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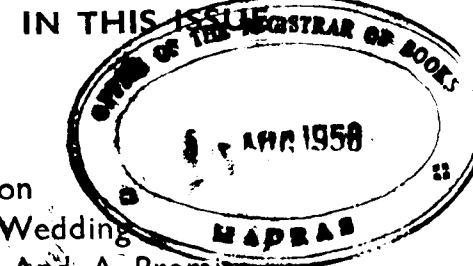
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August, 1958.

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At The Wedding
Marriage And A Promise
Yesterday's Bachelor

Articles

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India Magazine

THIRD YEAR OF PUBLICATION

VOLUME 3

AUGUST 1958

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THE MIDDLE EAST TANGLE

WILL East-West talks at any stage or level bring about peace or lessen the tension in the air? Frankly speaking, we are not confident that a summit meeting of the Big Five or the Big Four or all the Big Ones will achieve any tangible result. Some of the British newspapers are of the opinion that the ailing U. S. President was unwilling to face up to the energetic Russian dictator who is well known for his quick wit and ready retort. The British Premier who consults Mr. Churchill at every turn still casts a dreamy and covetous eye on the Middle East and hates Russian influence or penetration there.

Behind the U. S. President looms the towering figure of Mr. Dulles. He dictates America's foreign policy and everybody else there says ditto. That war-time hero, Premier de Gaulle of France, wants to follow neither the U. S. A. nor the U. K. but is eager to adopt an independent and original line and is even prepared to negotiate direct with Russia. How will a summit meeting succeed if the majority are not agreed?

It would be wrong to imagine that when Britain suggested a summit meeting within the Security Council she was prompted by a deep sense of loyalty to the ideals of the United Nations. If it was really the case, why did British troops move into the Middle East without the prior sanction of the United Nations? The original motive appeared to be to exclude India who is not a member of the Security Council.

Now at last the summit meeting is materialising but one wonders whether any solid achievements can be expected. The American troops are to withdraw from the Lebanon. The British, too, are bound to quit the Middle East area. But the Western Powers will see to it that Russia is foiled and snubbed at every turn. That much is a certainty. **††**

The New Challenge

The recent police firing in Kerala and the general unrest in the State have made the rest of India unhappy. The Communists are entrenching themselves and the Opposition parties are naturally afraid that they will soon be effectively silenced or even liquidated. That is why they have bestirred themselves, though belatedly, and are trying to salvage among the ruins.

It is stated that no serious trouble will flare up since the people of Kerala are lovers of peace. This sounds very like incurable optimism. How then did the Chief Minister of that State confidently declare that power could be seized by means of civil war? He must have assured himself of the blind and loyal support of the masses in any struggle launched. We all know from bitter experience of the riots arising from the new linguistic set-up how the common folk can easily be roused and that once they are

incited reason will desert them. The duty of the Opposition parties is clear. They must strive earnestly and by all constitutional means to wrest power from the Communists. Given the will, they can succeed. The example of the recent Tuticorin by-election is worthy of emulation. Very few thought that in a stronghold of communalism the Congress could succeed. It has won by a comfortable majority but not without strenuous effort. The Opposition parties in Kerala would do well to reorganize their forces at once and challenge the Communists.

But, first, they must forget all their petty differences among themselves and agree on a common programme of action. Let them remember that it is not easy to dislodge the present Ministry. They must plan a village-to-village propaganda and explain the ideals of a democratic state wherein freedom and equality of opportunity will be assured to one and all. On their success depends the future of democracy in the rest of India.—M.

ROLE OF INDIA IN WORLD AFFAIRS

THE essence of India's heritage from her puranic literature is the importance it lays on the detachment and discharge of one's duty, without expectation of any result and reward, in all spheres of life—spiritual, political, moral or social. India to-day probably occupies a more prominent position in the world than at any other time in her history, mainly because of her two great virtues—tolerance and patience. She has a great tradition of tolerance, on the conception that there are more ways than one to reach the same goal. Also she is second to none in her patience in tackling all problems with great fortitude and courage and endurance, as the situation at each step warrants. There are many encouraging examples in our past history to hearten us in continuing on this very delicate and difficult course.

* * *

India is a country whose history forms one of the most notable chapters in the history of mankind, whose history in the past was a centre of radiation for the ancient world, whose history at present is a source of inspiration for mankind in its

onward march for liberty, freedom, and dignity and whose history is bound to be in future a source of guidance, in order to establish a better world, based on freedom and democracy. We do not believe in aggression. Our policy is not to disunite the world by aligning ourselves with any power groups and breaking up humanity into various blocks. Our policy is one of non-alignment, and positive neutrality but certainly an active policy based on the merits of each question in establishing peace and tranquillity all over the globe.

India is a secular state and our constitution enjoins equality of opportunity in the public services and other walks of life for all citizens irrespective class, colour or creed. Freedom and independence are the life-blood of a nation. A nation can safeguard its freedom and sovereignty, only by its own inherent strength and not coming under the shadow of any other big power. India is deeply convinced that it is only by the application of the five cardinal principles (Panch Sheela) that firm peace can be established all over the world. Free countries ordinarily run their Government and business by their own strength

and through friendship and co-operation with other countries even though there may be differences in political and economic structures, or in the ideology that each country pursues. However uncertain of place and leadership for the rest of Asia, India is one of the world's pivotal powers and nothing in the world can shake it now and for ever. India, from the lofty Himalayas to Cape Comorin, a nation of about 14 major tongues and hundreds of dialects, shall always remain one solid united entity, in spite of everything and everybody.

* * *

India and the world live in a new era—the atomic age. Science has found a new and vast source of energy which has put into man's hand great power for good or for evil. Man has been getting more civilised, and yet discovering more and more destructive weapons. No war has been able to end all wars. But the last two wars revealed a very distressing feature—the peaceful citizen has been made a victim of hostile action. To-day, there is great danger of war. There is much animosity and anger among the nations of the world. No nation can delude itself into the impression that safety necessarily increases as expenditure on military research and forces mounts up. Indeed, beyond a wise and reasonable level, which is always changing and under constant study, money spent on arms is money wasted on sterile metal of inflated costs, thereby weakening the very security and

strength one seeks after. A lasting agreement on reduced armament at least would provide a valuable contribution towards a durable peace in the years ahead.

India has no passion for military pacts, like other nations. She considers them as futile, as such pacts do change the world and change it for the worse. One can understand economic help being given by one country to another. But the difficulty to-day is that often this aid is tied up with the mentality of militarisation. This military mentality wants to solve all problems in a military way. But the history of the last few years has shown that no problem could be solved by these methods except through tolerance, friendship, love, and co-operation. The Suez lesson is too recent to be forgotten. Even America is to withdraw her troops from the Lebanon.

India is a land of peace and she loves peace alone. She always respects others' views and ways of life, even if she does not understand them. The message of the one-world is one of 'love for all and co-operation with all.' She is persevering with efforts to reach such an agreement. Her continuous negotiations in this field are a major part of her quest for permanent peace in this H.-Bomb era. Our country has made mistakes—human mistakes. They have been of the head, not

—Please see page 13

DOCTOR IN THE HOUSE!

Woe unto the husband who falls ill especially when his wife begins to dabble in medicine and her cousin, the lady doctor in the making, starts her dangerous experiments. Read this funny story and have a good laugh!

“MEET Ragini, my cousin brother's sister-in-law, doing her final M. B.” Radha introduced her relative on a fateful day three months ago. I was not aware till then that my wife had doctor-relatives and this creature was sprung upon me suddenly. Ragini had come to spend her vacation with her brother here.

Ragini used to drop in quite often and retire to a quiet corner with my wife and both would talk for hours in scarcely audible tones. Naturally I had attributed this to the innate inquisitiveness of the female species to discuss the private lives of their kith and kin.

That evening I had done a bit of ‘cobweb cleaning’ at my office and returned home late—dear tired. I avoided my post-supper ambulation and sat in the easy-chair.

“Why, you have not gone for the walk,” my wife exclaimed after she had finished her duties. She would always refer to my ‘walks’ with unconcealed contempt for she harbours a suspicion that go out for a surreptitious smoke.

“FELT like staying at home,” she replied with a noisy yawn.

“No! no! You never avoid it,” she replied. “Something

must be the matter.” Saying so, she approached and felt my forehead.

“My God! Your body is burning!” she exclaimed.

“Not till I complete my *shashti-abdi*, girl!” I said playfully. “I have twenty more years to run.”

“Rama! Rama! what horrid things you say! I only meant you are not well,” Radha replied apologetically.

“So you say I am not well?”

“Not well! You *are* ill. Your eyes are blood-shot, your face is flushed, your cheeks are colourless, your breath...”

“You take it away, lady, by the sheer description. Tell me,” I said in awe, “where did you get all this?”

“Of course, Ragini taught me!” she replied with dignity. “Now tell me, do you feel a shivering sensation?”

“I do,” I replied shuddering, “after hearing that sawbone’s name!”

“You never treated any of my relatives with respect. She was kind enough to tell me all about ailments—arthritis, bronchitis, malaria, diabetes, *ephe...*”

To fetch and plant the thermometer into the mouth

which I had opened in sheer shock was the work of a moment for Radha. She shouted the reading aloud, “100.4”

Next day, I need not add, I had become a guinea-pig to Ragini. She and my ministering angel were seated not far from my bed. The doctor was describing cheerfully to my wife how malaria, if neglected, would spoil the liver, which in turn would give rise to further complications and we all know where complications lead a man to. She even threw an invitation to come and see the liver of a man kept pickled in their college. Very comfortable all this, no doubt, when you are tossing on the bed.

Radha was careful enough to fetch all the blankets available in our house (and I suspect that the musty looking multi-coloured atrocity on the top of all belongs to my neighbour). I was being carefully wrapped in them and this gave me a funny feeling that this was Egypt and that I was a dead Pharaoh being mummified.

“I AM not a Pharaoh, Radha!” I said with a smile. She could not understand me. (No wonder failing thrice in her B.A. histories, she gave it up with the conclusion that her papers were always valued by a childless heartless blighter!)

Radha merely exchanged glances with Ragini.

“I told you I am not a dead

Egyptian king." I laughed heartily at my own joke and still that good creature was unable to manifest symptoms of comprehension.

Radha again eyed Ragini anxiously. Ragini nodded her head gravely and picked up a medical book.

"Don't mummify me, I say," I shouted, irritated at her density in not understanding a joke.

"I am sorry, Radhoo, but your husband is raving," Ragini announced suddenly and dropped the book and approached me. "But don't worry. We will bring the temperature down. Please get me an ice-bag!"

RAGINI had sat down by my bedside pressing the ice-bag, feeling my forehead and administering all sorts of medicines bought from the chemist's shop (oh! my pay of the coming month!).

I was getting hotter and hotter inside the tomb of blankets. It was oppressive and maddening. I tried in vain to wriggle out of those blasted blankets.

"Let me out, for God's sake, let me out!" I cried, unable to stand the torture.

Ragini shot a meaningful glance at Radha, which indicated that this was the cry of the anguished soul to shuffle off the mortal coil.

"O God! what shall I do now?" my wife was raising tearful eyes to the ceiling. "Make him all right, God of the Seven Hills, and we will make a pilgrimage. He will have his head shaven and we will also..."

I could not stand it. Last time my child was down with 'flu, fulfilment of vows cost ten times more than the doctor's bills. The trip to Tirupati would cost me a big packet.

At last I struggled out of the blankets and sat up in the bed.

"I am perfectly o. k., I say. The fever has left me. Get me a cup of coffee," I said.

"The swiftness with which the modern drugs work on the human system is incredible," observed the doctor triumphantly.

"The quickness with which Venkateswara answers our prayers is unbelievable" joined my wife and added, "we will go to Tirupati soon after you receive your salary, dear."

THERE you have it. The doctor got a nice saree as fees and I went to Tirupati and returned poorer by one hundred rupees—and minus my beautiful black hair!

Some days ago, that angel of comfort again turned up with another of the same species.

—Please see page 15

SHORT STORY

At The Wedding

By S. S. RAMACHANDER

The bride was happy but not the bridegroom even though she was the girl after his own heart. Over her head there was a battle of wits with its own amazing and amusing sequel...

AT the marriage pandal everybody was gay except two people—Nagesh, the father of the bride and Shravan, the bridegroom. Rather strange, isn't it? The father must have been a very happy man because his daughter, Vasanthi, was now married to the assistant cashier of the City bank. For the past five years he had moved heaven and earth to find a suitable match for her but in vain. Not that Vasanthi was ugly. She was twenty-nine but the years sat lightly on her. She was attractive enough though she wore glasses and was very lean. But you couldn't call her slender...

Nagesh was earning a hundred rupees as a teacher to support a family of five. So his eldest daughter who was a graduate worked as a typist and supplemented her father's income. But Vasanthi's mother was stern and

relentless. She insisted that her daughter's marriage could not be postponed any further. If another year passed she would die of shame. The prospect of reduced income for the family did not matter much. She was not frightened. Nagesh wanted to ask for some more time but he bowed down before his wife's fury.

For a whole night he didn't sleep. He thought bitterly of his quarrel with his old father, Karunakar. Things would have been far different if father and son had lived together. The past flashad before his mind and upset him. His mother had died twenty years ago and Karunakar lived with him. He was happy to be in the midst of his grandchildren. But Kamala, Nagesh's wife, didn't like to serve the old man. She had learnt that he often went to see a widow in the

next town and was afraid that her father-in-law would waste all his savings on her. But he had not much with him to spare. He owned lands worth about ten thousand rupees and Kamala instigated her husband to quartel with his father and claim his share of the property.

KARUNAKAR had the surprise of his life. He was already past sixty. A politician all his life, he had not earned much and had looked forward to a life of retirement with his son and grandchildren. He was particularly fond of Vasanthi and had intended that his property should be sold for her benefit—when she was to be married. He knew that once his son got his money he would straightaway go to the racecourse and throw everything he had—even his shirt—on the horses.

Keeping his part of the money to himself, he decided to live separately. What was his surprise when in recognition of his part in the freedom struggle several jobs were offered to him. He was invited to serve on committee after committee—to enquire into labour conditions in one area, to determine the needs of some backward community, to find the causes of a particular railway accident or to fix the responsibility in case of some shooting, and so on. His judgments and findings were highly valued. His income per month exceeded three thousand rupees. He himself was astonished. The man who had never earned more

than two hundred rupees a month as an advocate, whom his colleagues looked down upon as a misfit, was now commanding considerable prestige and influence. He had a bungalow and a car, the widow whom he had been visiting on the sly now ministered to his needs and openly lived with him. He could hardly believe it when he was invited to serve as Minister for a time.

Nagesh tore at his hair. Kamala moaned and groaned and thought of the grand life that would have been hers if the old man had lived with them. Several times he went to the old man and begged of him on bended knees to return to his home and live with them. But Karunakar remembered the volley of abuse that his daughter-in-law had directed at him, the insults that she had heaped on his head and the occasions when she almost starved him. But the thought of Vasanthi and his other grandchildren softened him. He said that he was too busy and would consider his son's plea in due course.

NAGESH asked for a government job. But the old man was too strict. Getting for his son a job would amount to favouritism, corruption and worse. No, no. He wouldn't stoop so low. What would others think of him? Was he not aware that till his sixty-fifth year he himself had suffered? What a rotten life he had led! It was true that

Nagesh was forty-five. But he must learn to wait for better days.

Nagesh knew that it was worse than useless to ask the old man for some personal help. In his nasty frame of mind he would refuse it. So he touched him on a vital spot. He reminded him that Vasanthi was now twenty-seven and that he had already found a match for her. If Karunakar who was so fond of her could undertake the responsibility for her marriage, he would feel relieved. Would he find time? Nagesh was clever. He had just then read in the papers that Karunakar was scheduled to go on a tour of the country for two months and that it was impossible for him to postpone the assignment.

OLD Karunakar's eyes moistened. "I am glad, Nagesh, you are going to do the right thing for the first time. So my little darling Vasanthi is to be married? How sorry I am that I have to be away on tour! Tomorrow morning I am leaving by the Grand Trunk Express. If, as you say, the *muhurt* comes off next fortnight I can't be present. Well, by the way, I shall give you seven thousand rupees for her marriage and you must celebrate it on a decent scale. It is my responsibility and you needn't spend a pie. Wait a minute. I shall count out the money and hand it to you with my blessings to the girl."

He wiped his eyes dry—so great was his affection for Vasanthi—and gave the money to Nagesh. The latter hurriedly left the bungalow and when all had gone to sleep at home informed his wife how he had told the old man a lie and tricked him into parting with a tidy sum. Both of them chuckled over this fraud. They decided not to let Vasanthi into this secret for she would not hesitate to denounce this treachery. She was more devoted to her grandfather than to her parents.

That money was useful. It helped Nagesh to clear off some of his pressing debts and make peace with a Multani who was threatening him with a warrant. He had a balance of three thousand rupees which he earmarked for the horses. As usual, they ran away with it. He got a grand dividend of fifteen rupees and was boasting of his great luck to his friends.

Karunakar came post-haste to the city after two months to bless his darling Vasanthi and her husband. He was furious when he realised the mean trick that his son had played on him. But he would not see him when he came to offer an explanation. He had retired into his shell.

BUT when, two years later, under pressure from his wife, Nagesh had actually completed all arrangements for the marriage and requested his father to attend the wedding, Karunakar was sceptical. Even the printed

wedding invitation was suspect in his eyes. Probably, he thought, he had printed it to diddle him out of more money. But Nagesh went on to explain. He said that the bridegroom was an assistant cashier in the city bank. He had seen Vasanthi often and liked her immensely. He was thirty-two and did not mind the fact that she was twenty-nine. He had paid him two thousand rupees already and was to pay him another thousand before the marital knot was to be tied. The old man listened patiently. But he told Nagesh that he could attend the wedding only after twelve o'clock—one full hour after the muhurt. He had to preside over an important committee meeting that morning.

NAGESH was crestfallen. He had expected some monetary assistance from his father. He had managed to borrow some heavy amount from the Multani and paid off two thousand to the bridegroom. But Shravan was a cashier and was shrewd and calculating. Of course, he loved Vasanthi but he kept sentiment apart from business. So when Nagesh did not pay the balance of the dowry before the muhurt, Shravan was mighty angry and looked as if he would burn his father-in-law. The marital knot had been tied. So, as we said at the beginning, the two unhappy men at the wedding pandal were the father-in-law and

the son-in-law. Nagesh came near his daughter and whispered something to her. She nodded her head in assent though she was afraid that her husband might overhear his words. The truth was that Vasanthi was instructed to hand over to her father any cash present that her grandfather might give her. He knew that Karunakar would come there at twelve sharp and make a present. Out of that money he hoped to pay the bridegroom the promised amount.

TRUE to his word, Karunakar came in with his walking-stick and was respectfully received by Nagesh and others. He was introduced to the bridegroom whom he found to be a very intelligent man and good conversationalist. When both the bride and the bridegroom prostrated before him he was visibly moved. He embraced his grand-daughter and asked her to make an ideal wife and obey her husband at all times and under all circumstances.

Nagesh was looking for the signs of a cash present in vain. He knew that the old man liked good coffee and rushed into the kitchen to bring him a cup himself. Karunakar suddenly turned to the purohit and asked him to bring a silver plate with pan. He placed two cheques on the plate—one in the bride's name for Rs.5,000 and another

in the bridegroom's name for another Rs. 5000. As soon as the bride got her cheque she darted towards the kitchen to hand it over to her father.

"Vasanthi," shouted Shravan, "give that cheque to me!" His tone was imperious. His business instinct had asserted itself.

Blushing the colour of beet-root and bending her head low, Vasanthi handed her cheque to her husband who folded it along with his own and pocketed it. When Nagesh came to know of the cheque for Rs. 5,000, he felt faint. He could have given Rs. 1000 to Shravan as promised and kept the balance to himself. But now he had to find that thousand elsewhere. Vasanthi after all belonged to her husband; so did her money. It would be useless and unseemly to dispute that point now. The old man was chuckling. He had outwitted his son this time!

Doctor In The House

—Continued from page 8

"Radhoo, this is my friend Sarala. She is also studying for her M.B. I shall introduce her to her husband...where is he?"

I heard no more. Throwing off the book I was reading, I ducked behind the sofa. The

party came into the room. "My! where is he? He was here just now. Perhaps he has gone out," my wife said and they all trailed out. Ever since my uncle dumped his formidable sofa into my small house, I had always cursed him heartily. It occupied half of my little room, its projected nail had torn off two of my new pants and a few square inches of my epidermis (courtesy: Ragini). Now I came to regard it with affection. For the first time in my life I was deeply grateful to my uncle! ‡‡

Role Of India In World Affairs

—Continued from page 5

of the heart. Yet it is true that the great concept of the dignity of all men alike, created by the Almighty, has been the compass by which we are trying to steer our course. So long as we continue under this guidance, there will be progress in human affairs both among ourselves and among those with whom we deal. We want relations between nations to be based on the sound principles of equality, freedom and liberty. It is our earnest appeal to one and all to contribute their mite towards the development of human society where man might live in peace and harmony with nature, and with his fellow beings. Let us all pledge ourselves individually and collectively to the high resolve of not violating the sanctity of life and providing a strong background for good relationship within and with the rest of the world.—K.P. ‡‡

The Art Of Reading

By S. T. KASIRAJAN

IS reading an art? Before answering, another question must be posed and answered: What is an art? "An art," says Bacon, "is man added to nature." That this is an excellent definition of art can easily be proved by an illustration. Nature provides a painter with only rough materials: trees, the sea, and mountain and he simplifies, arranges, organises, and paints a picture to gratify the whims and fancies of the human mind. Skilful execution and imagination are called for to finish a work of art. Even so in the case of reading, a knack of reading only those books which one should read and of getting maximum return for the minimum of industrious study and judicious power to exercise omission are needed. In this sense, reading like painting, is an art.

Reading can be, in the words of Valery Larbaud, "an unpunished vice," or, it can be, to borrow the words of the philosopher Descartes, "a conversation with the most reputable people of past centuries."

Reading becomes a vice when it is resorted to as a kind of opium or as a means of flight from exertions and the actualities of the world. People married to this kind of reading read constantly. They read any part of the encyclopaedia with equal interest. Left to themselves in a room, they plunge headlong into piles of magazines and newspapers, and read, we do not know what, and seem to be immensely satisfied with their work, if it can be called work. For them everything is good. They care neither for facts nor for ideas, but they simply go on like Tennyson's

brook. They race ahead, page after page like a whippet chasing a rabbit, neither interpreting and understanding nor making room in their mind for assimilation, digestion and adoption. Reading is merely passive with them. This kind of reading is not healthy and does not stand the reader in good stead, for "men that read much and work little are as bells, which do sound to call others, and they themselves never enter into a church."

There is such a thing as reading for pleasure also. A novel-reader hopes to find thrill and charm in the story he reads. He reads for the stirring, exaltation and sublimation of his emotions. He reads to enjoy the adventures and escapades which life has chosen to deny him, but which the novelist has so enchantingly described in his story. Yet another may read to find among playwrights, poets and moralists perfect expression and synthesis of ideas he has formed and see whether "these unacknowledged legislators of the world" tell him anything new which may be of use to him. Such reading for pleasure is a much more active process.

Now we come to another type which may, for want of a better phrase, be called "work-reading", which is done by a man with a definite purpose to support the idea or for the expansion of the idea he has entertained. It is to be done with a crayon or a pencil or pen in hand for underlining, sidelining and starring,

the important passages, as all are not endowed with a photographic memory power as Lord Macaulay was, who learnt by rote all the twelve books of *Paradise Lost* at the tender age of 12—for otherwise one will have to waste precious hours in searching for the passage one may be in need of.

Reading, like all work, has its rules. The three practical rules offered by Emerson are: 1. Never read any book that is not a year old; 2. Never read any but famed books; 3. Never read any but what you like.

One must be careful to choose one's literary nourishment. In literature, as in love, there is a wide variety of tastes and where one sees Helen, another may see only a plain girl. "Your" author may not not be "his" author. You may like the desert island of Daniel Defoe or the drawing room of Jane Austen. Another may like the sylvan atmosphere of Hardy with the heath around him and the stars above him. To yet another all these may mean nothing. He may be interested only in the author who advocates aggressive optimism—Robert Browning. Yet we can safely say that it is advisable to prefer the authors of the past to the present-day authors not tested by the passage of time. No doubt you will find your friends delineated and emotions reflected in present-day authors; No doubt books are being

written which may become classics in due course. But the great authors of the past, who have withstood the vicissitudes of time, have been adjudged good by humanity. An individual may err; so may his generation; but humanity does not err.

Andre Maurois and Montague plead eloquently for a perfect knowledge of a few masters rather than a superficial and nodding acquaintance with a great many. Whether one has to read many or a few chosen authors depends on one's ability to digest the stuff one reads and on one's power of remembrance and thinking.

But this much at least is true and irrefutable; the more one reads, the more one gets interested in reading and the more one is interested in reading, the more does one devour with avidity and the more does one benefit by it. And no one who has not read a lot has ever become a writer. Great writers have always been great readers. One may have an itch to write; or one might have even produced something; but if one reads extensively, it will enlarge one's horizon and fortify and augment one's knowledge. Milton read a lot despite his alleged inspiration. These who want "to tend the homely, slighted, shepherd's trade" must read voraciously.

Great politicians and statesmen read a lot. Napoleon read widely and so did Stalin. The favourite authors of Napoleon

were Tacitus and Homer. He was interested in English literature as well. On being introduced to a man by name Lovelace, "why" the great Napoleon exclaimed with emotion, "that is the name of the man in *Clarissa*". When Hazlitt heard of this incident he fell in love with Napoleon instantaneously and subsequently wrote his life in several volumes. Rajaji, it is said, read *Robinson Crusoe* in his forties. Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes read Plato even at 93 "to improve my mind". Cato learnt Greek at 80.

The art of reading consists in acquiring a better and fuller understanding of life from one's acquaintance with it in books. Reading "maketh a full man" and thinking, a perfect man. ‡‡

HER FIRST?

Pretty as a doll and just as dumb, she floated through the cocktail lounge with a fussy poodle under her arm. She seated herself and as a waiter prepared to take her order, baby-talked the dog into a state of exasperation.

Trying to comfort the fidgeting animal she cooed: "There, there, now, Mama's itsy-bitsy baby—nobody's going to hurt 'oo."

The poodle settled after a while, and the girl turned her big eyes to meet the icy glare of the waiter, who asked, courteously, but biting: "Your first dog, madam?"

SHORT STORY

Sky-High The Limit!

Free and easy in her manners, she accompanied an actor to his room without any thought of the consequences. But her mother was shrewd and knew what she was in for. . .

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By R. KRISHNA

SITTING on a broken chair in her small one-room tenement, Vaidehi gave out a loud yawn. Sleep still hung heavy on her eyelids. She had slept the whole day from 9 a.m. It was now nearing six in the evening. She came back early in the morning after an all-night shooting in the studio where she worked as an extra girl.

She looked about the room. Her old widowed mother had not left a morsel to eat. Oh, what a wretched day! She must have gone out to the doctor's house where she served as a part-time cook. She cursed her for her forgetfulness. But then it is no use blaming poor old mother, she told herself. Even yesterday she asked me to borrow some money from some friend to buy

provisions. The pots and pans in the house are empty. How can something come out of nothing now?

SHE rose and opened her almirah. She took her purse and examined it. In disgust she threw it down with its contents of three naye paise. She remembered having kept a rupee-note in it on the previous day. Her mother must have taken it while she was sleeping. Probably she would be bringing something to eat on returning. The doctor paid her fifteen rupees a month and she took her meal in his house in addition. The fifteen rupees went to the landlord by way of rent. As for herself, Vaidehi worked for three or four days a week in the studio. She was paid only for

the days she worked and she did not get more than eighty rupees a month. The bus fare and the incidental expenses took off a good slice of her income. The balance was far from adequate. For ten to fifteen days in the month she suffered from semi-starvation. At times she borrowed right and left—but the difficulty of returning the loans was even greater.

PARTICULARLY, this evening, she felt extremely hungry. She thought for a while and then a smile flickered on her lips. She washed her face and hands and wiped them dry with a towel. She cast aside the ragged sari she was wearing and took out her laundered clothes from her box. She put them on to emphasise the curves of her body, combed her hair and tied it into a pigtail. She then picked up a small scent bottle and dabbed the nape of her neck and her silk kerchief with the perfume. Locking the door of her tenement, she sallied out as if she had no concern in the world.

She had already worked out her plan of action. She would go straight to the Garam Cafe at the street corner, eat as much as eight annas could procure, and then tell the proprietor she would pay the bill on the morrow. She was not new to that restaurant; every fellow there used to stare at her whenever she went with her girl friends. But she had never before asked the proprietor for credit. She

was positive now that he would oblige.

With a jaunty and confident air, she approached the hotel. But the absence of lights suddenly startled her. One of the waiters who used to wait on her was standing outside. "It is our weekly holiday today," he said, as if addressing nobody in particular.

She glanced at him steadily for a minute, then realising the meaning of what he said, blushed a deep red and retraced her steps. Back in her tenement, she burst into tears. Disappointment and ill-luck were dogging her footsteps. There were four more days to go before she could call at the studio and collect her wages. She couldn't think of anyone from whom she could borrow. Her co-tenants were hostile and didn't speak with her. Her studio friends were residing at the other end of the city, seven miles off.

SHE wiped her eyes dry and was about to change her dress when a familiar voice called for her mother. It was Govardhan, the son of a distant relation of her mother's. He was a widower of forty with two small girls to care for. He was manager of a small flour mill, making some Rs. 125 a month. The continuous noise and rattle of the machine seemed to have made him slightly deaf and he himself

spoke to others as if they were talking at his mill.

Vaidehi opened the door and went out to answer him. "Mother has not come as yet from the doctor's house," she told him.

Govardhan ran his eyes approvingly over the young woman's figure. "How many times am I to tell Auntie that she can stop her work and that both of you can come over to my house and give me relief? Not that I can give you all the comforts," he shouted, "but we can all be cheerful."

VAIDEHI bent her head down in silence and was digging the earth on the ground with her toes. She knew what he meant. He had several times offered to marry her with a promise to let her work in the studio as long as she liked. He did not want her money but he would not hurt her feelings or interfere with her career. And he had money enough to feed all of them. He was only anxious that his little girls should have a new mother in Vaidehi. The old woman jumped at Govardhan's offer and urged her daughter to marry him before he picked up some other girl. Vaidehi knew that he was really in love with her but she had her objections. He was middle-aged, a bit hard of hearing and perhaps stupid and unsophisticated. She wanted to marry a millionaire, probably a studio owner, or the topmost

actor who would one day groom her up for stardom. Imagine her name appearing in bold letters in the newspapers and her photos in various poses enslaving all young men in the land. Every time her mother pleaded she would ask for time to think about his offer.

"WELL, Vaidehi," shouted the man without waiting for her answer, "you must tell your mother I want to meet her in less than a week. Yesterday Gopal of our village came to my place and requested me to marry his third daughter Sucheela. He wanted me to name the date and it was with great difficulty that I could ask him to return to his village and wait for my reply. I have seen this Sucheela. She is not half as good-looking as you, Vaidehi, and she is very dark. So, tell your mother I want to hear from her before I write to Gopal. That is all. I shall get along. Ah! Have you got a tumbler of cold water to give? My throat is parched."

Vaidehi had all the while been feeling uneasy at his loud narration; now she was feeling more uneasy when he asked for cold water. She had not gone in the evening to the tap with the pot for filling. She had slept out the whole day. She said she would fill a tumbler with water from the tap. But Govardhan declined her offer. "No, no, I don't drink that lukewarm water from the tap. Take me to the nearest soda bunk. I want to have some iced drink."

At the bunk to which she took him he ordered two iced lemonades and invited her to have one. So great was her hunger that she almost gulped it. As he produced a five-rupee note she was almost tempted to ask him for a small loan. He would have readily accommodated her but a sense of shyness and shame held her back.

Soon he turned his back. She walked along the pavement with no particular aim. Having missed the chance of taking a loan from one who admired her, she was distressed at the bleak prospect facing her for the rest of the week. A cool wind blew against her face and the stars in the clear blue sky seemed to wink at her in merriment. She was about to return home when a taxi pulled up at her side and a young man peeped out from the back seat and accosted her. She almost jumped in fear, then steadied herself and looked at the man who called her.

She laughed. It was Devender, the second male lead in the picture in which she was currently playing a part. About thirty-two years old, he was lean and handsome with sparkling eyes and an aquiline nose. On the sets he had often met her and spoken in praise of her beauty and flair for acting. In fact, he was more a singer than an actor, and the girls swarmed around him in admiration.

"Come in, Vaidehi. You are standing there and staring at me

as if I am a stranger from another planet. There is no shooting tonight. You can go around with me and I shall leave you at your door before it is too late," he cooed.

She did not need another invitation. She threw herself beside him in the taxi which soon began to gather speed. Tenderly he placed his right hand on her shoulder. When she told him she had just then got up from sleep and was on her way to the restaurant, he ordered the driver to stop in front of "Sky High" Hotel. He paid off the driver and led her in. She almost staggered into a chair out of exhaustion and greedily polished up the plates of sweets and savouries served by the waiter.

Only then was she aware of her host's presence and smiled broadly at him. With her stomach full she began to chatter with her usual gaiety and even asked him to sing one of his best songs. Gently he reminded her that they were in the midst of hundreds of strangers and suggested that they should go to his room on the fourth floor of the hotel. Then suddenly she remembered her plight and asked him whether he could lend her some ten rupees and take back the amount after a few days.

WITHOUT a word he gave her a ten-rupee note. He paid the hotel bill and led her up in the lift to his flat. He unlocked his door and switched on a flood of light which revealed a large

blue-painted room elegantly furnished. She was speechless with admiration. Then he began to sing as he doffed his *libba*. It was an emotional love song which she knew and liked very well. He paused for a while as he mixed an iced drink into which he poured a 'finger' of some foreign liquor. He persuaded her to have a sip but she drained more than half the glass and he helped himself to what remained of it.

She felt a new exhilaration coursing in her veins. Before he finished the song she ran up and embraced him, pulled down his face to hers and kissed him fiercely and passionately on the lips. She had kissed two or three men before but never so passionately as now. He, too, responded with equal ardour. Then, adroitly, he switched off the light...

Next morning Devender had considerable difficulty in waking her up, taking her down and leaving her at her tenement in a taxi. The drink had stupefied her to that extent. Her mother thought she was just returning from the studio and did not question her about her late coming.

BUT as the weeks rolled by the old woman thought that something had gone wrong with her daughter's physical condition. Was she going about with some men, she wondered. But she dared not ask her. Didn't she know her daughter's

nature? She was a tigress when roused. But she had understood enough. Her daughter was the victim of some amour. And she was unconsciously paying the penalty for her folly. Something must be done to save her from disaster and that, too, immediately. And when Govardhan was insisting on immediate marriage with Vaidehi she consented at once. She breathed a sigh of relief only when the marital knot was tied. Sometimes truth is stranger than fiction. So when Vaidehi gave up her career and announced a forthcoming addition to the family, Govardhan was only too pleased. ‡‡

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MADRAS-1.

TEMPTATION

SREEDHAR remained on the threshold, contemplating the woman and boy in quiet repose by the bedroom lamp that dimly spread a halo of restful peace about them. Over the mantel-piece a panel of holy pictures hung against the wall, the central Krishna brightly lit up by a small bronze oil lamp underneath.

Sreedhar tiptoed into the room, and was with bated breath going to the peg to hang his coat, when he realised with guilty discomfort that his precautions were in vain. The woman had opened her eyes and was looking up at him.

"Oh, you didn't go to sleep? Or did I disturb you?" Sreedhar knew it was a stupid and commonplace thing to say, but he could think of nothing else.

"I was lying awake. What is the time?" Her voice was tired, but of suppressed resentment or suspicion he could catch no hint.

Sreedhar looked at his watch. A quarter to one.

"Past midnight," he said, a trace of apology and contrition in his voice. "How are you feeling?"

"Just the same. Weak and tired. Do you want anything hot?"

"No. I am overstuffed. These company meetings, you know, are nothing short of eating orgies." A mirthless attempt at hilarity.

BY

AMIN CHAND

HE quickly changed his dress and climbed into his bed, spread against the opposite wall. "Am going to sleep like a log," he said by way of good-night.

Sreedhar lay on his back and closed his eyes. A tissue of lies, that was his life. "Introspection is the bane of my life" he repeated for the hundredth time.

*He forgot his duty to an ailing wife and
a wayward son and sought the company
of a seductive beauty until his conscience
began to sear his soul. . .*

The spirit rallied. His brain gradually filled, and was soon in a quivering tumult, and he felt wide awake. The room, his wife and son, the smiling Krishna over the mantel-piece all disappeared. A fragrant, seductive breath was caressing his nostrils, and two large mischievous eyes were smiling into his. "Would you? Won't you?" they were asking, those lascivious eyes, half in jest, and a shapely bosom beneath, draped in transparent silk, was rising and falling, underlining the question. Sreedhar grew hot all over, and sick with desire. He tossed over and lay on his side.

"By the bye," the serene voice of his wife rasped across his thoughts and suddenly he was back in his room right amidst the listless still-life surroundings. The mental picture and the suffocating enticement faded away.

"Yes?" He muffled his voice so as to lend it a sleepy incoherence. Another lie in life, he thought.

"You have to sign Viju's Progress Report. He has to return it tomorrow."

Progress report. Sreedhar's conscience burst open with a

bang. Rani had mentioned it three nights ago—or was it a week? And he had not cared to muster sufficient interest in his only son's welfare to look into his school record.

"Pity I forgot," he exclaimed, real dismay and penitence tinging his voice. "This blasted business pre-occupation has made a machine of me. Tomorrow first thing in the morning—how is the boy?"

"I am rather anxious about him," Rani said in her wistful, sad voice. "His marks are poor, and the Headmaster says he has to improve a lot."

Sreedhar was disturbed. "He used to be above average."

"But then you used to have time to guide him." Was there a lurking reproach in her voice? Could it be she had known all along and was resigned to it? "Now he is running wild, and spends his time in the streets. And in bad company too. And he is not afraid of me."

"I WILL speak to him tomorrow," he said abruptly, trying to stifle his violently pricking conscience.

Silence ensued. But Sreedhar found it impossible to re-invoke the other vision. Somehow it looked grotesque, a sacrilege before the supreme tragedy before his physical eyes, of an ailing woman bedridden for life and a blossoming young life going to waste.

For nine years he had been everything to the boy—and the woman. His business was never exacting enough to keep him out of doors after sunset, or to prevent him from taking an absorbing interest in the shaping of the young mind, or squeezing time to manage an occasional outing for the family, a picnic, a picture, a visit to the temple....

THE business certainly had not since expanded enough to warrant the revolutionary changes in his family ways. Sreedhar had to admit before the merciless tirade of an importunate conscience. Nor had apathy and monotony, the bane of many happy family lives, supervened; the wistfulness with which he looked back on the past was genuine. At some stage in his smooth progress he had strayed, and ever since he had continued along a distinctly separate course.

The soul had gone off the rails.

When the doctor had said, after a dangerous abortion, that Rani should not conceive any more, Sreedhar had been elated. The beatific vision of the sacrific-

ing husband dutifully sharing his wife's sorrows rose in his mind. Life had bumped over that sublimity, then derailed in a head-on collision with fierce, relentless physical cravings. The thirst grew so intolerable that it fought shy of the insipid waters of the transcendent realms and stooped to sip at the muddy pools—that awful sinking of the spirit—grief-stricken reparations to an unsuspecting wife—heroic resolution to stick to the straight and narrow path—the second fall—the depression—gradual, inevitable deadening of the conscience, dulling of faith.

Unconsciously, unwittingly and helplessly, Sreedhar was trudging along the path that husbands have trudged these countless ages ever since the coming into shape of the social pattern.

Sreedhar felt hot and restless. He tossed again, and lay on the other side, facing the smiling Krishna. That pitying, mirthless smile—it was always there to torment him. The smile that rightly belonged to his wife, had she been less confiding and more worldly. At first it was indulgent, just reproving, as if sympathising with the weakness that is the universal way of all flesh—Then—

THEN he had met Radha, and immediately everything else was emptied of sense and sequence.

Lord Krishna disappeared. The room disappeared. Once

more a pair of enticing eyes held his, steadily sank him into eternal thralldom...a thralldom for which he felt ready to sacrifice hope and freedom, which left him in a consuming fever that was neither ecstasy nor pain: just a perpetual, unquenched thirst.

She had cured him of his vices—to make her conquest all the more complete. There was something about her that imparted a sort of wholesomeness and purity to her person. But in the all-too rare calm moments, when introspection forced objective thinking, he wondered if he had not made a blunder in substituting sure death in a clear lake for a splash in muddy pools. His former vices were a mire, whose very slush and stink induced cleanliness by reaction. This was a whirlpool, a quagmire, in which every attempt at escape sank one deeper; it created a burning thirst, an obsession that stifled freedom and prevented salvation.

BUSINESS had then suddenly assumed huger proportions than hitherto, customers detained him till nightfall, company meetings were always held at night—far into the morning. On Sundays he was too tired to take his wife and son out—which alone, of all his excuses, appeared specious to Rani. She let him know her mind subtly, and he felt exasperated, and consequently wretched.

And Radha was so elusive, never fully giving in or giving up. She allowed him to the end of the pre-determined tether, and then, when he lost heart and was straining at the leash, she collected him back. And he became sick with an oppressive desire, and later felt debased, mean, unutterably wretched. And he would ponder on the hard luck that made havoc of his family life, and made of him a slave, everyone of whose attitudes and moods was shaped and conditioned by the wayward whims of a frail creature, disguised under the euphemistic consolation of love. And he fell before the deity and groaned, "Deliver me, O, Lord! Never more of this shackling of my soul!"

But the next day, before Radha's magic eyes, his resolution wavered, his worked-up resentment melted away, and in an ethereal intoxication not far removed from sheer insanity, the future and the past ceased to have meaning, and the present moment lengthened into eternity. And he returned, the drinks like fiery liquor only promoting the thirst, and stood downcast, feeling like a worm, before the chiding smile of Krishna...

* * *

"My pet angry?"

THE eyes danced to a mischievous rhythm. A stray hair caressingly touched his ear. The shapely bosom dipped and rose,

heaved and sank, swam nearer and shied farther.

Sreedhar forgot his resolutions, his vow, his wayward boy, his ailing wife whose wrecked life stretched like a desert scorching onlookers, the smiling Krishna, his vows endlessly repeated before that disarming smile. His hungry eyes bulged, as he drank in the personification of grace and voluptuousness before him; they bored into him like live coals. Giddy with passion, he took the frail form in his arms and crushed it against his pounding heart, while his famished lips scorched into hers.

She freed herself breathless and laughing. "Murder! Help!" she shouted. "Brute!" she cried, laughing again.

"Would I were a cannibal!" he smiled sheepishly.

"Very poor taste, yours. Try this instead." And she held up a glass of sparkling liquid.

Sreedhar's blood cooled a little. "No."

And they went through the ritual of resisting, pressing, refusing, sulking and pouting, and ultimately succumbing.

* * *

Sreedhar returned home early, his spirit at the lowest ebb. Reaction, merciless and vengeful, was at work. The house was

silent. He found Rani lying on her couch, the symbol of spent womanhood.

"What is the matter?" he asked full of concern.

"I felt giddy, and the pain in the ribs has increased."

Sreedhar felt a stab. His wife had been suffering from pain in the ribs; for a moment he confused pictures, and he felt crunching ribs against his quivering body, hot breath on his face. By some telepathic transmission, as it were, here the one entitled to it was suffering the pain on the ribs.

"I will call the doctor."

"No, no. It is nothing serious. A hot fomentation would make it all right, but the maid went away early."

Sreedhar went into the kitchen, with violent remorse and a feeling of utter wretchedness. He switched on the stove, made hot water, and came back with towels and turpentine.

Rani protested as he applied fomentation, but oh! the radiance on her face! He had not seen it so aglow and happy for months. Perhaps he thought she had not seen him so devoted for just as long.

"Where is Viju?"

"He went out with Gopi to the pictures."

"Pictures? And his examination hardly a month away!"

"What can I do? He never cares for me."

"Well, let him come back. I will have a word with him."

Sreedhar felt an exhilarating relief. What a soothing contrast to the violent spasms of a turbid mind which he had called ecstasy! The dirt, the squalor, the reaction of utter ennui filled him with horrified disgust. And for that, he was wrecking this healthy, tranquil happiness!

"Never!" he shouted, and suddenly the strength and confidence of bygone days flowed back into him.

He tiptoed to the foot of Lord Krishna's picture and folded his hands. "Lead me aright!" he prayed. The anguish melted. Peace trickled in. "Never again, never, never!" he repeated with vehemence. And Lord Krishna seemed to smile.

He heard Viju coming in. "Who allowed you to go to the cinema?" he asked sternly.

The boy stood transfixed at the unusual show of temper.

"Your examinations are just a month away, and this is how you prepare for them? Look here,

if you fail to get through, I will make it dashed unpleasant for you to again look me in the face. Remember this is the final warning! Now go to bed and get up at three."

The boy whimpered assent, cast a fleeting glance of timid supplication at his mother, intuitively gave it up and withdrew.

The last warning. Somehow it tallied perfectly with the mood of the moment. Everything for the last time. With a clean slate hereafter. The scales of evil seemed to fall off, and he emerged unscathed and radiant.

"Shall we stroll in the moonlight, or are you too tired?" he asked gently stroking the pitifully thin, greying hair of the frail woman beside him. And a lifetime of miseries seemed to have lifted from her, and a sob of utmost gratefulness, of choking happiness escaped her. And Sreedhar read meanings hitherto unknown to him. Suddenly he saw before him a sick woman, devoted to love, in whom suppressed desires and discarded cravings and disappointed secret longings, all of the full measure of a grown-up, healthy adult animal, seemed to conglomerate into a vast expansive graveyard.....

THE saint worked for a couple of months, and then took a holiday.

Sreedhar groaned under the burden of a restive spirit. The poison was spreading slowly but unmistakably. The unused track was not lost, only superficially buried, and the whirlwind of choking animal cravings and habituated inclinations soon laid the track clear. He started tentatively, hesitatingly.

For a long time he stood rooted at the door. Then he knocked.

“THE prodigal come back! Verily, a fatted calf is called for!” Radha, fresh and lovely, her seductive charms in full battle array, greeted him. Sreedhar felt his feet slipping. Why did he come? But it was too late. The old fever was full on. He could not stand long on the verge of the eternal whirlpool without turning giddy.....

It was early morning when Sreedhar returned home. Rani was standing before the smiling Lord Krishna, engrossed in deep meditation. The oil lamp burning brightly, the smell of *agarbathis*, the crisp cool morning air, accentuated the utter wretchedness and the acute sense of irrevocable ruin he was feeling. Robbed of his life's whole frugal spiritual savings, without a scrap to make a fresh start on, the wreck stood heartbroken, weary of life. And then he caught the derisive smile of Krishna, his eyes glittering.

And he recalled in a flash the occasion two months back when he had taken once more that vow of “Never again!”—that life of happy contentment and peace, the cursed yearning, the fall—yet once again.

“I can't!” he groaned, averting his face. “I don't dare to look at her after this!” And he tottered and sat on the ground, spent, exhausted.

Rani started and turned to look at him with indescribable feelings. Then she ran towards him, wild, seemingly out of her senses. Sreedhar saw that her face was swollen with continuous weeping, and tear-stained all over. She fell by his side.

“Oh, how long you have been!” she gushed out. “And I on tenterhooks not knowing what to do! Hurry, Viju has run away!”

“Run away?” he repeated without comprehension. Nothing mattered.

“HE failed in his examination,” Rani explained in patches, breathless and sobbing. “He told Gopi he would not dare to look up into his father's face after that failure. He has not come home. Oh, don't sit there like a stone. Do act! Go and find him! He cannot have gone far!”

In Lighter Vein :

ALL THREE TO BLAME!

By S. MAHADEV

The Detective had a tough problem. How could he track down the intruders?

PRIVATE Detective Sangham Lal was baffled and scratched his head in bewilderment. Never had he come across such a strange case as the one posed by Moreswar. This retired railway official had just completed the construction of a fine, palatial house and the red painted walls were so pleasing to the eye.

So, it was indeed a great surprise to Sangham Lal when Moreswar urgently summoned him and asked him to start his investigations forthwith.

“Mr. Moreswar, I understand that everything in this house is brandnew but you say these intruders have somehow entrenched themselves. As a result, you and your wife and daughter have the most uncomfortable time. Am I correct in summing up the situation?”

“My friend, you are cent per

cent right. We have had no sleep for a fortnight. Imagine, the house-warming ceremony took place hardly three months ago. I tell you, we are experiencing excruciating agony. Every night I have a creepy feeling. Can't you do something about it at once?”

“I am no wizard with a magic wand,” smiled Sangham Lal. “But I will try. First of all, can you give me a list of the guests who came by plane or train? What luggage did they bring?”

Moreswar stroked his grey moustache and was absorbed in thought for five minutes.

“Only one guest—and that was my wife's brother—came here a month ago. I have no reasons to suspect him. He just brought a small suit-case with him. He lives within three hours' journey by train from this

place. There was no other guest because we haven't settled down and haven't invited anyone as yet."

It was now Sangham Lal's turn to think for a while. Then he announced his decision. "Mr. Moreshwar, I would request you to pack off with your wife and daughter to your brother-in-law's place and remain there for three days. On the fourth day I will tell you about the cause of all the trouble and find a remedy for it."

Moreshwar was very reluctant at first but he complied. On leaving town he handed over the keys of his house to Sangham Lal. At his instance, the departure of the family was quiet and secret.

THEY were all back on the fourth day and were surprised to find the Detective snoring. They woke him up and he welcomed them with a smile.

"Mr. Moreshwar, your wife and daughter are the guilty party and you, too, are responsible to some extent," he said, quietly.

All the three were flabbergasted, and stared at the Detective in disbelief.

"Your wife and your daughter have been borrowing novels and magazines from the lady next door. That lady's house is infested with millions of bugs and the books and periodicals they

borrow are full of bugs when they return them, and they have invaded your house too and robbed you of your sleep. As for you, Mr. Moreshwar, you must spend more liberally on light literature. I find your people have also lent to their neighbour some of their books and when they were returned they brought in a load of bugs. So neither a lender nor a borrower be, as the poet said. And, lastly, I have used some effective disinfectants to get rid of these little intruders. In addition, you had better give a thorough white-wash to the building, to be on the safe side. My bill is not much. It comes only to Rs. 250."

Moreshwar gave the Detective a cheque for Rs. 500/- and thanked him with all his heart for his unique service in getting rid of the intruders, namely, the horrid bugs! ‡‡

BOY'S DISCOVERY

"Is it true that we are made of dust?" a little boy asked his mother.

"Yes, dear," she answered.

"Well, is it true that we go back to dust when we die?"

"That's what the Bible says," his mother replied.

"Well, I just looked under my bed and someone there is either coming or going."

Health :

Simple Tips for All

DURING AN ATTACK OF SMALLPOX

(By A FAMILY DOCTOR)

IT is during the hot summer months that smallpox is more prevalent and persists in epidemic form. All that we know is that it is related to heat but nobody knows why. Among the most dreaded scourges of the world smallpox is one. Two hundred years ago in Europe, anyone who had an attack of smallpox was left on the street to die.

In England itself people died like flies and those who pulled through the ordeal suffered serious disfigurement or blindness. Macaulay called smallpox one of the frightful agents of death. He wrote: "The havoc of the plague was more rapid but the plague has only reached our (England's) shores once or twice within living memory, and smallpox was always with us, filling the churchyards with

corpses, tormenting with constant fear all those it had not stricken, leaving on those whose life is spared the hideous traces of its powers, turning the babe into a changeling at which the mother shuddered, making the eyes and cheeks of the betrothed maiden objects of horror to the lover."

In May, 1796, an English doctor by name Edward Jenner hit upon vaccination as a general preventive against smallpox. The entire civilized world has now gratefully adopted his method today in its fight against smallpox. What are the benefits of vaccination? If the lymph prepared in the various institutes is fresh and well preserved it confers immunity on those vaccinated for at least five to seven years. If, however, anyone gets an attack shortly after vaccina-

tion, he will not suffer from the diastrous effects of the disease like deafness or blindness. And even disfigurement will be decidedly far less. The general truth cannot be denied that there are millions of people on whom vaccination has conferred immunity against smallpox for scores of years.

But is there any effective treatment during an attack of smallpox? Unfortunately, medical science is helpless in the face of an attack. On the fourth day when fever at 104 or 105 degrees continues unabated the doctor suspects it may be a case of smallpox and gives up all treatment.

And then the pustules begin to appear over the face, the forearms and later on there are big eruptions all over the body, even over the tongue, on the roof of the mouth, inside the ears and even under the eyelids. The Indian way of handling the patient is more soothing. Make a bed of margosa (or neem) leaves and leave the patient on it. It imparts a refreshing coolness and when the patient feels a burning, itching sensation all over, pass a bunch of well-picked neem leaves over the body.

Don't give hot food to the patient. Fruit juice, bananas, the "milk" or juice of tender coconuts can be given plentifully and with advantage. If good citrus fruit is available add it

also to the list. Throw open all the windows and let in as much of fresh air as possible. The first two weeks are apt to be critical and then the pustules begin to get blacker and smaller and ultimately dry up.

What cannot be cured by man must be cured only by God. In that sense our people describe smallpox as a visitation of Goddess Durga. There is nothing wrong in such a conception as they approach the patient in a mood of dedication and purity of heart. The only request to them would be not to cast the neem leaves used on the patient into the river or tank or any common water source. Otherwise, the danger of infection will increase and the efforts of the sanitary authorities in controlling the epidemic will be defeated. ††

ANOTHER HUBBY!

"Madam," said the fortune-teller, "you should be very, very happy. A nobler and a more handsome man than your husband you have yet to meet!"

"How absolutely thrilling! But when?"

SHORT STORY

Two wives and a concubine made him rich and prosperous but utterly miserable. But Fate marked for him quite an unexpected career...

Marriage And A Promise

By SUKUMAR

THE Vaikunt Cafe was filled to overflowing with customers. The shouts of the waiters and the noise produced by the constant clatter of cups and plates reached terrific pitch. In the large kitchen, however, the cooks who were preparing the cakes and the savouries were calm and unperturbed. They had a ready supply enough to last till closing time. It was already 8 p.m.

Old Chinni Rau was a new recruit. His big paunch was heaving as he was grinding paste. The perspiration was streaming down his forehead. Now and then he wiped it off with a small towel on his left shoulder.

Hari, the chief cook, turned towards him and waved the oil-

dipped iron ladle in Chinni's direction. "Hey, stop grinding any further gram paste. There will be no more *vadas* today. Go to the other mortar and prepare coconut chutney. That will be the last item for you today," he shouted over the oven.

Chinni Rau rose up, went to the window and spat out pan juice. "*Achcha*, master," he said cheerfully to Hari. "I am free after finishing that, I suppose?"

KRISHNA Iyer, the assistant cook, who was a tall black man with a bald head, smiled. "Chinni Rau, I think I have seen you somewhere before but I can't remember where. But

and send away his daughter with him? Such a situation would spell his utter ruin. From prosperity to poverty again, especially when you are very old and when you feel weak about the knees...It was an appalling thought.

Srinivas was talking and he must hear him out. "Mama, your second daughter Sakuntala is as beautiful and well-behaved as Sumathi. How old is she?"

"TWENTY-FOUR," replied the old man, perplexed at his question.

"But is it not time she was married off? Have you got enough money?"

"No, Srinivas. What you give me is barely enough to keep me above want but I haven't been able to save anything. In fact I wanted to ask you about it."

"Suppose I put to you a plain question?"

"Yes."

"Are you prepared to give Sakuntala's hand in marriage to me?"

Devakar was astounded. For one moment he beamed with joy and in the next second his face was clouded.

"I shall be glad, Srinivas, if you take her for your second wife. Such a thought did not occur to me before. I came here to advise you to marry again some girl of your choice. But supposing Sakuntala turns out sterile like her sister, I am afraid you will misunderstand and even hate me. I am not prepared to face such a situation. Better marry elsewhere and be happy."

"If Sakuntala also bears no children, mama, I shall take it that the fault is mine, not your daughters'. I promise you there will be no misunderstanding. What do you say now?"

"My dear Srin, I shall be only too glad to comply with your proposal. As for Sakuntala, I may assure you she won't question my decision. Go ahead."

"But there is just one snag and I wish to avoid it, mama. I have seen many a home wrecked where the man took two wives. Even when they happened to be sisters they have quarrelled and given the husband hell. What will you do to avoid such a tragedy?"

THE old man thought for a while. "Oh, Srin, I can't recall a single occasion when Sumathi and Sakuntala ever quarrelled. Each would always say that the other's joy or sorrow was hers. I have a plan in my mind. You had better bring Sumathi to my residence tomorrow night."

Srin, his father-in-law and mother-in-law, his wife and sister-in-law assembled in a room on the following night. When Devakar announced his decision that Sakuntala would be given in marriage to Srin, the girl blushed and bent down her head. The old woman shed tears of joy and Sumathi embraced her sister.

"BUT, my daughters, this marriage can take place only if both of you give a solemn promise not to quarrel with each other under any circumstances. Take a vow now, will you?"

The sisters embraced again and swore that they would strive their utmost to make Srin happy and preserve the domestic harmony at all costs. And soon Sakuntala and Srin were married. Still greater luck awaited him. He opened two more hotels and became truly happy.

There was a pause.

"Sakuntala must have become a mother," ventured Hari.

"No," said Chinni Rau. "Sumathi bore him three boys but Sakuntala had none. The sisters, however, kept their promise but, all the same, Srin became an unhappy man. He deserted these two lovely women and spent all his time in a house of ill-fame. He lost both his money and business. Sumathi's sons who grew up in due course and did business of their own would not forgive their father

who had made their mother and step-mother so miserable. Old Devakar died of a broken heart. Now Sumathi and Sakuntala are devoting all their attention to the welfare of their sons and their children."

"What happened to Srinivas and what happened to his concubine?" asked Krishna.

"That is a different story. Come on, is that the cashier calling us? I am due to get six rupees for this week's work. So we are all going to the picture, my fellows? Hey, Krishna, don't forget about the pack of beedis, will you?"

"No, Chinni. You have told us a moving story and we will give you the best treat, as promised. Get the cash and come back," said Krishna.

AT this time, an attendant burst in. "Some old woman wants to see Srin at once. I told her there is no such man. She swears there is. Is there anyone here by the name of Srin?"

"That is myself," grinned Chinni Rau. "You know, friends, Srin became corrupted first into Jeeni, then into Chini and finally into Chinni. You have heard my life-story. That woman is my....er...you know who she is. I have to hand over the week's wages to her and will come back soon."

His listeners were dumb-founded. ¶¶

The Haunted Bedroom

She spent the night in a strange country inn though she stayed in the best of the bedrooms. But one needs to have the nerve to read her story...!

I WAS motoring through a remote, desolate part of Wales in October, 1951, when about six o'clock in the evening, the car unexpectedly developed engine trouble. It was already dark, raining heavily, and we were a mile from the nearest village. My chauffeur, a thoroughly capable man, doctored her up as well as he could, and, going slowly, we presently came upon a welcome roadside inn.

It was a somewhat tumble-down building, but I was thankful to reach it, for the car had been threatening a complete stoppage for some time past.

I was shown into a comfortable sitting-room in which a generous fire blazed. We had been driving for some hours and the keen wind had made me hungry. I ordered a meal and then asked to see my bedroom.

The landlady, with a pleasant 'Surely, ma'am, if you will please follow me—' led the way up a creaking staircase and opened the door of a room on the landing above.

It was somewhat bare and uninviting, and I liked neither the look of it nor its atmosphere,

BY

Mrs. J. O. Arnold

For I instantly knew that the room had witnessed some tragedy. I can always 'sense' rooms, and this one conveyed to me an impression of human suffering.

THERE was a four-post bedstead hung with red curtains in the centre of the room—the rest of the furniture I scarcely noticed.

"Is there any other room at liberty?" I asked.

"Only one other indeed, ma'am," the landlady answered. "We are very full because John Thomas is holding a revival meeting in the village this very night, and a number of people are staying in this inn because of it, look you."

"I'll see the other room, please," I said.

It was shown, and I took it.

BUT I had not occupied it ten minutes before I discovered that it was not watertight. Trickles of wet meandering down the wall on one side proclaimed a leaking roof. Plainly I must choose between the certainty of damp or the possibility of psychic trouble. Even in the face of that wet wall, I hesitated.

"Nonsense!" I said to myself sharply. "Even a tragic atmosphere is better than a damp one!"

I jerked the old-fashioned bell-pull, and after a pause a countrybred chambermaid appeared at the door.

"After all I have changed my mind," I said. "I prefer to have the room I saw first—"

"All the rooms are taken ma'am, for sure," the girl answered.

"There is one other at liberty—a room on the lower floor, with a four-post bed in it," I protested.

The girl hesitated. She appeared uncertain—embarrassed.

"I will follow you," I said, handing her my rug and travelling bag.

But still she made no attempt to lead the way.

"I know the room is disengaged," I said. "It was offered to me at first."

The chambermaid did not budge.

"It is the Best Bedroom," she said, as if that should certainly put me off: "the family keep it for themselves surely. You would not care to sleep there—"

"But why not?" I asked. Evidently the girl did not advise my engaging the room. "Is there a ghost there?"

SHE coloured up. "I never heard there was," she said quickly. "Nor no one ever saw one there, so far as I know. But—better stay here, ma'am."

Her high-pitched voice, rising at the end of her sentences with true Welsh inflection, was insistently persuasive.

"It is queer to sleep in—everyone knows," she said, finally.

I realized that she was trying to dissuade me for my good. After all, it was kind of her to warn me of the 'reputation' attaching to the Best Bedroom. Probably it was only a tale—grossly exaggerated as usual. Yet I had certainly been unfavourably impressed...I glanced at the trickle on the wall...My mind was made up.

"Nevertheless I will try the Best Bedroom." I said with decision. "Light a fire there, please, and put a hot water bag into the bed—"

THE long drive had tired me comfortably, so that after a quite decent country meal I went upstairs early. My room was unexpectedly snug—a blazing fire upon the hearth, red curtains over the window, a huge arm-chair drawn up to the hearth. For an hour I sat and read by candlelight, feeling warm and rested...

But not entirely at ease. The impression I had at first received still hung in the atmosphere of the room. A sense of indefinable dread, of foreboding, of growing fear oppressed me...I had not been mistaken. What I had felt upon first entering the room had not been the result of physical fatigue. It had been caused by psychic apprehension...

Later on the same chambermaid reappeared bringing me hot milk. At once I tackled her.

"Why did you say this isn't a good room to be in?" I asked. "What exactly did you mean?"

The girl, whose name was Megan, coloured guiltily. "I meant nothing for sure, but that it is a big lonely room for a lady to be in alone," she said. "The room is right enough, ma'am."

"But you said everyone knew...." I began.

"There was a lady here a year ago who had a bad night in it. She was took ill for sure and said it was the room—perhaps it was the cold—she did not have a fire like you, ma'am—"

I suggested that few rooms would escape bad reputations if being ill in them were the cause.

But Megan, with a quick "Goodnight, ma'am," disappeared hurriedly, apparently not wishing to pursue the argument further.

I DID not believe for one moment in her explanation. It was pretty clear that she had thought better of her impulsive warning and wished to make light of it. Probably she had talked downstairs with more sincerity than discretion and had been admonished to be more cautious. I had asked her if the room had the reputation of being haunted. For I knew that it was.

I hesitated whether or not to lock my door. This time it was

a question of a stray revivalist—not a burglar—walking into the wrong room, or the possibility of the inn taking fire. The latter fear prevailed—it is my pet nervousness—and I did not turn the key.

SNUG as the red curtains made the room I felt they would be 'stuffy' through the night, and so drew them aside—and opened the window. The rain had ceased and a young moon alternately appeared and disappeared through a driving wrack of banking clouds. Everywhere was silence—probably the revivalist had not yet exhausted his eloquence. Perhaps I had better get to sleep before his hearers returned...

I put out all the candles but one, and climbed into the high four-post bed.

I must have fallen asleep almost at once, for I have no remembrance of lying awake and did not hear any sounds from below stairs.

But when I again became conscious, it was to such a renewal of mental activity as language fails me to describe. An overwhelming, appalling fear gripped me—an apprehension so intense that even to tell of it now is to revive once more in faint degree the horror of it...

I tried to cry aloud. My jaw refused to act. No sound came from my lips. I tried to

open my eyes—to look about me. My eyelids were heavy and would not lift...

I heard footsteps moving softly at the far end of the room, yet could not turn my head in their direction. I heard voices at my bedside talking in whispers and could hear what they said—but was incapable of movement.

"Well—that's over," whispered one.

"Better so," another answered.

"It's in the room, she said," the first voice continued.

"Aye. But where? Not in any likely place. I've searched them all—"

"Under a floor-board, I'll be bound. We'll search there later," the other responded.

AND all the time "I knew, but could not tell them, that the gold was safely sewn into the mattress where I myself had hidden it. I could almost fancy I could feel the coins beneath me for all the thickness of the feathered bed that covered them."

The thought had made me forget my fear for the moment. But now it came back—stifling, deadly...

I was powerless, utterly helpless. I could not cry out. I could not move so much as an

eye-lid—no indeed, certainly not that, when a weight as of lead lay upon both.

Presently the voices ceased and I heard the door close. I was alone.

How long I lay I cannot tell, but it must have been for hours, because even through my closed lids I could tell that daylight had succeeded darkness. Yet either it was a grey day or the blind must be down.

How can I describe the agony I endured? I could hear, I was fully conscious, yet I could neither speak nor move. It seemed to me that my heart had ceased to beat. My brain strove in vain against the power that held me in remorseless grip. It was like a desperate, caged thing....How long would this nightmare, this horror of inaction, of despair, continue?

Two men came. I knew them to be men by their heavy tread and their voices. They stood by the bed and one gave out measurements to the other...and still I could not rise, could not utter sound...

More hours of such agony that why my heart did not burst, my brain ceased to function, I do not know.

Then, when once more complete darkness encompassed me, voices and steps came again.

I felt myself being lifted, and

a moment later the contact of—was it a wall? Then, with a sudden terrible understanding I knew what it all meant. They had put me into my coffin—they were going to bury me alive!

I knew the truth now.

Frantic terror seized me...I should know the horrors of the tomb whilst still alive. Since I appeared to exist without breathing how long should I survive lack of air?

It seemed a hundred years before they came again...Then it was soon done. I heard the lid placed in position, the screws being turned...

THEY told me that my shrieks had aroused the entire house. The landlady and her maids came rushing upstairs to find out what was the matter, anticipating murder and sudden death. They discovered me, my screams suddenly silenced, lying in a dead faint.

When I recovered I found that they had been very kind, and had done all they could for me—smelling salts, brandy, hot water. But my one desire was to get away. As soon as I was able I dressed myself hurriedly, trembling all the time—the vivid impression of that horrible experience still strong upon me.

The landlady herself helped me with my toilet and when I grew calmer, I questioned her.

"Who has died in this room?" I asked.

"A great many people, to be sure," she said soothingly, as if there were comfort in numbers. "It is the death-room, certain. All the family come to it when they know the end is near. It is the best room in the inn, look you."

"Who, for instance?" I persisted.

She began checking the deceased on the fingers of her left hand.

"There was Evan William, my father-in-law's grandfather."

"No!" I interposed sharply.

"David Williams—"

"No. What women?"

She named several. Then at last:

"AND the furthest back I know for sure was my husband's grand-mother, Mrs. Rhys Williams. Poor thing, she fretted herself into the grave, I'm told. She had fainting-fits very bad, look you—and lived always in fear they would bury her alive. She even made her husband promise to cut her finger to make sure indeed that

she was gone. But he never did.

"EVER since her coffin was taken out of it the room has been queer. There was a lady slept in it some time back and she was took just like you, ma'am. I don't know, indeed, which made the most noise, sure to goodness I don't. She came for a month to do some painting—but she left the very next morning—I don't deny it, ma'am. Folk say the room's queer. If it's John William's grandmother's ghost that comes back I'll be even with her this next spring as ever was. I'll have the room painted and papered and change the bed so as she'll not know it—"

I left the moment the car was ready. I knew what my experience meant. I had entered the arc of that unfortunate woman's ghastly fate...I had felt what she felt. Her agony of anticipation had left a clear-cut and undying impression in the room in which she suffered, the ghastly fear she had endured was still there, imperishable, vivid, capable of being experienced by a psychic person.

During that awful night I endured the appalling terror through which that unfortunate woman had—the suspended animation, the tied-up jaw, the weighted eyelids, the undertaker's visit, the final horror of the coffin.

—Please see page 54

Even a Scotland Yard sleuth would handsomely acknowledge Doggie's uncanny ability as a detective. But the little fellow had strange manners. . . !

THE LITTLE DETECTIVE

By RAVI

THE brown little fellow crept into my life like a ray of sunshine. The man who sold him to me claimed that he was a relation of the famous Madras Police dog, Yuvaraj. No further recommendation was needed and I bought him straightaway. When I called him "Balraj" he at once rushed towards me with tongue lolling and tail wagging. He then raced about my spacious room, smelt my clothes, tasted my shoes and brought me back my fountain-pen when I tossed it on my cot. The only things he wouldn't handle were the ponderous law books that I was studying but he seemed to love them better than myself. For, he would sprawl over them on the shelf or neatly curl himself up and go to sleep.

My mates in the lodging house took to Balraj as duck takes to water. Their admiration was mingled with respect when they learned of his relationship to Yuvaraj. They brought him bun, bone and basket wherein he could ensconce himself. He

would follow each student into his room and emerge with him after half an hour as his closest friend. There was only one fellow who was hostile to Balraj. He was Bhaskaran, the boy who attended to the needs of every lodger. One fine morning he gave Balraj a vigorous kick and the latter retaliated with a vicious bite in the former's right calf. Bhaskaran howled in pain for more than an hour and I took him to my doctor who bandaged his wound and gave him a preventive injection.

A week after this incident we were startled by strange happenings. The lodgers began to complain that a number of valuable things were missing from their rooms—a wrist-watch, a purse containing two ten-rupee notes, a fountain pen and three gold shirt buttons. They came in a body into my room and demanded to know whether Balraj had suddenly lost his detective ability. The little fellow who had been curling himself up under the cot seemed to be aware of their mocking

tone and emerged, barking. He pulled at my dhoti and ran towards the exit of my room. I asked others to keep quiet and watch. I followed Balraj who ran downstairs and stood pawing at a small trunk box. We all knew it was Bhaskaran's. We had given the boy leave for a month to go to his village and recoup his health. He had had frequent attacks of malaria. That night he was to board the train. He had just gone to the bazaar to make some purchases.

One lodger impatiently prised open the lid of the box and lo! all the missing articles were found in it. Needless to say, Bhaskaran was beaten and kicked out of the lodge. And the little hero was pampered by the students jointly and severally.

THE next evening I was smoking in my bed. Feeling slightly feverish, I did not venture out. Suddenly when I heard my grandfather's car screeching to a halt I went over to the window and threw my Gold Flake cigarette over the tiles and got ready to receive my grandfather. Of one thing he never approved—my smoking. When he came into my room he was concerned to see me indisposed. He was counting out my weekly allowance to me with characteristic caution when he jumped from the chair with a howl. I at once discovered the cause much to my embarrassment. Balraj had seized my half-burnt Gold Flake and laid it by mistake on Grandfather's bare foot. I im-

mediately removed it, and threw it back out of the window. "Get out, you stupid Balraj!" I shouted in anger.

Grandfather was aghast. "So my dear grandson," he said reprovingly, "you have honoured me thus by naming a wretched dog after me! I don't know how contemptuously you will treat me after I am gone!"

Only then did I realise the blunder in having given Doggie such a name. I was struck dumb and could offer no explanation. But little Balraj wouldn't go in spite of my orders. When Grandfather rose to go he fumbled for his walking-stick. "My God, I have mislaid it somewhere," he muttered in vexation.

I rose to get it for him but he held up his hand. "No, don't exert yourself. I will find it out," he said. But what was our surprise when Balraj seemed to guess at the nature of his quest, flew out and brought Grandpa's walking-stick between his teeth? Then Grandpa went out with an admonition to me to take care of my health.

That night Balraj had disappeared. The lodgers searched for him all over the neighbourhood but in vain and lodged a complaint with the Police. The next day, however, Grandpa sent a messenger to say that Balraj was with him and that he was proving quite useful! ††

Yesterday's Bachelor

By M. S. PADMANABHAN

He was clever and elusive and rejected his mother's choice. But a girl in the bus proved too wily. She outwitted him and proved evenmore elusive!

"I SAY, only you—Please wake up. The milkman is shouting himself hoarse," shouted Paru.

Slowly, yawning and stretching himself in the bed, Gopi looked up at her, with sleepy eyes, full of pleading to let him sleep undisturbed at least for an hour or two more.

"It is already nearing six. Up! Up!" said she.

"I will get up in a minute."

"I know that a minute means an hour for you. If you want to sleep—you can. But don't blame me, if the coffee is not good."

Slowly and reluctantly, muttering under his breath, Gopi got up and went to the verandah, where the milkman waved the milk vessel before his sleepy eyes and set about his work.

"Instead of idling about, why not finish some item of work?" came the authoritatively kind voice.

"WHAT work can I do now? Should I not watch the milkman?"

"Well, why not brush your teeth? Here, your brush and paste. Have I to remind you daily?"

"Acha! I will complete that," said he in a meekly vexed tone. mical and, at the same time, ge bonus points."

By the time he had finished his morning chores and started for the office with the customary adornments—chappals, umbrella, one bag containing some tiffin, one bottle of fresh water and one flask full of coffee—his wife had exacted from him as much as about a dozen items of work.

He had to cut down the plantain tree, which had yielded a ripe bunch of fruits, split open the stem and take the tender midstem, rearrange the firewood in the bathroom attic, shift the bureau from the left hand left side corner of the room to the right hand right side corner, wipe the bathroom lamp (bulb) clear of the soot which had enveloped it, rinse all the clothes in the soap, search for the missing hair-pin, locate the elusive comb, etc., etc. All this, his intelligent spouse accomplished, with a stern word of command here, with a kind and doodling voice there, a joke there and a retort here.

When Gopi complained one day to his spouse about his friends' cutting jokes on his getting curd-rice daily, she countered with, "Well! they go to the hotel and pay four annas for a handful of useless stuff which is titled *Bagala-Bath*, but is in no way different from or superior to your curd-rice. At least you are not so foolish as they are. You are more econo-

Gopi was very lucky that day, and caught the bus, when it had just started to move, heedless of the shouts of the conductor who was standing at the other end of the bus and who, Gopi was sure, could not reach him for some considerable time.

On the back ladies' seat, only two ladies were sitting and Gopi comfortably dropped into it at the other end and began to fan himself vigorously with his handkerchief, stealing a glance now and then at the women next to him to see whether they showed any signs of vexation or irritation.

One of the ladies did give him a side-long glance and her eyes stayed fastened on him for some considerable time. With some haste, Gopi averted his eyes from her and tried to look the other side.

All this trouble in life was because of this 25 number bus, he thought.

LIKE all people, endowed at least with an iota of common-sense, Gopi was also a confirmed bachelor. The freedom, comforts and easy life of bachelorhood appealed to him very much. For one thing, if a married man goes to a picture, he has to spend twice as much and most of the time go to a higher class. As a bachelor, you dress well, without any serious clamour from any-

body else for costly sarees etc., need not be tied down to the house, and in short lead a wonderful life.

How then did he come to be deceived into the clutches of matrimony, sacrificing at one stroke all the luxurious comforts of the blessed bachelordom?

He also had a talkative mother, whose only chant, whenever he visited her, was that he should soon marry a suitable girl and make his mother's safe passage to heaven secure by begetting at least one grandson before she died. Like all matter-of-fact and earthly individuals he also tried to put off this thing indefinitely on some pretext or other and to a great extent succeeded in that also.

It was then that Mr. Sarabeswaran caught hold of his address and began to lay siege to his one-room fortress. In spite of his employing all the methods in his capacity to thwart the gentleman in his efforts, the adversary proved too great for him and finally succeeded in getting the address of his surviving parent.

The preliminaries regarding financial and other matters being settled after the wishes of his mother, he got a letter from her stating that his marriage had been arranged and a date had tentatively been fixed for betrothal. Roused was our friend's ire beyond control and

he penned a few lines to his dear mother, impressing upon her the necessity to consult, and take the consent of, the parties directly affected by the marriage, allow them a chance to understand each other and finally to have at least a glimpse of each other; in reply to which his mother wrote, saying that the parties directly affected by the marriage had, after due consultation, already given their consent, the parties being (1) herself as the mother-in-law designate and (2) the girl—the bride-to-be. They had also discussed at length their habits, likes and dislikes etc., and come to a very cordial understanding. What was more, during the discussions, she had scrutinized the girl thoroughly and found her to be very domestic, quiet and pretty, like goddess Lakshmi.

ANYHOW, for his information, his mother had sent a photo of the girl adding that she was slightly tanned in complexion, but otherwise all right, being a very well-behaved girl with nice manners and an attractive countenance—"with her beautiful nose and bewitching eyes"—she wrote. Being worried about the impending doom which would shatter his freedom and chain him to domestic boredom, he wanted some excuse to put this thing off. He enquired here and there about Miss Sarabeswaran and could gather enough points to thwart his mother and Mr. Sarabeswaran in their joint efforts to ensnare him into the wily net of matrimony.

He wrote back a long letter stating how marriage was a matter of supremely major importance, being of a life-long duration, how one's happiness or ruin depended upon it and wound up by saying that he did not like this match for the reason that the girl was black, in fact jet black, was nearly his height and, last but not least, equally educated.

Now, let there be no mistake.

Let us understand Gopi well. By nature he was very selfish and of a nasty temperament, at times full of irritating sarcasm. He used to get all his sundry chores executed by his friends in the lodge. A request here, an authoritarian voice there, an indulgent attitude in another enabled him to pull through in life.

After completing the letter, as an after-thought, he added that even if all objections were to be overcome, it remained an insurmountable objection that the girl was twenty-four years of age and was not a suitable match for him. He never wanted to marry a girl above twenty.

Thus wrote he and remained content, in having broken the mesh thrown around him. All the pleadings of his mother were in vain, and she resigned herself to the fact that her son wouldn't get her the passport and letter of entry to heaven by the approved method and began to look for other means to secure her passage to "swarga."

One day, shortly after the D-Day, after finishing a hearty meal in a cafe, Gopi came to the bus stop, of course on time and the bus slowly slid to a halt. He went forward to get into the bus, but noticed a dexterous damsel trying to push in first. Being a chivalrous bachelor he waited for her to pass. As is wont to happen at such times, the usual misunderstanding cropped up and she also hesitated, thinking that he may get in first. Then after a moment's hesitation he put a step forward and felt that she too was doing the same thing and so hastily withdrew, almost, on time with her. The conductor was irritated at this dilly-dallying and cried out, "Come on, all are waiting impatiently." So, boldly, he made a dash for it, to find that she too had almost made it. Thus did they both put simultaneously their right foot first on the footboard, about which some humour bug remarked from inside "the Grihapravesam, ah!" And in the meanwhile the conductor gave a long whistle and when the bus started with a lurch, but for the protecting arm of the brave hero, the damsel might have found herself thrown down from the foot-board of the speeding bus.

WITH profuse apologies to each other they entered the bus and took their respective places—she in the ladies' seat vacated by a man who had been seated in it so far and he to the throng of strap-hangers, popularly known

as 'the standing passengers' to whose pressing and crushing number was added the man who had just then given up his seat to the lady passenger. Gopi felt that he had seen that girl somewhere before but was unable to place her. He could not, however, steal even one more glance at her, due to the increasing rush of standing passengers, pushing him to the front and creating a wall of opaque humanity between them both, nor was he conscious of the fact that similar thoughts were passing through the girl's mind, too.

He, however, noticed that she got down at the previous stop to his and entered the Ham Bam Wam & Co. opposite the bus stop. He knew their closing hours. He applied for permission to go home early by half an hour in the evening. Needless to say that he felt a thrill run through him as he took the 4-45 bus and realised that he was correct in his surmise that the girl too would come for that bus. In Kodambakkam, even though the next stop would have been nearer his lodge, he got down at the hotel stop and noticed again that his getting down from the exit was timed to a second to her exit from the back entrance. Involuntarily he began to follow her, for, that way lay the road, leading to his lodge.

After about two minutes' walk, she snapped at him and hissed, "Why are you following me?" Gopi was dumb-founded.

This was a great setback to his fundamental theory about womanhood! With all his suave manners he was never accustomed to tackle fiery birds. His conception of all women (except his mother, of course) was that of frail, snuggling, cooing, coy and shy beauties, fit to adorn, but of not much utility nor to be taken seriously.

"Well er..." he stammered—my lodging also lies in that direction."

"Why then are you staring at me like that all the time...as if you would devour me?"

It never occurred to Gopi to counter by asking, how she knew that he was staring at her all the time, had she minded her own business.

He was visibly melting now. They were walking on a stretch of road on which new houses were under construction. Long rows of brick piles were to be seen. The workmen had completed their jobs and gone home and the whole place was deserted, more or less.

SHE took advantage of his silence and proceeded, "You could have got down in the next stop, to get to your lodgings... that too with the same ticket?"

The insinuation in her voice was complete and open. Gopi wilted under the charge but his mind began to work vigorously—beneath the dull exterior.

How his lod

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"So y son?"

"How do you know?"

"The most ascetic, puritan bachelor!" Her voice was full of sarcasm.

"How did you—oh!" the thought struck him like lightning—it was the photo—she was Sri Sarabeswaran's daughter.

"You said, I am black!" It was plain accusation.

"I never meant to offend you. If only I had known that it was you—"

"How long do you know me to care for my worries and troubles?"

"I feel, I have known you all my life. I could hardly do any work in the office today. Since our strange encounter this morning," he wanted to say, but the words stuck in his throat. All he could blurt out was—"Not

know about that, you see, is it not just for a man to have a fair girl for his wife?"

madam—by the Fair! Do you mean to say that any fair girl will come within arm's length of you?"

ple 'Call me Having said REALLY, he was shocked. He had to talk his way out of this anyhow.

Krishna—Gopi

Kamu Auntie's

"All right, but I am only 5 feet 5½ inches and you seem to be like being 5 feet 6 inches."

"Ah, hadn't you ever read that appearances are deceptive? I am not rotund like you. I am slim and that is why I look like being 5 feet 6 inches. I am not an inch more than 5 feet 5."

"But, even that is too much, you see, to be a perfect match."

"Do you want to marry a 3 foot midget? Why! if I were to be short, you would not have taken all this trouble—because I am tall, slim and shapely, you followed me like like a..."

"Oh, you have not heard my case in full."

"What is your case? Do you think girls will flock around you?" He was stunned. She pressed home the advantage and tried to trap him into a corner.

"Do you understand the significance of a row of well-set

clean teeth? What an asset they are to any face."

"Really!" he said. Inwardly he thought, rather stupidly unto himself—"Well, mine are in a row!" Instinctively his right hand that was stroking his chin, wandered to his mouth. Row, my foot, thought he. These are all in a row all right, but are jutting out, pushing past the lips and I have to stretch my lips over them, which makes the awkwardness all the more significant." Suddenly, he felt terribly ashamed and was vexed with himself.

Realising that her sharp glance had caught him unawares, feeling his shameful specimens of teeth, he hastily withdrew his hand in great confusion. She could not suppress the sudden flash of a smile—a smile significant for the exhibition of a neat row of uniform pearly white teeth. All her vehemence and consternation were gone. Taking this as a fresh opening, Gopi launched his offensive.

"TAKE the question of age," said he, meekly however, "you are about twenty-four, but I wanted to marry a girl below twenty only."

"Below twenty!" she almost cried—"why you have completed 29 and are almost 30 and you want a girl below 20? Is there no law in this country to punish such evil-minded people? Well! Had you been married at twenty, in about ten more years time,

you would be the father of a girl aged twenty? Mr!" she shook her head sadly. "You are doomed to end your life as a lonely man—without anybody to care for you, none to share your joys and sorrows; none to comfort you in trouble and console you in despair—a bleak future—oh! I am horrified at the very thought of it."

"WELL! come to think of it, you are right. I have so far rejected about ten girls above twenty but more than twenty girls below twenty have rejected me, I heard," said Gopi wisely.

She smiled back at him.

"You know, I like your frank ways," he confided to her.

"Perhaps people never really tried to understand you, that is all. I'll tell Father what a really kind heart and understanding nature you have," she said significantly.

"So shall I write to my mother about you? All that is good and beautiful, nice and charming lively and lovely—in the world," said he.

They walked entranced, looking into each other's eyes—oblivious of the surroundings.

It was not until Mrs Sarabeswaran called out aloud

—Please see page 6

On Casting an Evil Eye!

AS we walk along any street our eyes get attracted by some grotesque figure staring down from some new house or building under construction. Any evil glance, of malice or envy, which might possibly have been directed at the building, gets deflected from its target and falls on the ugly figure—the evil-catcher.

These apparently crude attempts at averting the evil eye is not new to our country alone. It was known to the Egyptians, the Arabs, the Greeks and the Romans. Indeed, the Egyptians had perfected a system of protection against the "Evil Eye" by spells, amulets and talismans. The Arabs, on the other hand, used engravings from Holy texts as a sufficient protection against the evil one. The Romans protected their crops from damage by incantation, exorcism and, sometimes, fascination.

The Evil Eye is supposed to affect adversely, in particular

children and the young of cattle. Indian housewives from time immemorial have developed their own methods in this respect. At dusk or sunset a lighted wick is waved in front of the suspected victim, usually a child of tender years, and then it is thrown into a vessel containing a solution of lime and turmeric. The flame attracts the evil eye away from the child (or so it is believed) and the turmeric water absorbs the flame. This malignant liquid is later thrown out into the street whereupon the child becomes normal.

In Hindu royal courts of old, "betel-throwers" used to be employed whenever royalty went out in state. Their duty was to throw fried rice and red flowers along the path of the royal procession and thereby to distract the evil eye.

The Evil Eye, according to

Hindu belief, is supposed to be specially malignant in the first month of *Dakshinayan*. No auspicious acts are undertaken during this month, especially in Malabar. Pujas are offered to Lord Ganapati — Ganapathi *homam*—during the first 12 days by affluent families and in the evenings *Easwara Seva* is performed involving an elaborate ritual. A diagram, as prescribed in the Agamas, is made on the floor in an auspicious part of the house, pigments of five colours being used for this purpose. In the centre of this diagram is placed a lighted brass lamp, symbolising God, the lamp having wicks facing the four cardinal directions of the compass. Then follows an elaborate chanting from the sacred texts by Namboodiris specially trained in the *Agamas*. The underlying principle of these rituals is that human beings get depressed during this month and attract more than their normal share of the Evil Eye. This, if not cast out by proper ritual, might lead to dire consequences. Looking at the five pigments in the soft light cast by the oil lamp, for any length of time, is supposed to guarantee the casting out of the Evil Eye.

It is significant to note that

during this *Easwara Puja* red flowers are offered in profusion as, according to belief, they have a greater effect in ridding one of the effects of the evil eye.

Call it superstition or what you will, the fact remains that in our country as elsewhere a psychic attack is met by a psychic remedy—well and truly met. ‡‡

The Haunted Bedroom

—Continued from page 43

So hideous a fate as here is probably not possible in these days of medical science, but at the period when this unhappy woman met her fate, burial whilst still alive was probably not infrequent.

Let me tell you the curious sequel to my story. Last May I was looking through a newspaper when a headline caught my attention—"Money found in a mattress."

It was an account of the discovery of nearly one hundred sovereigns hidden in a mattress which was unpicked during the spring-cleaning of a room at an old Welsh inn. It was the same house in which I spent the most terrible night of my life. ‡‡



IT IS FUN

HUBBY ADMIRES

"I've been married since I saw you last."

"So I heard: In fact, I knew your wife before you married her."

"You're lucky—I didn't."

* * *

MISER'S DOUBT!

A man who was very rich but noted for his meanness was questioning a salesman in a car showroom. At last, indicating a certain model, he asked, "Does that one consume much petrol?"

"A mere spoonful, sir," replied the exasperated salesman.

"A teaspoonful or a table-spoonful?" asked the miser.

WILLING TO STAY!

A man stepped up to a front door, knocked, and the door was opened by a beautiful blonde. "May I speak to your husband for a moment?" asked the caller.

"I'm sorry," said the blonde "but my husband is away on business. I don't expect him back for at least a fortnight."

The man took another look at the girl. "That's all right," he murmured. "I'll wait."

* * *

BOTH OUT

"And what did the landlord do when she found you had left the light on for three days?"

"She turned us both out!"

WHAT A MEMORY!

From the office of a memory training institution the following letter was addressed to a man who had taken the course:

"Sir,—We feel gratified that you should have taken the trouble to call for the purpose of expressing your satisfaction with our system. May we ask if you will be good enough to write a letter stating the benefit you have derived from the completed course—with permission to publish?"

"PS.—Your hat and gloves, which you left at this office, have been forwarded by parcel post."

* * *

SOLICITOUS

"This is Captain Banks," said a hostess, introducing a handsome guest to a pretty girl. "He has just returned from the Arctic."

"Oh," said the girl, do come nearer the fire—you must be perished."

* * *

SUITABLE GIFT!

Making tests of a home-made brew which a cautious Scot had submitted for analysis, the chemist said: "I'm sorry, but this stuff is dreadful. If you drank this I guarantee you'd be blind

for life. You'd better let me destroy it."

"No need to do that," said the Scot, reaching for the bottle. "My old friend McPherson has been blind for years. I might as well give it to him for a birthday present!"

* * *

WARNED

A man with many worries was visiting his doctor again. "Do you smile at your troubles as I advised you to do?" asked the doctor:

"Yes," replied the patient.

"With what results?"

"The boss has warned me three times to wipe that silly grin off my face and get to work."

* * *

HENPECK

"When we first married my wife and I had some dreadful rows—until eventually we both realized that I was wrong."

* * *

TO PUT OUT FIRE

"Only cheese for dinner to-night?"

"Yes, dear. When the chops caught fire and fell into the tart, I had to use the soup to put the flames out."

CYNICAL!

A vicar out for a walk saw an old gardener digging up a neglected garden.

"It's wonderful what the hand of man can do with the aid of Providence, Wilks."

Answered the gardener: "You should 'ave seen this place, sir, when Providence 'ad it all to itself."

* * *

NOT A KISS?

They sat in the gloaming.

"Just one," he pleaded.

"No, certainly not," she replied.

"Please, darling," he persisted.

"Don't ask me again," she frowned. "I've only one left, and I want to smoke that on my way to the office in the morning."

* * *

RIGHT AND LEFT

"Which is the platform for the London train, please?"

"Turn to the left and you'll be right."

"Don't be impertinent."

"Very well, then—turn to the right and you'll be left!"

* * *

THE ALTERNATIVE

"What," someone asked a parliamentary candidate, "will you do if you're elected?"

"Good gracious!" exclaimed the impecunious candidate. "What will I do if I'm not?"

* * *

FELL AGAIN

A young wife was chatting with a friend. "My neighbour had her face lifted last week," she said.

"Really, I don't see much difference in her," the other replied.

"No, it fell again when she saw the bill."

* * *

MINUS THEM!

"Can you send a full-length mirror up to my room?" asked the hotel guest.

"But you have a half-length mirror up there already," replied the hotel clerk.

"I know. I've been out twice already without my trousers."

RUST

A man had been complaining that he had chosen a wet spell for his holiday last year, when a friend interrupted: "It can't have been so bad—you came back sunburned!"

"Sunburn, nothing," he replied; "that was rust!"

* * *

HER EXPERIENCE

"Look at this lovely ring John's given me. It fits beautifully."

"Yes, it's very nice, dear. It was a bit tight on me."

* * *

BOYS KNOW!

A pretty school-teacher was telling her pupils about the advent of spring.

"As I stood on the station platform one morning waiting for my train, I felt something lightly caressing my cheek. Can anyone tell me what it was?" she asked.

"The stationmaster's moustache," suggested the bad boy of the class.

ONLY NUT?

"What are you going to call your baby, Alf?"

"Hazel."

"What! You've got the whole calendar of saints and you're going to call her after a nut?"

* * *

DIFFERENCE

"What my wife doesn't know about cooking isn't worth knowing," announced Brown.

"I'm afraid that's just the bit my wife does know," said Robinson.

* * *

NOT GETTING IT

In a night club a dizzy blonde snuggled up to her escort. "How about giving me a diamond bracelet?" she murmured, holding out her arm to envisage the effect.

"My dear," replied her friend, "extenuating circumstances force me to preclude you from such a bauble of extravagance."

"I don't get it," said the girl in bewilderment.

"That's just what I said!" came the grim reply.

SHORT STORY

THAT IS LIFE!

LIKE a guilty schoolboy, Shanker stepped into his father's private room as lightly and noiselessly as a wind-blown feather and looked at his father for two or three minutes. But his father did not notice him. He was sitting on a big sofa with his head behind a newspaper which he was reading then.

In this awkward position, Shanker did not know what to

not be back before 8 p. m. To wait so long for him was quite impossible. This fact put a little more courage in him and he walked a few more paces nearer to his father and feebly uttered, "Daddy."

At this voice of his son the old man lowered his newspaper down to his shoulders and raised his head. A look of surprise came into his eyes as he looked at his son's melancholy face and

He told his father that he would marry no other woman but his college mate. With a small fortune he left his city to get his dream girl.

But between the cup and the lip...

do. Helplessly he looked about him and then at his wrist watch. It was 6 p. m. The April sun was already sinking down into the western horizon. That meant his father would soon stop reading and go away to the Vijayawada Cultural Club in Devi Street of which he was a member. In that case he would

slovenly dress.

"Yes, Shanker," he said at last, putting down the newspaper beside him on the sofa. "Yes, what do you want?"

"I don't want, daddy—," Shanker said and stopped, fear

choking down the rest of his words.

"Don't want what?" asked the old man, rather anxiously.

"DON'T want to marry—," Shanker could not manage to say more. He stood trembling before his father.

"Don't want to marry!" exclaimed the old man. "Why? Why don't you marry? No, no, you must marry. You're not a little boy now but a young man of twenty-three."

"Not that, daddy," stammered Shanker. "I want to marry—but not Suseela!"

"Not Suseela!" exclaimed the old man, his face instantly turning red. "You don't marry her? Why, tell me."

"Because, daddy," blurted out Shanker, trembling from head to foot, "because, I want to marry—Prema—my old College mate—I love her!"

This piece of news came like a bolt from the blue for the old man. He had never even dreamt that his son would fall in love with any girl, especially when he was studying in Madras. Of course he had sent him there to study well but not to court any college girl. That was why he had selected Suseela for him, confirmed the betrothal before the elders of the society and fixed up the wedding day for

the 7th May. All this he had done first and then informed his son because he had never doubted that he would object to anything he did. His other two sons did not; they simply married according to his arrangements. But, quite contrary to all his expectations, Shanker, his youngest son, rebelled against him like this.

This fact whipped him into no small fury; his eyes turned as live coals; his teeth ground; his lips compressed; his fists clenched; he half rose from the sofa to hit his son and neck him out of the room. But he did not do so. Instead, he controlled his anger a little and forcing rather a mild expression into his face, asked, "Who's this girl? What's her father? Her mother? Where do they live? Tell me about them so that I may think over the matter again."

SHANKER infinitely thanked God in his heart for the unexpected turn of temper in his father. Yet he stood before him like a convict and struggled internally how to answer his father's questions. After swallowing down three or four times he began at last:

"Her father, daddy, is a retired engineer. He's getting some pension now. His name is Narayan Rao. He's a very good gentleman. His wife also is a very good woman. I've been to their residence many times and they like me very

much. They'll give their daughter to me. Once they even asked me to marry her."

This above account of the people seemed to have vexed the old man. He moved on the sofa uneasily, frowning upon his son. He drew out his pocket watch and consulted it. It was 6.30 p. m.

"All right, Shanker," he said without betraying his displeasure in his voice. "It's enough now. I'm afraid you've picked up the wrong girl to marry. I can't approve of your selection."

"Daddy," protested Shanker, desperately, "I can't marry any one except her. She'll die if I —."

"Shut up!" growled the old man, now giving full vent to his hitherto suppressed indignation. "Shut up, you fool, stupid. Get out of the room. You shall never marry her. I will never give my consent to you to marry her as long as there is life in me."

SAYING this he stood up, picked up his newspaper and his walking stick, hurried out on to the verandah, and shouted to the driver in the garage to bring the car. And when it came in no time, he rushed in and shouted, "To the club!" to the driver.

Shanker also rushed to the car behind his father to beg him but he couldn't catch up. When the car was gone, he went to his own room, dropped into a chair before the table, leaned his

elbows on it, buried his face in his hands, and surrendered himself to the pangs of misery.

The next morning, still wallowing in such a miserable state, he started accusing his father in his heart. No doubt, he thought, his father was the author of all his misery. He did not even consult him about his own marriage. What a senseless old man he was to have done so! What a heartless man he was to ruin the life of his own son!

NEXT he turned his accusations on the society as the joint author with his father. No doubt, he was certain, it had many evil customs. And the most evil one among them was the marriage according to orthodox principles where a young man had no voice in his marriage. Anyway, what was a society in India? he asked himself. Was it not a dominating body of cunning old people over innocent young men?

Next, he began wracking his brains to find out how he might escape his marriage with Suseela and marry Prema. Immediately half a dozen ideas came into his mind; he would not eat or drink anything until his father repented and gave his consent to his marriage with his sweetheart; or, he would immediately disappear from home for a few months until his marriage with Suseela was cancelled; or, best of all, he would run away to Madras and then elope with his sweetheart away to Bombay; and so on. But, like a man of

many idle thoughts but little action, he followed neither course but let the time slip away between thought and action.

MEANWHILE all the arrangements for his marriage went on like clock-work and, at last, the wedding day itself came upon him like his Doomsday. No other person could ever be so miserable as he that day. Innumerable relatives and guests came upon him like swarms of locusts and led him, as if he was a captive, away to the bride's home. There they met with another host of relatives and guests of the bride. All these people, after greeting one another with a few grins, laughs and handshakes, settled themselves, some to eat food, some to drink coffee, some to chew pan, and all to shout for more. But, it all seemed nothing but a country fair to Shanker.

At last, the auspicious hour for the ceremony also drew near, demanding him to yield up and compromise himself over the situation. But he could not; it was quite impossible for him. Suddenly a host of relatives and friends confronted him. Some of them rebuked him for his lack of interest in his own marriage, some encouraged him to be up and active and the rest thronged round him to array him in ceremonial clothes. Poor man! it was a great ordeal for him to hide his misery and put on a happy face before the innumerable guests at the ceremony.

After the wedding Shanker could not overcome even a bit of his misery. On the contrary, he grew more and more wretched. He ate little, talked little, and moved little among his relatives. Not only that. He started thinking how he might take vengeance upon them and upon his society people. In his view they all were responsible for his wretched state; they had ruined his life; they had ruined his sweetheart's life; they were all life-ruiners.

HE did not spare his wife even in these accusations. He considered her also as one of them. She was a born enemy to him, to his darling. Why did she marry him at all? Why did she not marry some one else? How to punish her? How to punish his haughty-tempered father? He let loose his mind like this and grew worse and worse in misery.

At last a chance had come to him, a chance to punish them all. It was also a chance to leave his misery behind and go forward to the realms of eternal bliss. One morning his father had suddenly come into his room and putting some money into his hands, said, "It's yours, Shanker — Rs. 4,933. It has come by way of wedding presents to you. You may use it in whatever way you like. But I advise you to keep it in the bank."

"I will never do it," shouted Shanker to himself when his father was gone. "No, I will

never do it. I will never put this in the bank. I'll run away to my darling with this money. This will stand me in good stead. Yes, I'll go to her. She doesn't know yet that I am married. Neither will I tell her that. I'll simply take her and go away to Bombay and live there. I will never come again to this wretched place, to these wretched people."

THAT very night at 8 p. m. without any bag or baggage but only with his money in his pocket, he went out as if for a stroll. Soon he took a taxi on the road and went to Bezwada Railway Station in ten minutes. He then bought a ticket for Madras and got into a compartment of the Madras Mail.

In the train he made plans for his future life with his darling. He calculated the fares and the incidental expenses from Madras to Bombay by an express train. He then calculated the rest of the amount as sufficient to meet his expenses in Bombay, at least for six months. He thought he would move heaven and earth and secure a job before that period had expired. And so on.

At last, the next morning the train arrived at Madras Central Station. He got down and walked briskly to the car park. There he hired a taxi again and within fifteen minutes got down before his darling's house.

Now his joy knew no bounds; his face shone bright; his heart

leaped and danced; his spirits soared high into the sky. In such a happy state he walked straight into the house without announcing himself. But when he went in he found, to his great surprise, not Prema, but only her old parents.

THEY welcomed him with a smile and treated him to refreshments. Then they broke the news to him. Prema had been married to a young man of their own community. Since Shankar didn't come earlier they thought it best to give her in marriage to Venkat, his sister's brother-in-law's son.

Shanker went back home. "That is life," he told himself. "I think I should love my wife. She must be very sad and miserable."—B. VICTOR. ‡

Yesterday's Bachelor

—Continued from page 52

"Paru! Paru! why don't you come in?" that they realised they had actually passed her house and had also walked a few yards ahead. Full of shame and blushing deeply (so he thought) Paru ran into her house and he walked on to his lodge, completely dazed, as one in a trance.

In the next fortnight Gopi and Paru were married.

"So it is!" thought he, "I propose a thing and Paru disposes of it. It began that way and seems like continuing forever." ‡‡

FROM FAR AND NEAR

ALL ABOUT CHEQUES!

WHEN there are no funds to meet a cheque and, in consequence, it is returned unpaid, it is said to "bounce"—an apt and colourful colloquial expression.

Cheques are returned unpaid, however, for various other reasons, and by popular usage all such cheques have come to be known as "bouncers."

When cheques are returned unpaid by banks the reason is always stated in clear language at the top left corner, usually in red ink, says a writer in a British Monthly.

Refer to Drawer

The accepted phrase for a dishonoured cheque is "Refer to Drawer," which really means that the bank is unable to pay the cheque and the owner of it is referred to the drawer for an explanation.

There is a stalling answer that may be but a prelude to "Refer to Drawer," and that is "Effects not Cleared," meaning that the

money is there but consists of uncleared cheques. It is an invitation to try again.

At one time the reasons given by banks for the return of cheques were written in abbreviated form by means of initials. These answers were most mysterious, and bank staffs themselves were sometimes puzzled at fresh samples of abbreviation.

When it was found that these initials were capable of misinterpretation, it became the rule to show all reasons for non-payment in clear language.

Post-Dating

Though the reasons are clearly written, their meaning is not always clear to those unversed in technical expressions. It may, therefore, be helpful to discuss the various parts of a cheque, and to explain what can go wrong.

First, the date. That ought

not to give trouble, but it often does. Any cheque which is accidentally dated ahead of the date when it reaches the bank cannot be paid, and would be returned marked "Post-Dated."

Sometimes post-dating is deliberately done, and as a rule it is then a cloak for lack of funds.

Mistakes with dates are frequent at the turn of the year, and it is common to find cheques issued in January bearing the date of the previous year.

Banks have to be careful not to assume that all these are mistakes, or a genuine "stale" cheque might slip through—cheques are generally stale or out-of-date after six months.

A clue to mistaken dates may be gleaned from the date shown on the impressed stamp. If this is later than the date on the cheque, it is plain that the cheque date is a mistake. Help of this kind from the impressed stamp is, however, merely chance.

Alterations

Any disagreement between the amounts in words and figures would entail the return of the cheque, though banks are willing to pay the smaller of the two sums if the owner has said in writing on the cheque that he claims the smaller sum.

If there is no claim of this kind, and if it is the figures which are smaller and the discrepancy

only trifling, the bank may consider itself in order in paying the cheque.

But the bank cannot elect to pay the smaller sum when that is in words, or there would be trouble with the clearing-house, which deals only with figures.

Alterations to any part of a cheque inevitably suffer from lack of clarity, and are therefore a favourite device of the forger, who may increase the amount. It is important, in making out a cheque, not to leave him any loophole for this.

Signatures

It is not surprising that banks look at alterations with great care. If the cheque is to pass, the alteration must be clear and must carry the drawer's initials alongside—and if the initials differ from their appearance as part of the signature, the alteration should be fully signed.

Possibly the greatest number of returns comes from errors of one kind or another in endorsements.

The usual answer is "Endorsement Irregular," though at times the expression "Endorsement Requires Banker's Confirmation" reveals that the bank returning the cheque is not sure whether the endorsement is correct or not.

This often means that the writing is so bad that it cannot be read, and sometimes the fact

is bluntly stated by "Endorsement Illegible."

The word "discharge" may be used instead of "endorsement" for some special kinds of cheques, and with these cheques there may be a receipt-stamp missing, or perhaps a signature written wholly across several stamps instead of partly on the cheque.

- Signatures do not often give trouble, but it does happen that cheques which need two signatures are presented bearing only one, and have to be returned for the other.

Banks get to know their customers' signatures very well, but illness, accident or perhaps a merry evening are reasons why a signature will look unusual.

Forgery

Forgery is another reason. Banks never assert that a cheque is a forgery. All doubts about signatures are resolved by returning the cheques with the non-committal answer "Signature Differs."

Cheques are returned when the drawer is dead, insane, or bankrupt, and when the account has been closed or transferred elsewhere. Cheques are also returned when the drawer has no account, or when made out in pencil, or when incomplete.

Another reason is that the drawer may have instructed the bank to stop payment of a

cheque, when the answer given is "Orders not to Pay."

A source of some confusion arises from the practice of banks to cancel all signature before cheques are paid. This is to prevent old cheques from being fraudulently put into circulation again.

These are the more usual reasons for the return of cheques. There are others. Banks always give their reason for non-payment, and the true bouncer can thus be readily distinguished.

IN THE JAWS OF A LION!

A game ranger had been away for several weeks patrolling remote areas of his game reserve. Delayed on the last stage of the return journey, he decided to push on with his horse and dog in the hope of reaching the base camp before nightfall, leaving the natives with the pack animals to follow as quickly as they could.

He was still several miles from base when darkness began to fall, and he saw a dim shape emerge from the undergrowth ahead, then vanish again. Probably a buck disturbed by his approach. A few moments later it again appeared on the path, and again went on ahead into the darkness.

This time his dog spotted it, and ran on a few yards, barking. So far the ranger had taken little notice of what was, after all, quite a common occurrence. He was, therefore, completely

unprepared for the shock that followed, writes Philip Street in "Tit-Bits."

Rider Tossed

For the third time the dim shape appeared ... and his blood ran cold as he recognized a lion in a crouching position, ready to spring. As the great beast leapt forward he just had time to pull his horse sharply to the side of the track.

The full force of the charge had been avoided, but the lion's flailing claws ripped into his horse's flanks. Mad with terror, it tossed its rider high over its head.

The bump that the ranger expected as he neared the ground never came. By an amazing mischance he fell straight into the jaws of a second lion that was following the first into the attack!

Holding him firmly by the right shoulder, the lion trotted off along the path, with the ranger's legs trailing along the ground beneath its body.

Death Imminent

When death is imminent, thoughts succeed each other rapidly. At first all he could think about was what must have seemed his certain death. Would it be swift, or would there be prolonged torture—worse even than the excruciating pain already shooting through his shoulder?

Half-fainting with agony, he shifted his free left hand and grasped the six-inch knife he always carried in his belt.

As his fingers closed round its handle the lion, having dragged him about 150 yards, stopped beneath a tree and released its hold preparatory to beginning the serious business of making a meal of him.

Knife Thrusts

With all the force he could summon the ranger sunk the blade twice to its full length in the animal's chest. Roaring with pain, the great beast reared its head, giving him the opportunity to slam home yet another knife thrust, deep into its throat.

Baffled and hurt, eyes blazing with fury, the lion sprang back and for brief seconds the two antagonists eyed one another. But the lion decided it had had enough, and to the hunter's intense relief it turned about, walked some thirty yards away... and dropped dead.

Subsequent examination showed that both chest blows had penetrated its heart.

But danger still lingered. The ranger remembered the first lion, realized that before long it would get the scent of blood—and he was rapidly losing strength from shock and pain of his wound. He summoned up sufficient energy to pull himself up into a tree, but had reached a branch only ten feet from the ground

when his strength gave out. He knew that at this height he could be pulled down quite easily by the other lion if it spotted him.

Terrible Danger

By this time he was feeling very faint. Realizing the terrible danger of falling off the branch if he lost consciousness, he tied himself to the tree as best he could with his scarf and waited. Sure enough it was not long before the first lion returned, nose close to the ground as it followed the trail leading right to the foot of the tree.

It must have been just on the point of tracing the scent up into the tree, when the ranger's faithful dog appeared and attacked the lion from the rear.

For a few moments its attention was diverted as it turned to drive the dog away. But it soon returned to resume its examination of the tree.

Again the dog appeared, and again it had to be driven off. This, in fact, went on until at last the ranger heard the welcome sounds of the approaching natives with the pack animals. As they appeared the lion slunk off into the undergrowth and they were able to release the wounded man without interference.

Although the chances of escape are not very good for a man who is seized by a lion when there is no one about to help, this ranger is by no means the only man to survive such an ordeal. One of the most extra-

ordinary cases was that of an unarmed native who was suddenly attacked and carried off while walking through the bush.

Savage Bite

Finding his face close to the lion's he managed to get his teeth into its nose and give it a really savage bite. The sudden pain so shocked the lion that it released its grip and, roaring loudly, loped off into the jungle.

This story has an amusing sequel. The district commissioner was very impressed by the man's courage, and felt that his bravery deserved public praise and recognition. Accordingly, at the next assembly of the local chiefs and inhabitants, he gave an account of what he described as the bravest action of the year.

But the natives didn't see it that way. To them it was the funniest joke of the year. The idea of a man biting a lion on the nose reduced them to hysterical laughter, and the meeting had to be abandoned as it was quite impossible to calm them down again!

Hunter's Trick

The fact that nine out of ten lions will walk off if they see a man approaching during the daytime is not much comfort. It is the tenth that charges and does the damage, though even against a charging lion an unarmed man may stand a chance if he keeps his wits about him.

—Please see page 75

Questions & Answers

(All types of questions are welcome though the right to pick and choose is reserved. Answers may be diverting, informative or instructive as the case may be but under no circumstances is any offence meant to any one.)

C. Krishna Dhar, Srinagar.

Q.—What is platonic friendship? Do you honestly believe in it?

A.—Platonic friendship is friendship between a man and a woman in whose relationship sex plays no part—at least, that is what they say. Honestly, we don't believe in it. Such a thing is impossible. When an attractive young woman and a handsome man meet and talk, they can't think of anything else but sex. Such platonic friendships always end up in secret intimacy. For real platonic friendship to endure and be successful, the woman must be past fifty, the man at least sixty!

R. S. Damodaran, Trivandrum.

Q.—In your July issue a woman has written a story, "Night of Folly" in which she denounces magazines which publish misleading sex advertisements. I know, some young women go astray in the hope that they can get over their troubles by going in for the pills advertised in such magazines. Ultimately, when the advertised drugs do not have any effect, they commit suicide. What would you advise conscientious readers like me to do?

A.—For the sake of your sisters and the dignity of womanhood, you must boycott such magazines and advise your friends not to purchase periodicals containing such bogus advertisements.

Miss K. Khosla, Bombay.

Q.—Looking for a husband seems to be a serious mission. My

father is wearing himself out in the search for a suitable match for me. Can you hold out any hope?

A.—Patience, dear angel! The right man will turn up when the inevitable hour arrives. Your husband-to-be must be hiding somewhere, he is not going to be born. Your father's mission will soon culminate in your submission to some man. Don't you worry!

S. Rajendranath, Jaipur.

Q.—I am an earnest believer in astrology to guide me in respect of my future. My grievance against you is that you have no such feature in your otherwise excellent magazine. Will you ever...?

A.—Hold on, dear reader. From the current issue we are publishing astrological forecasts that every reader will find useful. They are authentic, written by a man who can well look into the future and prove to be a reliable guide. We don't publish bogus forecasts like a weekly here which reproduces, word for word, what it published in 1948!

B. Nirupa Ray, Calcutta.

Q.—Do you think Communism will spread in India? If so, how?

A.—The present wrong-headed policy of speedy industrialisation will give a fillip to the growth of Communism. At least when the private sector was given free scope the trouble was contained. Talk of nationalisation is another factor encouraging Communism. Wholesale industrialisation and establishment of heavy industries are not suitable to the genius of India.

T. Rama Row, Mysore.

Q.—I am fifty and a widower. Last night I dreamt that a beautiful girl walked into my life. How do you account for it?

A.—We are certain that you are reading all the advertisements in the "matrimonial" columns of the newspapers on the sly. You should be careful that your grandsons don't catch you reading them!

P. Raghuvir Shastri, Lucknow.

Q.—It turns my stomach to see some of these women wearing stomach-choli. They leave nothing to the imagination. What is your opinion?

A.—Stomach cholis nothing! You must see in our city some girls who wear transparent muslin for bodice and still more transparent silk for blouse. All this makes us wonder whether they are clad in anything at all. Their husbands or parents must be horsewhipped for permitting such exhibition.

Purun Chander, Samastipur.

Q.—What do you think is the motive behind Pakistani incursion and entrenchment in Assamese territory?

A.—It reminds us of Hitlerian tactics. When Hitler was talking peace with the Polish chief his army invaded Poland. So was the case with Czechoslovakia, etc. Prime Minister Noon is talking of permanent peace with India but is sending troops into Assam. Does it not sound queer? Remember, Pakistan has a stock of the deadliest and most modern weapons which America has so generously given her.

K. R. Reddy, Hyderabad.

Q.—I am such a busy man that I can spare just a minute for prayer. Will you put me in the way?

A.—So, with one minute of prayer, you want happiness for eternity. I can imagine you eating your fill for one hour at a time. But you are better than some of the godless men elsewhere!

G. Somasunder, Madras.

Q.—Sir, the Madras State Bus Service is most unsatisfactory. On some of the routes I find people waiting impatiently for the sign of a bus and looking at their wrist-watches. Will you suggest a way out?

A.—Ask those people to wait for the buses not with wrist-watches but with calendars round their necks!

PLANETS & YOUR FORTUNE

ASTROLOGICAL FORECASTS FOR AUGUST

By T. V. RAMAN

MESHA

(Aswini 4, Bharani 4, Krithigai 1.)

This month is neither good nor bad for men. The effects will be mixed. Jupiter and Venus are the two planets that can be counted upon for luck. Mars and Saturn are throughout under check. Success in undertakings, financial gains, favourable results in examinations, arrival of friends and relations are the probable good results. Promotions in service and increase in emoluments are also possible. As far as the health point is concerned, it cannot be said to be good. Kethu in Janma Rasi and Mars in Janma are likely to keep you indisposed. It is better to avoid extraneous undertakings, cycle riding, etc. as there is risk through accident. Those who are having a favourable Dasa and Bhukthi will be able to easily manage this month successfully. Lucky Days : 4th, 10th, 15th and 26th.

Women will fare better than

men during this month. There will be all round comforts. Health will be good. Financial resources will be plenty. Misunderstanding will cease and there will be rejoicing. Lucky Days : 7th, 17th and 29th.

VRISHABHA

(Krithigai 3, Rohini 4, Mrigasirsha 2.)

This month is generally not promising for men. The major planets are in evil houses transmitting evil influences. It is better to avoid new undertakings and ventures. Avoid travel as far as possible. It is advisable for those in services to put up with pinpricks and misunderstandings with superiors. Financial loss, loss of prestige etc., are also likely. Investment should be avoided. From the health point of view, this month is very bad unless one runs a favourable Dasa and Bhukthi. It is better to confine one's self at home avoiding extraneous undertakings as far as possible. In spite of all the handicaps the

month will pass without much ado since Venus and Mercury are well placed. Lucky Days : 4th, 18th and 23rd.

Women will enjoy this month. Happy occasions, new companions, success in studies are the probable good results. Health will also be sound. Some may undertake a journey. Lucky Days : 8th, 19th and 26th.

MITHUNA

(Mrigasirsha 2, Arudra 4, Punarvasu 3)

For men this month is excellent. Almost all the planets are placed very well so as to guarantee favourable results. Success all round is indicated. All kinds of luxuries, new clothes, good news, gains, promotions, success in litigation are the probable good results. For those in services, they will be earmarked for higher posts. Their health will be very good. From the financial point of view this month is extremely good. Lucky Days : 10th, 18th and 19th.

Some women may get married. Those women who are already married will join their husbands. They will enjoy the month in all spheres. Birth of children is also indicated in some cases. The month is excellent. Lucky Days : 11th, 22nd and 23rd.

KATAKA

(Punarvasu 1, Pushya 4, Aslesha 4.)

For men the month will be of mixed results. The important feature is that the profession will

come into the limelight. Venus in the 11th house indicates gains, comforts and luxury. One's health will suffer a setback during this month. Regulated diet and limited work and more of rest are necessary for this month. On the domestic front things will go on smoothly. The health of children may cause anxiety to some. The later half of the month will be better. Finance will be maintained steadily with some waste here and there. On the whole the month is good excepting for your health. Lucky Days : 4th, 18th and 27th.

For women the home will be peaceful and prosperous. Their health may suffer during the later half of the month. For social activities this month is not good. Lucky Days : 16th, 18th and 28th.

SIMHA

(Makara 4, Pooram 4, Uthara 1.)

For men the month is not good. The evil results outweigh the good. One's health may suffer very seriously. Fever, cold, excessive heat, eye trouble are the probable sicknesses one has to suffer. It is better to postpone all undertakings, journeys and the like. The finances will not be sound. The month will prove dangerous if cautious steps are not taken in all spheres. An intense spell of prayer will do good. It is advisable to spend the month more at home taking complete rest. Lucky Days : 7th and 27th.

For women this month is equally bad. Their health will suffer very adversely. There will be bad news, grief and sorrow. The month is not good for social activities. Avoid all engagements as far as possible. Lucky Days : 10th and 26th.

KANYA

((Uthira 3, Hastha 4, Chithra 2.)

For men Jupiter and Saturn are very favourably placed. Your interests will be safeguarded. The health will be all right. The finances will be very good. There will be some wasteful expenses here and there. Avoid journeys as far as possible. Lucky Days : 7th, 11th and 19th.

For women this month is exceptionally good. The health will be excellent. One's popularity or influence will be on the increase. The finances will be steady. The household will be happy. Lucky Days : 9th and 18th.

THULA

(Chithra 2, Swathi 4, Visaka 3.)

This month will bring only bad results. Your health may be adversely affected. The wife will suffer a serious setback in health. The finances will be very much affected. It is better to remain calm and composed despite adverse happenings. Lucky Days : 2nd, 11th and 16th.

Women will maintain their status quo. Their health will be good. Success in social and educational spheres is possible.

VRISCHIKA

(Vrischika 1, Anuradha 4, Jyeshtha 4.)

Jupiter and Saturn are adversely placed and will affect men adversely. Their finances will suffer very much. Their health will not be good. There is chance of abnormal waste, unpopularity and mental unbalance. Avoid journeys and extraneous engagements. Mars and Kethu in the 6th house will guard you despite other factors. Lucky Days : 7th and 17th.

Women will meet with failure in all spheres. Their health may be affected. The month in general is not good. Avoid all new undertakings. Lucky Days : 14th and 21st.

DHANUS

(Moola 4, Poorada 4, Utharada 1.)

For men Saturn is adversely placed. All other planets in general are favourably placed. Thus the effects will be partly good and partly bad. Jupiter in the 11th house indicates gains, popularity and rise in official position. Mars in the 5th in his own house promises a sudden improvement in business. Your health will be generally good. Finances will be steady. Avoid journeys as far as possible. Lucky Days : 8th, 17th and 23rd.

Women will have a fine time. Matrimony, birth of child and domestic happiness are the probable good results. In the social sphere this month can be said to be very successful. Their health may not be good during this

month. Gastric troubles, stomach ulcers and the like are probable. Lucky Days : 19th and 27th.

MAKARA

(Utharada 3, Sravana 4, Dhanishta 2.)

For men Jupiter in the 10th house indicates setback in the profession and unpopularity. Saturn in the 11th house and Kethu in the 3rd house will guard you. Those born in this rasi should be well guarded against any setback in health. The finances will not be good during this month. New undertakings and investments should be avoided. Lucky Days : 18th and 27th.

Women belonging to this rasi will experience a setback in health. The children may go sick. This month is not good for social activities. The household will be happy. Those who have a good dasa or bhukthi will find the month tolerable. Lucky Days : 11th and 28th.

KUMBHA

(Dhanishta 2, Sathabhishta 4, Poorattadhi 3.)

For men this month is excellent in all spheres. Their popularity will be on the increase. Those in services will get promoted. Those doing business will meet with a boom. The good results of this month cannot be over-estimated. The finances will be steady. Your health will be robust. This month is very good for new undertakings. Some may get a change of profession for the better. Lucky Days : 8th, 17th, 25th and 30th.

Women belonging to this rasi will experience very good results. Some may get married. Some will give birth to children. Their health will be good. The household will be happy. This month is very good for those in the film line and for musicians.

MEENA

(Poorattadhi 1, Utharattadhi 4, Revathi 4.)

For men the place of Jupiter indicates sorrow. Death of near ones is likely. Your father may suffer a setback in health. Your finances will not improve. Some may experience changes for the worse. The month can be said to be a trying one. Avoid travel and litigation. Lucky Days : 15th, 26th and 28th.

Women will find the month happy. Their health will be good. There will be all round happiness in the household. Lucky Days : 18th, 21st and 23rd.

From Far And Near

—Continued from page 68

A famous hunter once came face to face with a couple of lionesses after he had exhausted his ammunition. One of them turned and walked away, but the other came rushing for him. There seemed only one hope, so he stood his ground, brandished his empty rifle above his head, and yelled abuse at the top of his voice.

The lioness stopped. She seemed puzzled, and was possibly somewhat scared. And then, as though preferring not to run any risks, she wheeled round and disappeared at a smart trot ! ††

Still Great And Superb

JOAN CRAWFORD, the Superb Indestructible, is one of the last of the line of Hollywood's Greats, a glittering star in the grand tradition who shines as brightly now as she has done for over a quarter of a century:

In the unlikely event of your not recognizing her, you cannot fail to sense that she is Somebody as she makes her regal entrance into lounge or restaurant. Always beautifully clad, impeccably groomed and coiffured, Miss Crawford has scant patience with some of the younger school of "Sloppy Joe" actors and actresses with their slovenly clothes and manners.

She thinks that an actress should always be on parade in public. "Why try to look like the girl next door?" she demands. "Who wants to pay good money to see the girl next door if you can see her for nothing over the garden fence?"

Too Perfect

It must be many years since this beautiful woman with the

dark auburn hair, the large, luminous eyes, and radiant smile was in danger of being mistaken for anything as commonplace as the girl next door. Professionally, Joan is a perfectionist. "The best is only just good enough for Crawford," one actor told me a shade ruefully in Hollywood. The fact is that she has taken the trouble to study the technicalities of her job and she expects those with whom she works to have taken equal trouble, writes Dick Richards in "World Digest."

"It isn't temperament—or, rather, it isn't bad temper," a wise director assured me. "It is simply a professional knowing what she wants and making sure that she gets it for the good of her job and of the film."

Joan dislikes discussing her age or the past—"if you look back too much on the past then you lose the present"—so shall we say that she is an extremely young 45-plus. They have been years of triumph and of heartache, of happiness and bitter unhappiness. But all the years have been slogging hard work.

Rapid Rise

Born Billie Cassin in San Antonio, Texas, she left home and a wretched job behind a department-store counter when she was only fifteen. She changed her name to the exotic sounding Lucille Le Sueur and got a job as a dancer in the chorus line of *Innocent Eyes* in Chicago.

There were often more meal-times than meals in those early struggling days. But in 1925 she made her screen debut in *Pretty Ladies*, within seven years had been voted one of the Ten Top Box-Office Stars, and had also taken to the Hollywood social life with verve.

Her gaiety, love of parties and of night-life made her one of the most popular girls around town. Joan was passionately in love with life—and with love. She attracted beaux without difficulty. Yet, despite many romances and three marriages, the will-o'-the-wisp of perfect happiness in marriage always eluded her.

Academy Award

First, Douglas Fairbanks, Jr. then Franchot Tone, and then Phil Terry. "I've gone through three ceremonies with three charming, intelligent men," she has said, "but I've never been married in the way I am sure marriage can be."

But now, at the fourth attempt, I feel sure that Joan Crawford has found what, for so long, she

has been seeking. She is happily married to Alfred Steele, a rich, middle-aged, quietly charming, soft-drink tycoon, and with her four adopted children, she has solved the problem of the loneliness that has dogged her.

Her career has, indeed, been a success. Not all of her films have been good artistically. But, invariably, her own performance has evoked admiration and often acclaim. Perhaps her outstanding performance was in *Mildred Pierce*, which earned her an Academy Award in 1945.

She Has Magic

She is dedicated to the business of being a star. No fan letter is ever ignored. She makes a fetish of punctuality on the set (and, indeed, off it, too), she respects the director as the boss, but has firmly-stated opinions on every aspect of the film.

As a woman she has magic. She loves cooking and running her home and loathes waste of time. She is having her hair done? Then a secretary must be with her to deal with correspondence.

She cannot tolerate laziness, bad manners, precocious children, or the very rare people who don't like her poodle, Cliquot!

In her ambitious struggle to the top she has developed a hard head for business, yet it has not destroyed her generosity or

robbed her of her extravagant liking for clothes and good living.

But it is an even greater thing that she has risen without becoming unduly solemn about her work. "I'll go on posing for cheese-cake pictures as long as the public want them," she says. I reminded her that some actresses regarded it as below their dignity.

"They must have bad legs," she replied pensively.

"PARVARISH"

Starring Raj Kapoor and Mala Sinha, Roopkala Pictures' "Parvarish" is a fine film exploding the myth that "blood will tell." In a maternity hospital there is a mix-up of two babies consequent on an outbreak of fire. The mother, unable to ascertain which is which, decides to bring up the two babies. The rich father imagines that some day truth will reveal itself through the nature of the blood but the two brothers love each other and make great sacrifices and thus confound all predictions. There are tense moments as the powerful drama unfolds itself. The background music is simply superb. Mahmood as Raj Kapoor's brother is equally convincing. Besides Mala Sinha and Lalita Pawar, there is a strong supporting cast including Krishnakant, Nazir Hussein and Radhakrishen. "Parvarish" is cent per cent entertainment, to be sure.

"THIRUMANAM"

Valampuri Pictures' maiden hit in Tamil, "Thirumanam," bids fair to attract huge crowds. With Savithri as the heroine and Gemini Ganesan playing opposite the popularity of the picture is assured. The story is full of pathos and several complications lend deep interest to the plot at every turn. Nataraj, the hero, hails from a family of musicians and though he can sing well his brother exhorts him not to take to the family profession as a curse overshadows it. He warns that anyone who tries to sing for money will bring death to some member of the family.

Nataraj then goes to the city to look for a decent job. There he meets Vani, the daughter of a practising physician. The girl takes a fancy to him, grooms him up as a sophisticated youth and persuades him to accept a job as a radio artist. But Vani soon begins to hate him when she sees him going about with another woman. At the same time, the curse begins to take effect when Natarajan's brother dies. Natarajan almost goes off his mind but Vani rescues him from his mental black-out and marries him. The supporting cast includes Nagiah, S. V. Ranga Rao, M. N. Rajam and Thangavelu.

CHARMED BY INDIA

Petite-dark-haired Japanese actress Yoko Tani, co-starring in India with Dirk Bogarde in

Rank's "The Wind Cannot Read," has fallen in love with Rajasthan National dress.

She was very impressed with the beauty of the costumes and jewellery worn by girls from the Maharaja's School of Arts and Crafts, Jaipur, who acted as "extras" during filming at the Ambar Palace, states a Calcutta weekly.

She was delighted, at a private party, to be given the opportunity of trying on her hostess's ceremonial full embroidered orange skirt and sari, and set of traditional Rajput jewellery. Yoko only found the nose-ring rather difficult to wear.

Already Yoko has a selection of saris to take back to Paris, where she lives with her French actor husband Roland Lesaffre. Now she hopes to take advantage of her trip to Jaipur to buy some samples of the wonderful craftsmanship in gem cutting and design.

"They are quite unique and exquisite," she says.

Grand Return

Founder of Ranjit and a veteran of the industry, Seth Chandulal J. Shah is staging a grand come-back in production.

He has cast Raj Kapoor and Vyjayantimala for the first time together for his new venture *Bahuroopiya* to be directed by Nandlal Jaswantlal. Shanker-Jaikishen have been signed for the musical score.

Among the veteran's previous ventures were such pictures as *Sant Tulsidas*, *Tansen*, *Jogan* and *Humlog*.

Wild Romance

Vivid scenes of romance between 36 wild male and female elephants were shot in jungles near Malampuzha Dam near Palghat in Kerala by Director M. V. Raman for Raman Productions' Technicolor film "Jwala."

It took Raman over two days to shoot scenes of the elephants' love-making.

Raman said that an army of mahouts were of considerable help in shooting this extraordinary scene.

Another thrilling sequence shot was of an elephant hunt. Here, Sunil Dutt, the leading man of the film rescues a wild elephant from the captivity of Pran, the villain, and falls in love with Madhubala, the leading lady.

M. V. Raman, who has canned 10 reels of the film, will take his unit to Hong Kong to shoot two dance sequences by a team of Chinese acrobatic dancers.

Those who will go with him include Sunil Dutt, Pran, Vijay-laxmi and Usha, says a Bombay report.

"Toys, S.N. 123865"

"Kala, Topi, Laal, Redmal" will be the next musical romance to be made by Devi Sharma, maker of "Taxi Stand."

Shakila and Chandra Shekhar will be teamed in the leading roles in this film, which will be directed by Harish Tara.

Shakila will play the role of a street toy-seller and Chandra Shekhar will act the part of a street urchin who fetches taxi cabs for the city gentry.

Kum Kum, who will have another major role in the picture, will also play a toy-seller.

Here & There

Errol Flynn is now sole owner of his half-filmed "William Tell" production and plans to finish shooting that apple in Europe, later this year.

"Rishya Singar" in both Telugu and Tamil will shortly be ready. Mukkarnala is directing the film while Adi Irani is in charge of the photography.

"Thanga Manasu Thangam" is the title of a new film, sponsored by the comedian "Friend" Ramaswami. The story, revolv-

ing round a newspaper, bristles with many funny situations.

Guru Dutt's Hindi picture "Kagaz-ke-Phool" (Paper Flowers) will have the unique distinction of being the first cinematic film to be produced in this country. Starring in the picture are Waheeda Rehman and Guru Dutt himself.

Vijayagopal's Pictures' "Pavai Vilakku" features Shivaji Ganesan and M. N. Rajam in the leading roles. K. Somu is to direct the film.

T.V.S. Productions' "Sollu, Thambi, Sollu" starring Raja Sulochana, Nambiar and Sakunthala, Sarangapani and Mathuram is scheduled for release in October. T. V. Sundaram directs the picture.

M. A. V. Pictures' Tamil film "Mangalyam" is soon to have a Telugu version as well. Krishna Rao is in charge of direction.

Manivel Pictures' maiden hit has been titled "Patharaimathu Thangam." Pandari Bai and Sundari Bai are in the feminine lead.

"Savukkadi Chandrakantha" will be the first venture of M.R.K. Productions. K. Vembu will direct the picture.

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