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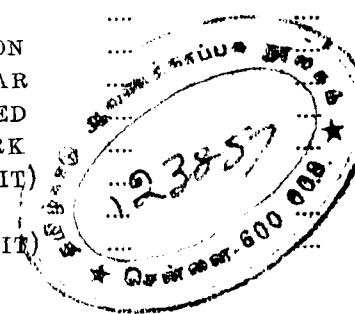
VOLUME 2: No. 6

AUGUST 1957

PRICE 36 nP.

Stories

	PAGE
THE BROKEN UDANKHATOLA	8
BURNING DOUBT	13
THAT LOOK	17
THE TRANSFORMATION	21
UNDER THE BUICK CAR	27
A MIRACLE HAPPENED	33
THE NIGHT WAS DARK	37
HOOPS OF STEEL (SKIT)	47
"S. O. S."	54
ON PUNCTUALITY (SKIT)	62



Articles

SMALL SAVINGS SCHEME (EDITORIAL)	3
UNIVERSITY EDUCATION IN INDIA	5
VITAMINS IN FOOD	25
THE CASE THAT ROCKED FRANCE	50
HE FOOLED THE WORLD'S EXPERTS	59

COVER PAGE PICTURE

The girl you see there, any young man would run after. But she is from Heaven and has been sent down here to settle disputes between lovers and love affairs. Any reader can put in his claim to have met her in flesh and blood. Any girl also is quite welcome to confirm her identity with our Artist's creation.

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No. 6

SMALL SAVINGS SCHEME

INAUGURATING the Small Savings Scheme, Mr. V. T. Krishnamachari, Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission observed in Madras that the States should take the initiative and furnish the motive-power for the Scheme, besides regarding the movement as their own for balancing their deficit budgets and emerging out of their financial difficulties.

The Government of India has already said that two thirds of the proceeds of the Small Savings Scheme in the States would be given to the State Governments for their own Schemes. It is essential, therefore, that the States should organise this movement on a permanent, broadbased structure for the success of the Second Five Year Plan and future Plans in the country. There are about 100 million families in the country, and if every family contributed Rs. 15/- a year, the amount collected would be considerable.

Would the States respond to the patriotic call of the Planning Commission ? Would the citizens of India with traditional love for family way of life ensure that every family did what it could for the Plan ?

The answers to these questions depend on the State and Union Governments regarding themselves as members of the family of people and not as Members of this Party in Power or that Group in Opposition. The Reorganisation of the States on the basis of Language or some other Administrative Formula has already led to the relaxation of family ties of political parties, and

INDIA MAGAZINE

disassociation of the family ties of the States. But these changes in boundaries was an effort to produce something new from the old.

Since all Economy finds its level on National, State, and Linguistic levels and what reorganises too is economy, the family of the people noticed a new orientation of unity in diversity. A new family of States has emerged in modern India.

As economy represents also the life of the family, the urge for savings indicated that the more centralised the economy in the people, the better for organising on a permanent basis the economics of the State and Union Budgets.

Moreover, the Planning Commission has envisaged an increase in the agricultural production and the people in the rural areas are called upon to utilise the National Extension Movement as an Agency for their savings scheme.

But there are members even in the family of the people who expect that the leaders and representatives should set an example. The President of India and the Members of Lok Sabha and the State Assemblies have now volunteered to cut their salaries and help this cause with such small token of kinship with the people. There is also an austerity drive in national and public expenditure at home and abroad and it is now essential to organise units of Small Savings Scheme in government offices, big private offices, banks and private industrial undertakings.

The movement is bound to gather momentum as it reaches the cultural and traditional institutions of India. The secular State of the Republic of India has a good and clean record of administration for upholding the sanctity of family life, introducing Prohibition, to save families from ruin, and protecting the citizens in their pursuit of their own Religion or Culture. There can be no doubt at all that the Small Savings Scheme represents the nervous system of national economy.

UNIVERSITY EDUCATION IN INDIA

By K. PARTHASARATHY

WHILE the term "university" may strike as modern one in India, its meaning and message has been familiar to us for ages past. The earliest records of India, reveal that students with strange enthusiasm and in surprising numbers gathered round famous teachers, in various parts of the country. Madura, now, a fine metropolis in the south, was the hub of 'Tamil scholarship' during the 'Sangam period' which dates back to about 2000 B.C. and which is historically famous "as the golden era of Tamil literature." Takshasila, the capital of Gandhara in North-West India, the native land of Panini, the renowned grammarian, attracted fine young men from all quarters of India in the fourth century B.C. The famous seats of learning belonging to Nalanda, Vikramasila, Dharanikota, Kasi and Navadvipa, were great cultural and educational centres, to which flocked not only crowds of Indians but many eager students from distant parts of eastern Asia. Those who carved deep out of the solid rock "Cells for themselves and temples for their Gods," No wonder, also raised great seats of learning for the knew "it is not mere walls but men who make a city and is not so much of

physical geography, as intellectual community, that moulds a nation."

Any one who has studied and meditated on the ancient classics of India, will testify to their peculiar greatness, their power to yield new meanings and their inexhaustible value as a criterion of presenting enduring and perfect ideas of Peace. Whence this power and vitality? Critical analysis of the question at hand, would reveal, one glaring fact and is this. The whole of modern education revolves around the famous central doctrine "Mens agitat Molem" i.e. "Mind moves the body." But ancient institutions, in India, went a step further and questioned which moved the mind and they found an infinite, inexhaustible and all perceiving "spirit" moved the 'mind.' They were relieved from the burden of inert ideas and petrified illusions. Consequently their ideal of learning "Sa Vidya ya vimuktaye." That is knowledge which liberates man from the gross and bondage."

Coming to the modern approach of a university, certain basic facts as to its origin and growth are of great interest. The term 'universitas' literally meaning an association or company' often

applicable to 'municipal corporations' was also applied in the thirteenth century in Europe to institutions of learning known as "Studium generale" where students from "all parts were admitted for 'different subjects.' This was done for the sake of seeking protection under one organization and also for seeking grants by King, Emperor or Pope, which they did by way of charters. "Thus originally" according to Newman "a universitas was an association in the world of learning which corresponded to a guild in the world of commerce." The rise of the universities is the most notable phenomenon of the middle ages.

With the march of time certain changes in the meaning and function took place with regard to the "University also." In a perfectly modern sense it has become an institution, "whose power of granting degrees is recognised by the state." Further it has come to stay as an institution, which offers various subjects of study for students hailing from various quarters of the world, through a collegiate system affiliated to it.

The growth of University education in India in its modern aspect has been both historic and romantic. With the advent of British rule in India, the ground for western education was prepared. It

was a hundred years ago that Macaulay produced his famous 'Minute.' In pursuance of that document, on March 7, 1835, Lord William Bentinck, the then Governor-General, issued the historic resolution in which it was laid down that "the great object of the British 'Government' ought to be the promotion of European literature and science among the Natives of India." The East India Company set apart a lakh of rupees for the education of the people of India. Their immediate task was to train clerks for the routine work of the 'bureaucratic administration, along with innumerable political and social changes in India. University education has come to stay to represent three conspicuous facts namely the 'scientific spirit,' the 'democratic method' and the 'cultural ideal.' It has also produced men who have stamped infinitely on the thought and life of the country. There are many Universities, in the country today, much devoted to the teaching of 'liberal arts' and 'pure sciences' and great 'academic personalities' think, the liberal arts and pure sciences, must complete, correct and balance each other, so as to achieve a better phase of University education in India.

As a society of thinkers the University is the home of liberty. It has the responsibility to 'develop the

higher mind of the country, its conscience and its ideals.' It is the task of the University to shape the thought and temper of the age towards peace and progress. "For lack of vision, individuals as well Nations have perished." Universities must endeavour "to produce men of vision, by skillfully blending the academic pursuit and cultural quest in man."

If true University education were to exist, equal opportunity for study should be given to all. Besides substantial state aid to the poor should be offered. Real intellectual merit should be recognised and honoured, by Universities immaterial of academic procedure and discipline. Above all the problem

of employment should not hang, over the educated.

Their education should bear fruits to society. In short, with their learning and training, they must be fitted into society, to serve society and to serve themselves with confidence and dignity. To a certain extent the state is responsible for accomodating the 'educated' into Society. And equally the University 'an autonomous body' to a certain extent is responsible for raising true democratic leaders, who could steer the state with vision. A discriminate and persistent policy of promoting the merits and elimination of demerits would bring the "University education aspect" in India, to closer perfection.

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THE BROKEN UDANKHATOLA

THERE yet lies a broken Udankhatola in my decorated drawing room, secure in its place in a corner of my table. Whenever I see it, an old memory flashes into my mind a reminiscence—which causes two, white round drops trickle down my cheeks to be lost in the carpet below, as slowly as the moon glides from behind the dense clouds. Then I stand spell bound, and grave as a senseless statue of stone, my hands in pocket and eyes fixed on the horizon far away.

To-day there is isolation and solitude in the decorated room. I find it in the evening just the same as I leave it in the morning but those old days are gone. These new days, new because of those conditions of the room, which I can remember. Then the room would seem as it had been changing all the day, and the things also seem to have been animated and fought a battle; for all would be found scattered and removed from their original places—just like the exhibition which I had concluded and then I would have to

think over and find the little guy who created all this confusion.

This little chap would create every new trick to tease his mummy all the day and when he saw me he was doubly encouraged in his mischief. Then I would sit on the sofa and accost him slowly "Praveen."

"UNCLE" he would say and run towards me with his hands wide open and the next moment he would laugh clinging to my neck, relating all the wonders he had done and trying to take out the shining cap of my pen some times. Then he would slip his hand into my pocket in search of some chocolates or biscuits and would make me forget all my fatigue, pain and worries of the day. I would forget all the miseries and become free like a soaring bird into the air above. How intense was my love towards that small child who had found his place in the heart of my heart. His cristal clear heart, void of all miseries and worries of the world, above

By

TILAK RAJ BHATIA

the matters of earning and spending, had neither nor lust, illwill towards anyone. He had not to seek or repent over what he had done. He was a haven for me, the light house of the beat of my life in this dark and inaccessible ocean of the world, where there is fear of storms, of law and society, and wild roaming life of the jungle. To-day that light has gone out, and my boat is wandering about in the dreadful ocean. The land is out of sight and I yearn for him my guide, my haven and my base and love.....

PRAVEEN was the only child of my cousin. He came here with his parents. My cousin was to stay here for about one year engrossed in some office work and so he had brought with him his two companions. Hardly it took him a couple of days to become intimate with me and it seemed as if he and I were always together. I was having my holidays then and so all the day I would be chatting with him and seeing his innocent face and tricks. My Bhabi would some times be so much irritated with his,—hue and cry and mischievous chattering that she would chase him to beat with cane but I was there to defend him from momentary fury. The next moment he would still be making face and smiling in such a way that Bhabi's anger vanished and she would soon laugh.

Oh! thus even the walls of the house seemed to laugh and all the atmosphere was gay and happy.

AND whenever I would intend to go out he would be seen ready before me in the side seat in the car. Whenever I see him he would put such expression on his face that compelled me to take him along with me or perhaps I myself sometimes, be wishing to take him. For such occasions he had kept a dictionary of questions in his mind. Before the answer, he had another question. He was always anxious to know the names of various parts of the car. And it was interesting for me to see him explaining these to his friends and thus claiming superiority over them all.

He would ask for many toys and sweets on the way persuading me to buy them. Icecream was his favourite and so when my car would stop near "Kwality" I would look towards him and find him smiling sagaciously—yes, I knew what it meant and he expects a pressure on the brakes. He would hold my hand and blurt out—"Ye good uncle." In such a moment I feel puffed up with joy and wished to print a kiss on his face, but I would only press hard his hand and the next moment we were seen tasting icecream. On such occasion he would say in a different tone "Uncle ye

didn't bring my Udan Khatola ye sir, when I will have it?"

"Oh yes, I am very sorry, Tomorrow I'll surely bring you one. And to distract his attention I would say "The cream is good, Is n't it? "No dear, you always say that" and would pull a long face "Well, if I don't bring Udan Khatola tomorrow, you need no excuse me —" I would say seriously.

"No dear uncle, you see, (he would laugh) I cannot punish such a big uncle ha, ha, I am a little chap."

His childish joke would be heard by those around and point towards me.

Thus days and weeks rolled on adding more to our love and friendship. And the day came when cousin had to leave me and so he and Bhabi were busy arranging their luggage but Praveen was indifferent to all this. He was busy playing with me. His Udan Khatola was yet due. In the course of chatting he asked "Uncle, you will also go with us?" "No dear, I have to stay here."

HE seemed to grow anxious: "you have not cared bringing my—". And the next moment he changed his tone saying, "No, my good uncle I will never be cross with you, now dear, I will go." But how could I explain to that innocent chap that it was

not the nature of the world to allow a prolonged joy of two hearts, that this seperation was unbearable. Praveen didn't want to leave me.

The moment of departure arrived. Those big eyes on a small face were filled with hot stream of tears flowing into my already burning heart. He was gone—my love my joy—not his memory perhaps. Alas; I had not brought his Udan Khatola and I said to myself "This departure of love you deserved."

The wheel of time rolled on. The long years were over. And that day I was on the earth when the news came that Praveen had sought admission in the Doon School. Now he was expected soon with my cousin in his car. I opened out my purse, counted money, opened the box and took some more to bring the best Udan Khatola for my Praveen. Next moment I was in my car. When I came back with the Khatola I was in air imagining the scene of his arrival. "Praveen will see it and know how much I cared for him. He will come with hands wide open" rushing wildly towards me. I was lost in the ocean of imaginations.

I WALKED or ran in my drawing room I can't say. But if some one had seen my condition that time the laws of health would have compelled him to arrange for my going

to Bareilly. Suddenly I took up the Khatola, wound it and let it fly-up and slowly circling above, it began to land. I was seeing it with a fixed gaze, as attentively as Galileo would have been observing the moving lantern in the church. I supposed as if Praveen himself was piloting it down to me. "Hishshshshsh—" it cracked against the wall and tumbled down with its wings broken. Simultaneously the telephone rang up. My senses seemed to give way. I felt giddy and it seemed to me as if earth does not move round the sun but round me.

With trembling hands I picked up the receiver. Some one was murmuring, "Praveen is injured seriously in car accident. Doctors say it is very serious. Are you coming?" I had become lifeless—don't remember whether I said yes or kept back the receiver. I wonder how my legs carried me to the garage. I was shouting for the driver to get me the key.

WHEN I entered the Hospital, Praveen's bed was surrounded with Doctors and Nurses. Their faces were flushed, and their brows were knit, and above I heard the drone of an aeroplane disturbing that pin drop silence. Perhaps it was the one in which Praveen was waiting upto now to go.

Oh no he can't go leaving me back, he promised, we shall fly to gether in Udan Khatola, to stop him I shouted "Praveen—"

472

ALL eyes were drawn towards me as I ran to Praveen. He was lying there all bandaged, to me it seemed all moments of earth had become still. My heart collapsed to see him unconscious. Oh, God! Why don't you bring the moment of annihilation of the earth. Is the earth still interesting for you? Oh! you are man-minus-heart. Where are these blue twinkling big eyes and those cheeks like dawn of the day. Oh, Almighty! Return to me my beloved.

Praveen's face was as pale as death, his eyes fixed and sunk deep. I murmured in his ears, "Praveen dear, I have come. Are you not the same Praveen that punished



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uncle, his good uncle; speak my love, speak—look towards me dear." Doctors thought I had gone mad. But it was not I talking to Praveen, it was the voice of my heart communicating to the heart of Praveen, and I was sure Praveen will feel my heart. Yes, oh! yes, his lips were moving, "Ah-Uncle you have come—my Udankhatola you have brought, good my dear Uncle—" and the breath that had gone out was the last.

DOCTORS said, "I am sorry dear, Praveen will no more ask for Udankhatola." My play mate was gone, my toy was broken. Praveen had gone in the Khatola alone, leaving behind his poor uncle, telling him no more his love for it does not belong to the nature of this world.

That flower—it faded before it bloomed—the twig in the lap it was rocking, shook off before time. To the Gardner it means nothing—it means more to one who knows the flower. And even to day when I behold that broken Khatola my heart seems to pump love of Praveen into my nerves. For the moment I feel two soft hands cling round my neck and the diaphragm of my ear begins to vibrate—"Uncle." My eyes try to dry off my heart by shedding out tears, the carpet below gets wet and dries off but not my heart.

**

INDIA MAGAZINE

BURNING DOUBT

MRS. BELLAMY'S hateful countenance stared up at David from his plate.

"Eat your supper, David." His mother's voice reached down the table to him.

But he could still hear old Mrs. Bellamy saying that his father and mother hadn't wanted him.

"Don't you feel well, darling?" His mother's voice was anxious now.

He turned his head and looked at her. The light from the candles flickered on her face and made her hair look less gray than it really was.

"I'm all right." He was trying his hardest not to cry. "I'm not hungry."

He stole a look at his father at the other end of the table. His father's elbows rested on the arms of his chair, his long thin body hunched forward a little as he peered over the top of his glasses.

"Eat your supper, boy."

David picked up his fork and put some potatoes in his mouth. They tasted like dry cotton, and he slumped against the table edge. Mrs. Bellamy's words kept going around in his head.

INDIA MAGAZINE

He could feel his brother Bob looking at him from across the table. Bob was 17 and a senior in high school. Then there was Jean on his left, 19, and engaged to be married.

Two other sisters, Betty and Alice, already were married and living away from home. David was six.

His mother rose to her feet and came around the table to him. She put the back of her hand against his face. "He mustn't feel too well," she said to his father.

David pressed his lips together to keep them from trembling. "I'm just not hungry," he insisted.

"Suppose we go upstairs," she said.

DAVID slid obediently from his chair, and his mother put her arm across his shoulders and drew him from the room. She made him lie down while she took his temperature.

She sat on the bed beside him, and in a minute she took the thermometer from his mouth. Frowning little, she laid it on the table beside the bed.

13

"Ninety-eight," she said.
"Does it hurt here?"

He shook his head.

"Here?" she touched his throat.

Again he shook his head.

"Where does it hurt, darling?"

He didn't answer.

She leaned across him, one elbow on the bed. Her other hand brushed his hair back from his forehead.

"The trouble must be up here. What is it. David? What's wrong?"

David pressed his lips together firmly.

"Tell me, David," His mother's voice grew chiding. "You and I never keep secrets from each other, do we?"

He shook his head.

"Then please tell me. What is it?"

* *

HE stared at the little silver necklace dangling from his mother's neck. The light shone on it, waving and sparkling, as though he were looking at it through a glass of water.

"Mummy, didn't you want me to be born?"

The words slipped out before he could stop them.

His mother's hand stopped stroking his head. A funny look crossed her face. And then she said. "Why, David, what do you mean?" He continued to stare at the necklace. He could hardly see it or his mother now.

"What do you mean, David?" she asked.

It all poured out then, in a rush of words. How he had been coming home from school that afternoon and had met Mrs. Bellamy and another lady on the street.

How he had heard Mrs. Bellamy talking to the lady after he had passed them. How Mrs. Bellamy had said:

"That Bob Baker's little brother. There's 11 years' difference in their ages. I don't think he was expected."

His mother was silent so long when he had finished that fear rose into his throat in a hard dry lump.

"Didn't you and daddy want God to send me to you?" he cried.

The funny look vanished from his mother's face. She bent and pressed her cheek

against his. Her arms went around him and held him tight. bies to other fathers and mothers.

"Oh, darling," she whispered. "Darling, what do you think?"

He began to cry quietly.

"What do you think, David?" Her tone was insistent. "Think back and think carefully. David was there ever any reason for your doubting?"

* *

HE lay still, staring at the ceiling over his mother's head. He let his mind go back into the past, as she had said, and curiously a long parade of pleasant memories began to take from before his eyes.

"Was there, David?"

His gaze searched the ceiling carefully, then dropped to his mother's shoulder. "No." He spoke in a whisper, and all at once he knew it was so. There wasn't any reason for his having doubted.

His mother drew back and looked at him. Her face was so close to his that he could see the stars shining in her eyes.

"After Bob was born, daddy and I begged God to bring us another little boy, David, but he didn't right away. I suppose He was bringing ba-

"Then when we'd almost given up hope. He brought us you. It was the most wonderful, the happiest moment in our lives, David darling."

* *

A warm glow spread through David's body. His mother's words had served to confirm his own decision. And in knowing, in having discovered the truth for himself, he felt a strange new strength grow in him.

It was more like a resolve that the next time, no matter what it was, he would have better faith, one that all the mean, old Mrs. Bellamys' in the world couldn't shake.

His mother smiled and, holding him tight in her arms again, kissed him. When she let him go, he sat up and slid his legs over the side of the bed.

HIS toes rubbed the soft carpet. He didn't hate Mrs. Bellamy and longer. He didn't hate anything or anybody. He looked up at his mother and grinned.

"I'm hungry," he said. *
—E. S. FOX

The illustrations on pages 42 and 43 are to face one another as in pages 43 and 42. The error is regretted.

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DID YOU KNOW?

DID you know? That, although you probably think of the Tower of London as a fortress, an armoury, a prison, where traitors have been confined and spies shot, from the days of William the Conqueror to the time of Charles II, the tower was occupied as a palace, from which the Sovereigns, at their Coronations, went in state through the City to Westminster.

King Charles II, was the last King to ride forth from the Tower to be crowned, and in the reign of William and Mary the domestic apartments of the ancient palace within the Tower were demolished.

Did you know? That, over two hundred years ago in 1735, a young self-taught carpenter invented a time machine. It was the most perfect instrument of its kind then known to the world of science. A lecture was given, not very long ago, in the famous Draper's Hall, in London, in honour of the inventor, and in the hall was the instrument he had made so many years ago.

The youthful inventor was John Harrison, the "man who improved on the clock," and the machine was the chronometer which revolutionised the science of navigation and made possible the exact determination of longitude at sea.

The chronometer is the perfect time-keeper, and it is matter of national pride that the first practical one was made by an English man.

INDIA MAGAZINE

"HOLD on please, hold on" shouted an old man at the top of his voice running towards the Government Transport Bus, which had just started moving the M. U. C. terminus. The bus stopped with a loud screech.

"Get in quickly," said the driver. The conductor helped the old man to step into the bus. Tightly holding a bag in the right hand, he came and sat by my side.

Turning to the conductor he asked. "How much for Tondiarpet?"

"Two and half annas" replied the conductor mechanically.

Is it two and half annas? "I have been told that it is only two annas" argued the oldman.

"Only from the next stage, it is two annas", I pointed out, trying to convince him.

"Where is the next stage?", he inquired vaguely.

"Parry's corner", I replied.

"Then I could have boarded the bus from there itself" he murmured. I thought that

INDIA MAGAZINE

he had only two annas with him. I felt something working his mind.

"Alright, give me a ticket for Tondiarpet" the old man asked the conductor, handing over three anna coins. Getting the balance he thrust the half anna coin safely into his pocket. For the first time I looked at his face. His forehead was low, puckered about with innumerable wrinkles. His thin, wispy hair was plastered to his bony scalp. His dress seemed torn but clean. I thought he is about seventy years old.



"What is time now" the old man put in mildly engrossed in serious thought.

"7-50" I declared.

K. HANUMANTHAN

"I'll be 8-15 to reach Tondiarpet" he whispered to himself. "I am going to my daughter's house" he explained as if I had asked him where he was going. He continued without caring whether I listened or not. "I am living with my son in Park Town. Though he is earning much, he has no voice at home. He is quite a henpecked husband."

2 Aug.—'57

I am to blame for choosing that extravagant woman for my son. I thought at least he would be happy in life. That is why I chose him a rich bride". After a little pause as if recollecting something, he resumed, "I was a carpenter. I could not get work for more than four days a week". It was a great task for me to educate my son. I never cared even to look after my bare needs. When my son was studying S. S. L. C. my wife was laid up in bed with T. B. I tried in vain to admit her in the Government T. B. Sanatorium. I was in a dilemma. Either I could attend to my son's education or to my wife's treatment. I could not look after both. Then my wife entreated me that I should not interrupt her son's education. I could not but listen to her. Within a short time, she died". He stopped abruptly for a moment, to recover from this sad memory.

THEN his eyes rested on me. I don't know what he thought about me. He went on, "When my son passed S. S. L. C. with good marks, another task awaited me. My daughter reached her marriageable age. I had to

choose her a bridegroom. Where I had to find money for the marriage? Who would lend a man of my miserable position. My son was then seriously looking for a job. To lighten my burden, he was soon provided with a clerk's post in a Government Office. I was able to save something from his earnings for my daughter's marriage. I received many matrimonial offers for my son. I chose one from a rich class. But my daughter-in-law looks down on me. I don't worry much about it. But what pains me most is that she does not treat my son well. I am to be blamed for all this. If I had chosen a girl from my own station of life, he would be having a peaceful and more enjoyable life. I planned that I shall lead a calm life at least in my old days. It all proved otherwise".

HE seemed cast down by his family troubles. Yet never a sign of hatred was seen on his face. His eyes looked calm and unperturbed in the mist of turbulent waves of misery that tossed his life. The bus was nearing Royapuram, chattering and tottering over the road.

How far "Is your daughter's house from the bus terminus?" I asked him.

"It is nearly a mile. That is why I am seriously thinking how I could walk that distance at this dark hour. This evening my daughter-in-law had prepared 'Rava kesari'. (sweet pudding) My daughter is very fond of it." he said pointing to his bag.

"Thinking that the bus fare would be two annas to Tondiarpet, I planned to utilise the other anna for the

fare from Tondiarpet to New Washermenpet where my daughter is living. Now I have only half anna with me. There is no other alternative, except to walk that distance."

I HAD nothing with me to spare for the old man. How could I tell him that I had not even a half anna to help him?

The bus slowed up and came to a stop at Royapuram. "I am getting down here" I told him. I really took away his breath when I coolly got down without knowing what



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to do. He would thought my heart is blind, my soul deaf and my conscience dumb. I should have told him that I had nothing with me to spare for him. He would have readily told me "don't worry".

THE whole night I was haunted by that look of the old man. I could not get sleep. Would he have asked some one in the bus to help him with a half anna? He was not such a type, I know from his look. More I thought about him I grew restless.

When I got up from my bed in the morning, I looked nervous and exhausted. After taking hot bath, I leisurely went through the newspaper.

A news para arrested my attention and felt my whole body shivering. The news was too much for me to bear.

"An old man of nearly seventy was run over by lorry at 8-20 P. M. last night in Thiruvetriyur High Road, a few forlongs from the Tondiarpet bus terminus. He had a bag of some sweet pudding in his possession. Before receiving any medical aid he succumbed to the injuries."

I would never forget that old man in all my life with such look in his eyes as if his end is near. That look will haunt me for ever. **

A Short Story.

The Transformation

RAMU was hardly ten years of age though he looked older than that. The shade of pure innocence which displayed itself on the faces of most of the boys of his age was not noticeable. He was not smart of limbs; he would not jump in wild excitement as his other classmates would do at a trifling joke. He would be seriously thinking all the time.

It was about 11 o'clock in the night as he lay on the cot. His eyes slowly closed—not in sleep, but in deep meditation. The centre of his meditation was his father. He thought of his father with repulsion. Scenes of his cruelty towards him and his mother came before his mind vividly. Did his father love him? No. There was no evidence at all,—not even the slightest indication. Almost every day he scolded him. Three days in a week was he made to feel the incessant flow of his father's blows though there is no reason for such punishment. God should not have given a child to a cruel father. This was his logic all the time.

The boy would still spare his father the silent vituperations but for his beloved mother suffering at his hands. Was he a husband? Was he fit to be a husband? Did he deserve the love and care of a noble-hearted woman? Did he at time reciprocate the warm affection she showed him? No. No. He was no husband at all; he was a brute, and that was why he beat his wife daily.

At the background of all the scenes was dominant the picture of that evening's occurrence.

AT about 9 o'clock that night, the man came home and smacked his wife left and right. The sublime, noble woman, typical of an Indian wife, fell prostrate before him and held his feet with a plea that he should not treat her in such a manner, and that he should behave himself like a respectable husband. Her eyes only expressed her appeal since her throat was blocked by emotions. The boy stood always

close to the mother. He hated his mother's humility and submissiveness. Why should she allow herself to such a state of misery? Instead of sympathy, the expression on her face pro-



duced annoyance in the man's heart. He stepped a pace back and kicked her on the stomach. The boy dropped himself on his knee beside her running one hand gently on her cheek and keeping the other on her head. Bitter tears flowed from his eyes. He came to the conclusion that the brute had killed the mother. 'I will kill him', he thought and looked up to mean it in childish defiance. Next moment a kick on his bony buttocks made him realise

that after all, he was a child. A little later he understood that his mother was not dead.

What would he do on occasions like these if he were a grown up man? Would he simply keep quiet? Or would he slap him on his cruel contemptuous face and make his jaw feel the strength of his knuckles? Or would he take a crow bar and finish him off? Which line of action would he prefer when he grew to be a man?

If his father continued to be contemptuous and cruel to his mother she might die before Ramu grew up. Men like his father were incorrigible, he thought—beyond all possibilities of rectification. Yes. They should die. This thought ruled over his mind. Let him die. How? Ramu had a plan. He had heard somebody say that when a man was truck hard at the temple he would die instantaneously. A hammer would suit the job well and he knew where to find it.

WITH this plan working fast in his mind, the little man often got down from his cot noiselessly, went to a

corner of the house and picked up the hammer. He now stalked bravely without making a noise. There was

no wavering of his mind, no second thought. He was determined as to what he should do. He should see his father die; it had become a necessity. He approached the cot on which his father lay seeming motionless, for the boy could not see the heaving of the man's breast in the dark.

HIS father would often throw a part of his salary on the face of his mother to look to the maintenance of the family. The rest he would squander at card tables or at the theatres with his 'moneysucking' friends.

He stretched himself now on a cot in a room. He felt as if a huge drum was being beaten inside his head to accompany a big band of musical instruments. His head ached so much that he thought he should order his wife to bring a pill of Aspro and some water. But he

knew his wife was sick. Sick? What he did two hours ago passed before him and he saw it more clearly than when it



actually happened,—his wife crying in pain as he gave blows after blows in mad rage, then falling before him headlong and appealing to his sense of respectability and to his sympathy and losing consciousness. He thought of his action now without pain and remorse. Was he justified in getting angry with his wife that evening? Why did he beat her? She did not argue with him at all. Not even once in her life was she in disagreement with any of his views. She never made a scene other women did when husbands beat them.

THIS, as he himself knew, was but a temporary transition of the state of mind. This was how he concluded every night but with the dawn of the day, the roughness of his manners would return.

He felt sleepy and slowly closed his eyes, but opened them presently for he heard a noise. He saw the silhouette of a small boy coming towards his cot, recognizing the figure. It was his little son whom he had kicked two hours ago.

The boy came close to the cot and bent over his father's face. The father pretended to be asleep. He could now see that the boy had a hammer in his hand and the father became cautious. Thoughts ran fast in his mind. He could see now that his son was preparing for revenge; and break his head with the hammer. Even then

he realised how cruel he ought to have been to have provoked the sense of revenge in his own little son.

The boy raised the hammer and brought it down with as much force as he could exert. He felt a strong grip on his forearm and he understood that his blow had not gone home.

Like a figured strip of rubber lengthened to the maximum extent and tied at both ends to two separate stationary objects, the boy's body suffered. The brute might smash settle his own life. A frightful shriek escaped his throat.

The shriek went and brought the mother to the scene. She was at a loss to understand as to what had taken place. She guessed her husband had beaten her son, and she was greatly angered, but still she did not say a word to her husband,—not because she was afraid he would kick her, but because she was a pure product of the Indian tradition a woman who had unquestionable devotion for her husband, even to accept self-immolation on her husband's death.

"This little boy of yours", he told his wife, "was about to take my life out, or rather thought so, with this hammer." He spoke seriously. There was not anger in his tone, no mock smile on the

—Please see page 26

VITAMINS IN FOOD

[T is important to have all the main kinds of food-stuffs—proteins, fats and carbohydrates—which means having milk, butter, eggs, cheese, meat, and vegetables, in the proper proportions. But what about the extra little things, the vitamins, which mean so much?

There are a number of different vitamins, called by letters of the alphabet; thus we have vitamin A, vitamin B, vitamin C, and so on. They were labelled like that by the biochemists who discovered them; but as more was found out, it was learned, for example, that what had first been called "vitamin B" was in fact composed of a number of quite separate parts, each having different work to do in the body, and so they were re-named "vitamin B 1," "vitamin B 2" and so on. The most important from the point of view of general health are A, the B group, C, and D.

Vitamin A is mainly concerned with maintaining the health of certain parts of our body surfaces, that is, the skin and the cornea or outer surface of the eye. It had other effects too, concerned with the health of nerve cells and so on. We gather lots of tiny germs on our skins just in the ordinary way of going about daily, because there are lots of tiny microbes in the

air almost everywhere we go; but we don't suffer any ill effects from this, and are quite unaware of it. This is mainly because the little germs don't have any chance against our healthy skin tissues, which drive them back quite easily. However, if we were to go seriously short of vitamin A, that wouldn't be the case, and another thing that would happen is that we shouldn't be able to see so well in dim light like twilight. Luckily, on an ordinary diet it is almost impossible in this country to get seriously short of vitamin A. It occurs in many foods, and particularly in liver, fish liver oils, cheese, tomatoes, and carrots.

The B group, which the biochemists tell us consists of at least nine separate factors, each with its part to play, is on the whole concerned with our metabolism. That is a big word which means the breakdown of our foodstuffs into their basic parts and the using of these in various ways in our bodies. For instance, part of the vitamin B complex is necessary for us to be able to use carbohydrates (sugar and starch). They also keep our muscles toned up and our heart muscle in good condition. They keep our nerves healthy, too. Various parts of the B complex occur in all the main foods—liver, lean meat, eggs, cheese, green vegetables, milk and in yeast.

Most people know some-

thing about vitamin C, or ascorbic acid. It occurs in most fruits, especially the citrus fruits, and in black-currents and tomatoes. Sailors didn't get nearly enough of it in the old days of the sailing ships, and the disease from which they all suffered as a result was scurvy. Many doctors nowadays have never seen a case of scurvy, so rare has it become. But just occasionally it crops up, perhaps in a victim of chronic alcoholism, whose diet has been more liquid than solid and has been missing in fresh fruit and vegetables.

That brings us to vitamin D which all mothers must certainly have heard about. Lack of this vitamin causes rickets, and this is the reason why clinics insist on babies getting cod liver oil, and on the expectant mothers taking extra vitamin D (as well as all the others I have mentioned) before the baby arrives. But in addition to vitamin D itself, sunshine is also terribly important, because the effect of sunshine on the skin is to promote the formation of vitamin D in the skin. Sky-shine, by which we mean just the strong daylight that is the scattered radiations from the sun, is just as important as direct sunshine, and babies need to be allowed in contact with the open air both winter and summer, by being taken out daily in the pram, either in the open country or, if you live in a town, into an open

space like a park. The air is more beneficial there than in a street. Of course, if you are lucky enough to have a garden, a spell out there is the pram every day, plus the daily dose of cod liver oil, is just what the doctor ordered for your baby, and will ensure that his teeth and bones are strong and healthy.—P.

THE TRANSFORMATION

—Continued from page 24
corner of his mouth. Instead she detected a queer sincerity in his voice, which she knew should have been excited by the seriousness of the situation.

THE trembling son was trying to run to his mother, but the father would not leave him. He hugged his son in fond parental love and shed some drops of tears. He held the boy close to him, patted him fondly and consoled him with soft, encouraging words.

He raised his eyes and looked at his wife with tears of joy. Joy, relief, pride and the warmth of love were all there in her heart.

Leaving the boy, he ran to his wife, embraced her and gave her a warm kiss on her forehead. The sudden transformation of her husband did nonplus her for some time, but she kept close to her husband in whose embrace (an embrace that was free from ostentation and mere lust) she found herself after a lapse of nearly ten years.—J. E. DAVID

AFTER meals, I was relaxing in an easy chair, munching betelleaves and puffing a cigarette creating circles of smoke.

I picked up the envelope thrown by postman eagerly and knew that it was from Ramesh. Ramesh was my intimate friend, living in Bombay, and working as a clerk in a private firm. I began to read the letter:

'Dear Babu.'

I am fed up with this deceptive world. You see, Babu, you are my only trustworthy friend. You always referred to me as the 'gay guy'. But today I am not gay. On the contrary, I am in great sorrow. I am not ill. Still I am going to die tomorrow. Not accidentally but deliberately. Life has become a bed of thorns to me, now. I don't want to live any more.

You know how I jeered at the idea of suicide. I referred to suicide as a cowardly



UNDER THE *Quick* Car

conduct. But I have been compelled to think of it today.

How I loved her, I never thought she will deceive me. Shobha was my goddess. I worshipped her with heart, How many times I took her to see pictures! How many times I led her to different restaurants! She was my life. But today all is in vain! I could not understand that

her love for me was a mere mirage. But only today I realised that she was a wolf in sheep's clothing. She gave me another shock. Do you remember Gangadhar, our old college pal. He is a manager of an engineering firm here. Shobha has taken a liking to him. You know, how rich he is! He has got a beautiful Buick Car and a bungalow. These things must have fascinated Shobha's heart. She has become very friendly with him now. Often I see them going to the beach in Gangadhar's Buick. My heart aches!

EVEN when Shobha plainly told me that she was not going to marry me, Babu, actually I caught her feet and pleaded with tears in my eyes.

She said sternly, "Mr. Ramesh, you should have known earlier that roses have thorns and, over and above, the path of true love never runs smooth!"

This was a bolt from the blue, Babu! I would not have been so astounded even if she had thrown a hydrogen-bomb in my direction!

The cup of my misery was full. I was frustrated. It was my greatest discomfiture. Hence I am determined to think of suicide by throwing myself under the speeding Buick Car of Gangadhar! Yes, Babu, I am going to make Shobha aware of my great love for her. I have already told you that daily Shobha and Gangadhar go to the beach in the Buick.

When Shobha will see my crushed body under the Buick, she will come to know the power of my love for her. She, then, will not get peace until her death! The guilty conscience in her will not allow her to sleep soundly! It will make her life a hell! I am going to keep a note for Shobha in my pocket at the time of the accident. The note will read, "Dear Shobha, I loved you sincerely but you jilted me! I wooed you but you did not take pity on me!"

THIS note will make her more miserable, Babu, she will repent later on for her behaviour. But it will be too late to mend! Then she will heave sighs of sorrow all her life.

THIS is my plan, Babu! I am disclosing all this to you because you are my best friend. I have observed the daily route of Gangadhar's Buick. I am going to stand on the road on a particular spot. I shall throw myself on the road as soon as the Buick will approach the spot. You will read the news of an accident in Bombay papers. Please, don't lament, boy! At least your heart will melt seeing my pathetic position. Today is Saturday. Tomorrow evening I shall be away from this world."

My last greetings to you,
Babu,

Yours dear friend,
Ramesh.

P. S. Please don't forget to read the news of a fatal accident in Bombay papers."

"Ah! wonderful fellow!" I mumbled to myself. You see, he has always been a queer fellow—rather hot-headed. I felt sorry for him. It was no use trying to persuade him. He was stubborn. Since more than one year he was writing to me about his romance with Shobha. They had become very intimate and I was awaiting for the invi-

tation card of their marriage. I never thought Shobha will jilt him and be friendly with Gangadhar. If everything occurred according to our wishes, what will be thrill there? He was an expert lover. I used to read and enjoy his letters. In the previous letter only, he had written: "Chum! Babu, my romance is in full swing. Actually I and Shobha were swining and singing hilariously yesterday. It was a thrilling experience to tell her. "Ah, dear Shobha, how beautiful you look! There is mocking mischief in your almond eyes, maddening music in your sweet words and marvellous magic in your tantalizing touch and . .

"Ah, steady please!" she cut me short, "you are fast becoming a poet!"

"No, dear", I said, "I am simply your lover!"

AND I thought that time that the next from him will be the invitation card for marriage. But—well, the path of true love never runs smooth! I shook off my momentary stupor and lay on my cot to snatch some sound sleep, for my eyes were get-

ting heavier and heavier due to the second show I had seen the previous night.

WHEN the paperboy brought the daily on Monday morning, I began to search for all the accidents in Bombay City. I read many accidents but did not find the name of Ramesh. I looked every nook and corner of the

accompanied by a letter. This was something more surprising. I began to read the letter eagerly:

"My dearest Babu, ALREADY you will have been wondering as to what happened to the resolution of mine! I shall explain very briefly. According to my plan I went to the spot and



paper but still I did not find it. I was rather surprised. I thought for a while and then murmured to myself, "May be, some fly in the ointment!" And believe me two weeks passed but I did not find the news about Ramesh in the paper! One day, I received the invitation card of the wedding of Ramesh and Shobha

waited for the Buick of Gangadhar to come. It came as usual. I tried to look through the glass of the car. I could see Gangadhar's face—but, Babu, the lady sitting near him was not Shobha! It was the typist girl in Gangadhar's firm. Well, at once I changed my plan, because I thought

of a car accident only in the presence of Shobha. I let the Buick pass and with a sudden impulse I went to Shobha's house. I found her sitting in a chair—rather sullen. She was surprised to see me there. I asked her casually, "Why did you not go today to the beach with Gangadhar?"

"Oh, no" she said softly, "He is unwell!"

"WHAT!" I exclaimed, "why, I just saw him driving his Buick. Probably he was going to the beach."

"What! she exclaimed now, "It is impossible! I had gone to him half an hour earlier as usual to go to the beach with him. But he was suffering due to stomachache. He politely told me that he was unable to come to the beach today".

"Well, it goes without saying that he has thrown dust in your eyes. Not only that", I ejaculated. "That typist of his was with him. I saw them very closely. Definitely they were going to the beach, I swear!"

"You don't say!" she shouted.

"BELIEVE me, Shobha," I said calmly, "this is the way of the world! And the path of true love never runs smooth. You may well visit his house



I find out whether he is in
out or better we may go to
beach. We shall see
nothing, I believe."

HE looked thoughtful and
ave consent to my proposal.
hired a taxi and went to
beach. We saw Ganga-
r and the girl-typist there
ing very close and chatting
rily. I looked at Shobha
mpantly. She was bur-
ing with anger. I dare say
blood must have been
led at that time. But at
e I whispered in her ears,
t go, Shobha. Remember,
persons are not like
gadhar. Now, it is not
late to mend. I am still
rs. You are my goddess,
bha. At least now take
on me." She looked
ightful. Tears gathered in
eyes.

hen she said politely,
orgive me, Ramesh. I
er thought Gangadhar will
e me. It is very kind of
to have enlightened me in
a. My behaviour must have
sed you much pain. I am
ly sorry, dear Ramesh."

Well, let the by-gones be
ones. Now, we must think

of our future! Don't you think
so, dear?

"Of course!" she said
blushingly.

But she asked me as an
after thought: "How did
you happen to see Gangadhar
and the typist in his car?"

"Oh! that is a different
story," I said blushingly. "I
shall tell you later on. But
what about going in the 'Taj'
for some refreshments?"

"I WILL come," she said and
we both proceeded towards
the 'Taj' merrily hand in
hand.

I was floating in ecstasy,
Babu! Her attitude really
made me happy beyond
words.

Yours affectionately,

Ramesh.

P. S. Please don't forget to
attend our wedding which is
coming off on Monday
next."

I was also happy at the
turn of destiny of my dear
friend.

—D. V. KAVADI
INDIA MAGAZINE

A MIRACLE Happened

ALL the way home her per-
fume walked with him
through the soft spring
darkness. The siren song of
her voice was with him, too,
and the memory of the tempt-
ing challenge in her eyes. "By
the way, I'll be home alone
this evening. Bill Martin—
just in case you don't have
anything to do after dinner."

He had not answered her
challenge one way or the
other. But he knew that
after the youngster was asleep
and after he had helped Mary
with the dishes and turned
the television to the station
she wanted, he would have
to give himself an answer to
it.

He would have to say,
"Think I'll go out for a walk.
Mary. Maybe drop in at the
alley and see if any of the
boys are bowling."—then actu-
ally stop by the bowling
alley, so that he would not
have lied to Mary, and then
... and then.

Or he would have to sit at
home as he sat almost every
night—a little bored, a little
frustrated, feeling he was

only 35, a little old. Only
to-night, because of the girl—
the stranger he had met so
casually and gaily there in the
restaurant—the frustrated
part would be much worse
than usual, because to-night
he did not feel at all old. He
had heard the beckoning voice
of spring.

As he turned into his own
block he walked more and
more slowly and he frowned.
"Of course, I won't really go
to her apartment," he said
aloud. "After all, I love my
home and I love the kid and I
love Mary."

BUT saying this neither help-
ed nor convinced him. For
one thing he was almost cer-
tain he would go to the address
the girl had given him—and
for another, he knew perfectly
well, that she was an exte-
mely attractive young woman
and was most certainly not a
trap. As a matter of fact, it
had turned out after they got
talking that he actually knew
her husband slightly—a
successful broker who came
to New York on the same
train he did.

INDIA MAGAZINE

3—Aug. '57

33

The meeting and the challenge in her eyes and voice when she said goodbye had lifted him clear out of himself and the six years' humdrum of breakfast, train, office, dinner, dishes, boredom, bed, breakfast that was his life.

SHE was glamorous adventure. Although knowing her husband slightly made it difficult, he pictured her as married to a glowering monster—and this made it romance, romance spelled with a capital "R".

At the beginning of the cement walk that led to his house between the two patches of green that he annually beat into a lawn with his life's blood, he stopped and took off his hat and absent-mindedly fanned himself walk up to the house seeing himself, according to custom, open the door and call, "Hello, family!" His little boy, John, snug and rabbit in his sleepers, would tear himself away from watching "small fry" long enough to stick his head around the corner of the living-room and yell, "Hi, daddy." Mary would tear herself away from cooking dinner long enough to stick her head through the kitchen door and yell "Hi, daddy!"

He went on up the walk at a snail's pace now, smiling to himself. He was thinking about the greeting he would get later that evening—the

breathless, exciting greeting accompanied by the wafting scent of perfume and the glow of laughing eyes that held a challenge.

"I'd be a fool to pass that up," thought Bill Martin. "I don't know any other guy who would."

He walked quickly up the steps opened the front door, and stood suddenly tense. The inside of the house was dark. For a few seconds a sensation of abject horror that sprang from a guilty conscience shook him. Mary had taken the boy and left him. She had committed suicide. She had . . .

"Light me, please, daddy," a small voice said. "When you opened the door just now you blew me out."

RELIEF flooded through him. The relief was so pleasant that he found himself laughing. His son John's odd request was, after all, the sort of extravaganza any father grows accustomed to.

"Sure, son," he said. "How do you want me to light you?"

"Here," said John. "on my candle with your lighter. It was my dessert for supper."

"The candle?"

"Sure Mummy stuck it in a little tiny cake. It made the cake taste just wonderful."

Bill Martin snapped his lighter into flame. The boy held up a miniature red candle.

"Now," he said. "I'll light you to my room. This is a very powerful candle."

BILL Martin followed his son up the stairway. The light from the candle reflecting in the worn oak banister rail made it gleam like mahogany. He followed down the hall-way to a big room at one end of the house. In the doorway of the room, which was the bedroom at one end and a playroom at the other, the little boy paused and held the candle high.

"Look!" he said, his voice filled with awe at the miracle of candle light and he turned to his father, his face radiant with wonder. "We can see everything!"

Bill Martin started to say, "We could see a whole lot more if we snapped on the electric light switch," but he checked himself because, suddenly, he doubted if this was true.

The boy walked slowly ahead to the playroom end. He still held the miniature candle high, and its light fell now on plastic tractors, fire engines and trucks lying in violent disarray. It cast long shadows from these overturn-

ed hulks, fell on scattered platoons of lead soldiers, lying every inch of the way—made them look in the romantic dimness, real and stark.

"Look," cried John, in a whisper, "I can even see my railroad."

Bill Martin caught his breath. The toy railroad—quite an expensive toy railroad, by his standards—had been there in that room for a long while—since John was four—and he was six now. He was quite certain that in spite of the modern fluorescent lighting in the boy's room, this was the first time in over a year he had actually seen the railroad. He stood still for a second, thinking. Then he bent quickly and kissed his son.

"Look John," he said, "I forgot something I should have bought on the way home from the station. I'll be back in a few minutes."

ACROSS the dining-room table, Bill Martin looked at his wife. In the soft glow of light from the pair of the shining crystal candelabra that had been the very best in the Gift Shop, she looked to him very much as he had thought someone else might look this evening. The excite-

ment of receiving a present had made her do special things to her lips, her eyes and to her lovely golden hair—and to dinner. They had, the two of them, been a long time over dinner.

HE wanted to tell her that it had been a long time since he had seen her look as lovely as she did to-night, but he wanted to be sure that when he said it—because of what he had heard in his son's voice—he would not sound as if he were saying it had been a long time since he had seen her at all. He wanted to be very sure of this, so he hesit-

ated before he spoke, choosing his words carefully. He was still choosing them when she spoke.

"Bill—you know, it's funny what candlelight does for a man." Then he heard her laugh. "I'd been thinking how sort of stuffy and prosaic and staid you'd been getting—but to-night...." Across the table, she held out her hand. "But to-night—well...."

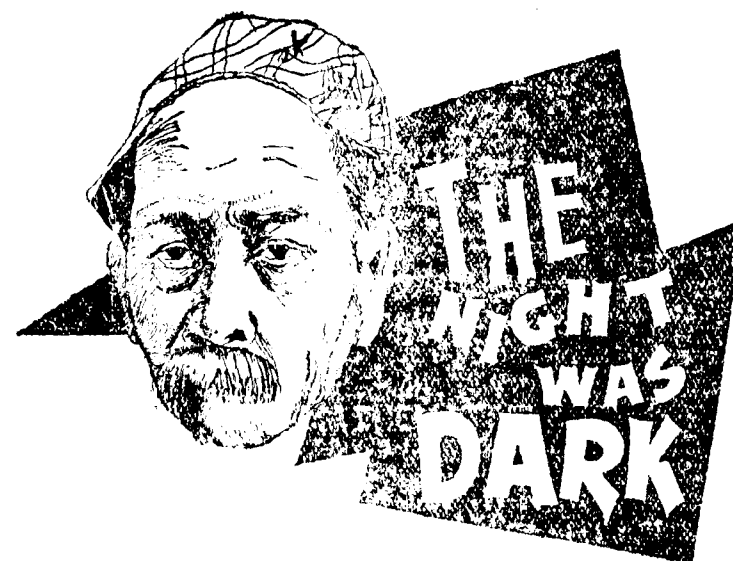
HER voice coming to him across the table was strangely exciting, almost challenging.

—ERIC HATCH

INDIA MAGAZINE

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THE exit door was rather small, hardly befitting the large and stony structure of the prison. The passage was dimly lit, and the policeman beside the ex-prisoner looked ghostly unrealistic, his dark-blue uniform blending with the darkness of the passage.

The door was opened and the newly released man looked vainly for the fresh light he sought. It was not there, for it was dark. The road outside the prison was faintly lit by the gaslight road lamps. The surroundings were silent.

As he stepped out of the door his hand moved silently

forward, and the coarse bony fingers shook as they felt the warmth of freedom. For twelve long years he had been without this air—the free air which was rightfully his.

He turned, as a rough hand was laid on his shoulder. The policeman was talking to him. He was vaguely aware of the words as they fell crisply in the night. "Go Nana, and don't come back!" It sounded like a threat, but was more of a good piece of advice.

As he turned around again, the policeman had disappeared through the small door. Far away a church clock

A Short Story By SHAMA KILANJAR

chimed nine times, and as he looked on either side of the road in front of him, he felt as if he were nowhere, just like the road; midway between two goals. For him one was the past and the other the future.

The night was dark. A car screeched along its mobile headlights cutting thin streams of light. He felt its hot presence as a draft of wind assailed his body.

NANA looked back once more. The ominous walls of the prison towered above him. All of a sudden he felt lonely. He had felt lonely like this twice before. The first time when father died eighteen years ago while ploughing the field. And the second time two years later when his mother had collapsed at the well while she was drawing water. She had never risen again. But these periods of loneliness had been brief, for the need for existence had wiped away all memories.

Now, he felt like that. Where to go? Anywhere, but away from this place. Now, he felt like hating Surya, whom he had killed accidentally and because of whom he had spent the twelve years in prison. His past, which was filled with misery, crooked dealings and evasive happiness. His heart towered with hate. Hate! But above the expression of his heart, the counsel of mind

muttered incessantly: "You shall not go back again."

That was five days ago. Five days of peace and relaxation! He had just sat and slept on the bed in his small room. Through his first floor window, the sun had repeatedly peeped in driving away the darkness, and he had revelled in its beauty, smoking his beedies in the while. From the hotel below, his food came regularly at twelve in the afternoon and eight in the night. Except for the chokra boy, he had not seen a single person for the last five days.

He felt the urge to go out to feel in touch with the world again. "But when shall I start?" he asked himself. "What has happened during the twelve dark years?" he wondered.

NANA wrestled with his dhoti. It was getting dark now. The electric light above him played on his features illuminating the dark and ugly scar on his left cheek. Surya's last impression of him before she died. His features were faded a dark brownish, drawn unto his bones. He was clean shaven and there was a hint of iron on his thick lips. The most forceful part of his face were his sunken eyes. They were powerful, provocative and at the same time exhibited a glitter of tolerance. The betrayed his life in the past.

When he got out of the building the sun had set and the gaslight lamps along the road were lit. As he passed the hotel, he could hear the vibrant notes of the radio laying inside. He did not want to listen to it, but the noise followed him as he walked, finally disappearing lowly into the air.

At the bus stop, he paused. Should he go or not? It was quite a time to be visiting anyone. He stood in the queue. The silence engulfed him as he waited for the bus. It was too reminiscent, the silence. It made him recollect, and he did not want to. But it was there, the silence. Like a huge wave it covered him and he had the feeling that he couldn't breathe. The air struck in his throat, and the harsh noises of the wind roared around him. He closed his eyes to evade it, but the vision bloomed into reality. He could see the cell now, and there sitting on the bed was himself! He was smoking and beedies parched his throat, but he smoked until his mind was filled with the smoke, blurring away memories...

The bus came and he got in. It crawled through the night, making gurgling sounds, stopping now and then. He sat alone. He did not look at the other people. They were so strange. The bus stopped and he got out.

He walked, unhesitatingly, as if he had gone through it all before. From the main road into a side lane, and there it was really dark.

Suddenly, he felt like running and he ran. His legs behaved like automatons and carried him forward. Something in his mind asked why he ran. He couldn't answer, not wait for it. He just ran.

The lane stank of rotten fish and day old rubbish. He felt his slippers hitting the objects in the way, and the smell rose all around him, making the passage unbearable.

THE smell, the wind, all started clearing his head and he slackened his pace until it was a mere trot. He viewed the dilapidated constructions on either side of him, and looking at them he tried to recall the face of his companion, whom he was going to meet now. Twelve years had passed, wide gap of living his own life. What could have happened during that time? Would his old time friend be still staying in the same place? He could remember him better now; Mohan the anaemic mill-worker, struggling for existence. He wondered how he ever had him for a friend. He, Nana, a big time racketeer! It was Mohan who had said before he had gone to prison. "Nana, you don't deserve this, but I am

sure you will come out a better man." Mohan could be serious!

HIS pace had slowed down to a walk and he could see the house. It looked ghostly in the dark. Silent. It was in a worst condition than when he had seen it last, its one storeyed rottenness housing the wrecked lives of humans.

He went in and found himself near the staircase. He paused. All the people were asleep. He did not know it was so late. How quickly the time passed! He climbed the staircase and reached the first floor and the first house next to the stairs faced him.

He raised his fist and tapped slowly.

There was no response.

His previous doubt crept back. Were they still there? Or was he going to make a fool of himself by knocking at someone else door?

He knocked again, a little louder. This time the door was opened by a woman.

Mohan's wife had been twenty years when he had last seen her, but the one before him carried unmistakable traces of a woman of forty-five. He could hear the echo of the crack made by Mohan when he had married her.

"She is as strong as a horse, foolish as a donkey, kinder than the kindest woman, and well built to bring out many children!" He had never found the time to agree with him. But he could still recognize her through the change in her appearance.

Her features were thin and drawn, compared to the healthy flesh that Mohan had cracked about. The tiny glass ornament on the left side of her nose twinkled, lending the pale face a grotesque look. Her crumpled hair fell carelessly over her skinny shoulders, falling over the old saree draped over her body. Her flat breasts, hanging loosely behind the saree showed slightly. In her right hand she held an old kerosene lamp from which acrid smoke trailed into the dark room behind her. Her eyes looked at him in suspicion.

"What do you want?" The tone was flat and brusque.

"How are you, Sita?" asked Nana embarrassed a little. "Don't you recognize me?"

"WHY it—s, it's Nana!" she exclaimed nervously. The grotesque look vanished from her features and a kindly glow took its place. "Come in!! Come in!"

She led the way backwards and placed the lamp on the single window sill to her right.

Nana entered the room. He took some time to take in the smoke, as he breathed, and to get accustomed to the light. He looked around and on all the four sides he got a unhampered view of the walls. At one end a solitary stool cast an enlarged shadow on the floor. At another corner his gaze rested on two sleeping children under a dirty white cloth. He could count the bones on their faces. Beside the children was a worn-out *seegri* with a few utensils in disorder around it. Over the children some tattered and old clothes were hanging on a cord stretching from one end of the room to another.

There was nothing else.

SITTING on the stool Nana asked, his eyes focussed on Sita in front of him. "Where is Mohan, Sita? Is he doing night?"

She did not look at him as she replied. "He—he—is dead." But no tears came out from her eyes. Her face was heavy and dull.

"Died? When? How?"

"Two and a half years back of T.B."

"And who is caring for the children—and you?"

"No one." There was no emotion in her voice.

"How do you manage then?" But there was no need for him to ask, neither

for her to reply, for the answer lay in the faces of the sleeping children and the empty room and Sita herself.

HE looked through the gloom at her, and he could see the tears sparkle in her eyes. They welled into hysterical sobbing. But over the falling tears no word of protest or of explanation came forth.

Nana got up and drew his arms around her bony shoulders, they were coarse and dry like the summer mud. He looked out of the single window, gazing at the pinpoints of white in the sky. He did not know what he looked for.

Sita's image welled before his eyes. He felt her sunken poverty pierce his heart. What must she be doing to maintain the two children and herself? He slowly withdrew his arms from her. From his purse he removed twenty rupees and handed it to her. "Use this tomorrow, Sita." What else could he say? He wanted to console her. He wanted to tell her how he felt about it all. But the words did not come. Instead he murmured, "Com'on, brace yourself. I'll be back within a few days. Till then goodbye and goodnight!"

He groped towards the door, a broken, half muttered, "Thank—k you," still haunting his memory.

sharp, meet me at the corner, 12 o'clock."

At the appointed hour the pair met at the corner and proceeded towards their object. Nana carried a small cloth bag in his right, and its diffused brilliance cast eerie shadows on the road of the silent buildings along their path.

They walked under the shadows, hugging the walls as much as possible.



Dawn had broken the monotonous night and the sun shone brilliantly so as to penetrate the seemingly impenetrable dinginess of the dusty lane.

THE light played upon the backs of two men seated in an empty hotel and conversing in whispers. One of them was Nana. He puffed assiduously at a 'beedi' projecting between his tightly drawn lips.

"Tonight," he said, his lips moving contemplatively, "at exactly twelve, we—rather I—will break through the door of a certain house in Bazaar street. Your part in it is as simple as it is free from any danger. Just stand at the entrance of the house and if you notice anyone or anything, whistle sharply. Is it clear?"

The man nodded his head.

Nana paused, reflected a little, then continued under his breath. "The fruits of our effort will be much. I am sure of that, and if everything goes according to plan you can be assured of a cut of 25%."

The man thought for a moment and then nodded his head again in agreement.

"Then at 12 o'clock

"There it is!" whispered Nana to his companion, pointing at a small one storeyed building across the road. "Slowly now." Nana pulled his accomplice and they were across the road and into the building.

"Stand here, and keep your eyes open!"

HE paused at the staircase, then went up. From the first floor he went up another staircase to the terrace. On the terrace he reached a point just above the victim room, and from the bag in his hand he removed a tough coil of rope. Tying one end to an iron railing, he let the other end dangle over the parapet into the balcony below.

Slowly he scrambled to the other side of the parapet and taking a firm hold on the rope, he lowered himself, inch by inch, until he finally stood inside the balcony and the open doorway in front of him decided his next step.

FROM then onwards it was left up to his agility. Would it fail him after 12 years? Silently he entered the house. He opened the drawer with a small implement. Time passed as he pilfered the contents of the drawer, and with each passing moment his

caution waned. As he bent down to facilitate his movements, his knee struck an object, which to his horror fell with a crash on the floor.

The reaction was instantaneous.

"WHAT'S that?" "Put on the light somebody." "What happened?" "What is it Vittal?"

Nana stood petrified on the spot. Accustomed to



the dark, he could distinguish shadowy figures walking blindly towards the other side of the room. The light switch! He did not wait another moment. Going to the balcony, which was luckily made of concrete, he climbed on it. For a second he hung perilously silhouetted against the sky, then he gave a jump into space, landing with a jerk that practically dislodged his bones.

NANA picked himself up and made a dash towards the road.

There was a loud cry then :
" Thief ! "

Dark places soon got flooded with light, as switches responded instantly to the touches of curious people.

Stairs creaked and groaned as groups of men dashed down with bamboos and brooms and whatever else they could put their hands on. Even the women were awake to the catastrophe, and they helped to enliven the scene by giving vent to their vocal powers. Doors banged. Children not to be left out of the fun, clung to their mothers and joined in the vocal tour de force.

All these forces gave impetus to Nana's flight. Cat-

ching up with his accomplice, who had already sized up the situation and was running for his life, Nana, his voice faltering as he breathed in gasps of air, said, "—Run. You go one way and—and I will go another. It will be safer. Meet me at my place. Now go. They've seen us. Run!"

The other swerved instantly, and started across a desolate park.

Some fifty yards behind came the crowd, the breakup causing indecision among them. But not for long. Nana, looking sideways saw his accomplice trip on something and then do a half somersault in the air. Then he was even with the ground. The crowd unhesitatingly ran towards the park.

NANA ran on knowing the utter futility of lagging behind. His friend would be first given a sound beating, and then dragged to a not too friendly police station. That placed him in a dangerous position. What a fool he had been not to plan the escape in advance or had the intention to be good after coming out from prison undermined his

mind? Okay. Damn the whole thing. Everything had gone wrong. Who was to be blamed? He felt like a trapped animal unable to do anything to escape.

HE headed towards Sita's house. It was a long way but...

Just as he had done two nights ago, entered the room, Sita looked a little better and at his entrance she gave a smile that spoke a thousand words. He saw some new clothes and fresh vegetables in the corner. Except for these new additions, the room was the same as before.

" Why do you come so late in the night Nana ? " asked Sita, not being offensive, but prompted by the woman in her.

Nana shrugged and wiped his face with his shirt. " Can't help it, Sita. Circumstances—or should I say fate?—make it impossible that I arrive here at any other time. "

Evading the topic, he asked, " How are the children ? "

She gave him the same smile again in answer, and casting a loving glance towards the sleeping children she said, " Thanks to you they are better. Won't you stay the night? Of course, you will have to sleep on the floor, but..."

" No—N—No, " said Nana hurriedly. " Have to go. Got

some important business to settle first. "

Sita's womanly intuition told her that something was amiss. She came towards him and asked kindly, " Nana, is something wrong ? "

He just looked away from her. " I must tell you the reason why I came tonight. It was to give you some money. " From his pocket he removed the crumpled notes and extended them to her. " Take it and use it well. I won't be seeing you anymore. "

Sita hesitated to put her hand.

" Won't be seeing me anymore? Nana, are you angry with me ? "

" Of course not ! "

SITA took the notes and counted them carefully. " Why, " she exclaimed, " there are one thousand six hundred and two rupees here! Won't you need them Nana ? "

" No, not where I am going, " he said abruptly. " Be seeing you someday, Sita! Then he added, " I hope. " He turned to leave the room.

As he turned, she caught his shoulders and turning him around looked into his eyes. " Oh, Nana! You are so kind. " Tears appeared in her eyes, falling slowly in droplets upon her saree.

He in turn looked into her eyes, and feeling the gratitude displayed there, he was suddenly filled with remorse feeling. Why, he could not fully comprehend. But he averted his eyes, and broke into a laugh. "Now Sita. Why all this fuss. Take the money and look after your children."

REMOVING her hands slowly from his shoulders, he said in a whisper. "Goodbye and goodnight."

"Goodbye Nana. Won't you come back soon?" There was anxiety and friendship in her words.

He went out without answering.

As he made his way homewards, he started thinking of his present situation. He knew he could not escape from the police. Wherever he went that guilt and the hand of the law would stalk him. What did he care anyway? Or did he? He remembered with what determination he had left the prison, and his face contorted into an ironical laugh. Many years back his father had said to him.

"Life is a game of chance, my son. Those who are poor, like us, will remain poor, unless driven by our own greed into the rottenness of crooked dealings. Every year you toil this land, you will know the truth of these words."

His father was right; Life was a game of chance.

He hoped Sita would not learn from where the money had come. God bless her kindly soul! Confound it, couldn't he escape? He faced the facts calmly and the answer was obvious. No!

He reached his house and pulled his weary body into bed.

He could not sleep. He smoked one beedi after another. Ten years or maybe five, he thought. The second time they were less considerate. Or would it be three? They should come any moment now. They were quick at their work, especially when everything was laid before them. The time passed, and the floor was now sprinkled with half-smoked beedies.

AT long last he heard the tramp of heavy boots—military boots—and excited talk. That meant only one thing. The time had come. He leaned backwards on the bed.

Through the closed door he could hear the noise of the boots ascending the stairs, their reverberating sounds echoing in the dark night.

Nana threw his last beedi into the darkness. It struck with its lit end on the hard floor, bits of red exploding upon the surface.

He waited, **

INDIA MAGAZINE

Hoops of STEEL



TOMORROW, by 12 o'clock, I hope I will be free. I think the judge will sign the papers by that time, and from then on . . . I am too thrilled to imagine that moment of deliverance.

It is one of the curious decrees of these lawless days of our century that a man like me, trying all my best to retain my place in the lower middle class, should be punished, and that too, fully for the very minor crime I have committed, while, others escape scot-free with greater mistakes. Mark you, the crime may be, as the Indian Penal Code so very cumbersome puts it, the committing of an act which, by law, one should not do, or the omission of an act, which one should do. It would have been a great satisfaction for me if I had come under either of these two categories to merit the punishment that I have had for these ten years. But the joke is, I have done only what is exactly expected by society of me, and the

result—hard labour and mental torture for ten long years.

BUT there is one satisfaction still left to me. My father is still alive and he will be very glad to see me a free bird again. Of course, it comes as a very rude shock when I am now to realise that my old father had all the time been in the right and I have been

A Skit by ORPES

proved to be in the wrong. I still remember vividly, on my departure to Madras from my village, my old father's parting remarks to me. "Beware of three things, son; wine, gambling and women. I know you too well to doubt that you will indulge in either of the first two. But the third one, is as dangerous as it is tempting. Promise me, son, that you will keep clear of women. From Adam downwards, they have been the reason of the fall of us men folks; they

are a necessary evil, I know, but for some more time to come, do keep clear off petticoats."

THIS Poloniusic advice may remind you of Somerset Maugham's short story 'Facts of Life', the hero of which breaks all the three injunctions given by his father but still lives to tell the tale of his emerging successful out of the three adventures. If so, your memory serves you very well. For, I was also reminded of the same story, and probably that is why that I promptly started drinking as soon as I set foot in Madras, and attended all the race meetings that I had a chance to attend. Of course, it did not take me a long time to find out that my father had not swerved far from the truth in regard to these two . . . er . . . vices. Still, one would like to ascertain for oneself, if you understand what I mean.

So much for the first two parts of my father's advice. The third one, was of course a question of promise, and hence I took great pains to see that I did not come into more than casual contact with the members of the other sex. But things suddenly went wrong.

I can hear you saying, "Serve the fellow right; he flouted every one of the three injunctions given by his dotting father, and now he is crying over the irredeemable past." Right you are; these

ten years of cruelty which I have undergone, these years of mental unrest, are irretrievably gone for me. But consolation is there in the fact that tomorrow, by twelve, in the noon, I would be declared free.

I know the world is full of cynics who claim that gold can do everything. I have a thousand and one arguments to beat any such cynic hollow if he might choose to argue with me, and prove that gold, at least in my case, has been of not much use. No doubt everything has its own price, but here I was, these last three years after I knew that I must purchase my liberty at any cost, ready to pay through my nose if it was necessary. I hired the best lawyer that money could get, and still only after three long years of trials recording of evidences and adjournments, that I could get the judge see my point of view. . . .

SORRY, I am boring you with details, but liberty may not mean a thing to you. Or perhaps, you may be wallowing in bondage not knowing what true freedom really means. I know your sort. Or may be, you might have got so much accustomed to this kind of slavery, that you do not even know that another kind of life—where you are the monarch of all you survey—is possible. I know *your* sort, too. I have only my sym-

pathies for you. But I am made of an altogether different stuff. Right now, I assure you that at the end of exactly twenty-four hours, I will have no weight attached to me, no silly responsibility thrust upon me and no sort of reserve or check on my movements. Of course, there will be a sort of scandal, and people will point me out to you in crowded cafe rooms, and young law students may be interested in my case-law. But I do not bother. I can live down that gossip and survive.

As I have told you before, it was for an act which I was socially expected to perform that I got this undeserved punishment. Only, it was against my father's wishes, who then, was prejudiced against the whole lot of women folk and much more so against Kamala. His letter to me on that occasion is still green in my mind. "Do you know, son, what a serious thing it is that you have proposed to do? I do accept that you may be doing this out of circumstances, and natural instincts, but it is only he who rises above circumstances and natural instincts, that will be a real man." This was followed by the usual threats a father holds out to his son while the latter develops symptoms of a rebellious attitude, viz. disowning parentage, cutting off the latter without even the proverbial shilling, etc., etc., Neither

the moving discourse on the real man or the threats that followed it, could make me budge an inch. I heeded not to his words. With what results? The hole I find myself in, and the predicament I have let myself into for these three thousand six hundred and fifty days (excuse me; arithmetic has never been my strong point. There must be some leap years in between these ten years, but the point is, how many were there? By the way, do you add or take away a day when the year is leaping? Confusing — eh?) have been sufficient eye-openers.

But it is better late than never. I am glad I have now understood things in their proper perspective. And gladder still I am to know that all that torture and tyranny are things of the past and henceforward I will be a free bird, unless, of course, I am foolish enough to allow history to repeat itself

YES, it is all over. A settlement has been decided upon and Kamala's lawyer has also agreed to compromise and accept the moderate alimony I had proposed to give to Kamala. The thing is as good as settled, and the judge will undo what I foolishly did ten long years ago. He will sign the decree freeing Kamala and me from our marriage bond yes, I am divorcing my wife from tomorrow.

ally at vacation times," said cemetery-keeper Mme. Rouseau as she conducted me among the tombstones, pointing out the Besnard family graves. "Some have been opened twice," she said.

When the brilliant Paris lawyer, Maitre Albert Gautrat was first asked to take Mme. Besnard's case he refused. Then he noticed an oddity in one of the autopsy reports. "So I went through all the reports and found a great many discrepancies," Maitre Gautrat told me. "I discovered later that not only had bottles containing samples of the remains been mixed up, but bottles from other cemeteries had got into the case."

In court at Poitiers the lawyer made great play with these errors. Bottles were mislabelled, analysis findings were contradictory. Estimates of the arsenic content of the same specimens ranged from "no trace" to "massive lethal dose." Different laboratory techniques produced different results. At one point in the trial Maitre Gautrat dramatically whipped out five test tubes from under his robes to confound an embarrassed prosecution expert on a question of chemistry.

As for the ordinary witnesses, assertions and recantations tumbled from their lips as they retailed years-old village gossip. In the end the exasperated judge exclaimed,

"I find not one solid fact in whole prosecution dossier." The hearing was stopped.

The defence lawyer was conceded a resounding victory—and France waited for the second round. Mme. Besnard remained in jail, working part of the time in the kitchen. Warders remarked on her religious devotion which included invoking the aid of her 13 "dear departed ones."

The second trial started with a clean slate at Bordeaux in 1954. A new panel of poison experts had been set up; the bodies had been re-exhumed. Fresh samples had been analyzed and carefully stored in new bottles. The charge was reduced to mention only six victims. Evidence on the others had been rather mixed up while being transported in boxes between Loudun, Marseille, Paris and Poitiers.

Again everything went wrong for the prosecution. Chief local witness Auguste Massip had to be ejected from the court. So did his brother. The judge, purple-faced, forbade them to continue their impassioned speechifying. Postmistress Pintou withdrew her deathbed revelation story. Wild charges were bandied back and forth concerning ex-convicts employed as spies; anonymous letters; assassination orders to Marseille gangsters; a 1,000,000-franc bribe. A my-

stery man, a handsome German ex-P.O.W. formerly employed by Mme. Besnard on her farm, figured in the case but not in court. He failed to appear as a witness and died in absentia.

Mme. Besnard herself, dressed in widow's weeds, was a good match for her accusers. Questioned about a letter she allegedly wrote in jail saying "I am guilty", she said she was under considerable strain at the time and left out the word "not."

There were 75 witnesses, several of them distinguished professors. Two terms of leading French scientists took part in what was widely billed as the "battle of the toxicologists." Their involved technical discussions fill a large part of the four-foot high Besnard dossier Maitre Gautrat showed me in his Paris office.

The court heard descriptions of the exhumations with grisly details of decomposing bodies, skeletons and rotting offins. The case hinged on whether or not arsenic in the cemetery soil could have permeated the buried bodies. The prosecution claimed there was a great deal more poison in the bodies than in the soil. Against in the defence, using their opponents' figures, argued the bodies contained much more arsenic than was needed to cause death; and that

therefore poison must have been absorbed from the soil after death.

Three hairs were produced in court and passed among the jury. They were said to have been thoroughly shampooed to remove all extraneous matter. Yet they contained 60 times more arsenic than hair normally contains. The prosecution deduced the poison must have entered the hair during life because "hair can absorb arsenic only through the bloodstream." But is that a fundamental law of chemistry? The defence promptly produced an expert to testify that arsenic could indeed penetrate hair after death.

So it went on. Every argument put up was speedily knocked down. Intricate mathematical equations and diagrams done on a blackboard merely added to the confusion. The unfortunate jury watched the experts fight each other to a standstill—while Maitre Gautrat, cold and incisive, threw doubt on their methods and everything else.

In the third week of the trial it was decided something drastic had to be done to bring order out of the chaos, nothing less than a complete new scientific probe by a team of "super experts." Three members of the French

—Please see page 64

THE girl yawned softly and let the book she had been reading slide, with a rustle of turning pages, to the floor.

Surely it was nearly time for Tom to 'phone her. Always at six o'clock on club nights he rang to assure himself that she was all right.

For a man two years married Tom was excessively attentive. A little stupid, perhaps, but it was a lovable stupidity that the girl found easy to overlook.

There was another noise in the room—a strange, stealthy sound, inexplicable and rather terrifying. Instinctively she knew that there are someone, else in the room. Two people, at least; she could tell by their breathing. They were crossing the door that led from the entrance-hall, behind her chair, towards the library.

Silently, she contemplated the situation. The obvious deduction was that these were burglars. Cold fear laid its chill on her heart.



by S. A. J. CARRINGTON

She sighed and glanced at her wrist-watch. It had stopped. Behind her, on the far wall, was a clock. She listened intently, trying to distinguish its tick among the mingling sounds that came from the street below.

Yes, the clock was going!

She turned lazily in the low arm chair so that she could see the face of the clock. Then, suddenly she stopped, and her head half turned, her eyes dilating.

THE girl toyed with the idea of remaining hidden; but only for a few seconds. Then a wave of courage swept through her, and she stood up boldly. As noiselessly as they must have entered the room one of the two men who faced her walked swiftly to her side. He caught her wrist warningly, but without violence. The other leered at her companion's gentleness and, gaping at the open door, prepared for flight.

The difference between the

two men was marked even to the girl, terrified as she was by the danger of her position. The one, whose cool, tapering fingers rested on her wrist, was a gentleman, an ex-officer, she decided, by his upright bearing. The other man, unshaven and uncouth, embodied the popular conception of the pugilist-crook of cheap fiction.

"YOU'LL be alright," the first man assured the girl quietly, "if you keep quiet!"

It was a threat, yet the accent was Oxford, and his tone so gentle that she smiled back her reply.

"There seems to be no alternative, is there?" she asked.

"Oh, I'm not going to shoot you—unless you are unreasonable," he returned quickly.

He seemed quite a pleasant fellow for a burglar. So the girl smiled again. But for all the calm she showed, her knuckles still shone white where she clutched the arm of her chair, and the tiny pink tips of her fingers trembled visibly.

Desperately she must play for time. At any minute now her husband might 'phone up. The relief that hearing his voice would bring, even though she had no set plan of soliciting his aid over the

'phone, would steady her nerves.

"Very well," she assented. "You can release my wrist. I won't shout—or scream," she added.

The man dropped her wrist with a muttered apology. Her apparent calm seemed a relief. He turned to his waiting companion. "You find the safe, Bill," he directed, "I'll look after the girl."

The second man stroked the stubble on his chin, doubtful as to the wisdom of leaving his companion with the girl. Then deciding to obey, he began a rapid search of the flat. After five minutes' absence he came back and whispered conversation followed. The girl caught little words and sentences.

"Don't be squeamish, Randolph," she heard. Then glances at her, and something about wasting valuable time, and a quick gateway. A muttered oath from the searcher, and from the first man, rather more loudly:

"I'll make her talk."

HE came across to her, his face set and grim. His mission seemed unpleasant, even to himself, and she shrank from him.

"I want the combination number of the safe," he demanded brusquely.

She shook her head resolutely, although her heart was hammering at her breast. She seemed to be more regretful than defiant—as if she would have liked to help, but couldn't.

"I'm sorry. I'm not in my husband's confidence at the moment," she lied with a well-feigned blush at what must seem to be a forced admission—a tearing down of her secrets before strange men. "I don't know the combination number.

The second man guffawed coarsely, incredulous. "Come across clean, lady," he urged, in a mixture of Bowery and Limehouse, "or you'll get 'urt, else."

But she was telling the truth, she persisted. The combination was a jealously hidden secret from her. She turned to the first man piteously, a plea in her eyes; she was in all respects the neglected wife. Inwardly she wondered how long she could keep up this lie without betraying herself.

"I don't know it, I tell you," she said again wearily. "I don't—honestly!"

She felt his grip on her wrist tighten. His hot breath flamed on her cheek. She shuddered. But she met his eyes bravely and did not flinch.

"She's right, Bill!" he snapped. "She doesn't know it. Let's try the usual way. And make it snappy!"

He knew too much of women, that man, and had been easily deceived. The girl felt a mingled sorrow and amusement that he was sufficiently educated to be taken in by her bluff. She was conscious, too, that he was sympathising with her; but she did not feel annoyed. A gentleman, this, if she had ever met one.

Strange, she reflected, how one met real gentleman of this world in queer circumstances like this. And strange how gentleman were so credulous of the "misunderstood wife" story. The other man, Bill, for instance—he would never have been taken in. He'd have bullied her till he got the truth.

The safe was in the library, and it seemed that Bill worked fastest alone. So Randolph stayed with the girl and watched her every movement.

FIVE minutes passed, Bill came back sweating. "It's bloomin' 'ot," he announced, and would have helped himself to a stiff peg from the decanter, neat. But the other man, who apparently directed matters, siphoned it for him soberly.

"That's all you get," he warned.

Bill went back to his labours. This time he was away about ten minutes. Then the heat of the evening, and the love of raw spirit, drew him back into the lounge.

DURING this respite the girl had chatted with the other man. For a burglar, she decided, he was an interesting man.

"It's coming," announced Bill, nodding over his shoulder. "Another three minutes an' we're in. But it's—"

Then the telephone rang.

He stopped short. All three stared across the room to where the instrument stood. A threat to the men—a hope for the girl.

She made a quick move towards it. Not looking at her; but keeping his eyes on the 'phone, Randolph pulled her back.

"Let it ring," he said quickly. "Just let it ring till it's tired of ringing." And to Bill: "Better get on with your work. Make it snappy."

"You'd be wise if you'd let me answer it," said the girl slowly. "You see, it's— it's my husband. He's at his club, I expect, and that's just at the bottom of the road near the bus stop. He rings every evening about this time to see if there is anything he can order for me. If he gets no answer—"

She left the sentence unfinished. She knew only too

well that Tom would not ring for long, but would conclude that she had gone out shopping. Later, if he did 'phone again it would be too late. But Randolph knew nothing of this.

"All right," he decided.

He took the revolver she had guessed already was hidden in his pocket and pointed it at her. "But one false move and—you understand?"

"That's only a threat," she replied. "But you'll hear every word that I say, so why worry? You've got the upper hand, and I know it, as you do!"

She took the receiver from the 'phone. A suddenly inspired plan came to her as she heard her husband's voice. She turned her back to the man behind her, so that, although he was close to her, he could not see the one pink finger-tip that rested on the receiver arm.

"Hallo, Tom!" she began. "Yes, this is Hilda!"

SHE began to talk quickly, as if in reply to questions asked her. It was convincing, although it called for all her wits to make it so, and the man behind her did not suspect that the other end of the wire was only a wondering silence.

Her finger was pressed down so that the man at the other end could hear nothing. And alternatively cutting the

line, then opening it for certain of the words she spoke to be transmitted, she sent a message of despair to her husband.

She began with her finger down :

"YES, Tom. Oh! We'll need the meat for the dinner tomorrow. Tell them to"—she lifted her finger slightly, and the words flowed through uninterrupted—"send a man"—down went her finger—"with it tomorrow about three. Oh! Did you, darling? Yes, I'll post it"—up went receiver again—"at once." Then down again. "Yes, I knew it was"—the receiver was up a third time—"very urgent"—and then down again quickly—"but I thought perhaps you meant to enclose a postscript to-night after you'd seen Walters."

She paused to let her bewildered husband ask her questions that she could answer with negatives or affirmatives.

All he had heard so far had been : "Send a man at once. Very urgent." Surely he would understand!

"But what's the matter?" he demanded.

Apparently he hadn't under-

stood; so depressing the receiver, she again began her Morse code. "Well, I was"—she released the receiver "hardly in a position to explain"—then down again—"to be"—up, for the last time—"safe."

At last the sluggard Tom seemed to understand.

"What! Is this a joke, darling or—I've got your message so far to be: 'Send a man at once—very urgent—hardly in a position to explain—safe. that correct, Hilda?'"

"Yes, darling," she returned openly, now abandoning her tactics. "I'm so glad you understand. You won't forget to order the meat, will you?"

WHEN she rang off, she remembered that Tom had heard nothing about the meat before. She guessed the context would puzzle him. It did, but he sent the man quickly, nevertheless. The man wore a blue uniform and a helmet, and he took quite a little crowd of companions with him, similarly garbed. Accompanying them was the girl's husband, tortured with fear for her safety.

She cried a little, softly, as the policeman took the burglars away, and her husband comforted her openly with tender words.

—Please see page 64

INDIA MAGAZINE

FORGED STAMPS MINT MONEY

HE FOOLED THE WORLD'S EXPERTS

"IN 35 years I have counterfeited 391 postage stamps. I have shown these great philatelic experts in London, Rome, New York and Paris to be what they are—fools and blockheads!"

Gaunt and gray but lacking neither vitality nor humour, 71-year old Jean de Sperati added, "Even when I told them of my forgeries they would not believe me." He produced his two "golden books" with 234 of his choice stamps, each a masterpiece in forgery. Their catalogue value is about \$ 100,000 and they could have been sold as genuine, he says, because all were certified by one expert or another. And he made three to six copies of each.

I visited Sperati at his home—Moonlight Villa he calls it—at this beautiful spa in the French Alps. Here he has lived since 1936. The British Philatelic Society had announced its purchase of all his presses, inks, dies and other materials for the protection of 15,000,000 philatelists throughout the world. The London officials would not tell how much they paid Sperati beyond saying that \$12,000, as reported in one newspaper, is too high a figure. Sperati is keeping it a secret also. But

the society spent more than \$ 30,000 in publishing a four-volume catalogue of Sperati's work as further protection.

He leafed over to his copy of the Swedish orange error, a three-skilling stamp, the only one of its kind in the world. Once owned by the late ex-King Carol of Roumania, the original is valued at \$ 30,000. The prized Vancouver Island five and 10 cents, the Newfoundland scarlet vermilion six-pence and the orange vermilion six-and-half pence represent more grist for his stamp mill.

"I am a naturalised French citizen" said Sperati. "I was born in Pistoia, Italy, and my father was a colonel in the Italian Army. I was only 12 and going to school in Pistoia when I discovered my art for imitation. Our teacher liked to autograph the report cards of the bright pupils. Feeling sorry for the dull ones I forged this teacher's name to their cards."

At 16, Sperati began to scorn experts in Turin where he was introduced to philately through his brother, Max a professional stamp dealer. Jean splurged his savings on a French colonies stamp only to learn from one

arbiter that it was a forgery. A second pronounced it genuine and a third further confused him by insisting it was "genuine but repaired."

Another brother, Mariano, owned a graphic arts studio and specialised in postcards. Sperati learned the fine points of contact photography, engraving and colour from a cousin, the mayor of Guarino.

At 25, Sperati opened an agency in Paris for Max, the philatelist. Meeting many collectors and dealers, he realised that they always seemed at the mercy of experts.

For his own protection Sperati steeped himself in philately. He read everything he could on the subject. He travelled all over Europe to stamp auctions. Unable to afford genuine rare stamps in perfect condition, he bought seconds at bargain rates and studied their colour and texture. Through his intelligent interest and knowledge he won the confidence and respect of wealthy collectors. They allowed him to inspect closely, often to photograph their rare exhibits.

He bought microscopes, spectrometers, quartz lamps and cameras. He studied the ingredients of gums, agar-agar, albumin, gelatin, flour and bone, and those plants that yield gums asafetida, mimosa and myrrh.

Then for the fun of it he began to copy. With a bleaching agent he removed the design of genuine cheap stamps, preserving watermarks and perforations. He retouched negatives to emphasise reality in the finished engraved product. He made a little copper furnace to produce inks similar to those of 1840, the year of the first postage stamp.

"My first attempts," Sperati told me, "were not good or bad, just fair. But soon I was better than I expected. I told my friends. One offered to try my work on a German expert in Berlin. Back came the stamp, signed as authentic by a Mr. Thier."

Sperati quit the agency to go into the business of copying rare stamps. He autographed each masterpiece on the back. "If people wanted to know what the real stamps looked like. Why shouldn't they?" he asked. "What help could they ever expect from the experts?" Really I was no more of a forger than a painter who goes to the Louvre to copy Mona Lisa. In Paris I saw them doing that every day. I consider myself an artist and I call my business *La Philatelatelle d' Art*."

But Sperati was not widely known until November 30th, 1942. Then a French customs censor, at a postal control station on the Spanish bor-

der, pounced upon a packet of 18 cancelled stamps Sperati had mailed to a Lisbon expert. The censor charged Sperati with exporting French capital, contrary to wartime restrictions, in the form of rare postage stamps. The prosecutors valued the counterfeits at \$ 7,500 — about 300,000 francs at that time.

At the trial in Chambéry, capital of Savoy province, only a few miles from Sperati's villa, Prof. Edmond Locard, of Lyon, swore the 18 were genuine. Sperati was fined 300,000 francs. Of course Sperati protested that he had made all the stamps in his villa and, of course, little attention was paid to his defence. His lawyer, George Jacobs, appealed. At the second hearing Sperati produced three more sets of 18 already held as evidence.

Paying more attention to Sperati this time, the court quickly adjourned after asking Dr. Locard and a couple of other experts to take a second look. Fearing the court might defer a verdict indefinitely and acting on the principle that the best defence is another offence, Sperati laid a trap.

Presently three more experts, one in Paris and two in Marseilles, were getting registered letters from a Mlle. Anne Corne, each containing 15 stamps catalogued as rare. Mlle didn't wish to sell them,

no, she merely wanted to know if they were genuine. All the experts formally certified the specimens as genuine. They also pleaded with her to let some go. After several written entreaties she sold one to each at the catalogue price. By a coincidence each was an Oldenburg 5, issued by a former German state and worth about \$ 300 as, up to that time, there were only 10 in Europe.

Each expert was happy with his purchase until they met in Paris and compared notes on recent acquisitions. "I've come upon an Oldenburg, a treasure!" they announced almost in chorus. Placing them side by side they discovered a fact remote indeed from the realm of coincidence: on each stamp the cancellation marks were in identical position.

Charging off to the office of Leon Miro, director of a dealers' syndicate, they complained with such vigour that he launched a criminal fraud suit against Sperati, demanding 1,000,000 francs damages. Miro singled out Sperati because Mlle. Anne Corne, it quickly developed, is the old maestro's sister-in-law. The stamp world was outraged.

In the end—and that did not come until nearly 10 years after the first charge—on July 25th, 1952, Sperati was cleared of all allegations.

—J. Y. NICOL

ON PUNCTUALITY

PUNCTUALITY is certainly a desirable virtue in men and women. But I am afraid, like everything else, it can easily be developed into a fad. I knew of a judge who would pompously emerge out of his chambers exactly at the first stroke of eleven, so that he could occupy the seat at the last stroke. There are indeed people who would make a fetish of punctuality and fall foul upon their subordinates if the latter were late even by one minute.

But perhaps you will feel surprised to hear that there are very many occasions when you really hate to find yourself the *victim* of punctuality! Let me not keep you in suspense. I will hasten to illustrate. You can certainly never say that your creditor is by any means unpunctual. Even if you ask him to come to receive his dues on a particular day and a particular hour with the twin objects of impressing your creditor with your bonafides and putting off the evil day with really no idea of paying him his dues at the back of your brain, you are sure to meet him at the appointed hour on the appointed day. Of course, you are intensely displeased at the very sight of him and almost, fly at him in anger, and men-

tally curse him for his internal punctuality.

If you are an appointing authority, and fix a time for interviewing prospective employees, and they turn up—the unemployed at least have never known to be unpunctual—with great punctuality, at the appointed hour, you feel only nettled by their punctuality, especially, if you have other more pressing business on hand.

Take again the case of one who goes to you for a favour; you put him off asking him to come other day. When he humbly asks you the day on which he might come, you feel irritated and shout out, "Come on some other day," and if he persists in requesting you to make an appointment, you feel your patience exhausted and give him some date and hour, of course, never expecting to see him again; for you at least never meant to keep the appointed hour, exact to the minute. You feel no pleasure on seeing him, though he has but observed the strictest punctuality.

YOUR insurance agent is 'noted' for his punctuality. From the very next day after you have received an appointment order, he begins to pester you with his morning

and evening visits with his gratuitous advice about the benefits of an insured life, specially to your dependents. He at least puts you in mind of the transitoriness of life and the unpredictability of the duration of your life. And he is prepared to meet you at any hour on any day convenient to "you" and continue his lectures on the benefits of insurance. But the only thanks he gets from you, for all his punctuality, is, you just give him the slip and avoid even meeting him.

TAKE the case of lovers. They are the best illustrations of punctuality. They never fail to keep time. To do so would only plant the suspicion of indifference, if not of infidelity in their hearts, resulting in the very breakdown of further progress in their love-affairs. Sometimes, it may cause one of the lovers even to commit suicide under the mistaken impression that the other has proved traitorous.

Want of punctuality has indeed sometimes been attended with an unpleasant, if not disastrous, results to certain category of employers. In olden days, the professional musicians, would always observe "Indian punctuality"—a very unfair expression which we really do not deserve—in beginning their performances. And generally

the audience, the majority of whom consisted of students, would get restless and the promoter had great ado in keeping them in good humour. Incidentally, I wonder if these instances do not show that far from tolerating unpunctuality, we do protest against it.

Equally has unpunctuality been sometimes a providential blessing to many of us. Have we not often heard of how a slight delay has been the cause of the averting of very serious accidents which might have meant incalculable loss to human lives and property?

So that, we cannot say unpunctuality is always an unmixed blessing. Both punctuality and unpunctuality have brought the greatest havoc as well as the greatest blessing to mankind. But this can be said with certainty. Punctuality is the very life-breath of military operations. Under no circumstances can it be ignored in this one field of human activity.

There are many people who observe 'double standards' in the matter of punctuality. By punctuality they generally mean that *others* dealing with them should be punctual. But as far as *they themselves* are

concerned, they don't feel bound by any such rule. Especially is this so, in the case of Officials—I mean, a majority of them. The honourable minority consists of those who either keep time or those who have atleast the courtesy to apologise for their late-coming. The majority care two straws for the feelings of people who have to wait on their pleasure. They do not see any virtue in favour-seeking people keeping time, which they do in their own self-interest!

BUT there are a number of people in India, who will flock to their place of appointment long before the appointed hour. Railway stations are always full of people who come even a hour prior to the scheduled time and wait for an hour more for the train to come. On examination days, school-boys go to schools long before the hour of examination. Prospective employees often crowd the corridors of offices long before the hour of interview. All this is due to a fear-complex that they might after all some-how be late and want to allow 'ample' time for all contingencies which might prevent them from being punctual and thus miss the bus.

—M. S. V.

The Case that Rocked France

—Continued from page 53

Academy of Science, one of them the atomic scientist, Prof. Joliot Curie, were appointed to sift the mass of conflicting expert testimony and arrive at a conclusion

Meanwhile Mme. Besnard waits alone in her stone house at Loudun. When I informed her that her lawyer in Paris had told me her case would probably come up soon, she clapped her hands with joy. "C'est merveilleux," she cried in her high-pitched voice. For Mme. Besnard has all along protested her innocence.

—W. G. MATTERS.

'S. O. S'

—Continued from page 58

"I'm glad, darling," she whispered, "that you didn't forget to 'phone me up, or I could not have sent my S.O.S.

"In future," he promised, with sudden resolution, "I'm not leaving you here alone in the evenings at all."

At the local police station, Randolph Greenhill, adventurer, gentleman, and cracksmen, smiled softly. In some professions, he concluded, a gentleman is unfairly handicapped.

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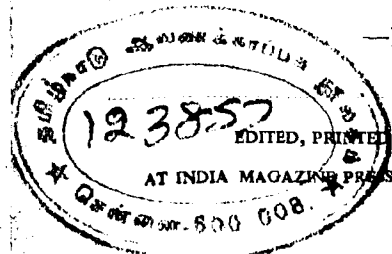
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