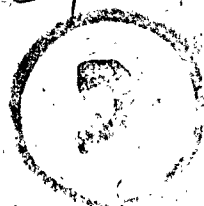


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CONTENTS

	PAGE
The Rogues' Gallery (By C. V. Pichappa, M A., M Sc.)	2
Mangalore Murder Case (By S. Rajagopalan)	4
The Talking Eggs (A Folk Tale)	7
Thlrd Time Unlucky (A Detective Story)	1157 4-54
Human Sacrifice Stopped (By Justice A. S. P. Ayyar)	15
Girl on Crutches (By Manjeri S. Iswaran)	24
The Haunted House	29
The Mischievous Ghosts	31
The King & The Sage (By A. R. Ponnuswamy Iyer)	37
An Obedient Wife (By Swami Sivananda)	39
Know Your Luck (By Leo)	45

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OURSELVES

Every month brings some letters of appreciation from readers. Last month one was received from a railway passenger who had to wait a few hours at a junction for a connecting train. Looking through the books and magazines at the railway bookstall he picked up *Kahaniya*. "I did not know how I passed the time. The variety of stories provide very interesting reading," he wrote.

dium of expression by writers of all countries and types."

After pointing out how the monthly contains varied types of stories, the review adds that it is a happy augury that stories of spiritual import are also included. "And short stories can be a very effective medium for the expression and propagation of spiritual truths and aspirations."

The November issue of *Vedanta Kesari* reviewing *Kahaniya* says:

"Short stories have a tremendous grip on human mind all over the world. Stories are read and told all over the world by men and women, young and old alike. This form of literary art has been used as a me-

Quite a few readers have asked why "Know Your Luck" feature has been dropped. We thought that in a story monthly the space occupied by this feature could be better utilised by giving one or two more short stories. But since readers seem to like it, we have decided to revive the feature from this month.

SURAJMAL'S

FOR

Quality Diamonds
and Precious Stones

313, Esplanade, Madras-1

THE ROGUES' GALLERY

(By C. V. Pichappa, M.A., M.Sc.)

He was staring at me from the opposite side of the table in the coffee-house

I was sipping my coffee.

I was watching him also.

I thought, may be he's hungry.

I said, "Shall I get you some coffee?"

He said, "No, thank you. I just had a cup. I'm glad that there's at least one good man on earth."

I thought, this fellow has suffered much. He has no faith in humanity.

I said, "You seem to have suffered much."

He replied sadly: "Yes, shall I tell you my story?"

I thought, I have no other work, let the fellow please himself.

So I said, "O.K. Go on."

This is what he said:

The world is full of rogues. I got disillusioned long ago.

I was young and well-educated. You laugh, don't you? I'm not surprised. Who wants mere education now-a-days anyway?

Or for that matter who wants classical music? You see modern society only worships wealth.

I wanted to marry. There was this girl also willing.

But she had a father. A unique specimen.

He said, "You want to marry? How much are you worth?"

I said, "Look here, is it not

enough that I have my degree?"

The father laughed. I couldn't see the joke.

He said, "Young man, I'm sorry for you. You're a fool. Go and get a job. Then come here."

He was adamant. My love died even at its birth.

I already told you. They're all rogues. That was the first one. He couldn't see my worth.

I'll tell you about another.

This chap was my close friend.

He said to me, "Old chap, you're living in a fool's paradise. You're trying to get an overdraft on your degree."

"The thing for us is business. How much are you prepared to invest?"

I said, "You know I've not a pie on me. I'll borrow some."

My friend said, "That's the spirit I like. There's no business without credit."

We tried to take up some agencies. There was some profit also.

One day, my friend said, "I think we will have to wind up. I have got an offer to work in a firm."

I said, O.K. We will split the profits and go our way.

My friend laughed, "What do you say about my salary? Was I not working like a dog, while you were the sleeping partner?"

I told you, they're all rogues. I was left on the roads.

The Rogue's Gallery

3

I climbed the steps of a number of offices.

Last month, I met this chap. He said he will get me a job in his office.

I got the job. I got the salary.

I counted the money. It was ten rupees less than the stipulated sum.

I asked my friend. He was the cashier.

He laughed and said, "What about my commission every month?"

I said, "You're not going to get it. I'm going to represent matters."

He said, "You won't try."

I said, "Let us see."

I saw the boss. The next day I got the sack.

So here I am without a job again.

They're all rogues, rouges, rouges.

X X X

I stood up. I patted him on the back.

I said, "Young man, I am sorry to hear your misfortunes. I hope you will get a job soon."

We came out of the coffee house together.

The editor invites short stories, skits and articles of general interest from readers and particularly from college students. Please enclose stamps if the manuscript is desired to be returned in case it is rejected. Stories and articles should not ordinarily exceed 1500 words.

There was the usual queue and the final rush at the bus-stop. Somehow with his help, I got into my bus.

I said, I'm much obliged. I'm an old man.

He said, "It's nothing. You are honest and kind. I shall be pushing along."

I sat in my seat.

"Fare please," the conductor asked. I put my hand into the pocket to take out the purse. It was not there.

I had to get down from the bus and walk back home.

Bitterly I said to myself: "They're all rogues."

ALL TO HIS CREDIT

Sandy seemed worried. There was obviously something on his mind.

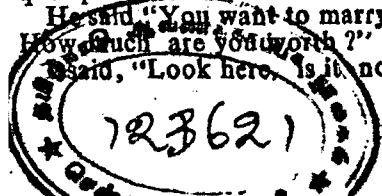
"What is it?" asked his friend.

"I want your help," replied Sandy quietly; "In fact, I want you to come and choose a suit for me."

His friend smiled modestly.

"But I don't think my taste is any better than yours," he replied.

"No, perhaps not," said the Scot, "but I'm thinking that your credit is."



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Mangalore Murder Case

(By S. Rajagopalan)

On the morning of 23-12-'50, at about 10 a.m. a cooly working in a field in Kuthethur village, about 5 miles from Mangalore, on the West coast, stumbled upon a gunny bag which when untied disclosed a human hand sticking out of it. The bag contained a headless trunk; the head apparently had already been chopped off. He reported the matter to the village headman and the police were apprised of it immediately afterwards. Sometime later, a skull wrapped up in cloth and weighted with stones was found deposited in a nearby well. The remains were later on identified as those of one George, who had been in the employ of one Peiris.

Peiris was a native of Ceylon and had settled down in Bombay. He posed as a big diamond merchant and a prosperous businessman with numerous contacts with Maharajas and other big people as his clients. But in point of fact he had been a habitual criminal having had between the years 1922-1942, at least 10 convictions for theft, house-breaking and other offences. In 1946 he met Lucy Patraos in Bombay and married her. Her brother Albert Patraos also became his close associate. Their maternal

uncle, one David Souza, a day labourer, too, became friendly.

In 1947, Peiris set up house in Bangalore where he met one George who was then working as a salesman in a radio shop, and prevailed upon him to serve under him. George consented to do so. In 1949, Peiris moved to Mangalore with Lucy and George and they all lived together as members of one family. In 1950, the party moved into a house in Bijey, which was expensively furnished and gave an impression to the visitors that the occupants were prosperous. Peiris, however, used to absent himself very frequently at Bombay or Bangalore and put in appearance only occasionally at Bijey.

On 13-9-1950, the Sub-Inspector of Police, crime branch, Mangalore, searched the house on information received from the Bombay police. Peiris, however, managed to conceal himself and eluded him. He disappeared soon afterwards telling his people that he was proceeding to Bombay. Lucy was alone in the house with George and the two became very friendly and lived as man and wife. George was addicted to drinking and most often he drank to excess. Two other persons Albert, brother of Lucy,

Mangalore Murder Case

5

and another, Augustine, also used to visit the house, and the three, George, Albert and Augustine, became boon companions with frequent bouts of drink and dissipation.

Now Peiris was upset by George's immoderate drinking and he felt that one day he (George) would betray him and his secrets. In fact he became extremely nervous after the police search on 13-9-50 and had even exchanged hot words with George. In November '50, Peiris had prevailed upon his brother-in-law Albert, who was working in a restaurant in Bombay, to come and reside with him in Mangalore. After considerable hesitation, Albert agreed to do so and on 22-11-50 had proceeded to Mangalore.

Sometime later, Peiris summoned both Augustine and Albert to him and complained that George was drinking heavily and wasting his money, creating a lot of trouble all round. He apprehended that he would expose him, and expressed his resolve that he should be murdered. Albert at first demurred but eventually agreed. Augustine who was promised a payment of Rs 12,000, also offered to help him in the nefarious undertaking. Albert was still cogitating but latter fell in with the idea. This was on 24-11-50 and 25-11-1950 and the three confabulated Peiris wound up and suggested that the murder should be completed in 10 days and that the corpse should be destroyed completely as to leave

no trace and that the head should be left untraceable.

Augustine suggested that the murder should be committed in Kulur by inducing David Souza, uncle of Lucy and Albert, to join the gang.

On 2-2-1950, Peiris sailed from Mangalore to Bombay and left full instruction for the communication of information; and he felt worried that nothing had been forthcoming. On 12-12-1950, Albert went to David and promised to pay him Rs. 2,000 if he would assist in the murder and he readily agreed, being only a day labourer.

The party perfected their plan and on 19-12-1950 took George from the house in Bijey to David's house in Kuthethur where they spent the night. On the following day, George was made to drink so heavily that he became completely prostrate. They took him to a hillock behind David's house about a furlong off and made him sit down there. A rope was then looped round his neck under instructions from Augustine and they pulled at both ends of it. George was thus strangled to death. His clothes were taken off and put into a bundle together with the shoes. The corpse was thrust into a gunny bag. It was carried to a well nearby which was being dug. A pit was made in the earth thrown up by the well. The gunny bag was then opened and the head severed from the trunk. The head was tied in a piece of cloth, and the trunk was pushed back into

the gunny bag which was buried in the mound of earth. The skull with the wrapping of cloth was cast into the well after it had been weighted with stones.

The shoes and stockings were deposited in a rock nearby and the clothes were brought to the house of David where they were burnt. On the morning of 21-12-50, Albert and Augustine left David's house, their task done.

The body was as stated discovered on 23-12-50 and the police began to move. Albert got scent of it and both he and Augustine did not stir out of their house in Bijey. On 28-10-50, Lucy sent in an express telegram to Peiris, saying, "On receiving wire start home." Peiris immediately flew to Madras and from there travelled by train to Mangalore which he reached on 1-1-51. On 5-1-51, Peiris, Lucy and Albert all left Mangalore by the mail train for Bangalore, travelling first class. They were, however, detained at Podanur and arrested by the Railway Police. They were produced before the nearest Magistrate and later bailed out. On 8-1-51 Peiris ran away

to Bombay, but he was arrested on 20-3-51. He was brought to Mangalore and kept in the sub-jail but he again gave the slip. He was finally arrested a month later in Delhi.

The police filed their charge sheet on 24-7-51 against the four persons for conspiracy to commit murder and for murder, the accused being A. J. Peiris, Augustine, David and Albert Patraos. Albert could not be traced until 28-7-52, when he was apprehended at Bombay. When produced before the Magistrate he offered to make a clean breast of the whole affair. He was in legal parlance taken in as an approver and was pardoned off.

The trial was long and elaborate, the story of the approver was corroborated and the three accused were sentenced to death by the Sessions Judge of Mangalore. At the High Court two judges differed as to the guilt of Peiris alone, but the third judge who was referred to, held that his participation was proved. The curtain was finally rung down on this gruesome murder when the Supreme Court dismissed their appeal.

Teacher was taking the class in a general knowledge test.

"Johnny," she said, "tell me how matches are made."

"I don't know, miss," said Johnny, "but I don't blame you for asking."

"What do you mean, Johnny?"

"Well, mother said you've been trying to make one for a year."

A FOLK TALE

THE TALKING EGGS

There was once a lady who had two daughters; they were called Rose and Blanche. Rose was bad, and Blanche was good; but the mother liked Rose better, although she was bad, because she was her very picture. She would compel Blanche to do all the work, while Rose was seated in her rocking chair. One day she sent Blanche to the well to get some water in a bucket. When Blanche arrived at the well, she saw an old woman, who said to her: "Pray, my little one, give me some water; I am very thirsty."

"Yes aunt," said Blanche, "here is some water;" and Blanche rinsed her bucket and gave her good fresh water to drink. "Thank you, my child, you are a good girl. God will bless you."

A few days after, the mother was so bad to Blanche that she ran away into the woods. She cried, and knew not where to go because she was afraid to return home. She saw the same old woman, who was walking in front of her.

"Ah my child why are you crying? What hurts you?"

"Ah, aunt, mamma has beaten me and I am afraid to return to my home."

"Well, my child, come with me; I will give you supper and a bed; but you must promise me not to laugh at anything which you will see."

"She took Blanche's hand,

and they began to walk in the wood. As they advanced, the bushes of thorns opened before them, and closed behind their backs. A little further on, Blanche saw two axes, which were fighting; she found that very strange, but she said nothing. They walked further and behold! it was two arms fighting; a little farther, two legs; at last she saw two heads which were fighting and which said, "Blanche, good morning, my child, God will help you."

At last they arrived at the hut of the old woman who said to Blanche: "Make some fire my child, to cook the supper," and she sat down near the fireplace and took off her head. She placed it on her knees and began to louse herself. Blanche found that very strange; she was afraid, but she said nothing. The old woman put back her head in its place and gave Blanche a large bone to put on the fire for their supper. Blanche put the bone in the pot. Lo! in a moment the pot was full of meat.

She gave Blanche a grain of rice to pound with the pestle and thereupon the mortar became full of rice. After they had taken their supper the old woman said to Blanche: "Pray, my child, scratch my back." Blanche scratched her back, but her hand was all cut, because the old woman's back was covered with broken glass. When she saw that Blanche's

hand was bleeding, she only blew on it, and the hand was cured.

When Blanche got up the next morning, the old woman said to her: "You must go home now but as you are a good girl, I want to make you a present of the talking eggs. Go to the chicken house; all the eggs which say 'Take me' you must take; all those which will say 'Do not take me' you must not take. When you will be on the road throw the eggs behind your back to break them."

As Blanche walked, she broke the eggs as directed. Many pretty things came out of these eggs. It was now diamonds, now gold, a beautiful carriage, beautiful dresses and so on. When she arrived at her mother's she had so many fine things that the house was full of them. Thereupon her mother was very glad to see her. The next day she said to Rose: "You must go to the woods to look for this same old woman; you must have fine dresses like Blanche."

Rose went to the woods and she met the old woman, who told her to come to her hut, but when she saw the axes, the arms, the legs, the heads and the old

woman taking off her head to louse herself, she began to laugh and to ridicule everything she saw. Therefore the old woman said: "Ah! my child, you are not a good girl; God will punish you."

The next day she said to Rose: "I don't want to send you back with nothing; go to the chicken-house and take the eggs which say, 'Take me.'"

Rose went to the chicken-house. All the eggs began to say "Take me," "Don't take me," "Take me," "Don't take me." Rose was so bad she said, "Ah, yes, you say, 'Don't take me,' but you are precisely those I want." She took all the eggs which said, "Don't take me," and she went away with them.

As she walked, she broke the eggs, and there came out a quantity of snakes, toads, frogs, which began to run after her. There were even a quantity of whips which whipped her. Rose ran and shrieked. She arrived at her mother's so tired that she was not able to speak. When her mother saw all the beasts and the whips which were chasing her, she was so angry she sent her away like a dog, and told her to go and live in the woods.

Peter was playing at John's house. When it was time to go home, it started to rain. Mrs. White, however, gave Johnny's raincoat to Peter.

"Don't take so much trouble, Mrs. White," said Peter politely.

"I'm sure your mother would do as much for Johnny," she replied.

"My mother would do more," said Peter. "She'd ask Johnny to stay to supper."

DETECTIVE STORY

Third Time Unlucky

(By George Goodchild)

The second attempt on the life of Sir Miles Friston was no more successful than the first, but it sent that gentleman hurrying to Scotland Yard.

As usual, he was as neat as a new pin, with well-creased trousers, spats, and morning-coat. But his customary calm and somewhat cynical face was now hard and resentful.

"It's happened again," he said to McLean, with whom he had a slight acquaintance.

"What has happened exactly?" asked McLean.

"I was shot at, shortly after leaving my house in my car. The bullet must have missed me by inches.

"The mile of lane between my house and the main road is thickly wooded on either side. I must have travelled about half a mile when I heard a loud report and a curious sound inside the car.

"The window on the driving side of the car was up about halfway, but just below the top of it was a round hole, and the glass was cracked all round the puncture. There was a similar hole on the opposite window, which was shut completely. The car is below. I drove straight here."

"You think it was an attack?"

"What else could it be? Two

months ago I was shot at in my garden."

"Do you know any reason why some person should seek to take your life?"

"Absolutely none."

"Do you live alone?"

"No. My sister shares the cottage with me, and manages the domestic affairs. We keep a daily maid and a part-time gardener."

The damage to the car bore out Friston's statement. There were the two bullet-holes, exactly opposite each other.

"It could only have missed my head by a matter of inches," complained Friston.

"Yes, you were extremely lucky. You say this took place within half a mile of your house?"

"Just about half a mile. Near an old, withered oak, which I reckon to be half-way between my house and the main road."

"I see," said McLean. "Now, if you have no objection, I'd like to see your house."

When they reached it, a tall, dark woman came out of the house to greet them. As she approached, McLean could see she was gravely disturbed, but she conjured up a smile as her brother made the introduction.

"I'm glad to see you, Inspector," she said. "I am horrified at my brother's narrow

escape. I can't understand why anyone should want to harm him."

"It's much too early to assume that anyone tried to harm him," said McLean. "I agree the matter needs investigating, but it's surprising how careless some people can be with fire-arms."

"I want to go into the first incident. At what time of the day did it happen?"

"It was at half-past nine in the morning," said Friston. "I happened to be at home because it was Saturday, and I do not go to the office on a Saturday. I was doing a bit of weeding on the rockery when I heard a report, and simultaneously I heard the bullet strike quite close to me. It sounded as if it came from the woods at the back of the house."

"And the bullet was never recovered by the police?"

"No. They spent a long time in the garden trying to trace it."

McLean gazed across to the rockery, and at his request Friston went with him and showed him the place he had been standing when the shot was fired.

"It seems very doubtful that we shall recover the bullet," said McLean.

He and Brook spent two weary hours at this, and just when they were about to give up, success came. In the largest of a group of silver birch trees McLean discovered a puncture about breast high.

Friston, quite excited by the discovery, soon produced a

carpenter's chisel and a large mallet. He watched while Brook used the tools with considerable skill, and at a depth of about five inches the bullet was removed, almost undamaged.

It was nickel-coated, and it showed clearly the rifling of the weapon from which it had been fired.

"Will it help?" asked Friston.

"If it can be traced to a particular type of weapon it would narrow the investigation."

The subsequent examination of the retrieved bullet endorsed McLean's early opinion.

"38 automatic pistol," said the expert.

"A very old weapon with much wear on the rifling. Should be easy to identify the weapon used."

"First find the weapon," said McLean.

But his search came to nothing.

x x x

A fortnight passed during which the police made no progress, and then late one evening a message came through to McLean at his flat.

It was from Scotland Yard, and it informed him that Sir Miles Friston had been injured in his house and that the man responsible was in a critical condition.

A fast car arrived and was soon making down the Kingston by pass with McLean and Brook inside. When they finally reached the lonely house there were two men present from the local force, and also a

doctor, McLean was shown into the morning-room, where the doctor was attending to someone lying on a water-proof sheet spread on a large settee.

McLean introduced himself, and the doctor said, "Friston is in his room. I have taken a bullet off his leg. He's not in any danger. But this fellow is in a bad way. He's bleeding badly."

The doctor stood aside, and McLean winced at the sight which met his gaze, for the face and neck of the man were covered with small shot wounds.

"Any chance of a statement?" he asked.

"Not much."

McLean left him to his grim task, and went across to the man's clothing, noting a pistol which lay on the floor. He went through the pockets of the outer garment, removing a pipe and tobacco pouch, also a bunch of keys and a wallet containing a few pounds in notes. The pistol he handled carefully before passing it to Brook as an exhibit.

"The weapon we've been looking for," said Brook. "Well, third time wasn't lucky in this case."

"I'll take Friston's evidence in his bedroom," said McLean. "He's probably incapable of getting down here."

Friston was found sitting in an armchair, with his right leg raised on a stool. He was wearing a dressing gown over a sleeping-suit, and he looked pale and worried.

"Good-evening, Inspector!" he said. "It happened, you see.

Thank God I sent my sister away."

"Tell me what happened," said McLean. "Didn't you hear him enter the house?"

"I never heard a sound until he suddenly opened the door and stood for a moment staring at me. I stood up and asked him what he wanted. He said he had come to settle accounts with me. I said he must have made a mistake, as I had never seen him before in my life."

"Since the trouble I've been keeping a shot-gun handy. It wasn't visible to him from where he stood, and it was loaded. I suddenly snatched it up. He was caught slightly off his guard, and his bullet went low and caught me in the right leg—just below the hip."

"As the muzzle of the pistol came up I pressed the trigger of the gun and he staggered and fell. The pain in my leg was considerable, but I managed to phone the police."

"You say the man was a complete stranger to you?"

"Absolutely. I think he's a madman."

McLean did not linger long, for he did not want to miss the chance of getting a brief statement from the man downstairs, but when he reached the door of the morning-room the doctor came out.

"He's gone," he said. "There was a flicker of consciousness at the end, and he tried to say something. I'm used to lip-reading, and I think the words were 'The pearl box,' but he

could get no further. Of course, I may be wrong."

"The pearl box!" muttered McLean. "A great deal might be concealed in those words. Well, I had better tell Friston the bad news."

"Is it so bad?" asked Brook. "The threat to his life is over, and in almost any court he would be acquitted."

Friston took the news sadly.

The matter of identification now rested with the clothing. The suit bore no tailor's tab, but on the vest there was a laundry number in red cotton.

It was the one and only chance, and McLean decided to use the machinery to supply this to the principal London and provincial newspapers. But before he left the house he made a search for any possible pearl box, without success.

"Does it matter, sir?" asked Brook. "The case seems all wrapped up."

"I think it's far from wrapped up. The evidence is very inconsistent, and has been from the start."

"For example, that bullet which we dug out of the tree in the garden could not have narrowly missed Friston. The direction doesn't agree with his story."

"For another thing, the bullet fired at the car, was fired while the car was stationary. Had the car been moving fast, as Friston stated it was, the two bullet holes in the windows would not have been exactly in the same position. I want to know far more about the dead man."

Two days passed before McLean could make any progress in this direction. Then the laundry mark was claimed by a small laundry in a south coast town and traced to a Mr. Cantor, who lived in a bungalow some miles out of town.

McLean and Brook found the bungalow. The place was isolated and locked up, but, significantly enough, one of the keys from the dead man fitted the front door.

McLean and Brook went inside. The place was well furnished and quite tidy. McLean passed into the small sitting-room, and opened a roll-top desk. Inside was a wooden box, inlaid with mother of pearl.

McLean selected the smallest key and speedily opened the box. Inside was a number of letters and documents, some of them dating back many years, but it was the top letter which drew McLean's immediate attention, for it was on Friston's headed notepaper and dated the day before the shooting. In a low voice McLean read the neat handwriting:

Dear Ed.—I am now able to fulfill your terms. Cannot meet you in town as I have a bad cold and am confined to the house. Better bring the stuff here and we will make an end of it. Any time after 8 p.m.—M.F.

"Well!" ejaculated Brook. "But that doesn't seem to make sense."

McLean made no reply. He was reading some of the other letters, and perusing some

bank statements. Then he said, "An incredible case. Yet it all fits together like a jig saw puzzle."

"Ten years ago Cantor was employed in Friston's office before Friston reached his present high position and got a knighthood. Cantor was sentenced for misappropriation of public moneys."

"Upon his release from prison, there appears in his bank statements a regular cash payment of round about a hundred pounds—always in cash and paid in quarterly. Can there be any doubt about the source of that money?"

"You mean—Friston?"

"Yes. He has been blackmailing Friston for years. It appears that recently he made a proposal to Friston, whereby he would deliver up what incriminating evidence he had about Friston for a lump sum. Friston, sick to death of being bled regularly, and having no intention of paying a lump sum, sought and found what he believed to be the perfect crime."

"He faked two attempts on his life, and then planned the finale. It all worked perfectly. He had already sent his sister away, and had the house and his victim to himself. He didn't use a pistol, because a shot-gun suited him much better."

"You mean to disfigure Cantor?"

"Yes. He didn't want him identified. I believe that after he shot him and believed him to be dead, he went through his pockets and removed anything

which might aid identification, also the incriminating documents, of course."

"But he was shot," protested Brook. "Cantor must have come armed."

"No, Friston had the pistol. He had it all along."

"You mean—Friston shot himself?"

"I do. Wasn't it worth a bullet in the leg to be rid of Cantor for ever? He was clever enough to realise that he would have to stand trial and that such a wound might tip the scales in his favour. You wouldn't think that he would have the guts to do it, but he had. Now we will pay him a visit."

But McLean was spared the necessity, for as his car rounded the bend of the lane, another car passed them at speed.

McLean caught just one glimpse of the driver, and that was enough.

"That was Friston," he said. "Turn the car Brooke as soon as you can."

"Yes, sir. But how can he drive a car with an injured leg?"

"A man can do a lot of surprising things when he has the incentive, and in this case the incentive may be the destruction of anything in that cottage which might spoil his game."

Brook still thought that McLean might be mistaken, but he got the car round and then stopped it on the bend in the lane. As they walked round the bend Friston's car came to view, parked just off the cottage.

"He appears to have gone round the back with the intention of breaking in that way. 'We'll give him a minute or two.'"

Finally they went forward. McLean sent Brook round to the back while he himself opened the front door quietly with the key. There was Fris-ton, hobbling towards him with the aid of sticks. He stopped dead as he recognised McLean. "You should have started half an hour earlier," said McLean. "What you hoped to find and destroy is now in my possession. This way, if you don't mind." And soon all three were in the police car enroute to headquarters.

HOPELESS

They found him wandering aimlessly, with a blackened eye and a gap in his front teeth. He looked as though he had annoyed somebody.

Filled with pity, they seized him by the arms and helped him along.

"Come along, old chap. Let us take you home to your wife. Shall put you right in on time."

"No, no," he groaned; "not that! Don't you—can't you understand that's where I got this lot?"

A Scottish minister had a sermon which he preached on special occasions. It was taken from the text, "Were not two sparrows sold for a farthing?"

John Smith, who had been a devoted church worker, was leaving the place, so he attended church on the Sunday before his departure and once again heard the familiar sermon and text, "Were not two sparrows sold for a farthing?"

After a time John returned to his native place. He went to church on Sunday, and was not a little surprised to hear the same old text announced. After the service the minister beckoned him into the vestry, and started talking about the many changes that had occurred during his absence.

"There's one thing that has not changed, I notice," said John.

"And what is that?"

"The price of sparrows."

He had talked about himself till she could endure it no longer.

"It costs a great deal more than one would think to become a broad-minded and intelligent man of the world," he remarked.

"I suppose so," she said, "and I don't blame you for saving your money."

Human Sacrifice Stopped

(By Justice A. S. P. Ayyar.)

King Harischandra, of the famous line of Ikshvaku, was very sad as he had no son. His Queen, Chandramail, was even sadder. So, when the sage Narada visited him one day, the king told him about the secret sorrow which was eating into his heart.

"Pray to Varuna," said Narada. "He may grant you a son though he will exact hard condition."

"I am willing to put up with any condition," said the King. "He shall have the costliest offerings."

"He may not be satisfied with any other offering; he may demand the sacrifice of the son himself," said Narada.

"How horrible!" exclaimed Harischandra. "Human sacrifice has not been heard of for generations."

"But, he is an old and conservative god, unlike Indra who is content with the lower animals and is fast becoming his dread rival," was the reply.

"What will I gain if I agree to this monstrous sacrifice?" asked the King.

"Some people think that it is better to have loved and lost than not to have known what it is to have a son at all," said the sage.

"Is there any way of making Varuna relent finally?" asked the King.

"Who can say? You can

count on my help, though it is mighty little that I can do. But I would advise you not to entertain false hopes from the very outset. Varuna is, indeed, a hard taskmaster," said Narada.

"Why does he exact such hard terms?" asked the King.

"He thinks that he is only taking back what he himself gives, and that there is nothing wrong in this," replied the sage.

"But, a human sacrifice! How horrible!" exclaimed Harischandra.

"To you and to me it is horrible, as death seems to us to be such a terrible and gruesome event. To Varuna, the ancient and immortal god, the giving and taking are just the same; birth and death are alike; so, he may not look at this with our eyes," said Narada. "Now I must be off," and he left, after setting the ball rolling for ending human sacrifice in India.

Harischandra consulted his queen that night. Both of them, finally, resolved to pray to Varuna, and obtain a son, even on the hard terms mentioned by Narada.

"Oh thou who holdest heaven and earth apart, and causeth the golden swing to shine above, hewing a path for it across the sky with thy dart grant us a son on any condition you like!" they prayed. Varuna appeared. He granted the boon

on the explicit condition that they would sacrifice the son to him.

Queen Chandramati had a son the very next year, resplendent like the sun and the embodiment of beauty and charm. The delighted parents named him Rohitasva or Rohita, for short, and went through the auspicious ceremonies and gifts, usual on such occasions. The whole country rejoiced at the birth of the prince.

In the midst of this universal rejoicing, Varuna appeared before the King and said, "Sacrifice the son to me, as promised."

Harischandra, replied, "Let the ten days of birth pollution pass. No one who is not ceremonially pure can be sacrificed to the gods."

"Be it so," said Varuna, and departed.

Ten days passed, and he came again, and made the dread demand.

"Let the teeth appear," said Harischandra. "No animal can be sacrificed till all the teeth appear."

Varuna left, but returned again after all the milk teeth had appeared.

"Let the milk teeth fall, and the real teeth take their place," said the King, "Teeth must mean only *permanent* teeth, and not *milk* teeth."

Varuna went, but came again as soon as the milk teeth had all fallen and the real teeth had taken their place.

"Let the boy be initiated in arms," said Harischandra. "Then alone will the sacrifice

of a Kshatriya prince be proper."

"So be it," said Varuna. "But, do not hope to put me off even then."

Rohita was duly initiated into the warrior's profession when he had completed the age of sixteen. Then, taking him inside his private audience hall, Harischandra told him, with tears streaming down his cheeks, about his impending sacrifice to Varuna, and begged of him to agree to it as there was no other way out.

"Why should I agree to be sacrificed for keeping your silly promise?" asked Rohita.

"No father is entitled, under our laws, to sacrifice his son except for his country, as in war. Simply to have the pleasure of boasting that you too had a son, you made this promise to this ancient and blood-thirsty god. He has no right to demand the sacrifice from me, as I had no part or lot in this promise. Let him do what he likes with you for breaking your unholy pledge. I do not want your kingdom or property so that Varuna may not say that, having taken your assets, I should also take on your liability. I am departing with only the bow given to me by my maternal uncle."

So saying, he took the bow and left for the wilderness, guided by Indra, the powerful god of rain and the rival of Varuna's exclusive claims to be the lord of all the waters. There he built the famous fort of Rohtak and lived free from care.

Varuna, deprived of his promised sacrifice, and powerless to do anything to Rohita, took revenge on Harischandra by causing a terrible kind of dropsy of the belly. The belly swelled enormously. For six years, Harischandra suffered the tortures of hell from this terrible affliction. Nothing could quench the thirst from which he was suffering, and his belly was distended like an enormous balloon, making it impossible for him to appear in public. He had no sleep or rest or peace of mind, and felt his life a burden. He heard Varuna's jeers, "Now you see how an unfulfilled promise can drag you down", ringing constantly in his ears. Finally, he was on the point of death. He sent a pathetic letter to his son as follows: "I am about to die. But, far from trying to live, I am only anxious to die as early as possible, and to get rid of this infernal disease. You will succeed me as king shortly. But Varuna will not allow you to reign in peace till he has been given the human sacrifice he demands. In response to the piteous entreaties of myself and your mother, he has finally agreed to accept a suitable Brahmin boy as a substitute for you if you can get one. Offer any amount of wealth; and get the substitute, and come here with him, and, save our race, the famous line of Ikshvaku, from extinction."

Rohita read the letter and went on eagerly searching for a Brahmin boy. No one was willing to offer his son as a substitute. One said to him:

"My son is as valuable to me as you are to your father." Another remarked, "What a Kshatriya are you that you quake before death and seek to put an unwarlike Brahmin in your place!" A third asked him, "Who wants your wealth in exchange for his son?" A fourth said, "Harischandra has an enormous belly filled with water. You have an enormous purse filled with pelf. Neither of you will succeed in fooling others." A fifth queried, "You fool, can't you see that a crow's young will be as dear to it as a swan's is to the swan?" A sixth said, "When you find a father ready to barter his son for your pelf, know that the time of universal destruction is at hand, as righteousness is at an end." A seventh remarked, "If you are brave, sacrifice Varuna to the other gods, and rid the world of this inhuman deity." Rohita wandered about, hearing such replies and without any sign of approaching success.

Then, one day, to his surprise, he met a father who was willing to accept his offer. This was the Brahmin Ajigarta who had three sons, Sunahpuchchha, Sunahsepa and Sunolangula. He was extremely poor and greedy. For years it had been his ambition to own a cow, and he had not realised it yet, though he had reached middle age. When offered a hundred good cows in exchange for a son he cried out, "Leave the eldest for performing my funeral ceremonies when I am

dead, and take one of the other two."

"Don't take my last-born one!" said his wife clinging to Sunolangula.

So, Rohita took the middle one, Sunahsepa who was unclaimed by either parent, like the unswept middle portion between two houses in a street or like the No-Man's land in war, and gladdened the heart of Ajigarta with the gift of the coveted cows.

Then, taking Sunahsepa, and also his parents in order to prove their consent to the sacrifice, Rohita went to Ayodhya and told his father everything. Harischandra asked Varuna for permission to substitute Sunahsepa for Rohita. Varuna agreed, remarking, "A Brahmin is better than a Kshatriya." The King then prepared to perform the sacrifice with Sunahsepa as the victim. Viswamitra was the *Hotri**, Jamadagni was the *Adhvaryu*; Agastya was *Udgatri*, and Vasishta was the *Brahma* for this unique sacrifice.

Nobody was willing to tie up this human victim to the sacrificial post, as a doubt was felt whether such a sacrifice was proper in the changed times, when the victim could not be restored to life, as in the days of old. Ajigarta said that he would tie up the victim if given a hundred cows more, adding, "I have already allowed

him to be sacrificed, and he will surely be sacrificed as the only alternative is Rohita. So, why not I myself do this, and gain something more for the family?" He was given a hundred more cows by Harischandra, and he tied the boy to the sacrificial post, Viswamitra alone shouting out, "Fie on you who call yourself a Brahmin!" The sacrifice proceeded, and the sacred fire was taken round Sunahsepa preliminary to his actual slaughter. After this was over, the victim had to be slaughtered.

No one was willing to use the sacrificial knife on him. Ajigarta once more volunteered his services and offered to slaughter his son himself if given another hundred cows, adding, "When I agreed to give him for sacrifice, it was equal to slaughtering him myself. So, I may as well get something more for the family by completing the gift." Harischandra accepted his offer at once, though Viswamitra exclaimed, "What a sacrifice is this, with this Brahmin callously killing his own son for the sake of wealth!"

Seeing his father get ready with the sacrificial knife, and sure of death now, Sunahsepa prayed to the Lord Prajapati to save him. "You are the lord of all creatures, and the lineal ancestor of men," cried he. "O save me from this horrible death!" Prajapati expressed

his desire that the sacrifice should be stopped, but referred the matter to Agni, as the sacred fire had been circled round the victim. Agni released his claim, but wanted the god Savitar to decide, as the hymns had been uttered, and it was for the god of hymns to release the victim. Savitar released his claim, but referred the matter to Varuna, as he it was who had demanded and got the sacrifice. Harischandra prayed to Varuna:

"Oh Lord Supreme, you have caused the rivers to flow into the sea; you have made the mighty mountains wrapt in cloud; you know the course of all the birds in the sky, and fish in the waters, and the path of the wind; you know each and every secret thing and act; and must have known long ago the course events would take. You who forge the dread fetters for the sinners, but forgive those who repent, pardon my sin in not fulfilling my promise and let Sunahsepa go."

Varuna released his claim, moved by the prayer and in deference to Prajapati's wishes. He referred the matter to the Viswadevas whose share in the proposed sacrifice could not be taken away without their consent. The Viswadevas readily agreed to forego their share, adding, "The question of our share arises only when there is actually a sacrifice. But the person to decide whether the sacrifice, which has been begun, can be given up is Indra, the lord of sacrifices." Indra was referred to. He said that Ushas,

the goddess of the dawn, was the fittest person to decide as to whether such a sacrifice was appropriate to the changed times. Ushas said with conviction, "Human sacrifices belong to the Sunset, and not to the Dawn." She continued:

"Know, human sacrifice
Is from now on a vice,
To be put down by Kings
Like a Hydra with wings.
Fathers can't sell their sons,
Even the middle ones.
It's forbidden to kill
Men simply at one's will.
Sacrifice can go on,
But with oneself as pawn.
He who wants others to save
Must be unselfish and brave.
The gods who demand blood
Must obtain it in war,
But the time is not far
When wars will go, like flood.
Give the gods a leaf or fruit,
Water, flower, or root.
Be your hearts pure always.
Keep you firm in God's
ways!"

So, the sacrifice was given up, and Sunahsepa was released, to his immense joy. Harischandra's belly also reverted to its normal size, and he was free from his fell disease.

Indra said to Sunahsepa, "Son, I give you the power to prepare a wonderful oblation called *Anjasava* from *Soma*. Prepare it at once and offer it to the assembled gods and sages with rice and butter as sacrifice. That is the only suitable sacrifice in this age, the sacrifice of a goat being a permitted alternative in a few cases."

"Tell us how this came about," asked Sunahsepa.

*The Hotri, Adhvaryu, Udgatri, and Brahma are the four priests necessary at a Hindu sacrifice. The Hotri recites hymns from the Rig Veda; the Adhvaryu recites ritual passages from the Yajur Veda; the Udgatri chants hymns from Sama Veda; and the Brahma represents the Godhead.

"I shall," said Indra. "The gods tried an experiment long ago. They sacrificed a man. The *medha*¹ went out of the man and entered a horse. They dismissed the man who had become deformed by this, and sacrificed the horse. The *medha* went out of the horse and entered an ox. They dismissed the horse which had become a white deer and sacrificed the ox. The *medha* went out of the ox and entered a sheep. The gods left the ox, which had become a *gaval*² and sacrificed the sheep. The *medha* went out of it and entered a goat. So the gods left the sheep, which had become a camel, and sacrificed the goat. The *medha* remained for the longest time in the goat, but, finally, went out of it also and entered the earth. The gods dismissed the goat which had become a *sarabha*³. Then they surrounded the *medha* which had entered the earth. It could not escape, being thus surrounded, and turned into rice. So rice with clarified butter, is the best thing to be sacrificed in this age. As the *medha* remained longest in the goat, that animal has come to be an alternative. Human sacrifice is hereby declared to be sinful, and to be distasteful to the gods."

Sunahsepa then prepared the *Anjasava*⁴ from *Soma*⁵ and

offered it to the gods with rice and clarified butter. All were pleased, and blessed him. Viswamitra adopted him as his own son. Ajigarta, on seeing what great honour was being accorded to Sunahsepa by gods and sages, went and claimed him as his son. "No, I shall not return to you who did acts which the worst sinner would not have done," said Sunahsepa. "I have been adopted by Viswamitra who was the first to condemn your act, and I will be his son."

"How can he adopt you without my consent?" asked Ajigarta.

"You have no more claim over me having sold me for 300 cows," said his son.

"How can Viswamitra, who has a hundred sons alive, adopt you?" jeered Ajigarta.

"I shall make him my eldest son," said Viswamitra. "Then the thing will be regular, as a man can have an adopted son first, and then any number of natural sons."

Ajigarta was cornered. "You will do anything," said he to Viswamitra. "You combine Brahman learning with Kshatriya courage. You made the Suttij make way for the Bharatas when they fled southwards after being defeated by the Tritsus with Sudas at their head. You made Trisanku

Human Sacrifice Stopped

stand in the middle heavens though the Devas tried to push him down to the earth. But your sons too are like you, daring and obstinate. They may refuse to receive this boy as their eldest brother."

"I shall see to it," said Viswamitra.

Viswamitra then took Sunahsepa with him to his hundred sons, and asked them to accept him as their eldest brother. The first fifty sons would not agree to have this stranger grafted into their family and as the head of it too.

"He should have obeyed his father, and consented to be sacrificed," said they.

"You obey your father, and accept him as eldest brother," cried out Viswamitra in wrath.

They persisted in their refusal while the last fifty sons, with Madhuchandas at their head, gladly agreed to their father's request, and expressed their pride at having Sunahsepa, the

inventor of Anjasava and the favourite of the gods, as their eldest brother. As the first fifty sons still refused, Viswamitra drove them out with the curse, "As pride of cast and love of of privileges have prevented you from accepting this favourite of the gods as your eldest brother, on the score that he is a stranger may your lot be cast among strange peoples of the south, and may your descendants be of low caste!" So the unfortunate fifty sons wandered forth in the hills and forests of the south, intermarried with the people there, and became the ancestors of the Savaras, Pulindas, Matilas and others. Sunahsepa remained with Viswamitra, as his honoured eldest son under the new name of Devaratha. Human sacrifice was stopped for good all over India, and Ajigarta's name became one of universal reproach and obloquy.—From *Famous Tales of Ind.* V. Ramaswamy Sastrulu & Sons, Madras.

An angler sat on the bank of a canal in Yorkshire, watching his float. Presently a bishop came along with his pretty daughter. They stopped to look on.

"My friend," said the bishop, "I perceive that you are a fisher."

"Aye," grunted the angler.

"I also am a fisher."

"Eh, is that so?" said the man with the rod; "well, I'm pleased to meet a fellow sportsman."

"Ah, but there is a misconception in your mind. You are a fisher of fishes, but I am a fisher of men."

The angler turned and surveyed the daughter.

"Aye," he said at last, "and with bait like her you ought to get a good bag."

1. The inner spirit of sacrifice.

2. A stunted short-horned bullock.

3. A fabulous animal having eight legs and reputed to be stronger than a lion.

4. A doubly sacred drink offered to the gods at sacrifices.

5. The usual drink offered to the gods at sacrifices.

Girl On Crutches

(By Manjeri S. Iswaran)

Of late Srimati had taken to crying at all odd hours of the day. While straining the boiled rice steaming hot from the oven, grinding the roasted coffee-beans, mixing glaxo for the baby,—while engaged in any kind of household work, her eyes would suddenly become misted, her throat dry; she would weep gently for a while, with a gentleness which belied the violence of her emotions, then with a sigh dab her eyes with the end of her sari. And in her preoccupation she would mix *dhall* and blackgram, cumin and coriander, mustard and gingili, and after the deed was done realize her mistake, curse herself under her sari, and subduing the impulse to throw away the stuff begin laboriously to sort out the mixture. One evening she had put salt in her husband's coffee; without batting an eyelid he had drunk the cup and said nothing about it. An hour after discovering her blunder, she had asked him timidly how the coffee had tasted to which he had replied good-humouredly: "Why, quite as usual." She couldn't help herself laughing. The absent-mindedness of professors is proverbial, but Parchanadam was not a professor, he was assistant cashier in an insurance company in Calcutta. He had

not lost his heart entirely in the ledgers so as not to distinguish between salt and sugar in his coffee; tolerant by nature, he exercised always a complete control over his feelings and he was uninquisitive. Deep in the heart of every man and woman there is the same kind of beast; the desire in each to bend the will of the other, in each to enslave the other; passive resistance on the part of man or woman alone is not the thing; together the two should fight the animal and vanquish it to achieve happiness. May be it was a dispensation of Providence that Parchanadam was not inquisitive; but his wife felt it rather inhuman of him not to ask her what troubled her. He took too much for granted. Nothing eventful had happened in the seven years of their married life except for the death of her mother-in-law in the third and the birth of her child, a boy, in the sixth; altogether the period had been even. Parchanadam deeply grieved over the loss of his mother for he liked the way she did things, though his wife did not; being fatherless since a lad of ten and coming to depend on his mother who had made him a man, his loyalty to her held beyond the crematorium. He, however, had

Girl on Crutches

23

nothing to complain about the way his wife ran the home; oftentimes he sincerely felt that he ought to be nearer to her than he was; but there was something withheld in him that defeated the feeling. Thank God for his tolerance! The alternative would have been detachment degenerating by and by into sterile indifference.

Despairing to attract her husband's attention by her sad face—result of crying fitfully at all odd hours of the day—Srimati changed her weeping time to night. She could give free flow to her sorrow which would pass into the night, unseen even by herself. She could relieve the heaviness of her heart through copious tears. She had been too long in hell that she needs must have a glimpse of heaven. This thirst itself was pathos and pathos should lead to understanding.

Parchanadam slept the sleep of the just.

Sitting hunched on the bed Srimati cried softly. Her hand crept toward her husband's shoulder to shake it, the cluster of slender gold bangles sounding thinly about her wrist. Just then she heard the child stir in the cradle near by. Panic seized her; with a little sob the baby was still again—a sob that didn't break its sleep.

Should she wake her husband? For six successive nights she had tried to, but at the last moment her courage had broken down. Tonight it wasn't going to happen again. Two lizards struggled on the wall, one clicked, clicked as if

to confirm. He lay supine, her hand rested on his knee, diffident and trembling, to shake him by the leg.

"I am awake," he said, in a small voice.

She was speechless with surprise.

"Then you know...."

"Know that you've been crying every night, at the same hour, for over a week now."

"And yet you never asked me why I did?"

"How could I? Sensible people tell and cry out their grief. There's greater consolation in that. You cry and wait to be asked. I am afraid of tears."

"Afraid?"

"Yes to the point of being benumbed. It's a preventive against infection."

Was he trying to be callous? Or was he really? Was his tolerance a mask? If it was he was wearing it only too well. It challenged the sum of her tragic, tearful hours. In the concrete world men and women were different, distinguishable beings, but in the realm of the spirit, man and woman as husband and wife, besought the same golden doors to open and reveal the shining idol of auspiciousness and good augury which they had unconsciously made through mutual affection, kindness, common hopes and joys and reverence for the verities of life. She was contrite, humble. Would he lead her by the hand, open the doors, and reveal the shining idol? Her lips were a quiver of unspoken

words. He waited in silence. Then she found her voice.

"I've heard from my mother from Madras."

"When?"

"Three days ago."

"Is it an invitation to stay with your parents?"

"No."

"Then is there anything worthwhile to be communicated to me?"

"It's about Lalita."

"Oh, indeed!"

"It seems she had an attack of typhoid. They didn't suspect it till after one week of the fever."

"I know how much interested your mother is in Lalita. It has been phenomenal in one respect—"

"Oh, please! Don't make it more difficult for me to tell."

"What is there to tell? I hope the poor girl is alive."

"She were better dead than alive. Oh, she were better dead," and her voice was lost in an uncontrollable gust of sobs.

x x x
Panchanadam showed no concern for his wife's tears. His mind went back to an unforgettable day, seven years ago. A very beautiful girl about fifteen, fair, tall for her age, with large eyes but their brightness shadowed by an indefinable sadness, her luxuriant dark hair of natural curls plaited and hanging behind her back, her *pavadai* and *davani* of different hues faded and shabby, looked at him from a staircase landing. He looked at her and her eyes, free

of the shadows momentarily, regarded him with a curious, half-smiling, bright interest. Confused, he turned his glance to see another girl who stood near her, dressed gaily, bejewelled like a goddess,—a large-made girl, well rounded, brown of skin, her whole get-up conscious of creating the best impression and before he could make a mental comprison of the two, with lightning speed it had happened. The beautiful tall girl fell down the stairs head foremost; thrown heavily on the floor she groaned and fainted. He gazed up the stairs again, on the landing stood the other one prim, grim; for a moment she appeared to him as ugly as sin. He fought down the unpleasant feeling....

A beautiful, fair, tall girl, the sadness in their eyes an added attraction—that was Lalita before she became a cripple. Seven years had passed since. Seven years by clock and calendar, but the moment stood and her girlish beauty with that—an undying vision!

Lalita was Srimati's cousin, her aunt's father's sister's daughter. Orphaned at seven she had come under the protection of her uncle. Here was a melancholy story. Panchanadam had known it piecemeal from his wife and his father-in-law, the most melancholy part of it from the latter. Lalita's father had a distillery for eucalyptus oil in the Nilgiris which did fairly good business; his only brother, younger and unmarried and much devoted to him helped him as accountant

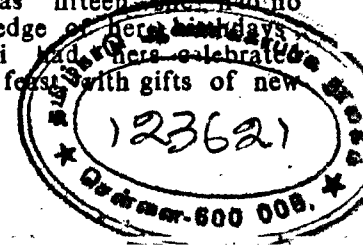
and organizing salesman. Soon a rival distillery, with plenty of resources and much showy publicity, was established near that of the brothers and their business began to fail. A local Marwari who had advanced money as capital to them pressed for payment; they prayed for time, and time was granted at first on agreement of a higher rate of interest; they were not able to pay up at the due date and the Marwari had said something obscene to the effect that those who couldn't pay must be prepared to pawn their wives. Lalita's father was a sensitive person and unable to bear the shame he hanged himself that night from a tree on the road from Ootacamund to Ketti. His younger brother, much concerned at his absence from home for forty-eight hours on end, wandered about in search of him, found his body before the police did, returned home quickly to tell his anxious sister-in-law that all was well, went back and hanged himself from the same branch beside his beloved brother. And all the time the money to be paid to the Marwari was there, for Lalita's uncle having been appealed to urgently by his brother-in-law had remitted the amount; but it happened to be a postal holiday when the pound of flesh fell due and fate took its toll. The irony of it! Within a year of these two violent deaths, Lalita's mother also passed away, ill of mind which made her unwilling to live, leaving her daughter to be looked after by her brother, for

she had no near relation of her husband who would bring up the child.

Innocent of the shadows cast over her young life little Lalita grew under the tender care of her uncle to whom the memory of an only sister so unfortunate was ever a tug at his heart-strings. But his wife viewed things differently; to her the orphan girl was an ill-starred creature and her mother, when she was alive, an unabashed sponger on her husband. She just waited for the day when with some tinsel of ornaments and a petty cash dowry she could marry her off to anyone be he a widower with six children. Her loveliness was an eyesore to her; she put into shade her own Srimati. Between the two there was a difference of a year and a half; Srimati was the elder and she was trained up by her mother to behave superiorly to her cousin, to put on airs, to always complain about her, that she did this wrong, that hurt.

Lalita, as she grew, intelligent girl that she was, noticed how unjustly she was being treated in the house. She had nothing against her uncle who was always kind and considerate to her; but then he was governed by her aunt, and of her she was frightened, for day by day her harshness became more manifest. She was carefully turned into a kitchen drudge. She was fifteen, she had no knowledge of her birthdays. Srimati had, where celebrated with a feast, with gifts of new

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dresses from her parents; she ran seventeen.

And then came the day of days. The house was agog with excitement. Srimati's marriage had been fixed and the young man was calling to have a look at the 'bride'. His mother in whom he had absolute faith had already approved of the girl; his visit was in the mere nature of convention.

Panchanadam came. The instant he stepped into the hall, greeted and conducted by him who was to be his father-in-law he glanced up involuntarily and saw on the landing of the staircase in front of him a very beautiful girl, fair, tall for her age..... May be, he wondered, this is she..... That was Lalita before she became a cripple. That happened seven years ago.

x x x
"Better dead," Srimati gasped, "than suffer like this; and make me suffer more with her silent, reproachful eyes. The typhoid has reduced her to a skeleton; so my mother writes."

"One crutch walking on two crutches," said Panchanadam.

"The crime is on my head."

"How do you mean?"

"For making Lalita walk on crutches."

"Why this self accusation after all these years?"

"I couldn't summon up the courage before. The hunger to confess has been eating me. I need to be consoled." Srimati talked with a feverish rapidity. "It was I that pushed Lalita down the stairs."

"Ah!"

"Yes, in a moment of blind jealousy. I wasn't aware that she was standing by me on the landing, even to this day it's a mystery to me how she got there. At the moment of your arrival she was in the backyard of the house, mother had designed to keep her back on some domestic work. Perhaps when I was taking a final look at the mirror she must have come upstairs quietly. Your glance of wonder and admiration was not for me, that made me turn round and I saw Lalita, light as a spirit standing near me, with shining eyes and half-parted lips. Even in rags and with not a speck of jewel on her body she would turn a princess green with envy. I went mad with rage and hate, we were standing on the brink of a step, and with a swift movement of my waist against hers and a foot between her feet I knocked her down. And when all of you crowded round her to examine the magnitude of the hurt I quickly put an orange hull in the place she had stood..... She was bruised on her left kneecap; no fuss said my mother, imperiously; an ill-omen, what a time the accursed creature chose to fall, she muttered, when the daughter of the house was to be married. For a couple of days Lalita walked with a slight limp; then she complained that her left leg felt stiff like a stick and she could not move it. They took her to a bone setter who only increased her pain, she had broken her ankle and the whole foot was swollen and livid. Days passed, my mother's temper grew worse.

Then the hospital and the operation. These are tiresome details. The doctor who operated for the fracture gave her a shortened twisted leg and a pair of crutches. For a time her right leg too was a half paralysed thing, not being used. Lalita never spoke a word, won't ever about my wickedness. It was an accident, the bit of orange hull was a clear proof."

"Even if she had said the truth your mother wouldn't have believed her. What chance is there for an ill-used orphan in an unkind home?"

"Please don't be harsh upon me. I've suffered enough. If she had spoken out I wouldn't have been so greatly on the rack. Now my mother says that the cripple is a burden to her family; who would marry a thing on crutches?—to add insult to injury this typhoid had reduced her to a bag of bones. She has made by father fall in with her

scheme; they have decided to send Lalita to a home for destitute girls. And I am the cause for it all."

Panchanadam made no remark. He was deep in thought.

"May I ask a thing?" said Srimati, her tone crumbly with anguish.

"Do."

"Did you know all along of my crime?"

"Yes," he answered quietly.

She recoiled as if hit but reaching out his hands he drew her softly to him. Through the open window he saw the morning star blazing low in the sky and other stars twinkling far apart, and each star more solitary than the other. His wife was no longer where loneliness lay. He had come closest to her, which he had always desired, he in his tolerance; and she had come closest to him, purified by pain.

Music Instructor: "I'm surprised to hear you admit you haven't been practising, Susie. What can you get out of your music if you don't practise?"

Susie: "Sixpence an evening from my father."

x x x

Theatrical Manager: "Can you dance?"

Applicant: "No, sir."

"Can you sing?"

"No."

"Can you act?"

"Not much."

"Then what did you come here for?"

"My looks."

"Well, you can hunt round for them if you like, but I don't think you'll find them here."

x x x

"I'm going to speak my mind!" she said.

"Ah! Silence at last!"

True Psychic Experiences

(By G. K. Arya, B. A., B. L.)

"The undiscovered country, from whose bourne
No traveller returns...puzzles the will."

—Hamlet.

During summer W. M. and his wife took a house in the country on the riverside. The eternal murmur of the flowing stream was a special attraction as a change. Suddenly one evening they saw a little boy with a big dog on the other side of the river. They hailed but there was no response on the first two occasions. He first stood there with the bare feet and torn shirt. They thought that the boy and the dog were from the big house yonder, but they felt there was something uncanny about the boy.

So a few days later when he appeared again he was beckoned again and this time he responded, the dog running behind him. He was asked whether he had not any play-mates besides the dog. The boy replied "not now". When questioned what his family was doing he answered, "Oh, they are all right." Then he disappeared. Couple of days later the fruit vendor came to deliver some fruits. Enquiry was made of him as to who lived in the big house and whether he sold fruits to them also. He said he did not know and that the boy and the big dog who used to meet him at the gate were killed in a car accident and that from that time on, the parents took to drink apparently to forget their grief.—From Esquire.

SENT BUILDING BY POST!

Probably the strangest object ever mailed in the United States was a brick bank building which was shipped by post from Salt Lake city to Vernal, Utah, in 1919. Freight rates at the time were \$2.50 per hundred pounds while parcel post was only \$1.05. The contractors who were moving the building decided to save money. They simply wrapped the bricks in fifty pound packages and hauled them to the post office. Since it was against postal regulations to send more than 500 pounds of parcel post to one address, they mailed them to various individual citizens. By the time the post office department discovered what was going on and changed its regulations to stop it, the bank building was nearly completed.

THE HAUNTED HOUSE

When he saw the "To let" sign in the window of the neat little house he was elated. Smith had been recently married and when he came to the city on transfer he could not find a suitable place to live and had to take lodgings in a boarding house.

He immediately called at the agent's office and enquired about the house. The agent seemed a little surprised at the enquiry but Smith took little notice of it. He was anxious to see the house and went with the agent to the place. The agent seemed in a little hurry and the process of looking over the house was gone through quickly. The prospective tenant seemed satisfied with the house and a lease was entered into for a reasonable rent.

Smith and his wife were happy at the prospect of moving into the house and setting up home and they spent the rest of the week purchasing furniture and taking measurements for carpets, curtains and the like. But on Saturday a telegram was received saying that his mother-in-law was ill and requesting his wife to come at once. She had to leave that day and the next day he alone moved into the new house.

As the last piece of furniture was being moved into the house Smith noticed a few old people gathered around and one woman was heard remarking to others, "Well, I bet, they won't stay long."

That night Smith dined in the lodging house and returning home prepared his bed to sleep. He was tired by the exertion in the daytime and he soon fell fast asleep. How long he slept he did not know but suddenly he was aroused from sleep by the creak of a door. He sat up and from the dim moonlight streaming into the room he could see that the back door of the parlour leading into the kitchen was opening. Inside the kitchen he could see the outlines of sofa and on it lying full length was a man! He was dressed in military uniform and the shining brass buttons were distinctly visible. A second later two evil-looking men entered through the door. One was carrying a heavy sledge. Behind them came an attractive looking woman holding her hands high. Her face showed that she was in great terror. She extended her hands as if in supplication to the two people but they rudely pushed her aside and one of them rushing forward gave a heavy blow on the head of the sleeping soldier on the sofa. The woman hid her eyes between her hands. The men lifted the body of the soldier and pushing aside a floor board by the leg threw the burden down which dropped down with a splash. The men placed the floor board in position again and it was nailed down and they hurriedly walked out carrying with them a small bag.

All this Smith saw sitting

on his bed. He did not move for he was petrified with fear. But slowly he recovered his courage and put on the electric light. The door to the kitchen was shut and there was no sofa there or any signs of tampering with the floor boards! And yet he could not dismiss what he had seen a few minutes before as mere hallucination. Then he remembered the words of the old woman just as the last piece of furniture was being moved into the house and also recollected the look of surprise he had seen on the face of the agent when he went to him enquiring about the house.

The next day he moved his furniture and wrote to his wife saying that the house was too damp and that he had given it up. The agent too seemed willing to pay back a portion of the advance.

It seems that years before a queer family had lived there. They were an ill-assorted lot—a fine looking girl and two or

three roughs whom none in the neighbourhood liked. It was said that the girl had a soldier paramour, who disappeared later in mysterious circumstances with a large sum of money belonging to the army. The last anybody knew of him, he was traced to the house. After the disappearance of the soldier, the girl committed suicide and the two roughs were not heard off again.

x x x

A few years later, the house which remained untenanted, was pulled down. Smith who had lived in it for one day went to the contractor and asked him, "Was there anything unusual about the kitchen?"

"Yes, there was an old well under the kitchen and before we filled it up one of my men put down a grapping hook."

"Did he find anything?"

"No. The iron only brought up a bit of cloth with a brass army button. Nothing of any value."

—♦—

The big game hunter was spinning yarns.

"And as I was walking through the jungle," he went on, "I tripped over a root and let my rifle fall. Before I had time to pick it up two lions approached. Without hesitation I grabbed each of them by the throat and—"

"Wait a bit," interrupted a listener; "how did you manage to catch hold of both of them? You've only one arm."

The hunter was not at all perturbed.

"Yes, I've only one arm," he said, "but in the excitement of the moment I forgot about that!"

x x x

Film Star: "I hear you're married again, Dorothy. Whom did you marry this time?"

Second Film Star: "Er—er" (opens bag)—"I believe I've got his card somewhere."

The Mischievous Ghosts

Now and then we hear of houses being haunted by ghosts. The doors and windows rattle. The roof shakes. Stones are thrown. The wind howls and the house is in a devil's dance. These phenomena are caused by the spirits of the lower order who unable to find a solace in the other world, go about mischief making. To offer prayers for the dead, for the peace of their mind and soul, is the least we can do for them.

Allan Kardec in his book on Spiritualism relates the story of the incidence of the disturbance in the Rue des Noyers, in Paris, in June 1860, by an evil spirit. It used to throw stones at the inhabitants and the experimenters with a view to elucidating facts, got the following version through their control (St. Louis) from this spirit. The questions and answers put are reproduced here.

(Questions addressed to St. Louis):

Q. "Will you have the kindness to tell us if the facts reported to have taken place in the Rue des Noyers really took place? We have no doubt as to their possibility."

"Yes, they really occurred; the popular imagination exaggerates them, but they were really the work of a spirit who likes to amuse himself at the expense of the inhabitants of the house in question."

2. "Is there any one in the house who is the cause of these manifestations?"

"Such manifestations are always caused by the presence of the person attacked; they arise from the ill-will of the perturbing spirit towards an inhabitant of the place to which he comes; and his object is to annoy him, and to drive him out of the house."

3. "We would ask, if among the people of the house, there is some one who causes these phenomena by a spontaneous, involuntary, medianimic influence?"

"Without such an influence, these occurrences could not have taken place. A spirit dwells in a place for which he has a predilection, he remains passive, as long as there is in it no one fitted to be used as a medium; but if such a person comes thither, he uses his medianimity as much as he can."

4. "Where does the spirit find the projectiles he makes use of?"

"The different objects thus employed are generally got from the spot where the manifestations occur, or in its neighbourhood; a force proceeding from the spirit impels them into the air, and they fall into the place designed by him."

5. "Do you think it would be of any use to invoke this spirit, so that we might ask him some questions?"

"Evoke him if you will; but he is a spirit of low degree, who will not be able to give you much information."

(Communication with the disturbing spirit of the Rue des Noyers):

1. "Why do you call me? Do you want to have some stones thrown at you? In that case we should soon see you scampering away, though you look so brave."

"We should not be frightened even though youthrew stones on us; we ask you to tell us if it is really in your power to do so?"

"Perhaps I could not, here; you have a guardian who looks so sharply after you."

3. "Was there any one in the Rue des Noyers who helped you in playing off your tricks on the inmates of that house?"

"Certainly, I had a capital instrument, and no wise and priggish spirit to hinder me; for I am merry and like to amuse myself some time."

4. "Who was the person that served as your instrument?"

"A maid-servant."

5. "Was she your auxiliary unawares?"

"Oh, yes; poor girl! she was the most frightened at them all."

6. "Did you do this from ill-will?"

"I? I had no ill-will whatever; but you men, who get hold of everything, will turn this to your advantage."

7. "What do you mean? We do not understand you."

"What I wanted was to amuse myself; but your spirits will study the thing and you will have one more fact to prove that we exist."

8. "You say you had no ill-

will, but you broke all the windows of the apartment; and that was a real injury of your doing."

"That's mere trifle."

9. "Where did you get the things you threw into the house?"

"They are common enough; I found them in the yard and in the neighbouring gardens."

10. "Did you find them all, or did you fabricates some of them?"

"I created nothing, composed nothing."

11. "If you had not found them, could you have made them?"

"That would have been more difficult but we can mix things together and so make a sort of a whole."

12. "Now tell us how you threw them?"

"Ah! that is more difficult to tell. I helped myself by the electric nature of the girl, joined to my own which is less material; we were able thus to transport these objects between us."

13. "You would not object, I think, to give us some information about yourself. Tell us, first of all, if you have been long dead?"

"A long time: full fifty years."

14. "What did you do when living?"

"Not much good; I did rough work; such as picking up rags, etc., in this quarter; and people used to tease me, because I was too fond of Goodman Noah's red liquor. So I wanted to make them all decamp from the house."—*The Other World*.

Walled-up Alive

(By Edgar Allan Poe)

The thousand injuries of Fortunato I had borne as I best could; but when he ventured upon insult, I vowed revenge.

He had a weak point—this Fortunato—although in other regards he was a man to be respected and even feared. He prided himself on his connoisseurship in wine.

It was about dusk, one evening during the supreme madness of the carnival season, that I encountered my friend. He accosted me with excessive warmth, for he had been drinking much. The man wore motley. He had on a tight-fitting parti-striped dress, and his head was surmounted by the conical cap and bells. I was so pleased to see him, that I thought I should never have done wringing his hand.

I said to him: "My dear Fortunato, you are luckily met. How remarkably well you are looking to-day! But I have received a pipe of what passes for Amontillado, and I have my doubts."

"How?" said he. "Amontillado? A pipe? Impossible! And in the middle of the carnival!"

"I have my doubts," I replied; "and I was silly enough to pay the full Amontillado price without consulting you in the matter. You were not to be found, and I was fearful of losing a bargain. I am on my way to Luchesi. If any one has a

critical turn, it is he. He will tell me—"

"Luchesi cannot tell Amontillado from Sherry."

"And yet some fools will have it that his taste is a match for your own."

"Come, let us go."

Thus speaking, Fortunato possessed himself of my arm. Putting on a mask of black silk and drawing a roquelaire closely about my person, I suffered him to hurry me to my palazzo.

There were no attendants at home; they had absconded to make merry in honour of the time I had told them that I should not return until the morning, and had given them explicit orders not to stir from the house. These orders were sufficient, I well knew, to insure their immediate disappearance, one and all, as soon as my back was turned.

I took from their sconces two flambeaux, and giving one to Fortunato, bowed him through several suites of rooms to the archway that led into the vaults. I passed down a long and winding staircase, requesting him to be cautious as he followed. We came at length to the foot of the descent, and stood together on the damp ground of the catacombs of the Monresors.

The gait of my friend was unsteady, and the bells upon his cap jingled as he strode.

"The pipe?" said he.

"It is farther on," said I;

"but observe the white web-work which gleams from these cavern walls."

He turned toward me, and looked into my eyes with two filmy orbs that distilled the rheum of intoxication.

"Nitro?" he asked, at length.

"Nitro," I replied. "How long have you had that cough?"

"Ugh! ugh! ugh!—ugh! ugh! ugh!—ugh! ugh! ugh!—ugh! ugh! ugh!"

My poor friend found it impossible to reply for many minutes.

"It is nothing," he said at last.

"Come," I said with decision. "we will go back; your health is precious. You are rich, respected, admired, beloved; you are happy, as once I was. You are a man to be missed. For me it is no matter. We will go back; you will be ill, and I cannot be responsible. Besides, there is Luchesi!"

"Enough," he said; "the cough is a mere nothing; it will not kill me. I shall not die of a cough."

"True—true," I replied; "and indeed, I had no intention of alarming you unnecessarily; but you should use all proper caution. A draught of this Medoc will defend us from the damp."

Here I knocked off the neck of a bottle which I drew from a long row of its fellows that lay upon the mould.

"Drink," I said, presenting him the wine.

He raised it to his lips with a leer. He paused and nodded to me familiarly, while his bells jingled.

"I drink," he said, "to the buried that repose around us."

"And I to your long life."

He again took my arm, and we proceeded.

We passed through a range of low arches, descended, passed on, and descending again, arrived at a deep crypt, in which the foulness of the air caused our flambeaux rather to glow than flame.

At the most remote end of the crypt there appeared another less spacious. Its walls had been lined with human remains, piled to the vault overhead, in the fashion of the great catacombs of Paris. Three sides of this interior crypt were still ornamented in this manner. From the fourth the bones had been thrown down, and lay promiscuously upon the earth, forming at one point a mound of some size. Within the wall thus exposed by the displacing of the bones we perceived a still interior recess, in depth about four feet, in width three, in height six or seven. It seemed to have been constructed for no especial use within itself, but formed merely the interval between two of the colossal supports of the roof of the catacombs, and was backed by one of their circumscribing walls of solid granite.

It was in vain that Fortunato, uplifting his dull torch, endeavoured to pry into the depth of the recess. Its termination the feeble light did not enable us to see.

"Proceed," I said; "here is the Amontillado. As for Luchesi—"

"He is an Ignoramus," interrupted my friend, as he stepped unsteadily forward while I followed immediately at his heels. In an instant he had reached the extremity of the niche, and finding his progress arrested by the rock, stood stupidly bewildered. A moment more and I had fettered him to the granite. In its surface were two iron staples distant from each other about two feet, horizontally. From one of these depended a short chain, from the other a padlock. Throwing the links about his waist, it was but the work of a few seconds to secure it. He was too much astounded to resist. Withdrawing the key I stepped back from the recess.

"Pass your hand," I said, "over the wall; you cannot help feeling the nitre. Indeed it is very damp. Once more let me implore you to return. No? Then I must positively leave you. But I must first render you all the little attentions in my power."

"The Amontillado!" ejaculated my friend not yet recovered from his astonishment.

"True," I replied; "the Amontillado."

As I said these words I busied myself among the pile of bones of which I have before spoken. Throwing them aside, I soon uncovered a quantity of building stone and mortar. With these materials and with the aid of my trowel, I began vigorously to wall up the entrance of the niche.

I had scarcely laid the first tier of the masonry when I dis-

covered that the intoxication of Fortunato had in a great measure worn off. The earliest indication I had of this was a low moaning cry from the depth of the recess. It was not the cry of a drunken man. There was then a long and obstinate silence. I laid the second tier and the third, and the fourth; and then I heard the furious vibrations of the chain. The noise lasted for several minutes, during which, that I might hearken to it with the more satisfaction, I ceased my labours and sat down upon the bones. When at last the clanking subsided, I resumed the trowel, and finished without interruption the fifth, the sixth and the seventh tier. The wall was now nearly upon a level with my breast. I again paused and holding the flambeaux over the mason-work, threw a few feeble rays upon the figure within.

A succession of loud and shrill screams, bursting suddenly from the throat of the chained form, seemed to thrust me violently back. For a brief moment I hesitated—I trembled. Unsheathing my rapier, I began to grope with it about the recess; but the thought of an instant reassured me. I placed my hand upon the solid fabric of the catacombs, and felt satisfied. I reapproached the wall. I replied to the yells of him who clamoured. I re-echoed—I aided—I surpassed them in volume and in strength. I did this, and the clamourer grew still.

It was now midnight, and my

task was drawing to a close. I had completed the eighth, the ninth, and the tenth tier. I had finished a portion of the last and the eleventh; there remained but a single stone to be fitted and plastered in. I struggled with its weight; I placed it partially in its destined position. But now there came from out the niche a low laugh that erected the hairs upon my head. It was succeeded by a sad voice, which I had difficulty in recognizing as that of the noble Fortunato. The voice said:

"Hal hal hal! he! he!—a very good joke indeed—an excellent jest. We will have many a rich laugh about it at the palazzo—he! he! he!—over our wine—he! he! he!"

"The Amontillado!" I said.

"He! he! he!—he! he! he!—yes, the Amontillado. But is it not getting late? Let us be gone."

"Yes," I said, "let us be gone."

"For the love of God, Montresor!"

"Yes," I said, "for the love of God!"

But to these words I hearkened in vain for a reply. I grew impatient. I called aloud:

"Fortunato!"

No answer. I called again:

"Fortunato!"

No answer still. I thrust a torch through the remaining aperture and let it fall within. There came forth in return only a jingling of the bells. My heart grew sick—on account of the dampness of the catacombs. I hastened to make an end of my labour. I forced the last stone into its position; I plastered it up. Against the new masonry I re-erected the old rampart of bones. For half of a century no mortal has disturbed them. In pace requiescat!

A young man was spending a week-end at a friend's bungalow and on the Sunday evening he took his host's little boy on his lap.

Presently there was a pause in the conversation, when the little boy looked up at the young man and asked: "Am I as heavy as sister?"

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Wife (arriving home rather late): "Did you think I was lost, dear?"

Husband: "No—I was never an optimist."

x

x

x

"Why are you crying?"

"Father called mother a wading goose."

"Well?"

"Mother called father a stupid ass."

"But why are you crying?"

"Then what am I?"

OUR HERITAGE

The King & The Sage

(By A. R. Ponnuswamy Iyer, Retired Principal,
P. R. College, Kakinada.)

Once there was a king named Janasruti, a pious man and a giver of large gifts. He had rest-houses built everywhere with the thought, "Everywhere let people eat of my food."

One night there flew over his house some swans, and one swan spoke to another thus: "Ho! Short-sight! Short-sight! The glory of Janasruti has spread like the sky. Do not touch it lest it should burn you up." To it the other one replied, "Who is this Janasruti of whom you speak as if he were Raikwa the man with the cart? Who is this Raikwa of the cart?" The second swan replied: "As the lower throws of dice go to him who makes the highest throw so the fruits of all the good things that men do go to Raikwa. Such is the reward of those who know what he knows."

Janasruti overheard this conversation. In the morning when the bards sang their usual praise of him, he said to them: "Why do you speak of me as if I were Raikwa, the man with the cart?" To their eager enquiry as to who Raikwa was he could only repeat the words of the swans that whatever good things men did all that went to him. The king was anxious to meet Raikwa and he instructed

one of them to go in search of him, but he reported that there was no man of reputed wisdom of the name of Raikwa. The king sent him back on the quest saying, "Go and look for him where one should search for a Brahman." But the only person whom he found with a cart was a man who was sitting under a cart and scratching his itches. To him the king's servant said, "Pray, sir, are you Raikwa with the cart?" "Yes, I am," replied the other.

Then Janasruti took six hundred cows and a gold necklace and a chariot and going to Raikwa said, "Please accept these gifts and teach me that divinity that you adore." To him the other replied, "Let these cows and necklace and chariot remain with thee, O Sudra." In explaining this episode commentators point out that by birth Janasruti was a Kshatriya and that the word of reproach only meant that instead of trying to get instruction in sacred lore by the approved method of devoted service of a teacher he was trying to buy it with material gifts. Janasruti did not resent the rebuke but went to him again with costlier gifts and his daughter. He said to Raikwa in all reverence, "I

offer you not merely these small gifts of money but also my daughter to be your wife. Pray, sir, do you teach me."

Though Raikwa again answered scornfully, "So you think that with this fair face you can make me speak" he relented towards the king, who thought him worthy of his daughter's hand, and imparted that mystic lore to him. There are three things to note in this story: how the greatest learning and wisdom often reside in quite unexpected quarters, the sage's contempt for wealth and his scornful rejection of riches and the deep humility of the king and his earnest quest of knowledge.

Here is a parallel story from the west, a true tale of ancient Greece relating to Diogenes and Alexander the Great. Diogenes, the cynic philosopher, lived true to his creed and scorning comfort wore the coarsest clothes, ate the plainest food and slept on the bare ground. After a time he took up his permanent residence in a tub. It is said that he used to carry a tub on his head wherever he went, to be used as resting place in the day and as a

sleeping berth in the night. The fame of his austere life reached the ear of Alexander and he came to see the sage, just as he was basking in the sun seated in his tub. When the king asked him if he could serve him in any way, the sage bluntly said: "Yes, by standing out of the sunshine." That was all that he had to ask of the mighty king, namely that he should not come between him and the sunlight. The king does not seem to have been offended by this churlish reply, for in departing he told his friend, "If I were not Alexander I would be Diogenes." Diogenes with the tub is a true match to Raikwa with the cart.

To prove that these are not impossible heights of ascetic sternness, in our own times Saint Tyagaraja scornfully declined the invitation of the Tanjore king to visit his court saying that he would live on alms and sing the praises of Sri Rama rather than utter flattered praise of kings. The *sanna-dhi* of Sri Rama was dearer to him than the *nidhi* offered by the king. India is still a land where wisdom is prized above wealth and where sages receive more honour than kings.

People look upon it as a slight if you don't remember them. I suppose we all attach a sort of importance to ourselves, and it is humiliating to realise that we have left no impression at all upon the persons we have associated with.—*Somerset Maugham*.

For anything worth having one must pay the price; and the price is always work, patience, love, self-sacrifice—no paper currency, no promises to pay, but the gold of real service.—*John Burroughs*.

AN OBEDIENT WIFE*

(By Swami Sivananda)

Tek Chand, a devotee of Kabir, was conversing with Kabir one afternoon. Kabir was explaining to him the various methods one should adopt for realising God through leading the life of a householder.

Kabir: You can convert your own home into heaven if only you wish to do so and act in the manner prescribed in the Shastras

Tek Chand: What, Maharaj! Home into heaven? I have heard many people say that it is impossible and that man can realise God only by resorting to forests and doing tapas-charya for a number of years. They say wife, children, and possessions are all formidable obstacles in the way of an aspirant's progress towards his goal. It greatly surprises me to hear this statement from you—that our own home can be converted into a heaven!

Kabir: Yes, I will explain to you. It is very simple; an obedient wife is all that is needed to accomplish this task. If she treats her husband as God Himself and acts according to his wishes without even a second-thought, she has the power of converting the home into a heaven. By doing so she not only realises the goal of life herself, but enables her husband

to attain self-realisation. the children will also become the beacons of wisdom and great yogis. (Doubt was expressed in Tek Chand's face. Kabir noticed this.) I see you are not convinced. Come to my house one of these days and I will make you understand the truth behind what I say

After about a week, Tek Chand paid a surprise visit to Kabir's house. Kabir was weaving cloth; his wife was busy with work on the thread. Kabir rose from his seat, welcomed Tek Chand with pranam and made him sit by his side. He, after enquiring about Tek Chand's health, the welfare of his family, and the progress of his sadhana, asked his wife to bring some clay. Without a word, she left the room and brought clay. Next, he asked her to bring some ghee; this too was brought at once. He then told her to pour the ghee on the clay and mix both these well. Without even a sign of astonishment at this mysterious behaviour on the part of her husband, she did as she was told to do. She was then asked to make small balls out of this clay-ghee mixture and cook it on the frying pan. Tek Chand looked on at all this, dumb-founded. When the fried balls were ready, Kabir asked his

From *Illuminating Stories* by Swami Sivananda.

wife to throw them away: and this was done. Tek Chand could not understand what all this meant. He thought that perhaps this was the custom in Kabir's family. Kabir and his wife resumed their work.

Tek Chand: Maharaj, you promised the other day that you would show me the easy method of converting home into heaven. Would it suit you to fulfil that promise today?

Kabir: Why, you have already seen a practical demonstration of what I said. It was for your sake that I wasted so much of ghee, time and labour. You have not understood yet?

Tek Chand: Is that all? My wife will also do likewise. Is this all that is required to convert home into heaven?

Kabir: Yes, try it then. You will experience the result yourself.

Tek Chand returned home and immediately wanted to try the experiment. His wife was in her room playing cards with a few of her friends. Tek Chand was impatient; he had shouted for her half a dozen times before even getting a reply. When she came, murmuring at the disturbance caused by his intrusion, he told her that he had something very urgent to be done by her and asked her to dissolve the party. She refused; but on persuasion, agreed to finish the play "in a few minutes". Tek Chand sat in his room counting time and planning his adventure.

Then after taking leave of her playmates, she reappeared before him.

Tek Chand: Indra, please get me some clay.

Indra: Good heavens! What are you going to do with clay at this time? And is this urgent business for which you spoiled my play?

Tek Chand: Don't argue with me now. Please bring some clay.

(Clay is brought)

Indra: Here is the clay. Now I am going back to my friends; meanwhile you verify if this is the same substance as is in your head just now.

(She turns towards the door.)

Tek Chand: Don't go away. My business is not over. Bring me some ghee.

Indra: You look curious today. Your talk is equally curious. Are you in your senses? Or, if you are feeling a bit out of sorts, shall I send for the doctor?

Tek Chand: Nothing is the matter with me. You will yourself know a few minutes later why I am asking you to do all this. Please bring a little ghee.

Indra: All right. Please yourself. (Brings ghee). What are you going to do with this?

Tek Chand: Going to turn this home into heaven...

Indra: Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha! Turn this house into heaven? It already is—if only I get my companions back! You are really mad. I thought as much at your very sight today.

Tek Chand: Don't be silly. Pour the ghee into that clay.

Indra: (grows wild): What? I am not going to waste the precious ghee to satisfy the fancy of a mad man like you.

I am still in my proper senses. Do you think I have also gone mad? Are you drunk today, or what? Go into your room and lie down for a couple of hours. Then you will be all right. (Takes the ghee back and goes for the door.)

Tek Chand (prevents her from going out): Do as I say. Don't ask any questions. Don't argue. Otherwise I will beat you.

Indra: What do you mean? I won't waste the ghee and pour it on the mud.

Tek Chand (vehemently): If you don't do as I order you to do, I will beat you severely. Don't you want our house to become a heaven? Now, come on.

Indra: Who has put these queer ideas into your head? If you want you can go to the bazaar, and get some ghee and pour it wherever you like. I won't allow you to waste this ghee which I have specially prepared myself. Going to convert the house into heaven!

(Tek Chand beats her)

Indra: O Kamala, Vasantha, Sulochana, my husband has gone mad. He is beating me. Please, come to my rescue. He will kill me now.

All the neighbours rushed into the house. Kabir also walks in. They catch hold of Tek Chand and make him sit on the bench nearby.

Nandalal (a neighbour): What is the matter, Tek Chand? Why are you....

Indra: Oh, he has gone mad today. Please ask somebody to remove him to the mental

hospital. Or he will murder me today.

Tek Chand: No, I am not mad, Nandalal. I wanted to convert the home into a heaven. She would not cooperate with me. So, I beat her.

Nandalal: What? How do you propose to convert the home into heaven?

Tek Chand: You see, if a wife dutifully obeys her husband implicitly, the house in which they live will be turned into a heaven. I came and asked her to do (narrates all that happened); but she refused to do. So, I beat her. All the people laughed on hearing the story and said that he was really mad. Kabir came forward and asked the others to leave promising to take care of Tek Chand. After the others had left, Kabir said;

Dear Tek Chand. This is not the way to convert home into heaven. You have, verily, done just the reverse and converted your home into a hell. That house in which the husband and wife quarrel is truly the worst hell. From there all peace disappears. You can't expect to have the least joy in a house where the husband and wife incessantly strike a discordant note. I find you have not understood the philosophy behind what I demonstrated to you this morning. It is not that by exactly repeating that process you can convert your house into a heaven. By an expenditure of a rupee worth of ghee, if man can obtain heaven, then don't you think all the people on earth would

convert their houses into heavens? It is not so. The idea underlying what you saw this morning is this. A wife should always be obedient to her husband. This, again, does not mean unwillingly doing things as a penance for having married the man. What all she does should be whole-heartedly done with reverence, faith and affection. This she will do only if you win her heart by inspiring confidence in her, by convin-

cing her of your good intentions and by satisfying her wants even before she expresses them. You must read her heart, understand her temperament, behave nicely towards her and win her affection. This will induce your wife to obey you implicitly and without the necessity of your having to apply force. The house in which the husband and wife lead such a life, is undoubtedly heaven itself.

She: "Have you ever had a lesson by correspondence?"

He: "You bet! I never write to women now."

Artist (pleased with his latest picture): "I shall never do anything better than that."

Critic: "Come don't lose courage."

"Darling," he murmured, happily, "you are the only girl I ever kissed."

"I believe you," sighed the girl.

He kissed her again.

"And you are the only girl who believed what I say," went on the foolish fellow, absent-mindedly.

"A fortune-teller said I should go to prison for embezzling money entrusted to me."

"Don't believe it. Who would entrust money to you?"

The teacher was putting questions to the class.

"What do we call a man," he asked, "who keeps on talking and talking when people are no longer interested?"

"Please, Sir," replied a boy, "a teacher."

"I see," said Smith, "that a famous man has been saying four hours' sleep is enough for anyone."

"Pooh!" said Jones, "that's nothing. I've a two years old boy at home who knew that a year ago."

"I'm the happiest man in the world. I have the best wife in the country."

"Well, who wouldn't be happy with his wife in the country?"

STORY OF MARICHA

(By N. Chandrasekhara Iyer)

Raksasas are wicked generally. Some are, however, born good; a few transform themselves from bad to good. The first class is illustrated by Ravana, Hiranyaksa and Hiranyakasipu. Prahlada represents the second class. Maricha furnishes an excellent example of the third category. A brief study of his life would be useful from several standpoints. He played a rather important part in the Ramayana.

He comes into the picture as one of the two frightful sons of Tataka, whom Rama killed. The yaga of Viswamitra was being desecrated by them and the sage sought Rama's assistance to destroy them. Viswamitra's spiritual power was so great that he could have himself accounted for the two Raksasas. But he did not want to expend his spiritual strength for any such purpose; and what is more important still, he had in his mind a much bigger objective, namely, the marriage between Rama and Sita and the ultimate slaying of Ravana, which could be achieved only by Rama and none else.

The arrows that Rama discharged against Maricha and Subahu were deadly. Subahu died on the spot. Maricha was hurled across a distance of several yojanas into the sea; but he escaped somehow from a watery grave. This lesson was not enough for him. Later, assuming the form of an ani-

mal, he molested, killed and ate away many of the forest residents who were engaged in tapas. In the course of this career, he attacked Rama also, eager to avenge his prior discomfiture and forgetting for the moment Rama's strength. Once again he got a sound thrashing.

He became wise after this second defeat. He founded a hermitage on the seashore and lived there in peaceful meditation, thinking of Rama always. Even the very mention of Rama's name ennobles, sanctifies, protects and confers bliss. What to say, then, about those who constantly think of Rama? The perpetual fear of Rama and the constant thoughts fixed on him changed Maricha. From a demon he turned into a devotee.

When Ravana approached him for assistance to trap and abduct Sita, he dissuaded the chief from the adventure in terms that do credit to his frankness, courage and sagacity and which prove the change in his character. He told his master that Rama was not a helpless weakling, who could be despised as an insignificant enemy. His prowess and valour were extraordinary; his skill in archery was unparalleled. Moreover, Rama was the very embodiment of goodness, truth and dharma or righteousness. Ravana would be inviting ruin on himself, on Lanka and the whole of the Raksasa race if he

persisted in his endeavour to kidnap Sita. "I have had a taste of Rama's strength and skill in archery on two occasions and I have turned a hermit. I dread even to think of him. I see a bark-clad, deer-skinned Rama with his drawn bow in every tree, looking like the very god of destruction. I see not one but thousands of Ramas. The whole forest is full of and pervaded by him. Seeing Rama even in a dream, I tremble and become unconscious. Even the words beginning with the letter Ra creates a tremor in me. Any quarrel with him is not good for you." People who say nice and pleasant things abound everywhere; but those who state unpleasant truths and those who listen to them are rare indeed.

Ravana paid no heed to Maricha's advice, as one on the point of death does not like medicines. He threatened Maricha that if he did not obey him, he would kill him instantly. Poor Maricha had to choose between death at the hands of Rama and death at the hands of Ravana. Naturally he chose the former, as it meant his future salvation. He assumed the form of a golden deer with silvery spots and went to

Rama's hermitage on the fateful mission; and he met his doom.

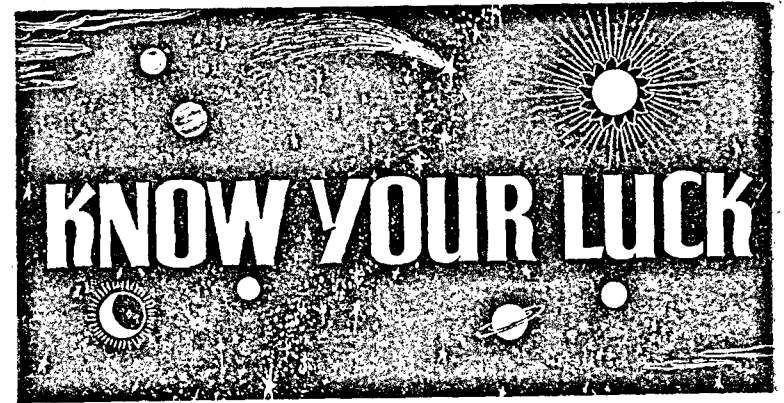
One lesson to be learnt from Maricha's story has already been indicated. Calamities make men wise; and it is never too late to mend one's ways. The second lesson is that destiny is inexorable and has its own way of working itself out, be the persons involved big or small. Maricha had to be an instrument in the hands of Ravana for bringing about his own end. Therefore it is that Rama did not kill him on both the occasions when he encountered Rama, though he could have done so most easily. The road to safety is never trodden by those fated to die. No saner counsel could have been given to Ravana than what Maricha offered; but what chance was there of its bearing good fruit with a man who proudly proclaimed his own nature in the striking words when his maternal grandfather Malyavan asked him to return Sita:

"Even though I may break into two, I shall never bend before anyone; this fault is inborn with me and nature is difficult to surmount." —*Kalyana Kalpataru*.

A doctor's reputation is made by the number of eminent men who die under his care.—*Bernard Shaw*.

Definition of a politician: "A man who approaches every question with an open mouth."—*Adlai Stevens* 6n.

A bigamist is a man with two wives. But a man with one wife too many is not necessarily a bigamist.



The predictions given below are based on a thorough interpretation of the planetary positions of the month. Those who have favourable ruling dasa bhukti will experience the evil effects mentioned herein to a lesser degree.

(By Leo)

MESHA RASI or ARIES

You will find this a better month than the last one. From the financial point of view you will find a distinct change for the better from the 6th. If you are considering any marriage proposition, it will meet with success this month but throughout the month you will have some worry or other. Children's health also may not be good. Speculation will be partly successful. Partnership dealings will be lucrative. Service conditions would be good. But don't put too much trust in your friends. Proceed cautiously.

2, 7, 11, 12, 16, 21, 22, 29 and 31 are good days.

VRISHABHA RASI or TAURAS

The month will give you mixed results. Financially you will find it more flexible. Health, however, will not be good and effects of general debility or rheumatism will be more prominent. Official duties will be found rather hard and heavy. Merchants will meet with more difficulties and obstacles in their business. A journey is likely.

3, 5, 9, 11, 12, 14, 22, 31 are good days.

MITHUNA RASI or GEMINI

The month generally is good and you will have relief from the depressing tendency

noticeable during last month. Important affairs held up last month will be successfully completed this month. Financially, there will be increased expenses much to your surprise. Health of your wife or child may need your attention. Merchants will be more speculatively inclined. There will be official recognition of your merit and promotion is likely.

2-5, 11, 12, 15, 21, 29 and 31 are good days.

x x

KATAKA RASI or CANCER

The planetary position promises better state of affairs for you this month than in previous months. Through the help of elders you will be able to carry out your programmes more successfully. Financial conditions will be more promising. For those in service, conditions will remain stationary. Merchants will be keenly interested in speculation and their profit takings will be good. Partnership will not be good.

3-5, 7, 10, 11, 14, 22, 26, and 31 are good days.

x x

SIMHA RASI or LEO

Domestically you will find this month rather unhappy though financially you will not be so much handicapped. A journey or some activity with regard to some

associations is envisaged. There will be secret enemies working behind your back. Official change or transfer if it comes will not be to your advantage. Businessmen will find unexpected difficulties. Your wife's health will be below par.

2-4, 9, 11, 14, 26 and 31 are better days.

x x

KANYA RASI or VIRGO

This is a very promising month for you. Financially you will feel much relieved. It is likely you may have to concern yourself with your brother's affairs or a journey is quite likely. Though your health may suffer now and then you will find the month enjoyable from the social point of view. Marriage negotiations are likely. Financial gain with retrospective effect is assured for some in service. Merchants will fare well in business. Partnership business will prosper.

3, 4, 5, 7, 11, 21, 29 and 31 are good days.

x x

THULA RASI or LIBRA

The position of Mangal and Saturn don't augur well for your affairs. You will be mentally high-strung throughout the month. Health also may suffer in some cases. Financial worry will continue throughout the month. Second half, however, is better than the first. In the office you will find work heavier. Trouble

through near relations must be expected. Speculation should be avoided. One of your children is likely to cause you considerable anxiety in the second half of the month.

2, 5, 10, 11, 14, 15, 26, 22 and 31 are better days.

x x

VRISCHIKA RASI or SCORPIO

The month is bad from the point of view of domestic happiness. There will be financial conveniences and you will notice it more in the second half of the month. Officially there may be some desirable change of duties. Wife's health may cause you some anxiety. Change of residence for some is quite in the picture. One of your children will come up well soon.

2, 7, 11, 12, 16, 21, 22, 29 and 31 are good days.

x x

DHANU RASI or SAGITARIUS

This is not a satisfactory month for you. All your efforts will prove unsuccessful. Health also will be below par. Financially though you will find increased expenses you will be able to manage it without much difficulty. Expenditure and worries will increase as the month progresses. In office there will be no change for the better. You will gain some friends in the first half. A journey is indicated during the

month. Marriage negotiations, if any, will not bear any fruits this month.

3, 5, 7, 11, 16, 21, 26 and 31 are better days.

x x

MAKARA RASI or CAPRICORN

This is a more promising month for you in all respects. Financially you will have greater conveniences. Domestic worries will continue to disturb your mind. In the office you will be happier than before and you may have a change of duties which is more to your liking. Departmental favour is also possible. Correspondence will increase. Avoid friction with others near your home surroundings. Saturn's aspect to Rahu in the XII house will cause you unnecessary worries through your near relations.

4, 6, 10, 11, 14, 20, 28 and 29 are good days.

x x

KUMBHA RASI or AQUARIUS

You are disposed to be hasty and impulsive in all your decisions this month. Friends and relations will take advantage of you. You may have to do some self sacrifice in your official work. You will have help from your superiors in office. Financially you will be able to tide over your difficulties through timely help.

from others. Merchants will find foreign business more profitable and encouraging. You will come in contact with men of position. Cultivate this contact to better your prospects in life. Marriage negotiations will be successful.

1, 3, 4, 8, 9, 10, 15, 19, 21, 27 and 28 are better days.

x x

MEENA RASI or PISCES

The month will not prove encouraging. Expenses will mo-

† Poorvabhadra
Uttarabhadra &
Revathi

unt up and you will be worried about it throughout the month. Your relations

will accuse you and give you trouble. First half of the month your health will not be good. Panchama Guru will somehow try to keep you from disturbed mind though pinpricks will be continuous both at home and at office. Elders will try to influence you to their advantage.

2, 3, 11, 12, 15, 21, 22, 26, 29 and 31 are better days,

Behind every successful man there is a woman—and usually she catches him.

x x x

The only way any woman may remain for ever young is to grow old gracefully.

x x x

Nothing is more responsible for the good old days than a bad memory.

x x x

If your wife wants to learn to drive, don't stand in her way!

x x x

Clothes make a man, but with a woman they merely serve to show how she's made.

x x x

The well of Providence is deep. It is the vessels we take with us to it that are small.

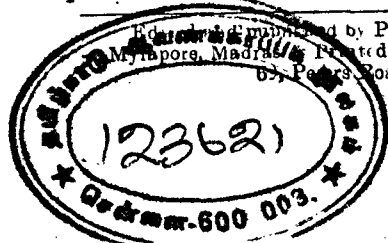
x x x

Children need love, especially when they do not deserve it.

x x x

At the perfume counter the sales woman was applying her sales pressure. "This one has a delightful fragrance" she said to the attractive customer. "Believe me, you can't go wrong with it."

The young lady thought for a moment and murmured, "Most perfumes advertise that you can."



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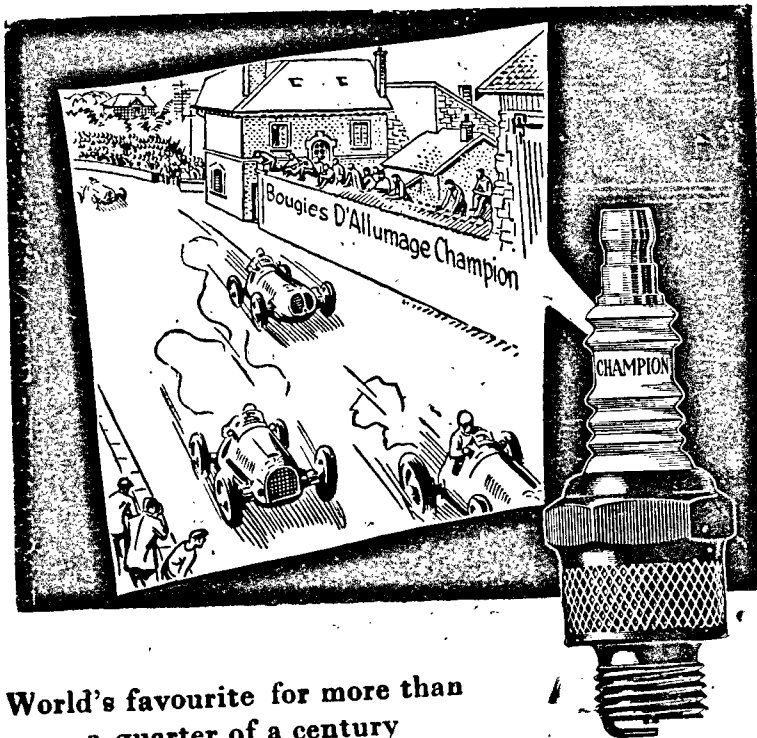
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