, how would you feel? Your heart would go out for your appreciative boss and make you work your hardest, wouldn't it? That is what exactly happens at Walter Wanger's. After the completion of every picture he writes every member of the cast a personal note expressing high appreciation of their work and no wonder he is a star producer.

Slim Summerville is an inveterate practical joker and the butt of his jokes is generally Walter Brennan. But the tables were turned in a recent set. This is how:

In one scene Slim was to say: "How's my baby?" with all the affection pouring out of his parental eyes and Walter Brennan was supposed to bawl like a fussy child. The camera was fixed and all else ready. Slim came on and uttered those lines in a most touching voice quavering with paternal concern. The answer given has embittered Slim in a manner he wouldn't forgive Walter for weeks. Do you know what the ass did? He pulled a raucous donkey's bray!

Binnie Barnes' recipe of her own luncheon:
Buttermilk—My vitamins; Spinach—my figure; Salad—my pleasure; Chocolate Pie—my dissipation.

Fountains of ink have been spilt on describing *Modern Times*. But here is one in something like a nutshell, by a seven-year old who sat through the show. On leaving the theatre, he remarked in disgust "Charlie Chaplin can't talk and I can't read! I had one heck of a time!" Now, can you beat that for a description?

Like all dads, Chet Morris is a hero to his son Brooks. Brooks writes little notes and puts them in Chet's pocket to be read only in the evening. They are usually just boyish confidences or something about

the school anecdotes and occurrences. One day Chet found himself stymied: "Dear Dad, (it read) I would like very much to have ball-bearing Sally-Walker and a ball-bearing spiker." And started trouble for Mr. Morris, which ended in the studio research department coming to his rescue. They were a variety of tops, two for ten cents spun with a string! And Chester Morris had spent nearly twenty dollars before he got it correctly.

Another of those guys dodging the double tax is Lionel Barrymore and his little scheme is a home near Phoenix, Arizona where he lives for six months and lives the other six months in Hollywood making pictures.

Things To Know

Jean Harlow always cocks her head to one side when she greets you with that smile.

Bill Powell always bows stiff from the waist.

Frank Morgan always knits his eyebrows severely and looks angry when he walks along in public.

Jan Kiepura loves to have his picture taken with his mouth wide open.

Charlie Butterworth always looks tired out no matter where he is or what time of the day.

Carole Lombard pulls down the corners of her mouth and slides back her scalp when she gets excited.

If I said that a rat in Hollywood stopped a running train, you would immediately say 'Mickey Mouse' and go to sleep. But you are wrong. This rat, christened Archibald, is the personal property pet of Edith Fellows of *She Married Her Boss* fame. Recently she took her companion rat and went on location, via a train. On the train, "Archie" sort of felt like romping and sneaked out of his box in his usual rat fashion. When "Archie" was out, somebody smelt, well, a rat and immediately there was pandemonium in the air and panic and havoc among the passengers. The conductor had stopped the train

meanwhile to avert a riot. Archie's box now bears the inscription in bold letter capitals if you please, ARCHIBALD THE ONLY RAT THAT EVER STOPPED A TRAIN.

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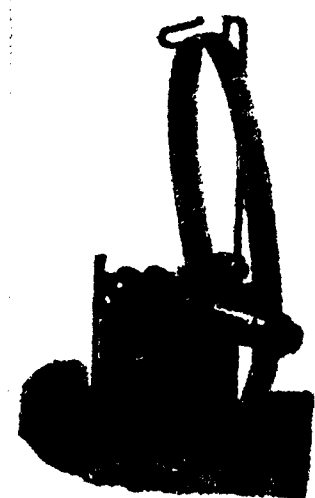
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