

India Magazine

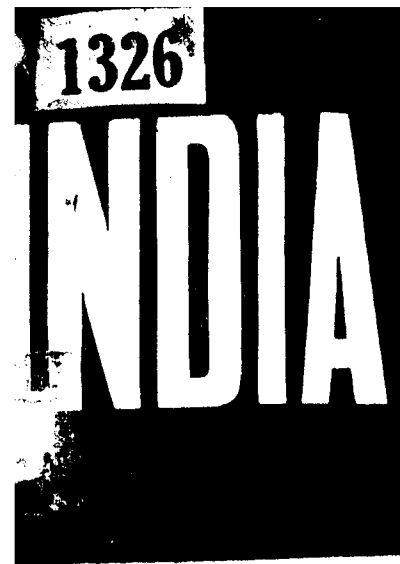
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POPULAR
NATIONAL
MONTHLY

TRAVEL MANNERS

- * CLEANLINESS is next to Godliness. Let us cultivate the habit of cleanliness. We can help by not throwing scraps of food, skins and peel of fruit and water on platforms or in compartments. These should be consigned to the dustbins.
- * SPITTING indiscriminately on platforms is unhygienic. It is also bad manners. Let us use spittoons.
- * Let us not use cooled and filtered drinking water for other purposes.
- * Let us avoid sitting with the feet on the seat. This is annoying to others in the compartment, and is not good manners either.
- * Booking our heavy luggage in the brake-van will give our fellow passengers and ourselves more room in the compartments.
- * It is an offence to smoke in a railway train when requested by a fellow passenger not to. Let us avoid smoking when requested, or when the compartment is crowded or the doors and windows are shut.
- * Railways are the Nation's property. We can help to safeguard these by apprehending persons pilfering or causing damage to railway property. They should be pointed out or turned over to uniformed Railway Staff on duty. Unsocial elements indulging in unauthorised alarm chain pulling could be dealt with in like manner.

ISSUED BY THE

WESTERN AND CENTRAL RAILWAYS

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The names of characters and places appearing in fictional stories are purely imaginary and any reference to living persons is only coincidental. The Editor does not accept responsibility for the views expressed by contributors.

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PEACE AND MISSILES

AFTER a full debate in the British Parliament, the House of Commons gave its full and unqualified support to the latest decision of the NATO 'Summit' Conference Paris, to have as many bases as possible in Europe for missiles. The Labour Party questioned the propriety of the conduct of Britain at the NATO conference. The stormy petrel of the Labour Party Mr. Anurin Bevan said that "American missile bases will be established on British soil and should therefore be activated by British consent." Some of the other Labour members went further and accused America by saying that "America wished to use Europe for its own protection."

The British Prime Minister warmly defended America and said that the attitude of the opposition was a little un-generous. As regards using Great Britain as a base for missiles, the Prime Minister Mr. MacMillan asserted, "We have a complete veto. We have a complete negative control." If this were true, one fails to understand how the "unanimous" resolution of the NATO Conference is useful as a check on "Soviet Expansion" or "Missiles Warfare". If the establishment of missiles bases in Europe was planned as a counter-blast to Russian superiority in nuclear weapons, the

British Prime Minister's boast of a complete negative control belies it and cuts the bottom out of it. It looks as though there is no difference of opinion between Mr. Anurin Bevan who wants that England cannot become a missile base without the consent of the people and Mr. MacMillan who says England has the power of veto in her hands.

Does this mean that England is not afraid of Russia's military plans? No. The British Prime Minister Mr. MacMillan confessed in his speech on the debate in the Commons, "the greatest menace Britain has to face at sea was the enormous fleet of Russian submarines". He wanted his country to concentrate on the anti-submarine warfare and leave the offensive striking role to the American navy. This again implies that Britain is not whole-heartedly supporting America's plan of missiles bases in Europe. The underlying assumption of this plan is: "If the Russian international ballistic missile is aimed at America on a long range war, then the NATO Powers will strike against Russian targets on a short range war in Europe." If the effectiveness of this defence plan is negated, the whole plan of the NATO goes awry.

But Mr. MacMillan paradoxically enough says that the "joint action taken in Paris is well done and will strengthen our position both for the defence of freedom which we believe in and for the seeking of peace." The British Prime Minister knows well that peace and missiles can't co-exist and gestures of peace by a flourish of missiles bases can only produce a result, opposite of that which is intended. The Prime Minister stated in the Commons that Russian proposals for disarmament were not accepted but he hastened to say "we must not give up hope. We must go on working for it." It seems to be a queer way of seeking peace by positively preparing for war. The Premier of Turkey Mr. Adnan Menderes appealed for a reinforcement of

—Please see page 6

Current Comments

TALK WITH RUSSIA FAVoured

There are two important news items from the NATO conference held in Paris. One is, that the foreign and defence ministers of the 15 nation NATO Alliance reached "unanimous agreement in principle" on the U.S. offer of atomic missiles, though the U. S. delegation says, "it does

HAPPY NEW YEAR TO ALL

*We wish all our readers
and patrons a very
happy and prosperous
New Year. May the
Almighty God shower
His choicest blessing
on us unstinted in its
measure.*

not commit any of the countries of NATO to accepting atomic missiles on their territory". When the operative part of a decision does not bind any country, it becomes useless for practical purposes. If on the other

hand it means war against Russia, then the whole of Eastern Europe from the Baltic down to the Adriatic and the Black Sea will not easily reconcile itself to it. The Revolution in Hungary last year conclusively proved the impotency of the Western nations to go to the help of the rebels in Hungary against Moscow and the Kremlin tyrants. The inevitable result would be that Soviet Russia would tighten up its control on countries of Eastern Europe and what little of freedom this shadow Europe enjoys now after Stalin's death would be lost. So, the alternative to this, is to enter into peace talks with Russia on the basis suggested by Marshal Bulganin.

Another news item says it is practically certain that the NATO leaders would certainly decide to have talks with Russia and seek to end the impasse between the East and the West and to stop the "Cold War". If this is the outcome of the NATO summit talks attended by the President of the United States of America, then it augurs well for peace in Europe in general and the Middle East in particular.

It is also note-worthy that the ill-fated suggestion to link NATO with Baghdad Pact has received no support. Our Premier Nehru's rejoinder to "Ike" that the ban on nuclear weapons and effective disarmament need not go together has created a new atmosphere particularly in West Germany and Britain and the hope is justified that the "Summit Talk" between the East and West may after all materialise at an early date.

* * *

CASE FOR RETENTION OF ENGLISH

Rajaji scored two points against those who want to make Hindi the official language of the country in his speech at the Y.M.C.A. Esplanade. The first is: "The old established ideas that a nation should speak one language, should have one religion and should have one set of domestic customs, could not be applied to India. So far as language in a general sense is concerned, they have in India quite a number of good and beautiful languages. But the problem is that all the people of India speaking different languages formed one nation. They have flourished and God-willing, they might continue to flourish with more than one language, more than one religion and more than one set of domestic customs." It is no doubt an impossibility to make Hindi the mother tongue of the 36 crores

of people who inhabit this country.

Rajaji neatly disposes of the "argument of national pride" for having an Indian language as the official language in these words: "If membership in the Commonwealth can be reconciled to, English language—which is not on the political side—can also be accepted. They have learnt and dealt with it all these 150 years; during the last ten years after they have achieved Independence, nobody found any difficulty. Even the propaganda for Hindi has to be done in English. If you can swallow the camel of the Commonwealth, you need not strain at the gnat of English as the official language of India. In order to spite English, they need not cut their nose by doing away with this language—which had served them well. Hindi people might cut their nose, but non-Hindi people need not do so."

The universities of India also vote for retaining English and maintaining the *status quo*.

* * *

ARE DRAVIDIANS DYNASTIC EGYPTIANS?

Dr. J. T. Cornelius, addressing the Archaeological Society of South India at Madras Museum premises, traced the origin of the Dravidians to dynastic Egyptians of 6000 B. C. and propounded the theory of migration of the Dravidians from Egypt. "The Deccan was

the only portion of India not affected by foreign invasion and influences for a long time, and for basing a true history of India, one should go to the Deccan"—this was broadly the opinion of Prof. Sundaram Pillai and his view was supported by Sir William Vincent Smith in his history of "Ancient India". Just as the myth of Aryan invasion was exploded, Dr. Cornelius now says that the Dravidians are not indigenous to the soil but are dynastic Egyptians and gives a very interesting account about the Egyptian clans who had migrated to the Deccan, and from there to Northern India. It is too premature either to grant that the Egyptians came to South India by maritime route and settled in India or that the names "Ramayana" and "Rama" came from *Aman Ra*, the God of the Theban Pharaohs of Egypt. We shall await the comments of eminent historians of India on the issue whether the Dravidians are the natives of the soil or are people who came

here from a foreign country and settled down before the dawn of the Historical Times.

* * *

POPULATION AND

POVERTY

"If the world population increases, poverty also will increase and that will constitute as the greatest enemy in the battle to raise the levels of living" say the economists. But that is what is precisely happening says the Population Reference Bureau (attached to U.N.) and according to its forecast, the population of the world by year 2000 will be 6000 million. It winds up its report in a sarcastic vein that "despite modern progress, there might be more poverty stricken people in the world today than there were 50 or 100 years ago". Is this all the achievement, we are tempted to ask, of the greatest democracies of the modern world? It is sometimes good for people to know the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth. ‡

PEACE AND MISSILES—EDITORIAL *Continued*

the Baghdad Pact at a closed session of the NATO 'Summit' Conference and his statement that Russia has encircled Turkey "by taking over Syria" and "by establishing close co-operation with Egypt" will produce international commotion. This sort of war mentality on the part of the Premier of Turkey may be to the complete liking of the American Secretary of State, Mr. Dulles but it does not presage a mood for peace or co-existence on the basis of "live and let live".

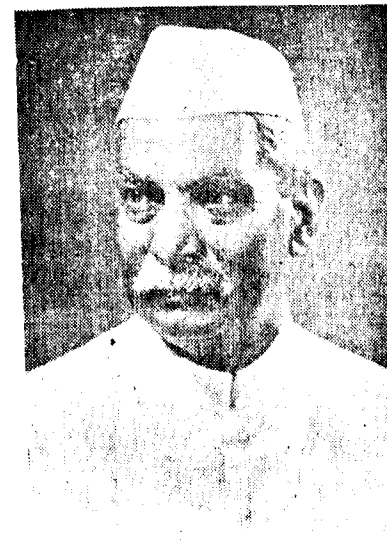
PROFILE

President Prasad

THE SAINTLY STATESMAN

(V. N. R.)

BABU Rajendra Prasad of Bihar is "a gem of the purest ray serene" and is the much respected President of Independent India. Though he is the administrative head of a vast and rising country—politically, militarily and economically—he lives the life of a *Sanyasi* or more accurately *Vanaprastha* in one of the grandest palaces in the Capital City of New Delhi.



Perhaps it is easy "to walk through slaughter to the throne", easier still to migrate "from the log cabin to the White House", and easiest of all to be rolling in wealth and unlimited power,

pomp and pleasure as a dictator, if fortune and ambition are allied together. But it is far from easy for a gentleman of true culture, of intense piety and of stainless and sturdy conscience which believes in and acts on the hypothesis that "service to the people is service to the All-Supreme", to be the political head of a new-born free Government which is beset with scores of perplexing issues, baffling problems and confusing conundrums, both at home and abroad and at the same time unwaveringly stick to the golden path of self-effacing and altruistic service to humanity backed

by truth and ahimsa—the twin rails that take the soul to the spiritual haven.

It is this seemingly herculean and well-nigh impossible task President Prasad is engaged in. Fortunately for him, his political guru Mahatma Gandhi has shown the way as to how to spiritualise politics. Ascending this lofty ladder our President is trying to broad-base politics and bring religion and philosophy “from Cathedrals, Churches and Cloisters to the market place”.

Rajan Babu, as he is affectionately called, is writing his own autobiography which is being serially published in daily news papers. As a conspicuous politician who has played a worthy part in the counsels of the nation for over three decades and more, as a patriot—soldier who took a leading part in the glorious struggle for freedom started by Mahatma Gandhi ever since its inception and as one of Mahatma's trusted and closest comrades who was in the Congress Working Committee for over a generation, Sri Prasad may have some original, nay unique things to say and throw a flood of light on men and things and enrich the pages of history. We shall content ourselves here with reviewing a couple of his outstanding achievements which stand to his everlasting credit and personality.

It was in the year 1917 that Rajan Babu's close association with Mahatma Gandhi commenced and it was in connection with the *Satyagraha Movement* in Champaran which proved the potency of the Mahatma's new weapon and inaugurated a new epoch in the political history of India. Champaran in Bihar and Kaira in the Bombay Presidency paved the way for all-India satyagraha or civil disobedience movement later on. The terror—stricken people of India shed their mortal fear of government and became first-class heroes. It was the turn of the foreign bureaucracy to become mightily afraid of the united strength of the people and of their saintly leaders.

In Champaran the European indigo planters brought into existence a reign of terror and despotism for which there was no parallel in history. The British Government reduced the rich Zamindars to a stage of abject bankruptcy in Bihar and in spite of the permanent revenue settlement of Bengal (Bihar was part of Bengal then) they were forced to sell large tracts of land to the European planters who were very largely aided by the Government and the banks. For instance, the Maharaja of Bettiah had become heavily involved in debts and gave permanent and temporary leases to the European planters. The possession of such vast territories added to their reputation and enhanced their political influence. Being members of the ruling

class and with the active support they invariably got from their government they changed the entire situation in their favour and the Indian agriculturists were at their mercy.

The new masters insisted that the tillers of the soil should compulsorily cultivate indigo on portions of their holdings. When the villagers murmured or refused to do so, the European planters got the Bengal Tenancy Act enacted which permitted compulsory cultivation of indigo, however unprofitable it was and to the detriment of other food or cash crops which paid them well. The planters paid only nominal wages to the tillers which created a horrible selfdom compared to which the rule of the Borebones of France prior to the great French Revolution might be considered a blessing or the indentured labour forced on the Indian labourers in South Africa by the colour-mad white masters was not completely unwelcome. The European planters in the Champaran district in addition to this, levied about fifty illegal taxes on the poor which are graphically described in the “Congress History” as under :

“The planters used also to extort a large number of unauthorised and illegal perquisites in the form of taxes which were counted during the enquiry to be more than fifty in number. A few illustrations may be given.

There was tax on marriage; a tax on every hearth, a tax for *Kolhu* or oil-mill. If the *Sahib* was ill and needed a visit to hills, the tenants had to pay a special tax called *paparhi*. If he needed a horse or an elephant or a motor car, the tenants must bear the cost and pay the special taxes known as ‘*Ghorahi*’, ‘*hathiahi*’ or ‘*hawali*’. Besides those taxes heavy fines used to be imposed and realised for anything which offended the planter or for other offences against others, thus replacing civil authority and courts in the district.”

Could anything be more tyrannical than this? The leaders of the locality and public men of the province moved heaven and earth to secure redress to the hapless and down-trodden peasantry but all their efforts miserably failed. The local-government shed crocodile tears of sympathy but confessed its helplessness to do anything substantial in favour of the tenants, as the European planters had enormous pull with the Bengal and Delhi Governments. It was in such a desperate condition of things that the Mahatma was requested to lend his help by the representative tenants and Bihar delegates to the Lucknow Congress.

* * *

GANDHIJI agreed and with a band of select and stalwart workers headed by Babu Rajen

dra Prasad and assisted by Acharya Kripalani began to investigate into the grievances of the tenants of Champaran against the foreign indigo planters. Before we pass on to the political and economic struggle that started under Gandhiji's leadership in Champaran, it is worthwhile to remember what a dreary hell was created by the planters for such of the tenants and high caste Hindus as dared to challenge the authority of the planters. Let us quote again from the "Congress History."

"Beating and shutting up Hindus of high caste in *Murgi-Khanas*, impounding cattle and harassments in a thousand and one ways, including the looting of their houses, stoppage of the services by barbers, washermen, chamars and even the ingress into and egress from their house and collecting untouchables to sit at their doors, were an ordinary every day affair."

When Mahatmaji with Rajan Babu and others reached Motihari, the headquarters of the district to inspect a village to see the above mentioned atrocities, he was served with a notice by the police under section 144 Cr. P. C. calling upon Gandhiji to leave the district forthwith. Restraint order under 144 in those days was something like the throwing of the Atom Bomb of these days but Mahatma Gandhi instantly disobeyed that preventive order. He retaliated

further by returning the *Kaisar-i-Hind* Gold medal which had been granted to him by the British Government for humanitarian work. He pleaded "guilty" before the trial magistrate which took the government completely by surprise. Not knowing what to do, the government withdrew the case against Gandhiji and appointed an investigating committee, comprising of the representatives of the government, the indigo planters and other landlords. Mahatmaji was made a member of that committee on behalf of the tenants.

Gandhiji with the able support of Rajan Babu and his friends was able to convince the committee of the injustices meted out to the tenants. He filed statements before it from 20,000 tenants and formulated his demands. The committee ultimately came to the unanimous conclusion and submitted its report practically accepting the complaints of the tenants as valid. All the illegal taxes were abolished and the entire plunder to the tune of 12 lakhs of rupees taken by the planters from the tenants in lieu of compulsory cultivation of indigo was ordered to be returned to the poor tillers of the soil. This was Mahatmaji's and Rajan Babu's first grandest victory. As a result of this the indigo planters sold their lands and factories and left the district for good. The latter day "Quit India" movement and the abolition of Zamindari and other land reforms may be said to have

originated in Champaran—where Rajan Babu had unique training for future leadership and organisation of his province for national fight and redemption.

* * *

SEVENTEEN years later, on the 15th January 1934, a severe earth-quake appeared in Bihar devastating large tracts of land and causing utmost damage probably the greatest in recorded history. The destruction extended to six districts including Champaran and covered an area of 30,000 square miles. About 10 lakhs of houses, a lakh of wells and irrigation tanks, 8 lakhs of houses, 8 lakhs of fertile acres were lost and an artificial sea shot up above from below the bosom of the earth over large tracts of cultivable lands. Railroads and motor roads were completely destroyed leaving no means of communication for people for several months. In such a cataclysmic upheaval, unparalleled in the world, the unpopular and irresponsible foreign government in Bihar, could not do much by way of relief.

The Bihar central relief committee under the leadership of Rajan Babu came into existence and all Congress volunteers and Congress men and women who went to jail in connection with the civil disobedience movements led by Gandhiji, rallied to his help and carried on work of relief day in and day out without

rest or sleep. The country from the Himalayas to Cape Comorin made a splendid response to Rajan Babu's call for help. Cash donations amounting to 29 lakhs of rupees besides "large quantities of goods like blankets, wearing apparels, cloth, rice, flour, utensils, medicines, tea, invalid food, building materials like bamboo, timber, corrugated iron sheets, tarpaulins, hessians, tents and other equipments valued at about 3 lakhs" (to quote from Rajan Babu's report) came pouring in.

It was not merely a remarkable demonstration of the new-born unity of the country created by Gandhiji that realised that the acute distresses in one part of the country was a common all-India tragedy to be equally borne by all but that feeling of oneness and brotherly affection evoked spontaneous response from millions of sympathetic hearts, breaking all barriers of territory, caste, creed or colour. Surely that was a blessing in disguise. It conclusively proved to the world that when nationalism of that noble type was freely flowing in India, it was really impossible for any Imperialistic Power to hold it in bondage any more. It gave absolute proof of the constructive ability and leadership of Bihar and all India Congress organizations that they were fit for self-rule and could manage their own affairs against odds.

BABU Rajendra Prasad was elected President of the Congress in Bombay 1934. His speech on the occasion was considered a model of sweet reasonableness and a plea for the peace of the world on the twin bases of freedom and ahimsa. In his beautiful peroration, Dr. Rajendra Prasad made an impassioned appeal to his countrymen to rise to the supreme height of which they were capable and to stand four square and rock-firm against attacks from the enemies of our political freedom. We quote his ringing words of wisdom below:

"Let us not be deterred by the difficulties which confront us, nor diverted from our straight course by fear or favour. Our weapons are unique and the world is watching the progress of our great experiment with interest and high expectation. Let us be true to our creed, and firm in our determination. Satyagraha in its active application may meet with temporary setbacks, but it knows no defeat. It is itself a great victory, as James Lowell put it.

"Truth for ever on the
scaffold,
wrong for ever on the
throne,
Yet that scaffold sways the
future,
And behind the dim
unknown,

Standeth God within the
shadow,
Keeping watch above His
own.

It is this inherent belief in God and the ultimate success of truth that singles out Dr. Rajendra Prasad from the crowd for distinction. He was a minister of food in the Central Government, president of the Constituent Assembly, and then was called to the Presidential throne. He was again re-elected for another term. As President of the Republic of India, he is acquitting himself as creditably as was expected. There is whole-hearted co-operation between him and the dashing and brilliant Prime Minister, Nehruji.

His simple life and saintly discipline, his vast erudition and self-sacrifice, his cultural attainments and broad-minded religious toleration, his soft and peace-loving temperament and zeal for compromise and co-operation endear him to the nation, and if at any time a need arises to pour oil on the troubled waters of the Congress or to quell the storm inside Nehru's cabinet, Dr. Rajendra Prasad may surely be relied upon to do his best and help the country to move forward undeterred and undaunted. He is an anchor of safety and let us hope that he will, as a redoubtable captain, steer the ship of State to success and to the promised haven of prosperity and happiness.

SYMBOLISM—

OF THE WEDDING RING

THE ring! Just a shining little circlet, which, to the young bride, represents so many hopes and dreams of a rosy future, and to the happy wife and mother a thankful heart and golden memories!

In bygone days the circular shape of the wedding-ring was held to be symbolic of eternity and the continuity of true love which like the circle, has no end.

The giving of a ring as token of a contract entered into, or any mutual pledge accepted, dates back many centuries, and to purely business matters, as quite distinct from matrimonial affairs. This custom is believed to have originated in the old Jewish practice of exchange or giving something as ratification of any bargain or agreement. We find it too, among the Romans, who used to give a ring at the conclusion of any fresh contract.

With the ancient Egyptians it appears to have been used principally in connection with marriage, for at their weddings a piece of "ring-money" (used before

the introduction of coins) was placed upon the bride's finger to indicate that the husband endowed her with his wealth.

For many years a plain circlet has been used, but in former centuries quite elaborate rings were made both for engagement and wedding.

The "key rings" of the Roman times were interesting on account of their symbolism. Made of various materials, such as gold, silver, ivory, or even of iron, they were surmounted by a small key, in token that the husband handed over to his wife the keys of the home on their wedding-day. "I give the keys of my house and my honour."

Some Saxon rings bore the same device, and the Saxon father used much the same wording, saying to his son-in-law: "I give thee my daughter to be thy honour and thy wife, and to keep thy keys." This idea well fits in with the chatelaine, who always carried the keys of the household at her girdle.

Wedding-rings have been made of almost every conceivable material, such as precious metals, bone, crystal, ivory or glass, and beautified with all manner of carvings or set with many jewels, but the most popular have always been gold, the metal which may be bent but not broken, and like true love passes through the furnace purified but indestructible.

The lovely old custom of the blessing of the marriage-ring before it was placed upon the bride's finger is still retained under a rather different from the modern bridegroom lays the ring upon the sacred Book of Prayer, where it is given benediction.

The "fourth finger" (the thumb being counted as the first of the five on the hand) was chosen because of a quaint old belief that from that finger a vein and a nerve ran straight to the heart—where wedded love found its true home.

COURTSHIP CUSTOMS

Why is knitting wool usually sold in skeins in this country? In France it can be bought, ready for use, wound into balls of convenient size. Here only a certain type of very fine wool is made up in this way.

The above question was asked sometime ago in a letter to "The Times." There were two answers—one practical and one romantic. The first is that most wools keep better in skeins. The second

suggested by the newspaper, is that in France marriages are arranged by parents, and in this country by the young people themselves.

So "in romantic and individualist England knitting wool is sold in skeins because the winding of the skein into a ball is one of the most respectable, most effective, and most enjoyable figures in the formal dance of courtship."

Even in these slapdash, modern days, this may still be true, for many girls knit their own jumpers. And "old-fashioned" methods of courtship still persist to a surprising extent throughout the world, even in the present decade.

For instance the Rev. A. G. Partridge described the way in which courtship is conducted in Tristan da Cunha, the lonely island in mid-Atlantic.

"When a young man begins to have a feeling for a girl," says Mr. Partridge "he goes round to her house and sits on a bench in the kitchen. He will sit there for hours, looking very sheepish, and hardly say a word. He does this every day for months. Then comes the next stage. He will make moccasins for his intended, and the girl will then very shyly ask the boy's mother for permission to do his washing. At a latter stage they begin to walk out together on a Sunday afternoon, and they then have to run the gauntlet of the jeers of the whole island."

SKIT

HAUNTED BY GHOST

I LAY on a cot in a small room in the interior of a dilapidated house. Except my room which was lighted by a hurricane lantern, the other parts of the house were completely in the dark. I knew the house was haunted, but I wanted to find out by whom it was haunted—by ghosts or by bats!

Being left alone in the house, I developed soft quiver in the limbs despite my self-confidence. I found my hands shaking immensely when I closed the window. Not a minute had passed before I involuntarily jumped up two to three feet from the ground for a queerly chill hand seemed to touch me on the neck.

Turning back I saw nobody in the room. The window slowly opened of itself with a metallic creak. Two long, ugly, bony hands stretched themselves in, followed by a mass of human bones. My whole body shook and doddered as in senility.

Fear grew virulent as the moments passed by. It reached the climax when I observed the skeleton floor at me with an ugly shrug of its fleshless shoulders. Perhaps it thought what an impertinent fool I must be to stay alone in a haunted house!

The crunch of bones as the skeleton walked in the quiet of the night, sounded to me like the beating of the drums at a South Indian cortage. The skeleton came nearer me and I moved backwards and sideways to prevent the minacious and repulsive mass of bones from touching me until my legs struck the cot.

I seized the opportunity and, having lost hopes of an escape, stretched myself flat on the cot, face downwards. I hid my face in the pillow in fear of what the skeleton might do. I expected it to touch me at any moment. It might strangle me with its strong hands, I thought. No. It was not necessary for the skeleton to exert effort. The mere touch would be sufficient to make my heart burst out, for it was already beating with the maximum speed.

It touched me at last,—on the shoulder. My heart did not burst out as I guessed. I rolled violently in the bed not being able to bear the contiguity of the skeleton, and I opened my eyes slowly to see my wife standing close to me in the bedroom of my own house, murmuring, "It's already six o'clock".

That was the first and the only opportunity given me to be in a haunted house.—D.

Charming Raj- The Perfect Burglar

By Douglas Manuel

IN his own line, Raj was an expert. He knew exactly what to do; and in a given set of circumstances, he knew precisely when to do it. But the trouble was, as it often is with experts, that an unforeseen detail could entirely upset the plans of Raj—and others.

In this case the detail was named Swaran, a plump wench with pronounced feminine instincts. Swaran was Mrs. Chatterjee's maid, and Mrs. Chatterjee was the wife of Mr. Chatterjee, a millionaire with artistic tastes who was rich in possessions, but who had recently been far, far more wealthy. The Chatterjees had a house in Marine Drive that was overcrowded with valuables. For this reason it was as near being Burglar-proof as possible. Automatic steel shut-

ters closed over every window at night-time, and over all doorways at the rear of the premises that gave entry to the house itself.

AT the front there was only one front door, which had a light that burned all night above it, and which would be impossible to force unnoticed. Even very expert burglars neglected the house of Chatterjee as being a proposition too difficult to tackle. Moreover, such was the nature of the valuables, that even when burglariously acquired, they would be almost impossible to sell—as, for instance, a jaded Buddha set with emeralds and diamonds of such quantity and size as to cause consternation among all beholders. There were also objects of historical interest but of no great actual value, but, which nevertheless, carried poli-

cies of Rs. 10,000 and upwards.

love with him—given the right circumstances.

* * *

The servants employed by the Chatterjees were all above suspicion as far as dishonesty was concerned, and all had characters that would not be worth risking for any share in the proceeds of a robbery. But while there are people wholly beyond suspicion as far as dishonesty was concerned, they may yet possess other weakness—just as there are expert thieves who can implicitly be relied upon to carry out a perfect, fool-proof burglary and yet be foolish in some way that will entirely upset the outcome of their enterprise. We are none of us perfect in our professions.

RAJ, for instance, was an almost perfect burglar, and he worked alone. The police were fully aware of what he was—he would leave little jokes behind him for their amusement (and irritation), but they could never find a spike to nail him with, which caused them to regard him with great respect. They even tried to get at him through his weakness, but even there they failed, for the pretty girl employed by police to ensnare Raj fell so much in love with him that she wouldn't give him away. For Raj had charm. Nine women out of ten would have fallen in

SWARAN, Mrs. Chatterjee's maid, also had charm. She was not pretty, but she was buxom, and somehow suggested a nice ripe mango, a really juicy mango that would melt in the mouth. Her voice, her manner and her mannerisms were curiously alluring, and possessing, as I have stated, pronounced feminine instincts, she had a power of projecting an attractiveness. When she wished that, any genuinely masculine man would have the very devil and all to resist—if he were fool enough to resist.

It was at the door of Mrs. Chatterjee's boudoir some where about midnight, when the Chatterjees were out at a dinner party and the other servants all in bed, in another part of the house that Raj and Swaran first met. Swaran had gone out for the evening and had come home earlier than she had intended. She had partially undressed, then, hearing movements from Mrs. Chatterjee's suite of rooms, had gone forth to investigate, since Mrs. Chatterjee had told her particularly that, as she would be very late, Swaran was not to wait up for her. Mrs. Chatterjee was a jolly woman and a considerate employer.

When Swaran opened the door of the boudoir, she beheld Raj

removing an Egyptian statue with great care from its pedestal. The statue was of Amanra, and dated back to the eighth century B.C.—and, though the statue was carved out of common or garden granite, it was insured for Rs. 100,000,000, since it was unreplaceable and to all intents and purposes priceless and unsaleable. To the surprised gaze of Swaran, for instance, the statue was worth less than Raj, who was a small, muscular figure in well-cut evening clothes, and with a face that suggested he had seen all that life had to offer. This personality struck Swaran in the eye, so to say, and then made a bull's eye of her heart. As for Raj, I have already indicated in which direction his weakness lay; and Swaran, in every particular of her being, just lay in that direction.

* * *

THE house being, burglar-proof, the subject of burglars was never entertained by the Chatterjees or their servants, and it never occurred to Swaran for a moment that Raj had entered the house by any other way than by the front door and with a key—which was precisely the way Raj had entered the house. He nodded with friendly politeness and said:

“Good evening.”

Whereas Swaran answered:

“Good evening, sir.”

Raj, with a humorous expression on his remarkable face,

then explained that Mr. Chatterjee had asked him to fetch the statue in order to settle a bet of considerable dimensions which had been made that evening at the dinner party to which both Mr. and Mrs. Chatterjee (and presumably himself) had been invited.

THE statement was so simple, so possible, and Raj so looked the part that Swaran, who was no fool, accepted it unquestioningly, and as Raj appeared in the mood for conversation, Swaran remained, willing enough, and conversed. After a while she suggested fetching Raj some refreshment, and the conversation became more intimate in tone.

From what happened later, it seems obvious that Raj knew precisely at what hour the Chatterjees intended returning home, for he appears to have made himself very comfortable at their house during their absence. As for Swaran, it must be explained that one or other of Mr. Chatterjee's friends and visitors to his house had surreptitiously made love to her with varying success. Therefore Raj's behaviour would not appear very extraordinary to Swaran, particularly as Raj found favour in her eyes.

When Raj had departed, he had wisely (so it seemed to Swaran at that time) taken the precaution of leaving by the back door, which door and other doors Swaran closed after him. He had explained that, for her sake, it would be better if he

were not seen leaving the house after being there so long, and so did not use the front door as he had done for entering. For the same reason Swaran obliterated all traces of his visit, other than such traces he had left in actually removing the statue of Aman-Ra, and then she returned, contentedly to bed and to sleep.

* * *

SHE was awakened some time later by Mrs. Chatterjee, who appeared in the elaborate suggestiveness of an evening frock and an advanced state of agitation. “Burglars, it appeared had entered the house by some inexplicable means and stolen the statue of Aman-Ra. Had Swaran seen or heard anything?”

The shock of this statement must have been considerable to Swaran. Nevertheless, she must have realised, without delay, how any indiscretions on her part might be misinterpreted, and that to be over-familiar with a guest in the house is one thing, while to be ditto with burglar is another. So she prolonged the natural state of stupefaction on being suddenly awakened in order to review her situation as rapidly as possible, and, when appearing fully awake, swore she had seen and heard nothing at all.

The household by then was aroused, and the police called in. Nothing but the statue had been stolen, and there were no signs whatsoever of how the robber

or robbers entered or left. The theft, quite naturally, was beyond the resources of the police. As all trace of the statue was lost, two insurance companies grudgingly paid up; and Mr. Chatterjee, though poorer for the loss of a famous but unsaleable statue, was the richer by a considerable sum of money—until, one day, a gentleman of the C.I.D. caught sight of Swaran (whose appearance he had made it his business to know) in the company of Raj—a fact that interested the police immensely, for they had long since decided that it was probably Raj who took the statue, though they didn't in the least know how.

HAD Raj avoided Swaran ever afterwards, or had Swaran not taken such a fancy to Raj, Mr. Chatterjee and Raj might not now be serving considerable sentences of imprisonment.

But, as matters turned out, the police communicated with the insurance companies concerning Swaran's friendship with Raj and after the insurance people had pursued their own investigations, Swaran broke down under cross-examination, and though she was exonerated from all wilful or knowing participation in the theft, Raj was convicted of the actual burglary, while Mr. Chatterjee was convicted of defrauding the insurance with the assistance of Raj, who, like better men, was ruined by a weakness for women. †

WHY SHE WAITED

“SIR, anything for me?” she asked.

Anxiety, doubt and, shyness sounded in her tone, which were duly noticed by Mr. Chandrakumar.

“No please.”

He was observing her in a queer way, as she was disappearing from his sight. It appeared to him as though a life-size statue of Ajanta or Ellora was moving about after regaining its life.

“What is it she has been expecting all these days?” was his thought for a while.

* * *

It was only two months back that Mr. Chandrakumar took charge as village post-master. It being a small post-office, he had to do everything for himself: sorting, packing, distributing etc.,

Generally the villagers are accustomed to go over to the post office and take delivery of their

letters. In a way, it minimised his work. He used to distribute the rest according to his convenience.

He was a man of patience and sweet tongue, which made him very popular in a very short period. They soon began to consider him as their well-wisher.

His responsibilities were not small but his salary per month was only fifteen rupees!

BY

Sonti Krishnamurty

After completing his work, he would take up the daily newspaper and start reading it. Though his eyes were following the lines blindly, all his thoughts were centered round her.

Daily it had been happening: she would come and ask the same question and he used to say, “No please.” She would disappear silently.

“What might be the thing that she awaited for?” was his worry. Nothing struck his brain. He had many times decided to ask her straight and find out what for she had been waiting. But he had not the courage lest she should misunderstand him.

“I will ask her tomorrow without fail and find out the truth and give her all the help she requires. I will make her life happy.” He finally made up his mind.

* * *

She was a middle-aged woman with a beautiful appearance. Though she was of ordinary complexion, she looked fairly graceful because of her neat-dressing.

What attracted Chandrakumar much more was her endless waiting than her physical glamour and air. The previous post-master told him that she had been coming for the last one year. He too, did not give out any reason.

“Perhaps her husband is employed in military or in a distant place or he is in some foreign country. She must be expecting a love-letter or any monetary help from him. Women are true lovers. They know the correct spirit of love better than men.”

His face reddened as these thoughts flashed in his mind. His heart was full of sympathy for that helpless woman. His mind flared up against her merciless husband, who had left her in such a desperate position. He cursed him in many ways till his mental agitation subsided.

The expected moment arrived. She came as usual and asked: “Sir, anything for me?”

“No, Please.....But.....”, he said as if he was going to say something more.

She cast a thoughtful glance at him through her broad eyes and said “Please speak out.”

“I hope you would excuse me for enquiring into your personal affairs. I request you, if you do not think otherwise, to tell me without hesitation and frankly, what for you have been waiting all these days. I would like to render as much help as I can”.

“Nothing special, sir! When I voted in the last elections, I was told that some money would be remitted to me by M. O.”

She expressed in plain terms.

Chandrakumar felt as if he was falling from ‘Chandra Loka’, or a Laika of the Russian “sputnik”.

††

STORY

THE bungalow 'Vijaya Vilas' that stood in a remote corner of the city looked like a giant amongst the dwarfs. The inhabitants of the house consisted of a family of four members, Vijayakumar—a smart young man, his parents and Munimji—their servant.

Vijay, a jubilant youth in his twentyfive led a life of fribble and frivolity. He was ebullient, gay, and boisterous in spirit,

When his master called him out by name he ran up to his master asking that he should be pardoned for not taking his permission when he went to his native place.

"I will tell you a secret, you should not let it out and must keep it for yourself. Would you?" asked his master.

"I would never let it out," Munimji said very obediently.

ETERNAL SLEEP

By A. Muthukrishnan

active and adept in his actions. He squandered all the hard-earned money of his parents.

Munimji was out for a week to his native place, and when he returned he was struck with wonder and amazement to find the house completely wrapped in deathly silence. Not a soul except Vijay was in the house. He was curious to know what had become of the house and to Vijay's parents.

"I have been your trusted servant for the last 15 years and I will continue to be so."

"I KNOW you are my trusted servant. Yet I cautioned you, because the matter is very important. Do you know that I am alone in the house?" said Vijay.

"No sir...We are two in the house" replied the servant and by the way he asked, "What about your father and mother?"

"Only yesterday I sent them away to Delhi where a near relation of my mother is employed as an assistant manager in an European firm" explained Vijay.

* * *

WHEN he heard that, Munimji who already got excited over the situation and frightfully exclaimed "Oh! is it true you have sent them?"

"Yes. I myself!...I have some urgent business to look into. I wanted to be alone and none other to talk to. Hence I sent them away to Delhi" replied Vijay.

"Alright sir!"

"Let me tell you what you should do." You should allow none to enter the house and leave me alone in my room. Even you should not come in, unless called for."

"Yes, sir. But if any letter comes?"

"You need not wake me up. Drop it through the window."

"Oh! need not wake you up! Then you are going to sleep?"

"Yes! I want to have a long and eternal one!"

"Everything is confusing...and I understand nothing..." said the panic-stricken servant.

"It is better you do not understand it! Waste no time...Even midday meal need not be served. I have some fruits and biscuits to satisfy my appetite." So saying Vijay had shut himself up inside the room.

It did not take a long time for Munimji to assume things, though he was in utter confusion for a while. He knew that his master was in a realm of his own, ever since he fell in love with a beautiful maiden—breaker of hearts—and a merry charmer Mohana by name. He had seen personally that Vijay and his fiancé together going to the beach and visiting cinemas. He also knew all about the intimate correspondence that took place between them.

One day Munimji had actually over-heard his master telling his intimate friend that he would marry only Mohana and none else and that she had also consented and promised to keep firm to the man of her choice.

The words, "want to have a long and eternal sleep" struck him prominently and he guessed that his master having been disappointed in love had decided to commit suicide in his room taking some poisonous drug.

* * *

MUNIMJI hurriedly strode upstairs and rang up the phone to Dr. John a friend of Vijay's father. Dr. John arrived within

an hour and Munimji explained him the whole matter.

"You do not want the fact that you rang up the phone to be revealed to Vijay? I will look to that. But how to enter the room as it is locked inside?" asked the doctor.

"We can open the door by letting our hand through the window. But it is his strict order that the door should not be opened and much less be tapped," said the fear-stricken servant.

"The order is for you and not for me; I will open it," saying this the doctor opened the door and entered the room.

VIJAY was rolling on his bed and was experiencing both physical and mental torture. The appearance of the doctor made him restive and brought him to a more woeful plight. Almost driven mad, he shouted at the highest pitch of his voice, "Who allowed you here?"

"Since it is a long time since I had seen your father" the doctor told him calmly, "I have come to meet him." Patting him kindly on the back, "You please tell me if you have swallowed any poison. If you tell me the truth, you'll be alright in a few minutes." said the doctor.

"I know nothing about poison and all that! I am suffering only from stomach pain,

and so I do not solicit any medical help from you" cried he furiously.

* * *

Just then Munimji entered the room with a letter in his hand and gave it to Vijay who quickly cut open the envelope and read it.

The moment he finished reading it, he cried out loudly "Doctor! please doctor! I do not want to die, doctor! I have really taken poison and the bottle is there. Doctor, I beg you to save my life."

Without losing time the doctor finished his duty. Vijay was given an anti-poisonous injection.

"Don't fear, my boy, your life is saved, and it's no more under the influence of the poison. By God's grace the letter has come in time. I think it's really a wonder." The doctor who finished his work soothed him by such caressing words.

"I will briefly tell the story in a few minutes, doctor. This is the letter that gave me life!" said Vijay. "Hear me doctor!" he continued. "A year back, one evening when I was witnessing a show at 'Liberty' I met a girl of my heart and deeply fell in love with her. Our new acquaintance speedily warmed into tender affection, and we determined to cement it in wedlock..." Before finishing the

story he paused, reflected for a moment and passed the letter over to the doctor.

The doctor received it and as he read it, he was surprised to find the words in capital"—**DROP THE MARRIAGE PROPOSAL.** The doctor was greatly puzzled and asked "Vijay, have you not read the letter properly?" Mohana says she will not marry you!... Are you not disappointed?"

"No, doctor. On the contrary it gives me a feeling of relief, a great joy and happiness."

"Let me know the fact, if you are not offended."

"Doctor! I will be frank. It is true we were deeply in love, and made promises to marry. But when I came to know that she was a dancer, I realised that she was not fit for my love, and

decided not to marry her. Being a dancer, she will not love me but only my money. In fact she knows little of being loyal to a married husband and the duties of housewife. Hence I detached myself from her. Since she was in possession of some of my letters, she threatened to drag me to the court!"

"Sure! she will not easily leave a wealthy man like you!"

"Yes! I thought it fit and better to end my life than to be disgraced for my acts of folly and shame. Otherwise, I would have become a laughing stock of this locality, but God saved me. It is fortunate that she has changed her mind" finished Vijay.

"PERHAPS a man richer than you would have been caught in her net!" suggested the doctor. ‡‡

ELECTRONIC GOODS TRAIN

Soviet technicians have successfully tested the first totally automatically-driven goods (freight) train, reports the Moscow "the Economic and Industrial Journal".

The train is controlled by a "mathematical, electronic machine", says the paper.

This machine immediately calculates the coefficients of resistance for the track and the mass of the train, thus permitting a better use of power by calling on kinetic energy and increasing average speeds.

THE FIFTY-SEVENTH YEAR IN INDIAN HISTORY

By E. Theodore King

THE fifty-seventh year of every century is rather significant in Indian History. Important events took place which changed the face of the country and gave a colourful outlook to the events and the movements that made the pages of history glow like gold.

Avoiding the era before Christ, let us see what happened in Anno Domini. In 57 A.D., the Kushans had already entered India by the Passes and were ruling at Taxila with Kadphises I as their king. These Kushans were part of the famous Yeuhi tribe that swept India with plunder and massacre and arson. From barbarity they became civilised, adopting Indian names and manners and customs. They wrought great changes in art and literature which later got the outlandish name of Gandharva

art and literature. Also, at this time, a new religion was being preached by no less than a person called Thomas. He was one of the disciples of Christ who came to India and taught and preached Christianity, converting many to be the followers of Christ. It was also the beginning of the Saka era when Salivahana defeating the Sakas, entered it as a new phase in history.

In 157 A.D., Kanishka ruled India with a firm but noble hand. He was the greatest of the Kushan kings and a devout Buddhist. He originated a new kind of Buddhism called the Mahayana or the Greater Vehicle in contrast to Hinayana or the Lesser Vehicle. He was a patron of arts and literature and had a great influence in creating a new type of heritage for India. At his court were such famous

names as Nagarjuna, the great Buddhist savant, Asvagosha, the great commentator, and Charaka, the great physician and surgeon.

In 257 A.D., the South became most prominent. It was the Sangam age with its renaissance in art and literature. *Silappadikaram* was the great Tamil epic that was written at that time and Senguttuvan, the famous Chera king, went conquering the kingdoms of the south and the north. It was the golden age of Tamil civilisation.

* * *

In 357 A.D., the Gupta Empire flourished and the greatest of its rulers, Samudragupta, went on his famous *digvijay*, conquering lands and countries in his pride of power. It was the golden age of the Guptas and a period of renaissance. Art, literature, religion, philosophy, logic, etc., flourished at that time.

In 457 A.D., the Gupta Empire was tottering though its last rulers were trying to hold it up. But at this time the Huns invaded and upset the applecart of the Guptas. Skandagupta fought hard against these ferocious invaders and repulsed them, but they came in greater numbers like the locusts.

In 557 A.D., the Huns had spread throughout the land with Mihiragula as their chief, burning, plundering, rap-

ing, massacring. Their king was a beast in human form who revelled in torture and torment. Later, some of the Huns got absorbed with the inhabitants and formed a new race by their mix-up and were known as the Jats.

In 657 A.D., the Rajputs had risen. New clans, new dynasties, new kind of warriors blazed into the firmament of Indian history. Rajput valour, Rajput honour, Rajput courage and bravado became the bywords in history. In the South, the Pallavas overthrew the Chalukyas and ruled the land between the Nerbada and the Cauvery. They were responsible for most of South Indian art and architecture and the monoliths of Mahabalipuram speak volumes in their praise.

In 757 A.D., the Palas had risen in Bengal with Dharmapala as their greatest king. He was a doughty warrior and a bold adventurer with a softness for art and literature.

In 857 A.D., Bhoja came to the throne of Kanauj. He ruled a vast extensive empire and the country flowed with milk and honey, with song and dance, with love and harmony. Literature and art flourished and made new advances in astronomy and medical science.

In 957 A.D., regular inroads were being made by the Muslims. Encouraged by the first Arab invasion two centuries

before, the Muslims found India not only a land of wealth but also a good ground for conversion. In the south, the Cholas had risen under Raja Raja Chola who spread his conquering tentacles everywhere and was crowned as "The king of the Three Crowns." He had even a navy in his honour at Kandalur Salai and he warred successfully with Ceylon and other islands around India.

1057 A.D., finds the rise of the Chauhan Rajputs over other clans. They were a hard people who revelled in fighting and shedding blood. In 1157 A.D., their finest king, Prithviraj, ruled them. He was a veritable hero. He fought and defeated Mohammed Ghori several times though he finely lost to him, betrayed by his own countrymen. His famous exploit of elopement with Samyukta, daughter of Jayachandra Rathor, is still considered a feat of foolhardy courage and bravado.

In 1257 A.D. history finds itself at the cross roads. The Hindus had shrunk next to nothing and the Muslims dominated with their capital at Delhi. The Slave kings had established themselves and became the virtual rulers of North India. They gave such rulers as Kutubuddin, Altamash, Raziya, Balban, and such monuments as Kutub Minar.

1357 A.D., is Ferozeshah Tughlak's year. He was the last and the best of the

Tughlaks. He built roads and hospitals, cut canals, opened schools, reclaimed land, lightened the taxes and took care of the needy and the sick. In the south, a wandering man found employment under a Brahmin and while ploughing the latter's field found a pot of gold coins. Being honest, he gave the pot to his master who predicted a great future for him. This man then set out on his adventures and finally founded the famous Bahmani kingdom. His name was Hasan Gangu Bahmani. In a latter day, this kingdom gave its finest minister, Mahmud-Gawan.

In 1457 A.D., Bahlol Lodi ruled well, conquering when conquest was necessary and looking after his people when he wanted to. The Lodis were important because a century later, the last of the Lodis fought with an Afgan adventurer and lost and thus a new dynasty - the Moghul came into existence.

1556 A.D., saw the first battle of Panipat between Babar and Ibrahim Lodi. 1557 A.D., saw Babar marching towards Kanua to face Rana-Sangha, the doughty Rajput. 1557 also saw the greatness of Vijaynagar Empire. It was at the zenith of its power, pride and glory. Rama Raja was the minister then, who ruled the kingdom with an iron hand.

In 1657, a gay Aurangzeb was in the Deccan as its viceroy. He

was not exactly a pagan but he bordered on it with song and dance and mistresses. He fought with Bijapur and Golconda and got them. It was at this time that the war of succession broke out and he made quick plans to win the throne from his other three brothers. It was also at this time that Sivaji had risen amongst the Marathas as a saviour of the Hindus and had just then annihilated the giant Afzal Khan and caused consternation amongst the Muslims.

1757 A.D., dawns as an ill-year for India. It was the year of the battle of Plassey where treachery played its major part and courage and bravery went unrewarded. Clive fought with Sirajuddaulah and won, thus securing a firm foothold on India with the three rich territories of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa as the prize. It was a black year and history will never forget the perfidious Mir Jafar who sold his country for filthy lucre and an empty title.

1857 A.D., started with a new hope and a new desire. People wanted to avenge the battle of Plassey and

thus the seeds of revolt were slowly sown. The Great Rebellion was fought and the Indian battled his utmost to oust the foreigner from the Indian shores. Though the fight was lost, it threw up such martyrs as Tantia Tope, Nana Saheb, Azimullah, Lakshmi Bai, Kumar Singh, Mangal Pande, Bahadur Shah, Ahmedullah Shah and several others. We all know about it because we recently celebrated its centenary. This was also the year when the three main universities were founded - the Bombay, the Calcutta and the Madras Universities.

This is 1957 A.D. Already a new coinage called Naya Paise has been introduced. There are several problems besetting the country and one hopes that they will be solved quickly to the lasting credit and glory of the country.

Thus we find that fifty-seventh year is, indeed, an important year. Let us hope that 2057 A.D., will find India a rich and prosperous country, a land of sunshine and colour, of peace and plenty. ‡

BAN INDIAN FILMS

A deputation of the Pakistani film producers and directors have requested the Central Government to ban totally import of the Indian films into Pakistan.

THE MICE IN CONCLAVE

By Nalini Devi

DEMOCRACY is expanding from precedent to precedent and if the ex-convicts of a State in India can meet in a conference at which State Ministers speak on "new approach to criminals based on broad humanity", and if ex-convicts sentenced for moral turpitude can be given appointments in the Central Government, there can be no harm in the mice of the town meeting in solemn conclave, not for the selfish purpose of advancing their interests or for asking that a ban be put on the use of inhuman 'rat-traps' but for an objective discussion of the virtues, frailties, foibles and failures of society ladies, to whose bungalows it is the proud privilege of the mice to pay nocturnal visits daily and study their mental make-up and behaviour.

"Where no male outsider or a confidential un-official woman

C. I. D., or a secret lover could enter, the mice have a right of way and can repose in a place of safety inside a lady's bedroom and watch the scene with perfect impunity" said an experienced mouse presiding over a monthly meeting.

"Come out, my brothers and sisters, with your reports. We shall discuss the salient points and help the public with our disinterested criticism. Let none despise or cavil at us. Ask Aesop and he will tell you how a battalion of mice went to the rescue of a lion, king of beasts, and liberated it from the hunter's net in which it was caught. We will similarly help human society with our views on some of the problems which beset it. Democracy thrives by discussion and sometimes more wit and wisdom reside in the mice than in men and women, though with a

sixth sense," asserted the chairman.

The discussion started. Here is a brief summary from the minutes of the proceedings of their meeting.

Mouse No. 1. I witnessed a quarrel in the house of a high court judge whom his young and beautiful wife took to task.

Chairman. why? Did he come home late, keeping his wife waiting in endless suspense? Did he fail to take her to a cinema or a musical concert?

"No, sir, it was on a different issue. The judge, it appears, remitted Rs. 5/- to one of his poor brothers. That was the origin of the trouble" answered the reporting mouse.

"You may be an inexorable judge and reign supreme in your court room. Clients and advocates may be afraid of you and you may sentence them for contempt of court at the slightest provocation but when at home, where I am the presiding Deity, you can't wag your tail" said the enraged wife.

"You can't question me. I may lose myself in your fond embrace and give full scope to all your vanities but I will never lose my independence. You can't question my right to send Rs. 5/- to a needy brother, when you have the whole of my salary amounting to Rs. 4000/" argued the judge.

"You have forgotten the price of my love and loyalty to you. Ours is free and companionate marriage and tradition has it that the wife's word is law. You are bound to subscribe to this dictum and subordinate yourself to your wife at home" rejoined his talented wife.

Chairman. This sort of quarrel developed, you say, between them and it lasted the whole night robbing them of their sweet pleasure and rosy sleep?

Mouse No. 1. Yes, sir, the quarrel came to an end only when the out-witted judge gave an undertaking to his wife that he would behave better, that he would not remit money to his relations anymore and that he would, both in letter and spirit, conform to the unwritten code of the harem. Only then did she allow him to kiss and embrace her.

* * *

Chairman. Now the position is crystal clear. The issue is, whether the conduct of the wife is commendable or condemnable. I invite the views of the members.

"It does not become a good wife to ill-treat her husband like that and reduce him to the position of a servant of the house, though he is the chief earning member" said some of the mice.

"A dutiful, though beautiful, wife obeys her husband and co-operates with him through thick and thin. A nagging wife is a devil" said another.

"In the modern world the position is different. It is the duty of the husband to keep his wife in good humour, if he wants his enjoyment with her to be complete and cordial" interposed a lady mouse. "The husband has been, ever since the dawn of creation, a tyrant and treated his wife as if she were chattel. It is good that fit retribution has overtaken the males. I gloat over her victory" said she.

Chairman. Let us make no mistake about the position that is due to the housewife. I agree with the American poet who sang thus:

"As unto the bow the cord is,
So unto the man is woman.
Though she bends him, yet
she obeys him.
Each is useless without
the other."

Further, the judge's wife was guilty of exhibiting her meanness. Though we are little mice, we help the needy, the infirm and the helpless amongst us. Wherefore in this age of socialism, men and women, who boast that they are the crown of God's creation, must be willing to show all the charity they are capable of. It was ill-becoming on the part of the judge's wife to have objected to her husband remitting a small sum to his poor brother. She forgot her duty but fought a right royal battle to secure the right to control the finances of her husband. She has sinned against God and man. A good wife identifies herself with her lord, the husband. Compassion is and must be one of the cardinal virtues of womanhood and in denying it, she has proved herself to be a degenerate woman, however beautiful, educated and estimable she might otherwise be. All honour to the ladies who are charitably minded.—

ASCENDING THE SUMMIT

"There are some who ascend to the heights of physical discipline and intellectual analysis. There are some who take a difficult path and attain the high peaks where, in a rarefied air of abstract thought they commune with the Infinite. Others ascend the summit by boundless love, compassion and faith."—DR. C. P. RAMASWAMI AYYAR.

The Alluring Song

BY

LALITA RAJAMONI, M.A.

RAIN was on the river. The August rain striking at a long slant the dull silver of the Cauveri, sent little shoots of spray flying like dust across the flat expanse of water. Through the unbroken serenity of the Eastern twilight came the distant sound of a song. It shivered through the still air like the cry of a bird wounded in its flight. As it drew night it took a richer form—a tune of exquisite sweetness and irresistible appeal unfolded itself on the air like the petals of a fragrant flower and its beauty was enthralling. The sun was slowly sinking and the tune came on—irresistible, persistent.

the tune hovering in the evening mist like a winged creature paused, seemed to tremble—then went on softly and yet more softly as he came to the door of his cottage. Like a living thing of tenderest sympathy, it caressed all the air for miles around giving light to the deepening darkness and speaking in soft accents of wordless rhythm which suggested a speech higher than human.

* * *

To the measured beat of oars upon the water, a fishing boat was coming, and it was the boatman in an ecstasy of delight from whose lips the melody emanated. As he neared the bank,

SAROJA the teacher at the village school wanted to be married for two years now and it seemed as if that miracle would never happen. She and Raja Doss the assistant Doctor at the small village Hospital had waited and waited for the change in their prospects that never came. And

loving so much and waiting so long had made them desperate and frayed their nerves. And last night they had quarrelled for no more reason than that they were so fond of each other.

HE had not come to take her for their usual walk that night, wherefore the little white-clad

—a solution that appalled and attracted her at the same time.

IT was all so easy. You just stepped into the river and closed your eyes tight and just walked on and on till merciful oblivion overtook you—what did the poor



teacher sat alone on the river bank and was very miserable indeed. So miserable that she might have done something desperate had it not been for the song that was wafted over the water. A dangerous solution to her trouble had entered her head

little harassed widow, woodcutter Mangaram's daughter-in-law do, who was fished out of the well last week? Saroja saw suddenly the vision—she pressed her hands over her eyes to shut out the unforgettable sight. Sweetfaced and pretty the girl had been in

life but the waters bloated her face and turtles and vermin had rendered it hideous and unrecognizable.

* * *

INTO her thoughts the boatman's song broke in—and the tune carried her memory back to the day when she and Raja first discovered that they loved each other. She did not know the name of the melody and had never heard it since but the association had been imprinted on her mind for ever. They had been sitting in the garden of Raja's father's house where she had gone for her vacations. A group of children playing in the shade of a nearby mango grove had begun to sing this song then. They had listened to the end of the song . . . then Raja had looked at her steadily and said "Heaven knows when I'll be able to get together a home for you, darling, but let us always remember today when we are fed up about waiting."

And remembering that day brought to her mind by musical association, it seemed silly to contemplate suicide. She sat on the sand quietly and went on listening to the soft cadence and

presently she was telling herself that it was wrong to have doubted Raja even for a moment.

* * *

AT that moment there was a patter of hurrying footsteps and she heard Raja's voice raised in breathless excitement. His eyes were eagerly shining. He seemed to have forgotten last night's quarrel.

"Couldn't get round before, darling," he cried tensely. "Oh Saroj I have great news. You know Dr. Bhama is going away to one of the city hospitals and the people here have grown so fond of me that the chairman of the local board called me today to say that I've been appointed to the post of Medical officer of the District. Oh Saroj, isn't it marvellous? There is the bungalow rent free and a good salary."

A thrill of happiness ran through her as he concluded. "Shall we get married next Monday and move into our home?" She nestled close to him and sought the shelter of his young, protective arms . . . and all was well.

A boatman's song! What a small thing and yet how sweet and fine the influence it spread! ‡

CUPID AND PROFIT WALK HAND IN HAND

"I'VE said it and I mean it," insisted Judson Phelps. "I wouldn't marry you if you were the last girl on earth."

He sat straighter on the foyer bench, a dark-browed, dark-eyed young man, a little on the lanky side. His jaw was noticeable even when it was not set like this. Yet he was not stubborn, even if Mary persisted in calling him that. He was only sensible. And firm.

"You're beautiful," he admitted, assaying clear blue eyes and bun-brown hair and a slim but developed figure always in demurely smart, office frocks. "Anyway you're cute, and you dress well and you laugh at the right places. But you have a backbone all wood and a yard wide. You're obstinate, that's

what you are. And who wants an obstinate bride?"

"I beg your pardon?" said the girl.

Jud looked up. Mr. Maydin's secretary stood before him. "Sorry," he said. "Guess I was thinking aloud."

By
PAUL ERNST

"Mr. Maydin will see you now," she said, looking as if she could not imagine why.

* * *

JUD, following her, was unsure himself. He was a good hotel man and he knew Spanish; but he was acquainted with several

other young men who seemed to him to be better hotel men and to know Spanish better. However, if Mr. Maydin wanted to consider Mr. Judson Phelps for the job of managing the new hotel in Havana, that was all right with Mr. Judson Phelps.

THE only trouble was that Mr. Maydin didn't want to consider just Mr. Phelps—or just Mr. Anybody. The silliest notion Mr. Maydin had in his otherwise shrewd head!

"Good-morning, good-morning," said Mr. Maydin over his big desk. He was a large and happy man with fine digestive efficiency and the untroubled eyes of one who sleeps well. All of which, said Mr. Maydin, came of being suitably married. Especially away from home, in such far off places as Havana.

"Good-morning, Sir," responded Jud, aware that he was not happy looking, not untroubled of eye, and felt as if he had been digesting pieces of sole leather all the night before. "You wanted to see me? I take it you have decided." He let the rest of it delicately hang.

"We have decided," Mr. Maydin corrected. It was his conviction that all the heads of Maydin Hotels, Inc., participated in all descriptions.

"You are our man," said Mr. Maydin happily. "You will

leave as soon as you have had a decent period for a honeymoon. Unless you'd rather have your honeymoon in Cuba."

Jud cleared his throat. "I've been thinking, sir. If I went down there alone, sort of proved myself first..."

He stopped abruptly. Mr. Maydin had stopped beaming. "My boy, never could you make a greater mistake. Absence, we have discovered among managers of our more distant hotels, does not make the heart grow fonder. Twice we have unwittingly broken up a beautiful romance by sending a man away alone. We do not want that on our consciences again. Besides, we have found that married men stick closer to business. It seems that Cupid and profit walk hand in hand, Ha, Ha."

"Ha, ha," said Judson hollowly.

"So now," said Mr. Maydin, good fairy in a pin-striped suit, "you and that nice girl of yours decide when you want to sail, and we will attend to further details. Good-morning."

* * *

OUT in the foyer Jud said: "Not if you were the last girl on earth! Not even if you are cute and dress well and laugh at the right places and even for the Havana job."

Which, though scrambled, was precisely what he meant. And he was not really stubborn. When a man discovers almost at the altar that his girl is not only jealous and vindictive but also obstinate, what does he do? Exactly, Just what Jud had done.

He went along the street, starting to pass up the restaurant where he and Mary usually lunched. But then he stopped. It was noon and he was hungry—or ought to be—and he was hanged if he was going to hunt up a new chow house simply because Mary sometimes ate there. That was not being stubborn; that was simply fighting for his rights. A man of habit, perfect husband—for any girl but Mary.

AMBROSE, their usual waiter, nodded to him among the small crowd waiting to be seated. "Only one place left," he said out of the corner of his mouth. Jud followed. "If she was the last girl on earth," he was beginning, when he saw one place was across a table from a girl who looked annoyingly pretty, irritatingly well dressed, and who was—if not laughing—smiling sardonically at him.

She looked him over coolly, taking in his average height and his lankiness. He looked her over—clear blue eyes, nice shoulders, red young lips and obstinate chin. He waited for her to say something, for of course if any first moves were to

be made it was up to her to make them, after the outrageous way she had acted.

* * *

WHAT Mary said was: "Hello, Not with Justine today."

"She's my cousin," Jud said through his teeth. "Anyhow, second, or third."

"Oh, of course." This time Mary certainly was not laughing at the right place.

"We practically went to kindergarten together, back in Rockford," Jud picked it from the night before as if no intervening hours of digesting sole leather had occurred.

"Bill and I" said Mary, referring to the large, good-looking male with whom Jud had seen her through a green haze night before last—"Bill and I, the first time we met, practically hit each other over the head with our rattles."

"You haven't got over the habit yet," said Jud.

"See" said Mary to the wall. "Stubborn."

"If you can go around with your phony cousin, I guess I can go around with mine. I mean my real cousin."

"You started it. A week before the wedding, picking up with violet-eyed blondes."

"If a guy's cousin comes to town, he has to at least take her to a movie, doesn't he?"

"Since when do movies keep open till 3 a.m.?"

"She wanted to see a city night spot. Is that a crime? Oh, well!" Jud stopped. They had been over this before and Marry had been too obstinate to see the light. She looked as obstinate now. It had been obvious from the first she wasn't going to make a conciliatory move, and he never should have entered here. He turned. "Regards to your cousin," he said over his shoulder.

"Regards to yours," she called lightly after him.

* * *

HALFWAY to the street door loomed. Ambrose with a loaded tray, and Jud had a bone to pick with him.

"You!" he said. "Only seat in the place, eh? Why don't you waiters and taxi drivers stop making with the little bow and arrows? What do you read nights, romantic swoon tales?"

"Me?" said Ambrose, beetling. "Bow and arrow? Look, for 10 bucks I'd save any spot and lead any dope to it any time."

"You—what?" Jud stared, then whirled to look across heads at Mary, stonily regarding her menu. "You mean she . . . 10 bucks?"

"You're in the way," snapped Ambrose, balancing his tray.

"GOSH!" Jud grew four inches and picked up 40 horsepower. "Ten. . . Gee!" She'd made the first move after all, though still too obstinate to want him to know. He could tell her he was was sorry now, for certainly the last thing you could rightly call Jud Phelps was stubborn.

"You're blockin' traffic," Ambrose snapped again.

Jud unblocked it, grinning from one ear to the other. "Have to make a phone call right away. Mr. Maydin—Havana—" He skidded to a stop, wheeled and came back. "You keep on saving that place, Ambrose. You ever been kissed, Ambrose? Here's 10 to match the 10 she gave you."

"Stick it on a tray," said Ambrose, and watched Jud gallop for the phone booths.

He set the tray down on a service table and pocketed the bill. He scowled. Ten clams. Very nice. But it would have been nicer if there had been another 10 to match it with. ‡

The Glutton in Man

By Georg Mann

THE human stomach is a pink lined, skew-shaped bag of muscle that has the temperament of prima donna and the ability to soak up physical punishment of a water-polo player.

Take the matter of food alone. Doctors tell us the average stomach is small, has a capacity—of about a quart. But the record books are filled with the feats of hearty eaters. Food-eating contests are more common than you imagine. Recently there was a rush of hamburger-eating. It all started at the University of Southern California, where a local restaurant owner had a standing offer of free-hamburgers to anyone who would eat a dozen. Nobody could, until Charles Ponser came along and dashed thirteen. A co-ed at Michigan collapsed after twelve-and-a-half.

But Ponser is not the all-events hamburger champion by any means. That title apparently

belongs to Dan Rodricks of Waukegan, Illinois. A few years ago, at 15, Dan polished off 25 hamburgers in 58 seconds. Each hamburger came completely equipped with pickle and onion, as well as bun.

Oyster Record

Sea food is a delicacy that brings out the glutton in man. The University of Michigan—which apparently spent a hearty winter eating has a freshman, Donald Brown, who ate 48 raw oysters in half-an-hour. He was promptly challenged by a sophomore, Charles Porter, who advanced the cause of higher education by downing 76 in 10 minutes size unspecifically. Both Brown and Porter incidentally, topped off their gargantuan oyster cocktails with a mansized dinner. The standing record seems to be held by W. Nicholas of St. Augustine, Florida. He claims a consumption of 317 backed oysters in a leisurely two-and-half-hours.

Clam-eating is well on the way to becoming an organized minor-sport complete with regional and national tournaments. A year ago, the Pacific Free Style Amateur Clam-Eating Contest ended when Richard Watson, a taxi driver, gulped down 120 clams in 10 minutes. W. Nicholas forsook his backed oysters long enough to become runner-up. About 10 days later in the National Clam Bowl, Watson, relied on a steady wrist action and a regular consumption of 13 clams a minute to beat out Joe Silva of Martha's Vineyard, 132 to 127. All clam records went by the boards when a 26-year-old carpenter, Joe Gagnon swallowed 167 littlenecks in eight minutes flat.

A Samson Breakfast

The stomach is equally a Samson on a more varied diet. Shortly before last Thanksgiving, just to give his appetite a trial spin, a 130-pound Cincinnati youth Frank Neumeister, polished off a breakfast which included a pound of ham, six doughnuts, a round dozen eggs, eight slices of bread, a glass of milk and two cups of coffee. He still didn't equal the record set by marine private Early Wolfe in 1945. Eighteen at the time, Wolfe put away 12 complete fish dinners. As an afterthought, he stacked four quarts of milk, six sandwiches, five tomato salads and four glasses of orange juice in on top of the fish.

If history can be believed the stomach has always been able to absorb large quantities of food. Max Baer is said to have made five pounds of steak vanish in less than five minutes, a reasonably quick record but one that doesn't compare with one heavy-weight eating champion of antiquity. There's a legend that the Roman Emperor Maximus eked out his existence on 40 pounds of meat and six gallons of wine a day. The mysterious East has managed to produce its own share of serious eaters. Take the Arabs whose gastronomic-feats made the bespectacled eyes of a German Ph. D. named Boehmen pop from their sockets. One burnoosed Boehmen Jr., started to eat by disposing of an entire sheep. He moved on to surround and annihilate a sucking pig. And for dessert, he swallowed 60 pounds of prunes—stones and all. Another Arab methodically consumed half a calf—the calf weighed well over 200 pounds. Two Arabian chieftains, dining together, each disposed of an entire sheep, 10 fowls and 10 pounds of sticky sweetmeats.

So much for sheer quantity of edible food. But the human stomach is also able to scoff at substances that would eat out the insides of a chromium plated cocktail shaker. A specialist in industrial medicine, Dr. Carey P. McCord, found out how tough the human stomach can be when he was testifying in a poisoning case. As an expert in his field, he stated flatly that two ounces

of formalin, a solution of formaldehyde in water, would kill anybody. Then the defence attorney promptly introduced a witness who calmly drank half a pint of formalin and beamed amiably at the court-room.

Human Wonder

After the trial which McCord's side lost—he investigated further, found out the witness was one of those queer creatures who are a little sub-normal mentally, but with a stomach lining that placed him in the genius class. He made his living by going from bar to bar downing poisons or broken glass for a quarter. In demonstrations he would swallow six used safety razor blades, a package of needles, and the mashed up glasses from a broken electric light bulb without the slightest ill-effect. McCord was suspicious about his swallowing sharp metal objects and had him X-rayed. Sure enough, the metal was found reposing in his stomach.

There are a startling number of people in the world who find metal objects appetising. Take the case of the young carpenter in Cape Town, South Africa, who

developed the habit of soothing his nerves by swallowing a handful of nails. Eventually indigestion sent him to a doctor. He was examined by him, ordered X-rays and gasped at the results. In the operation which followed, the surgeons hoisted some 2,244 three-quarter and one inch nails out of the carpenter's stomach. The patient's recovery was uneventful.

A Canadian woman also set some short of a record in accumulating a miscellaneous metallurgical gastric inventory. Whether too many objects were missing or whether she had begun to clink as she walked is not known. But they finally X-rayed her, discovered a large dark mass in her stomach. Surgeons who operated were confronted with a collection of scrap metal that included more than 2,500 separate items. There were almost 1,000 pins, hundreds of pieces of wire, almost 200 pieces of glass, fragments of keys, steel pen points corset ribs, nails and screws made up the rest of the collection. The sheet weight record seems to be held by a Kansas prisoner, who carried three and half pounds of metal around until surgeons relieved him of it. ‡

"We must, if we are to prepare ourselves for the new world which is on the horizon, rid ourselves of racial pride and religious intolerance and of that deep-seated lust for power which Socrates says is the wicked harlot who makes city after city fall in love with her to betray them one after another to their ruin."

—DR. S. RADHAKRISHNAN.

SKIT

Money Over-ruled His Conscience

RAMU was a IV Form student. He observed taciturnity and seldom talked with his classmates freely. The reserve was mainly due to his father being a teacher in the same school, who taught mathematics for all the high school classes.

On a Friday afternoon when he was returning home after doing his Geography examination, he heard his name being called aloud. It was Gopalakrishnan of the V Form who wanted him. He knew Gopalakrishnan, but he had never talked with him.

Though pleasantness was manifest in Gopal's face, Ramu did not fail to gather from Gopal's restless and anxious eyes that the boy was in mental unrest. In assumed

politeness Gopal said he had a secret and asked Ramu if he could trust him. But without waiting for an answer he confessed that he was very poor in mathematics. Mathematics never entered his brain. In the examination held on Monday he had done so badly that he expected not more than ten per cent. He was a poor boy and his wish was to go to the S.S.L.C. class for which mathematics was an impediment. It was not necessary that he should pass S.S.L.C. His having studied in the VI Form itself would qualify him for the job his father had in mind.

By

J. E. DAVID

fession.

"No" replied Ramu.

"Then, would you do me a favour?"

"What's that?"

"That's the secret". Gopalkrishnan came close to Ramu and said in a whisper, "I have done the mathematics paper separately. Look here.....". He produced from his bag two sheets of papers and showed to Ramu. "All I want you to do is to foist this into the bundle of papers which your father has, taking away the original one. Will you, Ramu, help a poor friend of yours to fulfil his ambition in life and also to be of help to his parents?"

"I am sorry, I won't do such an ignominious act. My father reposes great confidence in me and I will not betray his trust".

GOPAL begged him again, "Please, Ramu, look here", he put his hand in his pocket and brought it out with a ten rupee note. "I reward you with this for your help."

The boy's eyes fell on the currency note. He thought for a while, and shaking his head he started to go.

Again Gopal stopped him and taking another ten rupee note said, "Twenty rupees, Ramu, should be a decent return for your help. What do you say?"

The appearance of twenty rupees sent him in contemplation. Twenty rupees! What a

sum! He had never possessed that much in all his life! After all, it was going to be a help and could not be termed a betrayal of his father's trust in him. He would only be helping a poor, miserable fellow.

When again Gopal implored him, Ramu nodded his head, though with hesitation.

* * *

GOPAL's face brightened up. Resplendently smiling, he handed over the fresh answer-paper to Ramu. "I have done it so carefully that a liberal correction of this would not give me more than 40 per cent. You need not, therefore, fear if your father may doubt my suddenly acquired intelligence."

After receiving the twenty rupees Ramu walked hurriedly. He asked Gopal not to come to his house under any circumstance since that might arouse suspicion.

Two days later, that was, on Sunday Ramu was walking on tiptoe in the room where his father kept the answer-papers for correction. It was afternoon and his father and mother were relaxing their limbs in a peaceful siesta.

When he unbundled the mathematics answer papers of V Form, his body trembled and his hands shivered immensely as if in senility. He thought for a while if he should do such a

treacherous job for the sake of twenty rupees. No! It was not the twenty rupees that had prompted him to accept doing it—it was the boy's miserable condition. If he did not do this, the boy would fail. Gopal would be detained in V Form and one more year would be added to his dependence on his aged parents instead of his helping them in time.

Thus encouraged by his own convenient logic, Ramu decided to do his job. Carefully looking this side and that he searched for Gopal's answer paper, took it in his hand and thrust the fresh answer-paper in the place of the original one. A shudder shook him bodily at this moment when he visualized his father standing at his back with an angry stare. What would he do? Ramu was about to cry in despair. But when he turned back, to his great relief and shame, he found there was nobody behind him.

THE next day when Ramu saw his father unbundling the answer-papers of V Form his heart beat awfully fast. Fear brought perspiration to his face. If his mother should have noticed him she would have thought that her son must have seen a ghost.

To add to his fear, his father, Velayudham, called him angrily,

"Ramu!"

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The boy was about to fall when he rose up from the chair. The shivering of his fingers was so great that his father who did not even turn towards him, was aware of the boy's anguish. Without looking at Ramu he asked, "What an impertinent fellow you are. Aren't you ashamed to do a thing like that?"

RAMU's whole body trembled. His fear knew no bounds at the thought that his father had somehow come to know of what he had done the previous day. He did not fear of any blow from his father—he would only welcome it. But he was ashamed that a father like Velayudham, kind, noble and indulgent, should be treacherously deceived by his own son, the son who was considered a gem in the house. What would his mother think of him, if after her prayers to the Almighty and advices to himself, her son should turn to deceive his own father. 'God, what a treachery have I committed!'

All these thoughts flashed in his mind in a moment's time and the only alternative now, he thought, was to simply fall on his knees in front of his father and crave his forgiveness.

He was about to kneel down when his father said in a loud voice, "Hereafter, if your teacher scolds you, remember it is your duty to come and tell me, but not to retort or banter in the manner you did this morning".

Ramu felt ashamed of his cowardice when he heard his father say this. After all his father told him about an incident that had occurred that morning. He had retorted emotionally when his teacher had used 'obscene' words to scold him, and that was all.

Turning towards Ramu who stood speechless with a mixture of feelings, his father said, "All right; go and behave". He then noticed his son shivering as if he had high fever. The poor father secretly repented for frightening his son in such a stern and harsh tone to which he was not at all accustomed.

* * *

RAMU did not go near the bundles of answer-papers afterwards. The feeling of shame which he fought down before, slowly rose up once again. He began meditating. What a shameful thing he had done! The papers were corrected and Gopal would have secured 38 per cent. The act would, of course cause a poor and miserable boy, who could not spend another year in the same form, to be promoted. By his help he would shorten one year of Gopal's school career which would mean that Gopal could go out of school (irrespective of whether he passed the S.S.L.C. Public Examination or not) to work somewhere, thereby earning his bread as well as helping his aged parents.

"Did I do it for this reason?" was the dominant question that tortured his mind. No, No! The goad that had driven him to deceive his father was the treacherous twenty rupees. He would not have accepted the job had Gopal not come forward to offer him the money. Money! Yes. Money was the incentive. It over-ruled his conscience. It polluted his innocent heart. What a nasty act did money prompt him to do! He could no longer live in his father's house with so big an indelible blot in his heart. Further, every time his father talked to him he was reminded of Gopal's answer-paper.

'I will not spend a pie out of this twenty rupees', he said half aloud. Being thus assailed by conscience, he decided to confess to his father that he had foisted a fresh answer-paper into the bundle removing the original one. He should get punishment for his misdeed. The original one had been cast into fire and his father should do what he thought best.

"Ramu!" It was his father's call.

"Yes father" answered Ramu.

"Sit down and write down the marks of the pupils against their names, as I call one by one".

All his courage to confess to his father evaporated in the air.

Petrified, he sat down. The first bundle his father gleaned was of V Form. The fourth item he called was Gopalakishnan.

"Gopalakishnan—fifteen".

Unconsciously and involuntarily Ramu's fingers drew the figure fifty. Noticing the mistake, Velayudham said,

"Fool! correct it. It is fifteen, not fifty. No one can dream of Gopal securing fifty marks in mathematics..... If I should have corrected his paper the fool wouldn't have got more than 3 marks."

After finishing the six mathematics papers, Velayudham compared the list once again and bundled all the six together and said, "Put it in fire".

* * *

THIS was how Velayudham disposed of the answer-papers. Because he was an experienced old man, serving the same school for over twentyfive years, the headmaster who held the position for the last fifteen years, had complete confidence in Velayudham. He never questioned him at all. He would not bother to receive the answer-papers after correction in presence of going through them. He would want a complete list of marks, and that was all. Teachers, of course, earned some little money by selling the answer-papers to grocers. But Velayudham was a man with

certain definite principles in life and had never craved for such money.

'What a turn the events have taken', Ramu murmured to himself after burning the answer-papers to ashes. A great relief brought a slight smile to his lips. The wrong he had committed could now be undone the moment he returned the money to Gopal. He would tell Gopal a few lies which might matter nothing under the present circumstances.

Ramu opened his trunk, stealthily thrust the two ten rupee notes into his pocket and rode off to Gopal's house in his father's bicycle.

THE first thing he did when Gopal came out of his house to meet him was to offer back the twenty rupees. Without receiving the money the perturbed boy asked,

"Why Ramu? Could you not manage it?"

"The question is not whether I could or could not manage. I changed my mind the moment you left me that day, but I did not have time to come and return the money to you. I will not deceive my own father in his own house, hiding myself under the innocent confidence he has in me. Here, take the money". Seeing the boy's obstinacy and decision, Gopal received the money back, when Ramu con-

tinued, "Thinking it would be dangerous to go on keeping the answer-paper you gave me, I cast it into fire".

* * *

THAT was the first pleasant evening for Ramu for the last one week. His mother noticed a smile and pleasantness in his face after the cryptic gloom that had covered it for a week. His father, for the first time in his life, observed that his son was also loquacious. Ramu was continuously talking with his father for more than an hour.

During the course of the talk, Ramu casually asked his father, "How do you give marks without correcting the papers, father?"

"Do you mean that fellow's, that is, Gopalakishnan's?"

"Yes, father"

"I was the supervisor for his hall that day when he wrote the Mathematics examination. Immediately he had gone out of the hall after placing the answer-paper on the table, I opened it to see if he had done anything. I just saw what I had expected. The boy had attempted only four sums out of thirteen and all the four attempts were awful. Just out pity I have given him fifteen or sixteen marks".

††

DEVIL WORSHIPPERS —THEIR PHILOSOPHY

By ZAMIR HASAN KAZMI

ONE of the most interesting people in the Middle-East are the 'Devil worshippers' inhabiting the North Western part of Iraq. They are commonly known as Yazidees and have strange beliefs and customs.

Yazidees, who number about 30,000 are mainly engaged in agriculture and sheep-rearing and are a very honest and peace-loving community. They are reported to be of mixed Arab and Kurdish blood and speak a dialect akin to the Kurdish language. Education is forbidden in the religion of these people.

The male members of this community wear age-old Arab dress, while the dress of the women-folk is unique and quite different from that worn by Arab women.

YAZIDEES follow a religion, which might be said to be a strange amalgam of Zoroastrian, Hindu, Jewish, Christian and Muslim faiths. They believe in the existence of two super-natural powers, Malik Isa or God and the Great Satan, each of whom controls the universe alternately for ten thousand years. Since, according to them, Satan is ruling the universe these days, they worship him. Satan is still to rule for six thousand years after which Malik Isa will appear in his last turn and will throw Satan into the Hell. But his wailings will extinguish the raging fire of the Hell and he will then be forgiven his misdeeds and will be made the chief of the Saints.

On festive occasions they slaughter only one sheep in the name of Malik Isa, who is merciful and benevolent, while seven

sheep are slaughtered in the name of Satan, who being cruel and aggressive, is kept pleased by more offerings.

Yazidees consider the sun and the moon to be holy and kiss the spot which receives the sun-rays first. They regard Hazrat Mohammad as an incarnation

CULTURE

"The underlying essential of culture is self-control. There in beauty, religion and civilization meet. One may even dare to add politics to this list."

—RAJAJI

of God and Mecca as a holy place.

Statues of Satan are placed in their temples, whose inner walls are decorated with the paintings of black serpents. Lamps are kept lighted day and night before the statues of Satan.

According to their belief, mankind has been born of Adam and Eve but (contrary to the common belief of their taking birth only once) they have been born 71 times and each time they have lived for 10,000 years. They believe in a legend that once there was a quarrel between Adam and Eve as to who possessed the creative power. In order to settle the quarrel, they spat in two vessels separately and kept them for nine months. When the vessels were opened, Eve's vessel was found to contain serpents, centipeds and scorpions etc., while that of Adam contained a beautiful girl and a handsome boy and Yazidees are their descendants.

Socially an autonomous and well organized community, Yazidees live in villages and follow the usual tribal system. They are divided into a number of tribes. Each tribe is governed by a Shaikh (the word 'Shaikh' means leader). At the head of the tribal Shaikhs is the Shaikh-al-Shunkh or the chief Shaikh.

The Offices of the Shaikhs are hereditary and are held only by the descendants of Shaikh Ad, the founder of Yazidee Religion. ‡‡

FOLK TALES :

IN every country in the world, there are folk-tales noted for their breadth of vision, comprehension of human nature in all its multitudinous ramifications, depth of thought and abiding love of God and all His manifestations from the most magnificent to the most humble. Some of these tales date back to pre-historic times. It is a matter for the highest admiration of us all how, in those good old days, when people had not the benefit of modern universities, literacy

barber refuses to pay the wood-cutter for the wooden frame which carried the firewood also is given to him. The poor wood-cutter runs to the Caliph for protection and justice. The Caliph with an uncanny wit whispers something into the ears of the wood-cutter, who merrily leaves the court.

After some days, the same wood-cutter goes to the barber's shop and arranges for a "shave for himself and a friend of his."

A Daniel Come To Judgment

and culture, and when all the knowledge that the learned men could boast of, was from word of mouth handed down from father to son, or from guru to cheela, people of ordinary intelligence also possessed judicial minds and delivered extraordinarily clever and just judgments.

Take for instance the well-known story of the *Barber of Bagdad*. A woodcutter sells some fire wood to a barber. The

After the wood cutter is shaven, the barber asks him to bring his friend.

"This is my good friend. Please give him a clean, smooth shave" says the wood-cutter pointing to his ass. The barber gets violently angry and drives away the woodcutter and his ass.

Again the woodcutter runs to the Caliph and narrates his story. The barber is immediately summoned to the Caliph's court.

"Is it a fact, barber, that you entered into a bargain with the woodcutter to shave him and his friend?" asks the Caliph.

"Yes, my lord. But whoever would have thought that the ass is his friend? Is there anything to show in all literature that the ass is given the luxury of a shave? Does the ass usurp the status which rightly belongs to man?" asks the barber.

"I can understand your righteous anger, my dear young man but answer my question: whoever would have thought that firewood meant and included the frame also? It is neither law nor equity" retorts the Caliph.

The tale ends by saying that the barber was obliged to shave the ass in the presence of the Caliph and all his courtiers and the public jeered at him and that his pride was justly humbled.

IN Shakespeare's "Merchant of Venice" advocate Portia asks Shylock, the Jew, to show some mercy. The Jew is abdicatory and refuses to yield. Thereupon, Portia asks him to take a pound of flesh without shedding a drop

of blood. This is said to be an adaptation of a folklore tale prevalent in Italy and Spain.

FOLKLORE tales are of many kinds. In some of them we find "absolute justice", not tempered by mercy, meted out, irrespective of the environmental evidence, denying all compassion and allowing no margin for accidental happenings beyond the control of man.

"Manu Neethi Chola" is called upon to dispose of a murder case, in which his own crown prince is involved as the chief accused. The prince is going to a temple in his chariot. A calf which accidentally crosses the road is run over by the Prince's car and dies. The bereaved cow runs to the king's court and shakes the alarm bell. The king comes there and understands the whole situation.

"The ends of justice will be met only if my son is run over by the same chariot and dies in the same way even as the calf died. There is no escape from it. So, ask my son to lie on the road and you drive the chariot over him." Thus does the King order his minister. The minister refuses to carry out such a ghastly order and questions the propriety of the sentence. Whereupon the Chola King carries out the order himself, kills his son and suffers bereavement even as the cow

suffered at the loss of its calf. The king is hailed as a daniel come to judgment and gets divine blessing for his uprightness.

A SIMILAR story is found among the folktales of the Moghul Court in Delhi-Durbar. Emperor Jahanghir, though notoriously fond of the pleasures of the flesh, is yet noted for his even-handed justice. His wife, the Empress Nur Jahan is practising archery in her garden. An arrow accidentally strikes a washerman who is washing the clothes in the river nearby and is killed. His wife runs to the emperor and complains. Jahanghir conducts a public enquiry, compels Nur Jahan to give evidence in open court and satisfies himself that the washerman's death was really due to Nurjahan's arrow piercing his breast.

"My judgment is this: the washerman's wife has become a widow and is mourning the death of her husband. My wife Nurjahan who brought about this tragedy must share her fate," saying thus, the king asks the wife of the washerman to shoot him to death.

The tale reaches its climax when the king is forbidden to take such a drastic step by the washerman's widow and by all his subjects and the purity of his judicial administration is vindicated.

THERE is a third type of story bristling with wit and humour. In ancient Chola Kingdom, King Karikalan administered justice with such meticulous care and strictly on a moral and legal basis that he became famous as an upright judge not only in Tamil Nad but also in the Pandya and Kerala kingdoms. There is a folk-tale which speaks of his intuitive ability and genius in discerning deeply hidden things.

A quarrel arose between two eminent poets in an adjacent kingdom and there was no end to their arguments for and against their respective stands. "If the lions quarrel, how can other animals adjudicate their case?" asked the learned judges of their country. The king and the court felt powerless. So, the poets came to the Chola Kingdom and decided to approach King Karikalan to settle their quarrel.

The King, not being an ostentatious man, was sitting in an ordinary cot as though he was a common man. When the poets saw him, they were puzzled as to what to do.

"He is so young and inexperienced. He may not be in a position to assess the intricacies with which the problem bristles. To appreciate the relevant issues and analyse the facts of the case correctly and separate the grain from the chaff, we require an old man with plenty of experience, who must also be a master of all

the Dharma Shastras"—so thought the poets but they were afraid to give expression to their inner feeling.

* * *

KARIKALAN instinctively perceived their dilemma, rose to the occasion and with a ready smile put the poets at their ease.

"I know that you consider me incompetent to try your case and to give a just and impartial judgment. I shall send you an old man who will be satisfactory to you and give you an unerring judgment" said the king and walked out.

His courtiers were wondering as to what the king proposed to do and who "the other old man" was, who was going to be appointed by the king to settle the quarrel of the poets.

Presently an old man with silvery hairs came to the court and took his seat as a judge. The poets were very glad that they after all got a suitable

person to hear their case. They presented their case before the old man and argued it fully and well.

The old man pondered for a while and gave his judgment in a most dispassionate manner. The poets admired the judge's ability and his legal acumen and thanked him for settling their quarrel.

"Are you satisfied, my friends?" asked the old man.

The poets nodded assent. "Experience and wisdom go together and so we were not disappointed" said they.

Immediately to the surprise of all present in the court, the old man stood up and cast aside his greyhairs and white moustaches. Lo! he was King Karikalan. The poets were agreeably surprised and said, "Though young in years, the king possesses all the accumulated wisdom of the age. Probably it is a God-given gift. He is a daniel come to judgment. May he live for a hundred years and be the guardian angel of his kingdom."

—"NOMAD"

ODE TO LIBERTY

*"The sun pursuing its heavenly flight
Poured torrents of its pure light
On its benighted blasphemers."*

—FRENCH POEM.

THROUGH THE CONGRESS WINDOW :

REWARD OR RIGHT?

SURENDRA NATH BANERJEA

Vs.

DR. ANNIE BESANT

[This is a monthly feature, which will give the spotlights of the glorious struggle of India for liberty.]

HISTORIANS describe the year 1914 as constituting one of the most beautiful land-marks in the chequered political history of the Indian National Congress. Several sensational and epoch-making developments began to take shape in that year. Of the scores of historic movements which made for the rapid growth of nationalism and regeneration of India, two events need special mention.

One was the outbreak of the Great European War which speedily developed into a great World War No. 1 in which the Indian troops displayed first class martial valour and kept the onrushing, victorious, and mighty German army at bay in the winter of that year. Their marvellous

feats of heroism and physical and mental endurance commanded the admiration of the world. The Indian army was till then derided by Britain herself as of no consequence and the Indians were declared to be a *non-martial* race and hence were denied

BY

An Old Guard

Commissioned ranks in the army and kept out of power and responsibility.

If this were the truth, how was it that while the 'heaven-born' troops of Britain and France were fleeing for their lives before the irresistible onslaughts of the

German warlords, the Indian troops, which were thrown into the gap probably to serve as a buffer between the advancing and retreating forces, were able to rout the proud invaders and halt their glorious advance? The German Kaiser himself was not a little surprised, shocked and humbled when he heard that before the determined Indian cavalry the flower of the Prussian army had to beat a hasty retreat from the strategic positions in France and Flanders.

While the bravery of the Indian troops in France raised the "reputation of the Indians miles higher in the estimation of the western nations than ever before," it at the same time increased India's hopes of getting self-government as a result of the Allied victory in the war, which was ostensibly fought for democracy and freedom of the world—the war to end all future wars!

The second major event was that the fire-eating and uncompromising nationalist leaders of Bengal, who conducted a raging and tearing propaganda throughout India against Britain for effecting the partition of Bengal in 1905 became grateful to Britain on its annulment in 1911. In fact, Sri Surendra Nath Banerjea (afterwards knighted by the British government), the thundering orator of Bengal and all-India and a leader of consummate ability and talents, openly expressed that he expected self-government for India as a

"reward" for the great services and sacrifices made by India to help Britain in the dark days of the terrible war. When Surendra Nath Banerjea was in London in 1905 to attend the Imperial Press Conference that veteran British editor of the "Review of Reviews" Mr. W. W. Stead dignified the glorious son of India as "one who will never surrender". But after the two Bengals were again reunited the "Surrender Not" leader became a Knight Commander of the British Empire and ended his life as a minister of Bengal in the period of Dyarchy imposed by Britain on India but which the Congress and the country boycotted.

* * *

THIS "reward" conception was hotly contested by Dr. Annie Besant who joined the Congress in 1914. Mrs. Besant was a co-adjutor of Charles Bradlaugh who was a world celebrity. He refused to take his oath in the British parliament, saying that he was no believer in the Christian God and on that score he was insulted, humiliated and beaten in the "mother of Parliaments", his dress was torn to pieces and he was spat upon by the most enlightened M.Ps. of the British democracy. Bradlaugh's seat in Parliament was declared vacant and a re-election ordered.

Bradlaugh stood for re-election and Besant was his able lieutenant in the election propaganda. The by-election was won by

Bradlaugh. Dr. Besant became a theosophist, then the President of the theosophical society and finally in 1914, she shot up as the leader of the Home Rule Movement along with Balgangadhar Tilak, the leader of the extremist party and a rival to the Congress. She easily demolished Surendra Nath Banerjea's slogan of reward due to India's loyalty in war and asserted India's inalienable right to self-rule. Let us quote her own words uttered in one of her most torrential of addresses to the nation:

"There had been talk of a reward due to India's loyalty, but India does not chaffer with the blood of her sons and proud tears of her daughters in exchange for so much liberty, so much right, as a nation, to justice among the people of the Empire. India asked for liberty before the war, India asks for it during the war, India will ask for it after the war, but not as a *reward* but as a *right* does she ask for it. On that there must be no mistake."

Mrs. Besant was one of the great orators of the world and she jumped to politics at a time when she reached the nadir of her reputation as a result of the Gandhi-Besant episode in Benares and J. Krishnamurthi Case in the Madras High Court. Dr. Nair of the Justice Party in Madras pounded her mercilessly and ridiculed her

theosophy and the "immoral" methods adopted by Mr. Leadbeter, Besant's right hand man.

In the Banares Hindu University function, when Mahatma Gandhi was called upon to speak, he spoke bitterly against the Maharajas, Nawabs and Rajas, their pomp and splendour, their vain glorious jewellery and outlandish behaviour when crores of their countrymen were steeped in dire poverty, criticised them without fear or favour and asked them to become public-spirited and help the poor. Otherwise he warned there would be revolution in the land.

Up rose Besant, protested against the Mahatma's speech and requested the Viceroy, who presided over the meeting, not to allow him to continue his 'revolutionary' speech. Meanwhile there was confusion in the hall and Maharajas and Nawabs walked out one by one and the whole show ended in utter fiasco. Barring the theosophists and personal admirers of Besant, a vast body of people throughout India supported Gandhiji and attacked Besant for espousing the cause of the Maharajas and Nawabs who were from A to Z thoroughly anti-Indian. Apart from the merits of the controversy, whatever "sins" Besant might have committed before, she made ample amends for them by working for the freedom of the country.

She used all her superb talents and inimitable oratory in the

service of the poor and for getting Home-Rule. Her bold advocacy of the Indian cause, the new ideas and methods of her political propaganda gave a new twist to the Congress and created a flood of enthusiasm—particularly among the students and young men and women—which practically washed away many of the strongholds held by the moderate leaders. No wonder that Surendra Nath Banerjee—an outstanding orator in English, and the gallant Editor of the “Bengali”—an English Daily newspaper—could not hold his own against the rising tide of Besantine politics.

The year that followed greatly favoured Besant. The two eminent leaders of the moderate party Sri G.K. Gokhale and Sir Pherozeshah Mehta passed away in 1915—one after the other. There was a gap in leadership. Surendra Nath, notwithstanding his gifts of oratory and eminence was rejected as a person out of tune with the new thought that was coming to the fore in the Congress. Lokamanya Tilak, considered by the British Government as its arch enemy, was released in the year 1914 from the Mandalay jail where he completed his full term of imprisonment. He was outside the Congress and his nationalist friends were not yet in a position to capture the Congress. Mahatma Gandhi was of course the coming leader of the Congress and the country, but he did not want to actively participate in the politics of the country just then. Gokhale was his

“guru”. “I would rather be wrong with Gokhale rather than be right by myself”—such was Gandhiji’s admiration for his guru. Besant saw in this state of things her opportunity to seize the leadership of the Congress.

Dr. Besant’s monumental work, “*How India Wrought for freedom*” and her little book entitled “*India—a Nation*.” had a wonderful reception in the country and even her worst critics forgetting her past activities became her staunch adherents. She started the All India Home-Rule League six months after Tilak started one in Bombay and ceaselessly worked to bring about a rapprochement between the nationalists who were dubbed as “extremists” and the moderates who were friendly to the Br. government and in possession of the Congress. But her efforts to unite both wings of the Congress failed in 1914 and in 1915 as Gokhale and Sir Pherozeshah Mehta stood against Tilak being brought into the Congress. “Mr. Tilak’s re-entry into the Congress camp” said Gokhale, “would only be a signal for a renewal of the old struggle.”

But Besant was not disappointed. She used her mighty tongue, and mightier papers “*New India*” and the “*Commonweal*” in furthering Congress unity and strengthened the position of the nationalists. The Madras government took a sum of 22,000 rupees as security from these

newspapers and then forfeited it. Tilak and Besant worked together and their Home Rule movement went on expanding, and encouraging the people to speak freely and fearlessly. The Government in London and Delhi was anxiously trying to boost the moderates as against the nationalists but their game of “divide and rule” failed miserably. In 1916, the Congress became united again and Tilak and his party were re-admitted into the Congress owing largely to Besant’s influence. Tilak was very happy and said, “we are united in the United Provinces and found luck in Lucknow.”

Another event of national importance was the Congress—Muslim League unity brought about in the same year by the leaders of the two organizations. Great credit was given to Mr. M. A. Jinnah and he was called the “Ambassador of Hindu-Muslim unity”. But all the world knows how he in his latter days became an arch enemy of the Congress and Gandhiji, and worked to establish Pakistan.

Though Gokhale stood against Tilak and his re-entry into the Congress, Tilak had the greatest

respect and admiration for Gokhale. We shall quote an extract from the funeral oration delivered by Tilak on Gokhale’s death.

“This is not the time for cheers. This is a time for shedding tears. This diamond of India, this jewel of Maharashtra, this prince of workers is laid to eternal rest on the funeral ground. Look at him and try to emulate him. Every one of you should place his life as a model to be imitated and should try to fill up the gap caused by Gokhale’s death, and if you will do your level best to emulate him in this way, he will feel glad even in the next world.”

Under the joint inspiration of Tilak and Besant, the Home Rule movement was forging ahead and infused courage and faith in the minds of the people. At the same time, the government wanted to put Besant under restraint. The Home-Rule agitation was at its height in 1917 when Besant with her two colleagues Dr. Arundale and Mr. B.P. Wadia was interned and kept in the Coimbatore Central jail. We shall deal with it and the subsequent developments in the next issue. ‡

AUTHORITY AND REASON

“I would reject all authority if it is in conflict with reason or the dictates of the heart. Authority sustains and ennobles the weak when it is the handiwork of reason, but it degrades them when it supplants reason, sanctioned by the still small voice within.”

—MAHATMA GANDHI

CRIME STORY :

THE lights in the glittering "Royal Restaurant" were blazing and business was brisk. It was full of young couples enjoying the 'Dinner and Dance' programme. Inside, the proprietor, Ramesh Krishna was busy having a conference in his room. His face was serious, and his mind thinking deeply. The long years in which he had been a mere pickpocket had hardened him and he had reached the top by the use of his guts and wits. He was a good looking man

to save it at all costs." He ended expectantly looking at his gang.

"Jeevan, how much do you have?" he asked his henchman who was one of the best safe-crackers in the whole of Bombay.

"A little over two thousand," he replied.

"And you Ramu?" he queried turning to another of his lieutenants, who was an expert forger.

Guts, Wits And

aged about thirtyfive and had a sunny, winning smile. He had been always just outside the clutches of law, conducting many shady deals. The Bombay C.I.D. was aware of his activities and kept him under surveillance. But he was too clever to leave any traces behind.

"Look here, you chaps, this business is going to burst up if I don't do something immediately. I urgently need money to cancel a 'pro-note' I have given for Rs. 12,000. Our credit is very important to us and I wish

"Nothing. I am broke," he said cursing under his breath.

"It was as I expected. But we have no need to fear. I have a little scheme which will enable us to cancel our debt. Don't you worry, boys," he ended reassuming his old self once again. He went out whistling, after having given the required instructions to his 'boys'.

* * *

PRAKASH was feeling very jubilant and happy. He had concluded an important success-

By SOMNATH SAPRU

ful deal in the morning and had reaped unexpected profits. A cheque for Rs. 15,000 had come and he would send the clerk to bank tomorrow to deposit the amount. He gave an increment to his employees and dismissed them for the day. Only his stenographer Miss Mohini remained. She was a beautiful young lady very much in confidence of Mr. Prakash.

Four o'clock struck and Mr. Prakash got ready to leave.

needed the report that the goods were in order.

PRAKASH called Miss Mohini and she got the necessary files. Soon the business was over and both Prakash and Mr. Sinha left the office. Somehow, Prakash seemed to take a liking to the other's charming manners, frank and open way of speaking and that engaging ever-ready smile of his. He invited the other to dinner at the Ambassador and the invitation was

Phoney Cheque

Suddenly the door bell rang and Miss Mohini ushered in a well-dressed gentleman. He handed his card.

"Very glad to meet you Mr. Sinha. You are the representative of the 'Poona Trading Company', aren't you?"

"Yes" replied the other shaking hands with Prakash.

He had come about finalizing the accounts, receipts etc. about the import deal. He was their Insurance Claims man and thus

accepted.

The evening was warm and Prakash felt extremely happy and gay. Mr. Sinha too was enjoying it and forced many bottles of whisky upon Prakash. Prakash felt dizzy and gulped his last drink in a state of semi-consciousness. He soon fell sideways on the sofa and knew no more. He was carried into the car and sent home *minus his safe keys*.

Mr. Sinha alias Ramesh met Jeevan and Ramu at the dark street corner. Instructions were

given and they parted. Ramesh always remained in the back-ground, while his crooks did the dirty work for him. He always had a 'fall guy' ready.

* * *

IN about three hours' time they were once more assembled in the backroom of the 'Royal Restaurant.'

"Did you replace the forged cheque in the place of the real one?" Ramesh asked Jeevan. "I hope, you did not leave any fingerprints."

"Oh! don't you worry. It was just a simple job."

"Yes he won't know about the cheque until tomorrow afternoon, that is, until his clerk goes to the bank" he ended up satisfied with the success of the plan. He folded the cheque and put it in his pocket.

Next morning, Ramesh got ready to go to the bank. Just as he was about to open the car door, a young lady came up and said:

"You see, sir, Mr. Prakash sent me to hand over the official receipts and take those insurance claims from your office. I was on my way to your office, but now that I have met you it will be easier to go with you." She ended this piece of information with a dazzling smile.

Ramesh thought fast. He would have to get rid of her somehow.

"All right, Miss Mohini. Get in. We shall go to my office and finish this business up."

He engaged the gears and drove on. She threw a sidelong inviting glance at him, and adjusted her saree delicately. He thought well. It was a long time since he was side by side with a pretty girl. But something was vaguely familiar about her. In a flash he remembered that it was the fiancée of one of his old colleagues, who had been killed in a prohibition raid on a hotel in Colaba. He kept this recognition to himself and suddenly asked her.

"Are you engaged to be married?" She shook her head and looked down.

It was mid morning and it grew warm. He took off his coat. He put his one arm round her waist and brought her nearer to himself. They had reached Juhu and it was lonely near the sea. He was emboldened by her inviting smiles and suddenly crushed her into his arms. His hands were all over her and he felt himself carried away by his desire.

THEY got into the car and drove back to Bombay. He remembered the cheque and was relieved to find it there. He

dropped Mohini near his office, pleaded some excuse and drove away smiling to himself. At Lloyds Bank he got out and walked up the steps to the cashier's counter.

* * *

HE presented the cheque and was asked to wait. He sat on a sofa and looked round. He saw two men come towards him, and one of them authoritatively said:

"Please consider yourself under arrest for trying to pass a forged cheque."

"What do you mean by this insulting behaviour? Get that cheque here" he said defiantly. The hand cuffs clicked, but the cheque was shown to him. A chill passed through his spine. *It was the phoney cheque.*

The news of Ramesh's arrest and conviction caused a great deal of alarm among the people. Everyone had thought him to be honest. In these days it was hard to judge a man by mere sight.

"How did that phoney cheque get into my pocket?" Ramesh was wondering while cooling his heels in the Central Jail. One

day he received a letter, it read as follows:

"Dear Ramesh,

You will be surprised to get this letter from me. But you will soon understand why. I was actually responsible for your arrest and present condition. I saw you taking the keys from Mr. Prakash's pocket. I followed you and hid in the office. Your pals exchanged the cheques under my very nose. I took the phoney cheque and met you next morning. All about the receipts and claims was just an eye-wash. When you embraced me and became blind through passion, I removed the real cheque from your coat pocket which was lying on the seat. I replaced the forged one in its place. After you left me, I phoned the police, and the rest you know for yourself.

"Why I did this was to take revenge for my father's death. He was a respectable man until he got mixed up with you. When that raid took place he did not want to be caught, because his prestige would go to pieces. He committed suicide to save himself and me too. No one knows about it for it was given out that he died in the encounter. He was your 'fullguy' and he paid for it through his life. You were his ruin and death. That was why I gave you a little of your own medicine—MOHINI." ‡

STORY :

Fascinating Sujatha

By G. Kameswara Rao

RAVI tore open the wrapper and quickly thumbed through the pages of the weekly magazine, in search of his story in it. There it was ! It was a delight to see his work in print and his name in bold letters in it.

Ravi went through the whole magazine and noted who the other writers were. These names were new, or not seen by him in any of the other journals. He was very jubilant over his success at last. He made up his mind to contribute something to this magazine regularly.

Two weeks later he received another copy with his article in lighter vein. Again Ravi read it from cover to cover and looked up the other authors. He again noticed only new names. Every now and then Ravi used to con-

tribute something or other and about half a dozen of his manuscripts were published.

There was another constant writer to this journal. Her name was fascinating—SUJATHA ! And another coincidence — t h e i r articles appeared side by side in all the three issues ! How finely she could express herself ! She must be a veteran in the field of writing or she wouldn't have been able to handle the matter as she did.

Ravi felt an urge to make her acquaintance. He wrote at once a letter of appreciation to Sujatha, c/o the Editor, "....." Magazine.

" Madam,

Allow me the liberty of addressing this letter to you, though

we are utter strangers. I would just like to express my appreciation of the style and force of your writings, which I like very much.

With best wishes,

yours sincerely,

Ravi."

He eagerly awaited a reply but there was none for a long time. At last he got a letter. It also came through the Editor. He impatiently cut open the envelope and took out a thin blue sheet on which there was the reply in a beautiful hand.

" Sir,

Please accept my heartfelt thanks for your kind letter. I am happy to note that you are also a writer. I trust your pen will continue to provide such occasions of happiness.

With best wishes,

Yours sincerely,

Sujatha."

Ravi's heart leapt high into the sky. His joy knew no bounds at receiving the letter from her. He began woolgathering about her. She must be pretty, if one could judge another's appearance from the hand-writing alone. Ravi wished that she was not married. He longed to get personal contact with her. " Who knows it might not develop into love ! What a happy time

we will have exchanging our views, criticising and appreciating our writings and helping each other in our mission " he thought.

It was decided that it was time they should meet each other. Sujatha suggested it first, and opined that it was but appropriate that they should meet each other and get personal introduction through the Editor of the Magazine. Ravi readily agreed. He would go to the ends of the earth to meet her.

Another letter came and it was this :—

" My dear Ravi,

I have arranged with the Editor for our meeting. He gladly acceded to my request.

Please make it convenient to come to the office of the Magazine on Sunday the 1st April at 8-30 a.m. sharp. After tea we will celebrate the occasion by going to some morning show.

I hope you will like the arrangement.

With best wishes,

Yours affectionately,

Sujatha."

5—Jan. '57

Ravi was excited at the prospect of his meeting Sujatha. He looked up the newspaper to fix up the picture to be seen in company with his "Love" on Sunday. He decided it would be "Gone With The Wind" at Plaza. Of course he had seen it previously but as it takes a full 3½ hours unlike the other short English pictures, he would be able to spend more time with his "fiance" in the theatre. He reserved two first class seats, taking care to select a good place in the back row.

SUNDAY dawned. Ravi was in high spirits. He took a smooth shave, trimmed his moustache, groomed his hair neatly and dressed immaculately in the finest tweed suit he had, and put on the "Bata Ambassador" shoes he specially bought for this occasion the previous day. Just one look in a large mirror satisfied him that he appeared charming. It was 8-15 a.m. and he rushed up in a baby taxi.

As the taxi was nearing the destination, Ravi's heart was pounding against his chest. All his body was taut with the excitement of his expectation to meet his "Dream Girl". He mopped the sweat off his forehead carefully with his hanky and got out of the cab, paying the cabman more than the actual fare.

Ravi sat in the waiting hall and a boy took his card to the Editor. At once he was ushered into the Editor's presence, who

got up, shook hands with Ravi and requested him to be seated.

Ravi looked about the room but there was none else except three gentlemen sitting around the Editor's table.

"Excuse me, has not Miss Sujatha come as yet?" Ravi asked the Editor.

"Of course Sujatha is here, Mr. Ravi. Allow me to introduce you to "SUJATHA." So saying the Editor pointed out to each of the three men sitting there who got up one by one, as each syllable was pronounced, and extended their hands towards Ravi.

Ravi was flabbergasted. He shook hands with them automatically, but his legs refused to support him and he sagged into his chair.

"This is Mr. Subrahmanyan, our Assistant Editor. He is Mr. Jambulingam; that gentleman is Mr. Thangavelu—both Sub Editors on our staff. All the three of them put together have been writing those articles and have given them the authorship made out of the first syllables of their names," explained the Editor.

When Ravi recovered from the shock, his eyes fell on the table calendar which showed 1st April—All Fools Day!

It struck Ravi suddenly that all his fancies were "Gone with the wind!"



IT IS FUN

Nehru : The Chinese don't drink milk but they are stronger and are able to show better resistance. I myself don't drink milk.

Sir C. P. Ramaswami Ayyar : No, the Chinese eat *Soya Beans* and that gives them better strength.

An Imp : I am told, uncle Nehru, that they eat some frogs and reptiles and hence they are stronger than whales.

Villager : Do they drink toddy—pure or illicit? We feel stronger and better able to resist law, order and decency when we help ourselves to a pot of toddy or two drams of arrack.

Film Star : (She) Of course, a young man who has a will of his own.

He : That means you will be an instrument of his will—a slave.

She : No, No, No. What I mean is that he must have a will of his own to exercise it in my favour.

He : Oh, that is good logic.

★ ★

THEY STAND FAST THROUGH THICK AND THIN

Mr. K. A. Neelakanta Sastri says, that the great Krishna Deva Raya gave his justification of the

Film Star : (He) Whom will you marry?

practice in appointing Brahmins to important posts in the Kingdom as follows :

“ Because the Brahmin would stick to his post even in times of danger and would continue in service through thick and thin.”

Perhaps Krishna Deva Raya was thinking of the Brahmin Commander-in-chief *Krupa-charya* in the Mahabharata war and his invincible son *Aswadharma*, who stood by that outrageous king Duryodana even when *Duopada* was outraged in the open court, without a word of protest from them.

But there were other Brahmins—Purnayya for instance, who defied their kings and stood for truth and national honour.

★ ★

BECOME TALLER

“ You can become tall. Ask for our recipe by remitting Rs. 2 to us ” said an advertiser.

A short young man, who was being taunted by his wife every day as being small of stature, thought that was a God-send opportunity and immediately sent Rs. 2 to the advertiser.

He got the following reply :

“ Short man, to become taller, please stand on a stool.”

★ ★

HOME-MADE PIE

Host : We must all be swadeshi in dress and food. There is nothing like good home-made pie.

Guest : I am glad your wife is trained to make such a good pie and my wife is trained to eat.

Host : No, she knows just where to buy a good stuff.

★ ★

HARMONY AT HOME

Acharya Kripalani, M. P. Praja-Socialist leader, said that in spite of different political views held by him and his wife, Mrs. Sucheta Kripalani, M. P. (Congress) they led a “ harmonious ” family life.

“ I neither want to be a hen-pecked husband nor want to thrust my political views on my wife in this modern age. We are both living a harmonious family life ” said he.

Perhaps it is worthy of emulation as being an excellent example of “ harmonious co-existence at home ” for which Paradise, Milton but Socrates prayed, and lost. ‡‡

MEDICAL

MISCONCEPTIONS

EVEN in our modern atomic age, there are many people not only in our country but also in foreign countries, who believe in many fallacies about health and medicine. A few of them are dealt with in this article.

“ One should take laxatives whenever one feels pain in the abdomen ! ” Abdominal pain cannot always be relieved by laxatives. The pain may be due to appendicitis or the perforation of a peptic ulcer. If one takes purgatives, mild or strong, whenever he feels pain in the abdomen, his death may be hastened. So, it is wise to consult a physician if one feels abdominal pain often.

★ ★ ★

“ Antiseptic tooth-paste and gargles kill the germs in the

mouth and throat ! ” Antiseptic do not kill germs, but germicides kill them. If antiseptics are applied in sufficient strength and for a sufficient length of time, they stop the growth of the germs, but they cannot kill them. To be effective, an antiseptic must be in contact with the germs for hours together. Tooth-pastes and antiseptic gargles are washed away by the secretions of the mouth in a few minutes and hence can have little effect.

★ ★ ★

“ Baldness in men is caused by wearing caps, turbans or hats ! ”

Even to this day, not all the causes of baldness are known. We

By A FAMILY DOCTOR

may safely say that the tendency for baldness is hereditary. In almost all countries, most men wear some sort of head-wear and most of them are not bald.

* * *

"OUR grandfather smoked and drank everyday of his life without feeling any bad consequence and lived to ninety-four years with good vigour and vitality!" This is certainly an illogical reasoning. Such a statement is heard from time to time to prove that tobacco and alcohol are not injurious to health. To attempt to prove that tobacco and alcohol are harmless by citing but one example is quite preposterous. When researches endeavour to establish the effectiveness of a new drug or method of treatment, they test it upon as many persons, of both sexes and different ages, as possible. Administering a new remedy to a single patient and drawing conclusions from his response to it, is simply ridiculous. There is abundant medical evidence that use of tobacco or alcohol in any form produces injurious effects in human beings.

"Sweets do not cause tooth decay!" All the leaders of the dental profession are of the same opinion that tooth decay is caused by the acids resulting from the action of the micro-organisms on carbo hydrates, mainly sugar. Most dentists advise that the sweets should be eaten only at meal time and the teeth should be brushed if possible or the mouth gargled well with water immediately afterwards.

* * *

"TO draw blood for the various tests which a physician often finds necessary to make diagnosis, weakens the patient!" It is not true for the very simple reason that any individual has many times the quantity of blood taken, and can well afford to lose this trivial quantity. The physician draws about a teaspoonful of blood from the vein at the elbow, for the purpose of making various tests. An average healthy person has an amount of blood equal to 1/13th of his or her body weight. Thus a man weighing 156 pounds has about 12 pounds of blood, i.e. about 200 fluid ounces. So, it is not certainly injurious to one's health if one has to lose a few teaspoonfuls of blood for purposes of medical diagnosis. †

LIVING ONE'S OWN LIFE

*"Let me sing my song.
If it wafis you to heaven, listen to it ;
If you dislike it, go your way ;
But force me not behind the bars of your ugly ways
which violence and untruth have moulded.
My heart shall be mine,
And no power on earth shall make me betray it."* — K.M. MUNSHI

STORY :

SHE ACHIEVED A MIRACLE

BY

SHESH NATH SRIVASTAVA

IN the Vedic age there was a famous lady whose name was Apala. Her father was Atri.

Atri was a great saint and like other saints he lived in his hermitage. Around his hermitage there was a cluster of mango trees. There was a flower garden. Many students came to read in the ashram. Atri and his wife had no issues. They often felt very sad.

After sometime a daughter was born to them. She was named Apala. The joy of Atri and his wife knew no bounds. Atri loved his daughter very much. Apala advanced in age. Her parents saw that there were white spots on her body.

White spots are a kind of leprosy. The parents became very sad and the Rishi was careworn as to how to get her married. Atri consulted great physicians and various medical

treatments were given but all in vain. The white spots did not disappear rather they began to increase.

ATRI grew disappointed. Then he decided to give her higher education. He thought that education would surely facilitate her marriage. Gradually due to the efforts of Atri, Apala got greater education than all other young men. She learnt all the Shastras and acquired a fair knowledge of other sciences too. Her father began to seek a suitor for her marriage. After some time a suitable match was found. Her suitor was learned, handsome and strong. His name was Krishashva. Marriage with all its ancient ceremonies was celebrated. Apala went with her husband.

* * *

AT her husband's house she charmed all by her services. Her father-in-law, mother-in-law and her husband liked her very

much. Her lovely behaviour and sweet tongue won all round appreciation. After a short time Krishashva happened to see the white spots. He knew that Apala was a leper. He showed hatred towards Apala. He even gave up talking to her and was engrossed in worship.

One day Apala spoke to her husband thus: "Lord! I pondered very much but could not understand what my fault is and why you are so very much distracted as to desert me." Krishashva kept mum. His face blushed with shame. Words did not come out of his mouth. Apala spoke: "Lord! I am your wife. Have I not the right to ask you the reason for discarding me?"

Krishashva gravely answered, "Apala, I was not in the know that you had a skin disease."

Apala's eyes were full of tears. Her lips began to tremble. In a tremulous voice she said "Lord! you are well-read and you have studied all the Shastras. Is this body the basis of love!"

Krishashva bowed his head low. Afterwards he said, "Apala! I repeatedly thought over it. I know that there is truth in what you say; but I cannot console my heart. When I think of the white spots on your body, something like hatred springs up."

Fire of anger blazed in her heart. But she kept silent. She gravely said, "Lord, you are doing injustice to me. It is sure that my body is ugly, but I only wanted to serve you but you

refuse it to me." She again burst into tears. Krishashva went away from that place.

* * *

APALA had to seek assylum in her father's ashram. Apala's parents were seized with grief when they heard the news. But Apala said that she would conquer her husband through the practice of austerities and from that day she started doing it. She gave herself to the devotion of God Indra.

Days, nights, months and years passed away. In the biting cold and scorching heat, without food or sleep, she was unflinchingly engrossed in meditation. Her penance succeeded. Indra appeared and told Apala to ask for any boon.

By Indra's boon the disease of Apala's body was cured and she became beautiful and charming. She again went to the ashram of Krishashva. On seeing her, he was bewildered. Apala's entire body was shining like gold. At first he did not believe. Being a learned man himself, he thought that meditation and praying to God could achieve even the most impossible of miracles. A flood of tears flowed down from his eyes. He begged Apala's pardon. The generous heart of Apala forgot and forgave all the previous events.

There are several stories about the penances performed by the ladies of our country. Apala's is one of them. Indian ladies are renowned all the world over for such virtue and courage. ‡

Questions & Answers

*The Editor invites questions from the readers of this Journal.
Accepted questions will be answered in the order of their
importance.*

AMERICAN FAILURE

Digby, Bombay

Q.—Does not the failure of the U.S. rocket which exploded on sand within two seconds of its being launched show conclusively even to the purblind that America is not so well advanced in Science as she was boasting all these years?

A.—It proves nothing except that the rocket has failed. You can't establish anything definitely until the explanation, which President Eisenhower has called for, is made known to the public. There is no harm in admitting the Russian superiority in launching "Sputniks" but from this one can't go to the extent of belittling the American scientists or say that the U. S. will not be able to compete with Russia in the long run. In military language, a retreat may be a forerunner of a big offensive.

KARMA

V. K. Raghu, Madras

Q.—Are we to believe in *Karma*? What is *Karma* after all? Does it supercede reason or rationalism?

A.—Better attend Sri Sankaracharya's lectures and have satisfaction. It requires not much of courage to deny or denounce belief in *Karma* or, for the matter of that, any other belief. It

really wants a good lot of study to understand it and no mean courage to put your faith in it and act up to it.

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FOREIGN POLICY

S. Choudry, New Delhi

Q.—Russia and Japan have come forward to help India at a time of her greatest need while Britain's reaction is a definite "no" and America is not for any spectacular aid. Does this not call for a change in our foreign policy?

A.—No, it does not call for any change. Foreign aid or no aid has nothing to do with our foreign policy. Our policy is based on definite principles of International conduct and world peace. We must preserve an objective outlook and avoid selfishness as much as possible from entering into our calculations.

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BEST CINEMA STAR

A. K. Simpson, Bangalore

Q.—Who is the best Indian Cinema Star today and what is his or her salary? Why is he or she considered the best?

A.—There are many first class cinema stars, both males and females, in India but no one can say that A or B or C is the best star. The salary also differs from Studio to Studio. But the highest salary of the "best" star in India is lower than the lowest or the "worst" star in America. The proudest star of yesterday no longer enjoys his status or reputation. There is no prescribed or acknowledged qualification for a star, much less for the best star. It is public opinion that matters but that is whimsical. But some old cinema fans have not changed or exchanged their "love" even as some old women talk of their young lovers. It is common to see that a star is made today, is unmade tomorrow and forgotten the day after that, and new and newer stars are usurping their places. We need not go into the causes.

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SOCIETY GIRLS

Saroja, Poona

Q.—Why are the cinema magnates and producers fighting shy of society girls? Not long ago, there was intense propa-

ganda and society girls with good face cut and musical talents were asked to come forward to join the cinema profession and thus help to improve the quality of the films. But now, why are not society girls looked upon with favour even by the Government officials of the film section?

A.—Perhaps it is so, because society girls are difficult to handle. They are prone to assert their self-respect and will not slavishly obey the film directors as professional girls may be willing. Or it may be, that apart from beauty of the face and musical accomplishments, they may be lacking in dramatic talents and realistic acting. Further, society girls, if they are married, might prefer their family obligations and refuse to stay in the studio or in the sets the whole night for money.

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RAJAJI'S ADVICE

V. Santharam, Nagpur

Q.—Is Rajaji right when he says in "Indian Democracy" that "the Indian Government should boldly give up the policy of competing in military investments with American-aided Pakistan and save our resources from being wasted on what is called defence?" Can independent India afford to be un-defended?

A.—Rajaji is a far-seeing statesman and is able to see the dangers ahead of us which we with our limited outlook fail to see. Granting for the sake of argument that "defence" is necessary, where is the limit to it? America may go on aiding Pakistan, just to send India on a wild goose chase and waste its resources. Are we to follow that mad course? Rajaji who advises the western nations to unilaterally throw their nuclear weapons into the sea, tenders the same advice to the Indian government and the people.

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LOVE MARRIAGE

Mrs. Prakash Jain, Calcutta

Q.—Is "Love Marriage" necessarily the best form of marriage? What is the percentage of its success in America, Britain and India?

A.—Love marriage need not necessarily be the best. But in every form of marriage, the substratum is love. What is marriage

without love? Let us not take child marriages and forced marriages into consideration. Abnormalities are an exception to the rule. We either marry whom we love, or love whom we marry. Success in love or any marriage is a different thing. For percentage of success in love marriage, the questioner must contact any international matrimonial bureau. But broadly speaking, married life depends for its success on the amount of self-sacrifice, adjustment and toleration which the husband is willing to make to please his wife and vice versa. Without a positive policy of mutual accommodation and willingness to give and take, married life cannot be made a success. If there is real love in the heart, it will certainly prompt the couple to rub off all their angularities and individualistic peculiarities to the extent of self-effacement and establish identity of thought and action, that is, oneness of the soul, though the bodies are different.

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NATURAL CURE

Gangadar Keskar, Bhopal

Q.—Why not we revert to natural cure and demolish all hospitals?

A.—Natural cure has its place in medical treatment. Mahatma Gandhi was a great exponent of natural cure. But we have yet to come across a dictator who will demolish all hospitals. If one can discard all clothing and take to nature's nudity, perhaps he can boycott hospitals, until he finds use for them. ‡‡

TRUE LOVE

"Love all. Embrace all. Include all in the warm embrace of your love. Love your enemies. Love your Guru. Love all saints and sages. Love makes great sacrifices. Love is anxious to help and serve others and makes others happy. Love forgives. True, pure love, divine Prem, is eternal, unchanging, infinite."—SWAMI SIVANANDA.

NEW ERA IN FILM INDUSTRY

By Jayamani

THE first, pioneering and difficult phase of the film industry has been passed. The industry celebrated the Silver Jubilee of the Talkie films in December '56. The periods of infancy and adolescence having been covered in these two decades and a half, the industry has now reached the adulthood when mature contributions could rightly be expected of the industry. The year '57 is therefore a vital one. It is significant that this opens up the second quarter century in the life of the industry and it is hoped that the future would be promising.

There is a new dimension developing. Politically, India has a definite international

status. To justify and keep this up, every sector of national life has a role to play in upholding the prestige of our country at the international level. Films both as the mirror of the Indian way of life and as a sample of our culture and art, bear a great responsibility. Film-makers should ponder over this seriously and come forth with productions of which the makers, the industry and the nation could justly be proud.

Recent years have emphasized this aspect greatly. The Film Festival organized by the Government of India in 1952 was a significant attempt to show to

our film-folks the trend of thought and production in the rest of the world. More recently, exchanges of film delegations between India and other nations have occurred. Indian films are now being screened with local sub-titles. Pictures produced with definite bearing on our way of life as distinguished from unrealistic imitations of foreign styles and mannerisms are greatly appreciated for their originality and realism. Indian productions of this type have received the highest international honours during the year under review. "For the first time three Indian films won the highest awards at three of the world's most famous international festivals in competition with the best pictures from the world's most advanced film-producing centres", commented the 'Film Fare.'

Among the pictures that deserve to be selected for special mention are "Jagte Raho", "Naya Daur", "Do Ankhen Barah Haath", "Mother India", "Pyaasa", "Ab Dilli Dur Nahin", "Hum Panchhi Ek Dal Ke", "Sharada", "Musafir" and "Amar Singh Rather". Compared to hundreds of pictures produced every year in this country, this list is certainly no credit to the industry. However, these are amongst the successful pictures of the year and luckily, each of these boasts of a special point about itself which proves convincingly that a properly conceived and well executed theme

invariably pays well. Each of these pictures tackled a different subject and was certainly off the beaten track.

Through the natural law of survival of the fittest and through the process of natural elimination, the unfavourable elements will gradually vanish making room for competent factors. Already, some freshmen have come into the industry and some of them show splendid promise. With more of educated and men of understanding entering the production field with thoughts of ushering an improvement in the quality of Indian feature films, with the competitive trend asserting itself and with scope of foreign market widening, there is room for complacency and there is every justification to look forward to remarkable strides in the film industry during the second quarter century started off in 1957.

Conjuring up with the vision of the future progress of the industry, we shall be failing in our duty if we do not record the valuable services rendered to the Indian Film Industry by Savak Wacha, Gyan Mukerjee and Amiya Chakravorty who consistently gave progressive pictures. These three men and comedian Gope and artiste Al Nasir have been the industry's irreparable losses and while praying for peace to their souls, may we hope that their thoughts and ideals will inspire and guide us!

Sharada:

A Clean Family Drama

PRASAD Productions' maiden presentation, "Sharada" is a straight narration and makes no claims to artistic ebullience, decor or highlight of any kind. It draws its main force from a powerful story supercharged with a battery of incidents and plot and its truly family appeal picks it out for distinction from a host of pictures turned out by our studios lately.

Sharada is the central figure. She typifies a characteristic Indian woman whose life is one of sacrifice and dedication. Born in poor circumstances, she receives disciplined training in an ashram where she happens to draw a young man, Shekar, towards her and they mutually agree to marry. Circumstances develop differently and instead of a wife, Sharada takes the position of Shekar's step-mother. Though misunderstood, she however manages to make Shekar

agree to marry Chanchal who is in love with him. Shekar's regard and devotion to Sharada is misunderstood by his jealous wife and complications arise. In utter disgust, Shekar runs away and Sharada, realizing that she owed a duty to her daughter-in-law, proceeds to trace him out and restores Shekar to Chanchal, in the process of which her own existence is annihilated.

Director Prasad deserves praise for upholding through his film the dignity of Hindu marriage and love. This picture very pointedly stresses the fact that true love calls for and is sustained by sacrifice whereas marriage is a matter of coincidence and entails duty. Apart from this commendable feature about this film, it must however be said that despite the assemblage of first-rate persons in this film,

"Sharada" does not emerge as an outstanding picture. The main faults are its unduly long and windy treatment, loose script and definite lack of skill in exploiting the various elements to the best advantage.

Meena Kumari has been correctly assigned the main role and she has given a convincing performance. Raj Kapoor however has not been well directed. He has been used rather triflingly in the first half of the picture, though the latter part of the picture gives him good scope which he has amply justified. Om Prakash has been wasted and of the rest, Randhir must be specially mentioned. Aghas is his usual self and Gope, Manorama, Raj Mehra, Shyama, Anita Guha give the required support. C. Ramchandra's music is not very distinguishing, and technically the picture is only of an average standard.

It is interesting to see the air-

craft crash and only the hero happens to be the sole survivor. He is in bandage for a short while to suit the film's script. Thereafter, he is up and doing as before. The striking resemblance of Sharada and Shekar's own mother is a mystery all through. Until Shekar's reported death in the air-crash, the script does not bother to introduce his brothers and sisters and all of a sudden there are sick and ailing children in the house and the problem is created to bring someone into the family to look after the household. The final scene where Sharada happens to trace out Shekar is too much of an artificiality to bring conviction to bear on such an important climax scene.

All told, "Sharada" is a welcome picture for it is fairly decently presented and is a homely film to which one could go with his mother, sister and aged daughters.—V. J.

THE VIRTUOUS

Firmness in adversity, restraint in prosperity, eloquence in assembly, boldness in war, study in the Scriptures—these are the natural characteristics of the virtuous.—BHARTRIHARI

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