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JANUARY, 1957

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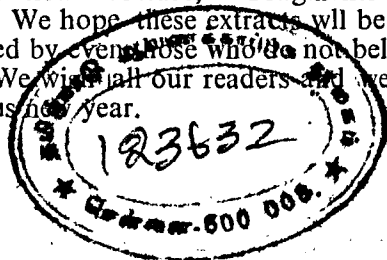
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THE NEW YEAR

The closing months of 1956 had been full of anxiety. Would the unprovoked aggression of Britain and France against Egypt touch off another world conflagration? That was the fearsome thought which had worried the people all over the world for some days. Fortunately the crisis was solved quickly by united action at U. N. As we enter the new year the threat of war from this source has been removed, but there are still some grave danger spots which need to be watched carefully. In the final analysis the arbiters of war or peace are the two major powers, the fearfully armed U. S. A. and the U. S. S. R. As long as the interests of these two powers do not clash vitally there is no danger of a world war. And the firm way they both acted over the Suez Canal crisis shows that they are still on the side of peace.

For India 1957 promises to be an exciting year. The reorganisation of States has been completed and the Second Five Year Plan is well under way. The second general election is drawing near. But one shameful blot still remains—Goa. Following the British example France has withdrawn from India but Portugal, a third rate power in Europe, is still remaining arrogantly defiant. Nehru, if he wishes, can call off their bluff and free Goa in a matter of hours. But he, who has already won a name as a man of peace, wants to solve this question peacefully. Patience no doubt is a virtue but ceases to be when it is carried beyond certain limits. In Goa there is no freedom, no peace. The only peace the Goans can enjoy is the peace of the grave under the present dispensation. Let us hope that 1957 will see this last vestige of colonial rule removed soon by peaceful means if possible or by force if necessary and Goa united with India.

Now one word about ourselves. In this issue we have started a new feature, "Fragments of Truth from the Unseen." We hope these extracts will be read with interest and appreciated by even those who do not believe in spirit communication. We wish all our readers and wellwishers a happy and prosperous new year.



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SAREE FOR PONGAL

She wanted a new saree for Pongal and since her lover couldn't afford to give it to her she thought she could get it from the clerk who had shown some signs of interest in her.

(By H. M. PETERS)

She was just a sweeper but young and good looking and he was a cart puller. He was in love with her, but he didn't exhibit his love through the kind of gifts she wanted. She had hinted in so many ways for the things she desired, but she never for a moment thought how expensive her wants were. He did give her things—simple things which an unsophisticated young girl in love would have valued greatly, like flowers, bangles, coloured ribbons and even an imitation pearl necklace. But she didn't care much for these things and so could not appreciate the love of the man who had made the gifts.

Her heart was set on a saree for Pongal day. So one day she gave him an ultimatum—saree or no more love making.

In one of the offices where she was employed as a sweeper, there was a young clerk, a relative of the manager, who had shown signs of his interest in her. They were always alone in the mornings. He came there first to open the office. May be, she thought, he could give her a saree and other things she had dreamed about.

That is if she worked her charms on him properly.

That morning he seemed to be more than friendly.

"You look very attractive to-day," he said to her.

She gave him a shy smile and went to the corner where the broom was kept. He followed her.

"You are very beautiful," he said coming near her and gently put his hand on her shoulder. She simulated surprise and fear and turned round but she was not at all afraid or angry. On the other hand it was he who was afraid, a coward that he was at heart.

"Don't get frightened. I won't harm you. I love you," he said.

She just cast down her eyes coquettishly and twisted the end of the saree round her finger.

"I love you," he repeated and tried to kiss her. She offered him her cheek.

"If you love me, give me a saree for Pongal," she said coaxingly.

"Saree! why, that will cost a lot. But I don't mind it. I will then demand more of you

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than a mere kiss and a hug," he said.

"Must I sell my honour for a saree?" she asked. She had not bargained for this. And her self assurance vanished. She was really frightened now.

"If you really want that saree," he said. He was now aflame with passion. "You must, of course, be cautious. I don't want to get mixed up in anyway. We must try to keep this thing secret."

But she was not hearing him. Her mind was on the cart puller, that simple soul who loved her for her sake alone. Her eyes were now opened to the true worth of the man. Poor he may be. But was she also not poor?

Just then she heard someone calling her by name. "Meena, Meena!" Yes, it was he, the cart puller. But why, how did he come here? He always used to wait for her at the street corner. Perhaps Providence had sent him here at the nick of time to save her honour, to save her from falling into the temptation.

She did not hesitate. She threw the broom at the clerk and rushed out of the office. Yes, there he was with a handful of betel leaves and flowers. To-day these things looked to her more precious than the



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saree she had hankered for.

He handed her the betel leaves and flowers. Then taking her hands he squeezed them gently and with a broad sheepish grin said:

"Here is your saree, you little witch," taking the newly bought gift from the folds of his dhoti. And with another squeeze and a broader grin said, "Now, don't forget my angel, you have to marry me soon after Pongal."

The law believes a man innocent till found guilty. Then if he has any money left his lawyer continues the belief.

This article is meant for men only who like the writer feel that modern women are going too far in claiming equality with men!

A Deputation to Hanuman

(By P. RAMAKRISHNA RAO)

The conference of the All India Progressive Women's Conference which was held in New Delhi was indeed a grand success. The delegates who had come from all the States made a great impression on the capital. And the speeches made at the conference left no doubt in the minds of the public that women were no longer content to be confined to the kitchens.

Many resolutions were passed. They claimed fifty percent of all jobs in conformity with their population proportion, equal rights of inheritance and so on. The most far reaching resolution, however, was passed at a secret session. It concerned about the ways and means to be adopted to free women from the necessity of bearing children and thus make them equal with men in all ways. The discussion lasted for hours in which leading lady doctors and scientists took part. And when finally they came to the conclusion that what God had ordained woman cannot undo they decided to send a delegation to God Hanuman who is supposed to take charge of the creation in the next Yuga, and prevail upon him to change the

order of things and make man bear the pains and pangs of childbirth instead of woman.

Some of the delegates were frankly sceptical about the idea but the majority carried the day and the resolution was passed.

Accordingly a strong delegation was chosen consisting of a politician, an educationist, a birth control expert, a famous songstress, a noted film star, a prominent doctor and so on. After days of preparation the delegation, equipped fully with food and camping kit, started to the forest in Ayodhya where Maruthi is supposed to live.

After many days of marching the delegationists came to the centre of the forest. So far they had not come across even a monkey though they had met many wild animals. Doubts began to assail the minds of some whether they had not come on a fool's errand. But the leader of the delegation persuaded them not to give up hope.

The songstress among them had a brain wave. Why not sing some songs in praise of God Hanuman? The suggestion was warmly received and she began to sing some melo-

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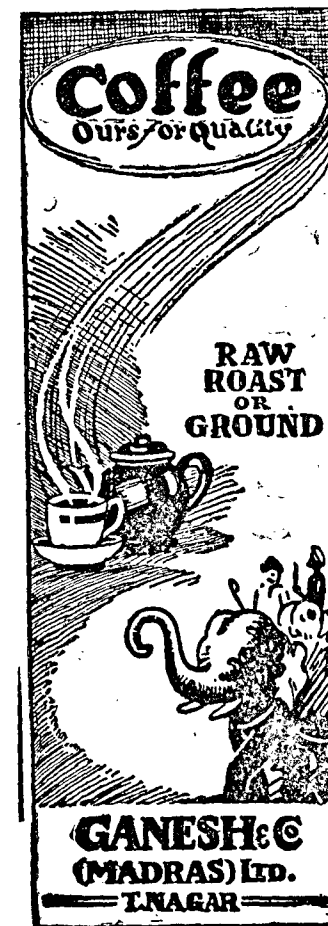
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dious tunes and others followed in chorus. And lo! monkeys began to appear one by one jumping from tree to tree.

"Our prayer has been answered. God Hanuman has sent his sentinels. Now sing Ram-dhun," ordered the leader and the whole party began to sing 'Raghupati Raghava Rajaram.' The monkeys that had gathered seemed to divine the intention of the ladies and they began to move in a northward direction beckoning the ladies as they hopped from branch to branch.

There was now no doubt among the ladies that they were nearing the end of their quest. Soon they reached a small clearing in the forest. In the centre they could discern a man-like ape sitting on what seemed to be a rock, but it was really the tail coiled round and round. The joy of the ladies knew no bounds at the sight of this figure for they were certain that it was Anjaneya sitting in his characteristic pose with eyes closed and hands folded in front in deep meditation.

The ladies singing "Ram-dhun" circled the figure thrice and prostrated before him. Maruthi disturbed by all this strange noise slowly opened his eyes, and was astounded to see so many ladies. He stood up and holding the tail in his hand bowed before them and asked in a sweet voice, "Sweet



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mothers, who are you and what has brought you into this jungle where no human being has ever penetrated?"

The leader of the delegation then stepped forward and offering him a cocoanut and some plantains answered: "Revered Hanumanji, we have come on a deputation."

"Deputation! And here in this forest! I belong to the Tretayuga and you are women of the 20th century. What is it that you want from me?"

"We have come, O, Maruthi," said the leader in the most seductive mannar as possible, "to represent our grievances against man. You know when Brahma created the human race he endowed woman with the womb and ever since we have been bearing the pains and pangs of child birth. Because of this disability man has been treating us as inferior to him. We have now learnt better. We know we are in no way inferior to men and in some respects we even excel them. We are now claiming equality with men and feel our peculiar disability should be remedied. We desire to have a change."

Hanuman: "Well, well, what has all this got to do with me? How can I be of any help?"

Leader of the Delegation: "Oh! we have heard that you will be in charge of creation in the next Yuga. We have come

here to request you to bring about this change during your regime."

These was just a trace of a smile on Anjaneya's lips. He was silent for a while and then said. "Has not your science come to your aid? I have heard that your scientists have conquered the atom and are now looking forward to conquer the universe by first sending earth satellites and then launching space ships that can travel in space. Scientists who can accomplish so much must be able to help you."

"We have tried all experiments," replied the leader of the delegation. "The utmost science can achieve has been achieved. We have many 'test-tube' babies. We know all about birth control but since God has placed the womb in woman's anatomy, she is compelled to mother the child so born. We want that this order should be changed completely."

Anjaneya was amazed at the frank manner of the modern women but he had not the heart to tell them plainly that what they were seeking was impossible of achievement. He therefore said a few sympathetic words and added he would be glad to be of help to them.

"But," he said, "I can do it only on one condition, for, you see, I do not want to be unfair to my own sex."

"Oh! tell us your condition

and we will agree. We will do anything to get rid of this disability."

"Well," said Hanuman, "I can grant your request and transfer the womb to man provided you agree to accept some characteristics of man."

"We have already adopted many of his ways. We are competing with men for all jobs and in some advanced western countries, women dress themselves like men and smoke too," said one of the ladies.

"I don't mean that," said Hanuman with a merry twinkle in his eyes. "What I consider fair and just is that man when he inherits the womb should have a smooth face and," he paused for a while to emphasise his words, "woman should have the beard & moustache."

"Ram, Ram! Ram, Ram," cried the ladies. "What! you want us to be freaks like the bearded ladies who are being exhibited in circuses?"

"Well, that is my condition," said Hanuman and making a bow disappeared.

The ladies involuntarily rubbed their cheeks and looked at each other. No words were spoken. Their looks betrayed their disappointment and out-

raged feelings. The first to find her voice was the birth control expert. "Hanuman or no Hanuman," she thundered, "we will yet achieve our object and teach man we are in no way inferior to him. Come, let us go," she said and they started their trek back home.

TWO VIEWS

"Money is round and made to roll," said a spendthrift to the miser.

"That's your way of looking at it," replied the latter. "I say that money is flat and made to pile up."

AMRUTANJAN



FOR

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Pains

GRAMANI MURDER CASE

(By S. RAJAGOPALAN)

On the morning of 5-4-1939, at about 9 a.m. one Thangavelu met Veeraswami, Govindan and Muthu who were the keepers (Vettians) of the Krishnampet burial ground in Madras City and mentioned to them that there was a leper's corpse near his house close by and that they should help him to remove it therefrom and bury it in the crematorium. They were given Rs. 10/- on the spot. Veeraswami and Govindan went to the house towards nightfall entering it through the backyard. They were led into the latrine and found a gunny bag into which the body had been placed. It was found very heavy and was lifted up with difficulty. The sack was carried through to the burial ground and interred. It somehow struck the chief man Veeraswami that all was not well and so he put a mark on the grave.

Thangavelu entered the details in the office, which conveyed that the death had occurred on a platform on the road side.

At about that time public conscience had been stirred by a rumour that a servant maid Narasammal in the household

of Shanmugha Sundara Gramani, a rich and influential man of the locality who was the neighbour of Thangavelu, had been missing and had been probably murdered. The police at first thought it all to be a hoax and no action was taken. Then anonymous communications were sent to the higher police officials and investigation was started.

A number of persons most of whom were the past employees and relations of Shanmugha Sundara Gramani were examined and the Vettians also were contacted. As a result it was thought expedient to exhume the body which had been interred on 5-4-1939, and this was done on 3-5-1939, that is to say four weeks and 2 days after it had been buried.

The body was in a highly decomposed state. The lower limbs were completely skeletonised; the bones were hanging loose and fell away as the body was being removed from the gunny bag. The soft parts were in an advanced state of disintegration but the skin over the chest and back and the portion of the hands were found intact. The arms appeared to have been tattooed and a Tamil letter "□" was visible.

There were marks of violence on the body, consisting of injuries on the head, the patella, scapulae and on the back. Two fractures, one on each shoulder blade of the body identical in size, were also noticed. There was another fracture in the condyle without however a corresponding injury to the right patella (knee-cap). The left patella had however been injured as also the left condyle.

Investigation was proceeding and the following facts came to light. Shanmugha Sundara Gramani lived with his wife Saradambal. He had a number of servants, both male and female. One of them Durgan, a mere boy, was his toilet assistant.

In or about February or March, one Narasammal (40) was taken into his service. She appeared to have hailed from Nellore, but seemed to be a waif and stray in the city of Madras. She had been married to a man who was reportedly in the lunatic asylum.

She was given Rs. 10/- as advance and as was the wont in the household her arm was tattooed with the words "தமிழ்". She was called Vadakathi by her master.

On the fateful day, Gramani was taking his bath which was to him an elaborate affair. Durgan was helping him. He smeared the green gram paste

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and asked for hot water to wash it off. There was no response from Narasammal. Gramani shouted: "Vadakkathial, where is conjee water?" Getting no response, he directed Durgan to bring a cane from the house. Durgan came with a casuarina stick about two feet long. Gramani then dragged Narasammal into the courtyard and beat her as he would a beast. The poor woman fell down on her face bleeding from her mouth. Her

dead body was later packed up in a gunny bag and removed to the latrine. In the following two days, the smell from the latrine became unbearable and the body as stated was removed to the crematorium on the evening of 5-4-1939. The police examined the premises & found a note book in a locked almirah containing an entry in the handwriting of Saradambal in token of the payment of Rs. 10/- as advance to the woman "who is working in the house" (ஜீவலை செய்கிற) in the relevant time when Narasammal had been employed. Shanmugha Sundara Gramani was charge sheeted for the murder of Narasammal. His wife Saradambal and neighbour Thangavelu were charged under Sec. 201 I.P.C. for causing the disappearance of the evidence of the commission of murder.

The case attracted considerable public interest, as the first accused was wellknown in the pugilistic circles and presumably was a terror in the household and the neighbourhood. The trial occupied 26 days. 35 witnesses were examined by the prosecution, four by the court and one by the accused.

The case was remarkable not only for the gruesome details of the crime but for the sharp, even fundamental difference between the medical experts who gave evidence in the case.

The accused set up a very unusual defence. He said that there was no woman of the name or identity of Narasammal in his employ and the case itself was a concoction of his enemies among whom was his own father-in-law Velu Gramani. He spoke of a plan whereby his enemies procured a dead body with the assistance of the grave diggers, the Vettians, dressed it up with a sari from his household, inflicted the various injuries detailed in the post mortem certificate, buried it again and then reported to the police for exhumation of the body. That there was a woman of the name of Narasammal in the house at the material time could not be denied and that the body which had been exhumed was hers was also proved. One clinching fact was the sari in which the body appeared clothed. It was identifiable as one half of a saree worn by Narasammal, the other half being worn by the other servant maid Kuppu. Apparently it was torn and distributed to the two women. Secondly, though the body was decomposed, enough remained of the arm with the tell-tale tattoo mark "U", to denote that it was that of a maid servant of Gramani whose obsession it was to tattoo the words தமிழ் on every servant of his. Thirdly, the entry of Rs 10/- in the account book in

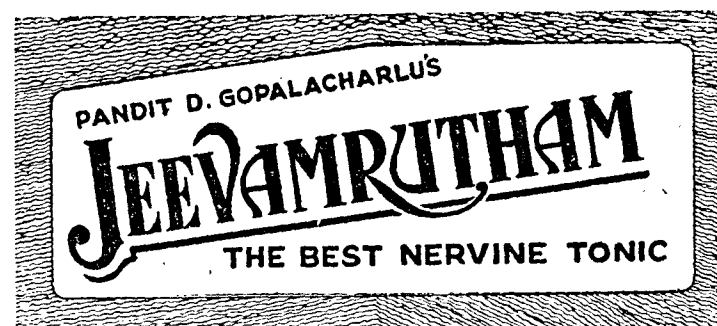
Saradambal's handwriting together with the subsequent debit of Rs. 20/- for "treatment expenses" could only refer to Narasammal. The "treatment expenses" were probably incurred for the internment.

Narasammal did not die a natural death. That her remains were in the house till 5-4-1959 was vouched by the fact that the inmates did not feel the awful smell after that date.

Dr. Srinivasalu Naidu who conducted the post mortem gave it as his opinion that the body had probably been buried on 5-4-1938, and that the extent of decomposition could be judged by the interval between the burial and the exhumation which was four weeks and 2 days. The condition of the body also suggested that, because the skin on the chest was found intact, as also on the back

portions of the hand. In Madras, especially during summer, complete skeletonisation is possible only after three months; and in this he was also supported by Dr. Koshy, the Professor of Anatomy, who was examined as a court witness. He also said that it was true of a number of the bodies of the ill nourished and destitute persons in the hospital.

The defence examined Capt. Shone, who was working in a London hospital and had been in India for three years. He examined the post mortem notes and the photographs of the bones. He gave it as his definite opinion that the body must have been buried more than 6 weeks before the exhumation. He pointed out that the uterus which is the last to disappear, had disappeared and that the lower limbs had completely skeletonised. Decomp-



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sition had been arrested by saponification. The body, he said, must have remained buried for more than the period of three months.

The dead body was in the open air for two days in the latrine before it was interred. Furthermore it was covered with a sack cloth. It is a common fact that in such circumstances decomposition sets in slowly. Narasammal was lean of figure. Her body therefore would contain lesser tissues than a fat body. The rule is that the larger the quantity of tissues, the longer would be the time for disintegration or decomposition.

As regards the injuries on the body, it could not be said with certainty whether each one of them by itself or even taken together would be sufficient to cause death. Here again medical evidence was inconclusive. Dr. Srinivasalu Naidu could not say that the injuries on the body were sufficient to kill the woman, especially when the vital internal organs had not been affected.

The defence of the accused was that such injuries as had been caused, had been inflicted on the body after it was dug up, in pursuance of a conspiracy to implicate him on a murder charge. Curiously enough colour was lent to this theory not merely by the loca-

tion of the injuries but also by the testimony of Capt. Shone. There were two fractures one on each shoulder blade of the body exactly symmetrical and identical in size. How could that be caused?

Again there was another fracture on the right condyle without a corresponding injury on the right patella (knee-cap) which protected it. It is not possible to isolate the patella from the condyle; nor could the former be removed from its position so that an injury to it could take place without the condyle being affected. This was reinforced by the circumstance that the left condyle and the left patella had both been injured. The eroded surface of the left patella was in exact apposition to the eroded surface of the right condyle.

Capt. Shone therefore gave it as his opinion that these injuries appeared to have been caused to the body after death. He was also sure that the injuries could not have been inflicted by the casuarina stick. Anyhow he said that the injuries were "manufactured" by third parties.

But what about the lacerated wounds on the head? Could they be caused on a dead body? Anyhow it all became a matter for guess.

The case therefore depended on the evidence of the lay

witnesses who though were no eye witnesses gave a fairly consistent story right from the beginning when Narasammal was inducted into the household down to the issuing out of a smell in the latrine. The testimony of the grave diggers also supported the story of Thangavelu and a few companions removing the body covered in a gunny bag and bringing it in the crematorium. The prosecution story was also strengthened by the circumstance that not one of the witnesses could be proved to have had any bias to implicate the accused on a false capital charge. Even the theory of conspiracy fell to the ground. There had doubtless been considerable misunderstanding between Shanmugham and Velu Gramani, but it was too much to suggest that the latter who was in fairly indigent circumstances, would have initiated a murder charge against the accused vindictively and then buttered it with so many witnesses.

The accused could very well have pleaded that the weapon which he was alleged to have used, namely the casuarina stick, could not have sufficed to kill Narasammal. Evidently the beating, even if it were ferocious, could not have

injured the internal organs to such an extent as to cause instantaneous death. Possibly the deceased had been suffering from enlarged spleen or intestines and fell down dead on being beaten continuously. That would reduce the offence to one of grievous hurt. But his wholesale denial of the very existence of the woman and the impossibility of a conspiracy which he suggested took place, did not carry conviction with the nine jurymen at the Madras Criminal Sessions who found him guilty of murder. Saradambal and Thangavelu were also found guilty under Sec. 201 I. P. C. Mr. Justice Vere Mockett who tried the case with phenomenal patience, ability and impartiality, sentenced on 7-2-1940 Shanmugha Sundara Gramani to death, Saradambal to two years R. I. and Thangavelu to three years R. I. accepting what he called a righteous verdict.

Shanmugha Sundara Gramani appealed to the Privy Council but without success. His application for clemency was rejected and he was executed.

The local government, however, on 28-8-40, remitted the sentence on Saradambal.

(Copyright with the author.)

A leader of men is one who sees which way the crowd is going and then jumps in ahead.

Man Who Confessed Too Soon

(By GEORGE GOODCHILD)

The finding of the dead body of a man in a cottage by the river at Richmond finally produced as nice a story as McLean had ever heard.

It was on a Monday morning, in late autumn, when the postman called at the cottage with a large registered parcel addressed to Arthur L. Packard, Esquire. He rang the bell and waited.

Nobody came, and after a second ring he decided to take the parcel back. He was turning away from the front door when he chanced to look into the bow window on his right.

The curtain was only partly drawn, and he could clearly see the legs of a man projecting from an easy-chair, the wings of which completely concealed the rest of the body. Anxious to dispose of his parcel, he tapped on the window. There was no movement from within.

Later the postman reported the matter to the police and a constable was sent down to Rivermead. He found the tenant of the cottage was lying back in the wing armchair with a bullet wound in his chest, and his

lifeless eyes staring at the ceiling.

Inspector McLean, Sergeant Brook, a doctor, and a fingerprint expert were soon on the scene.

The constable, whom McLean found at the cottage, gave the name of the murdered man, and stated that he had been in occupation of the cottage for six months. He had taken it furnished on an annual lease, and lived there alone.

The murdered man appeared to be about thirty years of age. He was tall and wiry, with a weather-beaten countenance, large features, and thick brown hair.

The doctor, who had examined the body, timed the shooting at between seven and eight o'clock the previous evening, and produced the bullet which he had extracted from the body. It was a nickel-coated one of medium calibre, and it was in perfect condition.

Brook, who had been looking for an ejected cartridge-case, was now satisfied there was no such thing in the room. The fingerprint expert, too, was

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disappointed, and said he proposed going back to the office until such time as McLean might require him.

When he had gone, and McLean and Brook had the cottage to themselves they started an intensive search of all the rooms.

In a casket in the bedroom McLean found some Savings Certificates, a bank statement from a local bank, showing a credit balance of eighty pounds, and some share certificates from a firm called Naylor, Limited.

The certificates were for a thousand one-pound shares. These were contained in five certificates of varying amounts, and were dated five months back. The firm's address was at Teddington.

"We'll try the bank first,

and then go to Teddington," said McLean.

The bank knew little about its dead client. He occasionally called in to cash a cheque, and the cashier, who knew him best, gave it as his opinion that he had been connected with the sea.

Naylor, Limited, was a big garage.

James Naylor, the head of the firm, was a man of forty-five years of age, and he expressed amazement and horror when told that Packard was dead.

"Why, he was in here two days ago," he said.

"Tell me what you know about him."

"He called here about six months ago to buy a certain make of car.

"He became interested in

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our workshops, because he was an engineer. He told me he had come from South Africa, where he had made some money, and he was keen to invest.

"I wasn't very keen to encourage him. But a few weeks later a shareholder died, and his widow wanted to realise. I remembered Packard, and told him there was a block of a thousand for sale.

"He bought the shares. Since then he has looked in once or twice hoping, I fancied, that I might find him a job."

"Was he still on that tack when he called two days ago?"

"No. He was snooping around the works on his own. My foreman was a bit short with him."

McLean had a word with the works foreman before he left. This man was a Scot.

"I'm not surprised someone shot him," he said. "Mon, because he owned a few shares he got the notion he owned the whole works."

McLean then decided to pick up the registered parcel which the postman had failed to deliver. He duly received the parcel. It contained a photographic enlarger, a packet of printing-paper, and various chemicals.

"That's curious," said McLean. "Why should he want this apparatus? I didn't see a camera at the cottage."

"Nor did I," said Brook.

"But he must have one. Surely he wouldn't buy the enlarger before he bought the camera. Our search couldn't have been 100 per cent thorough. Let's go back there."

At the cottage the search was continued, and at last the camera was found.

With it was a very fine telephoto lens and a number of tiny prints taken of a printed book page. The words were so small they could not be read with the unaided eye. McLean used his pocket magnifying glass.

"Beautifully clear," he said. "But just a love scene from a novel. Why should he waste time on that except as an experiment?"

"How do you mean?"

"It looks as if he had something important to copy, but tried out a book page first. Having satisfied himself that the lens would do the work, he photographed the more important document, and then took steps to purchase an enlarger to make prints that could be read easily.

"That he went to the expense of buying this apparatus indicated that he couldn't trust the negative to a shop where they do enlarging."

Later in the day McLean saw the liquidator of the estate of the late shareholder in Naylor's, Limited, who had

disposed of the shares to Packard. Savings Certificates through the bank.

"I remember quite well," he said. "I sold out at thirty-five shillings. Quite a fair price."

"Did Packard give you cheque?"

"Yes."

Again McLean went to the bank where Packard kept his account, and he asked to see the records prior to those contained in the current statement. When these were turned up they showed that Packard had opened the account with the sum of £3000.

Almost immediately he had drawn a cheque to pay for the shares, and a few days later had purchased five hundred

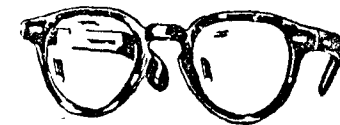
The balance had then been reduced month by month by regular small withdrawals until it had reached its present low figure. Nothing had been paid in during the whole period.

"Have you any idea where he got the three thousand?" asked McLean.

The paying-in slip was referred to. It merely recorded the payment of a cheque for the amount. But when the cashier who had received the money was questioned he recalled the transaction.

"It was one of our own cheques on another branch," he said. "Yes, Lombard Street.

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But I can't remember on whose account it was drawn. The Lombard Street branch should be able to trace it quite easily."

At the bank in question the manager was anxious to help, and after a delay of about a quarter of an hour a clerk came back from the vaults with the actual cancelled cheque. It was made out to Packard, and signed James Naylor!

McLean went away with the cancelled cheque in his pocket, and with speculation in his mind. For what services had Naylor paid Packard so large a sum of money?

Why had Naylor pretended he knew practically nothing about Packard? Where did the enlarging camera come in?

"I want some more details about Naylor," he said to Brook.

"He has a lady secretary who appears to be on very close terms with him. I think she's our best chance."

During the following two days McLean got a lot of very useful information from the woman in question.

McLean took her to lunch with the ostensible purpose of inquiring about Packard, whom she had seen and talked to, but he switched the conversation to her employer, about whom she was quite willing to talk.

She was full of praise for his business methods and his

energy, and she knew where he came from, because he often dictated letters to his brother, in Bombay.

"He nearly lost his life a year or two ago," she said. "He was on his way to England, when his ship foundered in a storm somewhere in the Indian Ocean."

"He and about ten other passengers were marooned on a bit of rock, without food or water. One by one they died, until only Mr. Naylor was left alive."

"He gave up all hope and prepared for death, when he was picked up."

McLean next got priority communication through to the Bombay police, and he waited anxiously for a reply. It came after only forty-eight hours' delay.

Naylor had left Bombay suddenly. His own brother didn't know why, for he had been in business there in a small way.

He had sold out suddenly for what he described as a "song" and had booked, a passage to England. As his secretary had stated, he had narrowly missed being starved to death.

"How comes it that he was able to purchase a business here immediately upon his arrival, which involved an outlay of over twenty thousand pounds," mused McLean,

"when, according to his wardrobe, where stood a long-brother, he possessed only a thousand or two pounds?" He took hold of it and reversed it.

Still reluctant to take action until he had forged the important link, McLean went to the cottage again, and delved into odd corners, looking for what

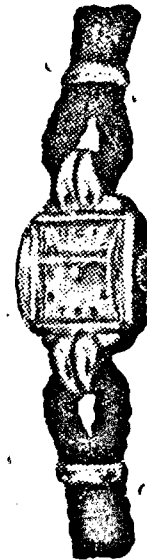
Brook knew not. "It's a photo print," he said. "A negative."

"Ah!" McLean took over the print and brought his pocket magnifying glass to bear. He began Packard having taken the precaution of copying whatever it was by the use of that excellent diminutive camera. "I, James Robert Naylor, of Garth Street, Bombay, late passenger on the steamship 'Maritza', and now close to death, confess to the murder

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of Ambrose Seligsen in Bombay on November 20, 1949. I now cast this into the sea, enclosed in a bottle, in the hope that it may be picked up by some ship. The jewels which I stole from Seligsen will be found sewn in the lining of my coat. I pray that God will forgive me—James Robert Naylor."

"Great Scot!" ejaculated Brook. "And he was rescued after he had sent his bottle afloat?"

"Yes, and Mr. Packard had the good luck to find the bottle, in circumstances which we may never know."

"Packard must have made inquiries, perhaps with a view to finding the island and getting the jewels. He must have discovered that Naylor had been rescued, and then the obvious alternative plan was put into operation. He found Naylor, and started a nice piece of blackmail."

"The fact that he copied the document leads one to suspect that he meant to double-cross Naylor, who had already paid him three thousand pounds. Possibly he had agreed to sell the original document outright for a considerable sum, but was cunning enough to realise

that if he kept a photostatic copy he would still have a hold over Naylor."

"Anyway, it is a pretty safe bet that Naylor, living in fear of this man, decided to put an end to him."

That night, Naylor was arrested on a warrant. His revolver was taken over and an expert was put on the job.

As it was a second-hand weapon, having had considerable use, it did not take the expert long to state positively that the bullet which had killed Packard had been fired from it.

But even this was scarcely necessary, for Naylor made a full confession.

"I'm not sorry—now," he said to McLean. "It's been hell since I was rescued, knowing that that bottle was floating round the oceans, dreading every minute that someone would find it. Why did they rescue me—when I had made my peace with God?"

"Packard never told me where he found the bottle. He was diabolically clever, and was planning to get hold of my business. I simply couldn't stand it any longer. That's all, Inspector."

NOTHING TO BE ASHAMED OF

"Could you help a poor man who has just left prison?"

"You should be ashamed to own it."

"I didn't own it mum. I was only a lodger."

THE PICKPOCKET

(By LOTUS EATER)

It was a straight road and the bus was proceeding fast. All at once the driver applied the brakes and the standing passengers were forcefully thrown forward. In the confusion I felt someone dash past me. I didn't think much about it then but when I got down from the bus I noticed that my purse with a hundred rupee note in it which the previous morning I had drawn from the bank, had disappeared.

I straight away went to the police station and gave a complaint giving a description of the purse and the number of the hundred rupee note. The purse had my initials stamped on it in gilt.

Days passed and I did not

hear anything from the police about my lost purse. I gave it up as lost—once and for all.

One morning opening the morning paper I read that the notorious K. D. Manian had at last been caught by the police in his hideout in the hills near Kalladakurchi. He was a desperate criminal with several charges against him. It was the resourcefulness and courage of Head Constable Ramaswami that was responsible for the arrest of the man. And it was he who discovered the loot cleverly hidden in a cave. There were over a hundred articles, costly jewels of gold and silver. Among them was a leather purse with my initials stamped

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on it in guilt.

The police sent word to me to identify the purse and a few days later I had a summons to appear before the court to give evidence against K. D. Manian.

The prisoner seemed to be reconciled to his fate. The evidence against him was overwhelming. Yet to each prosecution witness he put searching questions. And when my turn came he asked me whether there actually was a hundred rupee note in the purse or whether I had made up the story to stress my own importance!

I was indignant at this and retorted that I had the number of the note that I had lost with the purse. But K. D. Manian did not evince any further interest in me. I thought it was because he could not deny that the purse was mine.

In the end K. D. Manian was sentenced to three years' imprisonment. I went home highly satisfied that the man

who had picked my purse had got his deserts.

That night while searching for some papers in the drawer of my table, I had the surprise of my life. The missing hundred rupee note was there. Yes, it was the missing note for it had the number I had noted down. At first I thought K. D. Manian must have come and placed it there after he had picked my purse, but a moment's reflection told me it couldn't have been so. I myself must have absent-mindedly placed the note in the drawer instead of in the purse. So when K. D. Manian was cross examining me in the court he must have thought what a great liar I was!

The thought disturbed me. Instead of feeling happy over the recovery of the note, I actually felt miserable. How I wished then that the hundred rupee note had actually been lost with the purse!

UNKIND

"Thank you so much," said a woman to a labouring man who had given her his seat in a tram. "That was very kind of you."

"Not at all, ma'am," protested the man. "I know some men don't give up their seats to anyone except pretty girls, but looks don't make any difference to me."

THE CAUSE

One day two little boys bought a watch between them. It went wrong, however, and one of them took it to pieces and found a dead fly inside.

"No wonder the watch wouldn't go," he said. "The engine driver is dead."

STORY OF AMBARISHA

(By G. KRISHNAMURTHY AIYYAR, B.A., B.L.)

The story is narrated by Suka to Parikshit in the 9th Skanda of Srimad Bhagavatam. Ambarisha was born in an illustrious Vedic family and was a great emperor in Aryavarta. He was the son of Nabhala. Nabhaga, his grandfather, was possessed of immense wealth. He had three sons. He divided all properties between his first two sons leaving the third boy, Nabhala, Ambarisha's father, nothing. He asked his father: "Oh! my father! You have given all your properties to my brothers. Am I not entitled to any share? What are you going to give me?"

The father said: "I am your wealth. You take me as the gift." The honest boy felt satisfied with this partition. He was not only denied his share, but on him devolved the duty of maintaining his father in old age.

Nabhaga performed a big yajna in which all the deities took part and officiated as priests. Many gifts were distributed to the Rithviks. What little remained of the wealth after the yajna Nabhaga was about to give to Nabhala when Rudra appeared and protested: "Who are you to take these? It belongs to me." Nabhaga said to his son: "My

dear son, Siva's claim is right. It is affirmed by a text in Vedas. The residuary wealth in a sacrifice belongs only to Siva." The boy said, "Pardon me, Oh God! My father approves of your claim. So take all these things. You are entitled to it as per the srutis." Siva was mightily pleased with the conduct of the boy and Nabhala proved to be honest and obedient and faithful to himself, his father and the srutis. Siva showered all the wealth on him and he became a rich man. To such a great man was born Ambarisha in Vedic lineage. The story therefore has the authority of the Vedic texts.

Ambarisha was a great devotee of God. His mind was always concentrated on Vishnu, the Almighty. And so the problem arose how to discharge the duties of the king. The laws of the country had to be enforced. Life and property had to be protected from the thieves. Peace had to be maintained. The king had no time or mind to look to these royal functions. Lord Vishnu came to his aid and installed His Chakra as the royal power for the rule of the kingdom. All the powers of the king were by divine mandate, delegated to Vishnu Chakra.

and it began to exercise its power and ruled over the country. Before the installation of the Chakra as ruler, if there was any infringement of law the offence had to be investigated and the offender, when found, had to be brought to trial and punished according to the code. Now during the reign of Vishnu Chakra if anyone entertained an intent in his mind to break the law, the Chakra would at once chop off his head. So, only virtue prevailed and vice vanished. Crime became non-existent. Peace and plenty reigned supreme in the realm. The power of Vishnu Chakra was the greatest force and a boon to the people.

On one Ekadasi day, Ambarisha fasted in pursuance of his Ekadasi *vratham*. He used to break his fast the next day after the worship of the Saligram. Just when he was about to break his fast Durvasa, a great sage, appeared before him in the palace. Ambarisha bowed to the rishi and invited him for Dwadasi dinner. The sage accepted the invitation and went to the river Ganges for bath. Ambarisha expected him to return early as there were only a few minutes left for the Dwadasi *thithi* to begin. According to sastras he had to break his fast and take his meal just at that time if the spiritual benefit for the pre-

vious day's fast was to be obtained by him. He had invited a guest but the guest had not returned. He was in a dilemma. He wanted to fulfil his vow of fast by taking his food and at the same time abide by his promise to Durvasa for a Dwadasi dinner. He did not know what to do. He consulted the pundits in the royal assembly. After discussion the pundits pointed out a text of the Veda. "Water is described in Veda both as food and no food," they said. So Ambarisha just drank a small quantity of Saligram *thirtham*. Ekadasi *vratham* was thereby protected and its spiritual benefit preserved. Since it was not food but only water the guest could not take exception to it and he could still be given the first preference for a dinner.

Durvasa came back after the bath and looked into the face of Ambarisha. And he immediately knew that the king had taken in something as food before he had arrived. Durvasa took it as a great insult and began to curse Ambarisha. The Vishnu Chakra grew sensitive to the positive wrong committed by the sage Durvasa to the royal devotee Ambarisha. The function of the Chakra was to protect the innocent and virtuous and punish the wicked and offensive. Vishnu Chakra was an embodiment of power and

impartiality. Even a sage, if he was in the wrong, was no exception. The Chakra approached the sage. It began to scorch and burn him. Durvasa was unable to bear the heat and he ran. The Chakra followed him. He ran through the globe but could not find any shelter. He stopped at the other end of the universe and looked behind. Lo! The Chakra was also there near him.

Durvasa then flew to Satyaloka and prostrated before Brahma. Brahma said, "Oh! Durvasa, why are you in this travail?" Durvasa confessed his sin to the devotee Ambarisha and said he was unable to bear the heat of the Chakra. Brahma said, "I pity your condition, but I have no power even if I have the mind to help you." Then he fled to Kailasa and prostrated before Siva. Siva asked Durvasa, "Whom have you offended?" The rishi replied: "Ambarisha, a devotee of Vishnu." Siva at once exclaimed, "Don't stop here even for a second. Vishnu Chakra would burn me too. If you had offended a devotee of Vishnu then surrender to Vishnu. He may protect you."

So advised Durvasa left Kailasa and reached in mystic speed Vaikunta. The sage prostrated before Vishnu and narrated the entire story of his misconduct. Vishnu sympathised with him

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and bemoaned his condition. "Oh, Durvasa! Why did you offend a devotee of mine? If you offend me I can pardon you, but I have no power to grant pardon to one who offends my devotee. I am in fact a devotee of devotees. These devotees rule me and I obey their commands. I live in their minds and their mind is my only abode. Oh, sage! you have committed an unpardonable sin."

Durvasa exclaimed in utter despair: "Look here, Oh, God! Your Chakra burns me from behind. What shall I do? What is my remedy? Is there no saviour for me?" Vishnu in pity said: "If you have offended a devotee of mine, ask his pardon. Ambarisha will forgive you even now. So go back to the palace and seek the mercy of the man whom you have offended."

Durvasa came from Vaikunta again to the earth, and prostrated in full length on the ground before Ambarisha and said: "I now realise my fault. You were innocent. I was at fault. You drank only a drop of water and in my anger and arrogance I mistook it for food. You are a true devotee of God. None would protect me, not even the three Gods of the Universe, Brahma, Siva and Vishnu. They have remitted me back to you. Save my life. I surrender myself unto you." Ambarisha's eyes were filled with tears. His mind was filled with sympathy. He did not take food all this one year when Durvasa was being chased by the Chakra. As a true devotee he could not bear the sight of the sage in such a pitiable condition.

Addressing the Chakra he said: "Oh, Sudarsan, you are a power of Vishnu. You are the mightiest of the mightiest,

the only sanction of all sanctions. Your power knows no limitation. You represent the time and cosmos, the mind and the law of the universe and ages. You are at once the law giver and the dispenser of justice. Be merciful to the sage who has surrendered. Oh, Sudarsan, subdue thy self; free Durvasa from your heat." So praised, Sudarsan grew cold. Durvasa regained his breath and felt that Ambarisha was his saviour. Both Ambarisha and Durvasa bowed to the mighty Sudarsan.

Durvasa thus appreciated the glory and greatness of a true devotee of Vishnu. Ambarisha, the devotee, though a king, did not retaliate for the offence Durvasa had committed; he forgave him and protected him from the punishment of the Vishnu Chakra.

A true devotee of Vishnu will return good for evil.

So at the end of one year the Dwadasi meal was taken with Durvasa as the honoured guest. Ambarisha took his meal after serving the sage.

The moral of the story is this: Anger and arrogance will lead to abuse of power even in a rishi. The pure mind and conduct of a true devotee is the only useful corrective of such sinners.

(Copyright with the author.)

The World of the Spirits

"Fragments of Truth from the Unseen" is the title of an absorbing book by a famous medium Beatrice Russell. It consists of lectures given through her mediumship by the spirit of a doctor, who in his life on the earth took a great interest in spiritualism. Below we give a few extracts from the book.

I want you to think of the reality of the World of Light which seems strange and difficult for you to understand.

Now you know that you have five senses, and that these communicate through the body. Through the visions of holy men, holy books and hymns etc., you picture the World of Light as a shadowy, tenuous, and vapid world, but this is not so.

For this reality I must use the analogy of matter because this is closer to your understanding. As you know matter is not static, but rapidly moving. You know and understand this through the discoveries of your scientists. Picture a chair, a table etc., which appear solid but which in reality are composed of whirling atoms. Now you understand that these objects are not static, so neither are we in the World of Light—we are utterly real.

In this dimension we also use senses, one of which we have in common with you—the psychic sense. But with us we work with that sense and power of thought, which is very powerful here. There is another sense that I cannot name, but

it is akin to the sense with which I tell my instrument I am with her. With these three, and with others we communicate with each other, bringing things to pass in ways difficult for you to understand.

REINCARNATION

This idea is as old as history itself, but of late years it has become, in the western world, inclined to be narrowed down, so that the majority of people believe that reincarnation means living again in former lives on this earth. It is natural that they should think this; for the average person finds it hard to conceive of many other worlds. Tonight I want to place before you some thoughts about those other worlds.

We, as we progress in our life on this sphere, can reincarnate not only on the earth if we so desire—for reincarnation is a voluntary choice—but we can reincarnate in other worlds, and so we go on from sphere to sphere in the World of Light. We can, if we wish, visit other universes. This is a thought that perhaps you shrink from because of its immensity. I am going to give you one example:

You know the planet Venus to the shorter distance they revolves round the sun. This planet is nearer to the sun than your earth. It is enveloped in clouds, and your astronomers know little about it, though the details they have found are correct.

There are beings on this planet. They are not what we call human beings; there is no birth there, and no death. When we visit Venus, we go there by the power of thought and other powers which I have mentioned before. In this way, we become for the time being of the same substance as those beings on the planet Venus.

(To be continued.)

ABSENTMINDED

Said the professor's wife :

"George, do you know what day it is? Twenty-five years ago to-day we first became engaged."

The absent-minded professor looked shocked.

"Twenty-five years! Why didn't you say so before this? It's high time we got married."

X X X

"Let me see," said Smith, "do I owe you anything?"

"Not a penny, old boy," replied Jones heartily. "Why, are you going round paying off all your little debts?"

"No, I was going round seeing if I had overlooked anybody. Lend me five rupees till Saturday, will you?"

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Norton in Calcutta

(By V. G. RAMACHANDRAN, M.A., B.L.,)

After the great Sullivan episode of which we had already adverted to in extenso, Norton felt Madras wearisome. The Bar had not been one with him during those irksome days. They in fact let him down to fight singly his battles in contempt and allied proceedings. His contemporaries of the Barrister variety had almost all gone. And he felt the urge to migrate to another place where the Bar was still powerful. He liked to be in Calcutta where the Bar acclaimed such stalwarts as Tiger Jackson, Pugh Garth, and Cotton in active practice. Norton expressed tritely in one of his letters to a Calcutta friend: "The English Bar in Madras was decently interred. I have lost heart with my profession. The giants of old are being replaced by beardless regiment of raw recruits." Mr. Norton felt that he had to decide quickly. The "Vakil Raj" had firmly established itself in Madras. Sir V. Bashyam Iyengar, the great jurist with his flair for close, subtle reasoning and analytical exposition was outshining them all. He snatched for the first time the much coveted price of the English Barrister—the Advocate Generalship of Madras—an

office which till then had been the close preserve of Mr. Norton's tribe. In fact with but a solitary exception the office was subsequently held by a succession of learned Vakils among whom can be named the resplendent Sir C. P. Ramaswamy Iyer and the legal giant Sir Alladi Krishnaswamy Ayyar. Norton therefore felt the days of Barrister Raj in Madras was not rosy.

So Mr. Norton at long last decided to go to Calcutta. And he did. And he was more successful at the Calcutta Bar. Mr. Kenneth Leslie in his book "The Red judge and other Anecdotes" says:

"I must not forget that on this side of the street too, and right opposite the windows of the Bar Library in the High Court across the road were the chambers of the late Eardley Norton, whose briefs so fully occupied every minute of his day that he grudged the seconds spent in running downstairs from his chambers, crossing the street, and ascending the court staircase to the Bar Library. He proposed to construct an overhead bridge crossing the street from his chambers to the library. The Calcutta Municipality, however,

would not approve of it; perhaps there were a few Barrister councillors in the Corporation whose practice Eardley Norton had deprecated. His own was so flagrantly enormous, that when asked if he were likely to accept a seat on the Bench, he said (probably without much exaggeration), 'Pooh!' He made more money daily before *chota hazri* than a judge made in a month."

No sooner had Mr. Norton settled in Calcutta than he was briefed by the Crown in the historic and prolonged state trial, the Alipore Bomb case, in which Sri Aurobindo was one of the accused. He delivered a very moving and thrilling address to the jury for fifteen days on end. He referred to the cult of the bomb and how it was a meance to civilized society. He let himself go in his rhetoric to such an extent that he was himself often affected and more than once broke down. The Public Prosecutor who was instructing Mr. Norton had been suddenly shot. Norton apprehended that his name was also in the list and his exit from the world was any day imminent. In fact when he spoke to one of the prisoners in the prison cell from outside the iron bars, the latter gave him the threat of being the next victim. Mr. Norton coolly asked, "What have I done to merit such exit?" The prisoner

is reported to have replied, "You, your grandfather, and all must go to devalok."

But Mr. Norton did not get this prize of a heavenly passport! The case dragged on for a month or so and several of the accused were convicted. Sri Aurabindo Ghose, however, was acquitted who latter retired to Pondicherry.

In Calcutta, Mr. Norton conducted the defence both at the original trial and on appeal in the celebrated damages action against a District Magistrate and a Police Superintendent. Tiger Jackson and William Garth instructed Mr. Norton in the case which revolved round the illegal issue of a search warrant by the District Magistrate to the house of a rich zamindar and the alleged malicious search by the Superintendent. Mr. Norton later appeared for the leading Calcutta newspaper *The Englishman* in the libel action brought against it by Lala Lajpat Rai of revered memory in the matter of the latter's deportation. The next great debut of Norton was in the trial of Nirmal Kantha Roy (The Inspector Murder case) which was heard at three successive sessions owing to the judge's disagreement with a majority verdict of the jury. Mr. Norton greatly deplored that the same judge was trying again and again. He vehemently declaimed against

the holding of a police parade and the distribution of medals by His Excellency the Governor to police officers for their detective efficiency in the case at the identical moment when the trial was actually in progress and the accused was trembling between life and death. His address to the jury was a masterpiece and his demonstration of the mechanism of the fire arm said to have been used by the accused for shooting the Inspector saved him from the gallows.

Mr. Norton himself had felt convinced of the innocence of his client Nirmal Kanta Roy and he magnanimously refunded him the fee of Rs. 14,000 to enable Nirmal to prosecute his legal studies in England. Such was Norton, noble, generous and kind.

AGREED

She was interviewing an applicant for the position of cook.

"Well, Jane, you seem suitable in every respect, and I have decided to engage you. The work will be light and you will find the master is very easily pleased."

"Yes, mum," replied Jane. "I thought that the moment I saw you."

X X X

DESPITE HIM

Father: "When he proposed, didn't you ask him to see me?"

Daughter: "Yes; and he said he had seen you several times, but that he loved me just the same."

X X X

The minister found one of his flock sitting on the bank of the river.

"Giles," he murmured reproachfully, "this is somewhat of a shock to me."

"What be, sir?"

"Well, do you think it right to leave your poor wife bending over the washtub while you spend your time fishing?"

"But, minister, my wife don't need no watching. She works just as hard as if I was there."

(4)

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Pardon, Your Slip is Showing

[By P. VIJAYARAGHAVAN, B.A. (HONS.)]

Recently I read an article in a film journal about a play-black singer. The writer related how in the beginning "the man found it difficult to obtain a footing in Bombay. Many film producers listened to him, appreciated his talents but no one would give him a chance because he was a new comer. After he had passed through a period of hardships, one producer belled the cat and gave him a singing assignment."

"Belled the cat!" What an expression is used (misused) to refer to the kind act of a producer who was giving a deserving young man the opportunity of winning himself a name.

In this connection, there is a relevant story worth recounting. When James III was king of Scotland, he irritated the old nobility by his favouritism towards painters and architects. One of the latter named Cochran, who had succeeded to the estates of the Earl of Mar, was especially hated by the nobles. They met in a church and discussed how to get rid of him. Lord Gray fearing that the discussion would lead to no practical result, told the fable of the mice which at one time resolved to hang a bell on the cat's neck to warn them of its stealthy approach; but after the resolution was passed, on in-

quiry being made, "Who will undertake it?" none was found daring enough to do so. When Lord Gray finished telling this story, Archibald, Earl of Angus, a man noted for his boldness, rose up and swore that he would bell the cat. He kept his word, captured Cochran, and had him hanged over a bridge. Afterwards he was always known as Bell-the-cat.

The expression should not be used where the doer is benevolent and where there is no victim but only a beneficiary as in the case of the playback singer. Its figurative meaning is to cope with an adversary of superior power or undergo great personal risk to render a common foe harmless for evil.

Many misuses of words and expressions arise from ignorance, sometimes from thoughtlessness. In any case the effect produced is ludicrous and amusing. Here is an amazing misconception in the minds of some scribes. Some time back, I found in a film journal a sentence "Producer G...who proved that the success of A...was not a flash in the pan when it was followed up by the success of Mr...". Again, a sports reporter in a daily referred to the "Madras Blues" rather unexpected victory over the Southern Railway on Monday."

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and said that "the Blues proved that it was no flash in the pan by forcing the redoubtable Nungumbakam Youngsters to share points on Tuesday."

Evidently, in these contexts, the expression "flash in the pan" was used as if it meant "fluke" or "accidental stroke of success". The actual figurative meaning is "failure of an ambitious undertaking." The phrase is derived from a flint lock gun which, though loaded sometimes fails to go off when the flint is struck. The priming or powder contained in the lock-pan abortively flashes without discharging the piece. But the perpetrators of the absurdity, looking at the face of the phrase, perhaps imagine that it symbolises a thing which, instead of panning out badly as expected, flashes—and hence means "fluke, unexpected brilliance"! "Failure after a well-advertised preparation" is the correct meaning. James Main Dixon in his book "English Idioms" gives an example of the correct use of the expression: "The rising at Kilrush was a mere flash in the pan (an abortive attempt)."

Journalists have their own ways of expressing ideas, but sometimes their effusions, if closely analysed, would be found to have a howler-like appearance. During the war, an American journalist wrote: "It is when dinner is over that



the real conference of the day begins. Churchill and his key dinner guests sit around in an atmosphere of heavy cigar smoke and beat and mould Britain's policy into a malleable form." The dictionary definition of "malleable" is "capable of being beaten into shape"; it is a companion word to "fictile" which means capable of being moulded and "ductile" which means capable of being drawn out thin. Since one cannot therefore be said to mould a policy into a malleable form, still less beat it into one, perhaps he meant merely "easily managed."

A sentence, or even a para-

graph, may be spoiled by the use of a word that is not proper, that does not fit or is foreign to the meaning intended. That even great writers are liable to make such errors can be seen from this passage in a novel: "When he had been at Millsstead a little while he would, he decided, import some furniture from home...For the immediate present a few photographs on the mantelpiece, Medici prints on the walls, a few cushions, books of course, and his innumerable pipes and tobacco jars, would wreak a sufficiently pleasant transformation." Obviously the author believed "wreak" to be the present infinitive of "wrought"; but the correct form is "work". One may wreak vengeance, rage, harm etc., and similarly unpleasant things, but nothing pleasant at all!

Years ago, one Senator Harding said he would "advocate measures designed to promote increased production of the necessities of life." Somebody commented that of necessities there were too many already; it would be cruel to make more! "Necessity" means a state of need, the lack of things that are indispensable; "necessities" means the things that are needed. Such misuse of "necessities" is common.

"Unique" is a word that is immune from qualification. "The Manager of the Mount

Boppy refers to one of the most unique sections of the mine." Here the superlatives smother each other. If several such "sections" existed in the mine, not one of them was unique. The one first disclosed may have been unique; the second killed the uniqueness of it. Similarly, such words as "obvious" "vertical" "straight", "moral" etc., are not intensified by using an adverb; they are weakened. "Constructing a tramway in a perfectly straight line". "It is very obvious that the machine is worth the price asked."—these are wrong statements. A straight line is the perfection of straightness. Again, it is obvious or it is not; it can neither be more obvious nor almost obvious.

But we can of course say "almost unique". It is easy to slip into pedantry here, and to condemn the qualification of words which are perhaps strictly absolutes but are no longer so treated—"true", for example, and "empty" and "full." We ought not to shrink from saying "very true", or "the hall was even emptier today than yesterday" or "this cupboard is fuller than that". By usage, such statements have come to be accepted as not incorrect.

Consider this passage: "The pleasures of the understanding are more preferable than those of the senses." "Preferable to" means "better than". "Prefer-

able" therefore has a comparative significance and "more preferable" should be considered as a double comparative, which we are not allowed to use. We should, therefore, say "The pleasures of the understanding are preferable to those of the senses."

The sentence "John W. Smith, the late Manager of the Wild Cat mine, was unable to make it pay," provoked one editor to make the pertinent observation: "Is Mr. Smith dead? Was he the former or was he the deceased Manager? Or, was he merely unpunctual? If he was alive when the sentence was written—and he was—he should have been described as "lately (or recently) the Manager."

The managing director of a journal on farming and stock-breeding wrote in an article: "No industry has worked greater miracles than dairy farming. It emerged from an unusually severe winter with scarcely a ripple in the continuous flow of milk to the consumer." Here an amusing mistake has arisen from thoughtlessness. A ripple does not

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necessarily imply a snag, and a sluggish stream does not ripple so much as a fast one; so the absence of ripples does not suggest either that there was no hitch in the milk supply or that it flowed particularly fast!

This collection of examples taken from the Press and from literature will make clear how easy it is to come to grief in the matter of putting one's ideas on paper. All of us may well be on guard against the using of words and expressions, which make us look like ignoramuses!

LUCKY

"This man Jones is one of the luckiest fellows I know of. You heard of his arm being blown off last week in that explosion?"

"Yes, but there is nothing very lucky about that."

"It was his right arm, you know."

"Well, what if it was his right arm?"

"Why, he is left-handed."

Relaxation of the Moral Code In Hollywood

The long-time formidable obstruction to morally controversial material in American films—we speak of the operation of the industry's own Production Code—is slowly and quietly being loosened to accord with what is obviously a change in social attitudes. And the industry is much better for it, as is certainly the medium of films.

They don't like to talk about it in Hollywood, writes Bosley Crowther in *New York Times*. They are, for one thing, afraid that calling attention to it may cause the more sensitive elements of the public to become alarmed. At present, a three-man committee of top industry executives is making a thorough survey of the specific restrictions and consequences of the Code, with an eye to the possible elimination of some of its more unrealistic prohibitions and pieties. So long as this survey is going forward behind more or less closed doors, the Code's conscientious administrators are keeping discreetly mum.

But there are already healthy indications that the Code is being sensibly relaxed to permit the resolution of complications that might have been forbidden a few years back. One of these

is the current attraction, "Tea and Sympathy," which is a fine and sensitive motion picture taken from Robert Anderson's play.

The objectionable aspect of it was not so much that it frankly revealed a suspicion of homosexuality in connection with a sensitive boy in a preparatory school but that it was resolved by the wife of a housemaster giving herself to the boy. Even though this act was motivated and was led up to in the play by the most tender and touching compassion of the older woman for the great anguish and need of the youth, it was still an act of adultery, and adultery cannot be condoned, says the Code. There must be some indication that the sin is punished suitably.

Despite the apparent refusal of the Code Authority to tolerate that conclusion of the plot, without some "compensating normal value," which was not in the well-rounded play, Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer went ahead and bought it and got Mr. Anderson to adapt it to the screen. It also gave him the task of contriving an ending that would conform to the requirements of the Code.

What he eventually came up with was a device that put the

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play, substantially as he originally wrote it, into a time frame. Thus the story begins ten years after the main action, with the now-grown boy returning to his school and going back to his old room, where he muses in flashback on the emotional experience of his youth. Then as his memories are concluded with the surrender of the woman, as in the play, the story is returned to the present and to the adult man sitting in the room.

Downstairs he goes and discovers his old housemaster alone in his suite, obviously residing in bachelor loneliness. The housemaster gives him a letter, which he says has come from his wife, who "lives somewhere out near Chicago," intended to be forwarded to him. He goes into the garden and reads it. The letter initially reveals that the man has written a book about his school days—a book we must assume has been reproduced in the picture and the woman has read.

Then the letter which comes through in the voice of the woman, tells him he has romanticized "the wrong we did," that the act caused the end of her marriage and this did not bring her or her husband a happier life. It suggests that



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she might have let him find a way out of his boyish torment by himself, without giving herself to prove his manhood. And with that reflection, the picture ends.

Obviously, this poignant postscript suggests that the woman has "paid". And it states a moral judgment of adultery in preachy platitudes. It comes as a purely incidental addition of information to the play. The substance of the original drama is completely put upon the screen.

Many a poor man envies the rich man's food. And many a rich man envies a poor man's appetite.

Radiation Hazard

What is the cumulative effect of the fall out from the atomic and hydrogm bombs that are now bring exploded by the big powers?

Gerald Wendt of *UNESCO* answering this question says :

The unit of radiation from X-rays, cosmic rays or from atomic bombs is the roentgen, named after the German Professor Wilhelm Conrad Roentgen who discovered the X-rays in 1895.

The usual X-ray examination of the teeth or of the body in a hospital may give the patient from one to five roentgens. A total of ten roentgens a year is considered quite safe. A person who receives 100 roentgens can become seriously ill and receiving 400 roentgens or more in a single exposure is usually fatal. But the amount of radioactivity that has been added to the surface soil in the United States, where most of the bomb tests have been carried out, is about 0.001 roentgen. This is much less than the amount of radiation from cosmic rays, in which we all live every day, and which is about 0.035 roentgen. It is also less than the natural radioactivity of the human body which comes from the potassium salts that are contained in the blood. And it is

less than one thousandth of the radiation used in a harmless X-ray examination of the teeth.

The possible harm from the scattered radioactive materials is therefore not to the individual plant, animal or human being. But there is some danger to future generations. A very small amount of radiation of any sort, including the ever-present cosmic rays, can easily destroy or alter one or more of the genes that are present in the reproductive cells and are the carriers of the inheritance from parents to offspring, whether plant or animal. This may result in a defective or altered inheritance in the offspring. It is estimated that about two percent of the children born are defective in one respect or another and this may be due to the radiations received by the reproductive cells of the father or the mother. It is also generally thought that the large variety of plants and animals now on the earth are the result of many changes in inheritance produced by radiation through many millions of years. They are inevitable since we live under constant radiation from natural sources. But if the scattered radioactive materials add, even slightly, to the radia-

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tions from the soil and the air, they must be considered harmful. It is, however, as yet unknown what the effect of an additional 0.001 roentgen is on the inheritance. This is at present one of the major subjects of biological research.

DO METALS SMELL?

Have you noticed that water stored overnight in copper or brassvessels, acquires an unpleasant metallic taste? This is because metals dissolve to some slight extent in the water. Especially is it so when there are other materials already dissolved in water. It happens even with pure distilled water and it is for this reason expert tasters of tea and coffee prefer to make their brew in glass or porcelain vessels, and not in metal.

Do evil thoughts have any reaction on the body?

'Subandhu', discussing this question in *Vedanta Kesari*, answers in the affirmative.

Each time a man thinks evil, he says, a part of the energy of the thought current is spent up in modifying him by distorting his mental structure.

There is no scientific instrument, as yet made, to register exactly what happens there. There, without being aware of his danger, he goes on slowly transforming life and consciousness into coarse, arrogant, brutal, murderous and accursed thought currents. And they

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go on poisoning him down to the tips of his hairs! At a certain stage his organic functions like digestion, or assimilation break down. He then explains away those disturbances as due to bad weather, or water, or the absence of proper vitamins in the foodstuffs.

There is no chance there; it is all a play of the law: As we sow, so we reap. As we think, so we become.

Do we change the world with our thoughts? The answer is, yes; but we primarily change ourselves. This changed aspect of our inside develops like an extra invisible limb and draws to us just the men and experiences that are the moral equivalents of the mental forces we generate and turn down into the habit-level. Knowing this, let us choose wisely the type of thoughts and emotions we entertain, as individuals or as communities.