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INDIA MAGAZINE

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

India Magazine

THIRD YEAR OF PUBLICATION

VOLUME 3 } SEPTEMBER 1958 { No. 7

PITY THE TEACHER !

COMMENDABLE is the interest evinced by the Prime Minister in the status of teachers. He has often written to the Chief Ministers of States, urging them to do all in their power to ameliorate the teachers' lot and to increase the public esteem for them. The Chief Ministers seem to be in perfect agreement with the Prime Minister's proposal but the poser is when and how it is to be implemented.

We are only too familiar with the platitude that the teacher's calling is the noblest on the earth. But we know also that his pay is far lower than that of the chaprassi and that he is condemned to a wretched precarious existence. How then can we give him a decent status, how then can Government raise his prestige? There is only one way—to double his pay, to start with. But where are the funds?

WITHDRAW ALL THE OLD COINS

The old two-anna yellow coins are slowly finding their way back into the Treasury. Even when all of them are withdrawn the old coins of other denominations may continue to be legal tender for long. The differences in value between these and the Naye Paise are being exploited by unscrupulous traders and businessmen, and the common man suffers as a result. When you purchase a commodity worth two annas and give the grocer a four-anna coin, the latter returns twelve naye paise instead of thirteen. When you get change from a bus conductor on tendering a rupee note, you receive a confusing medley. On checking up later on, you will realise that four naye paise which you have lost have gone into the conductor's private purse. Most of the anomalies arising from the use of twin currencies, if we may so call them, will be remedied, if the old coins under the four-anna denominations are quickly withdrawn. The issue of a 2½ naye paise coin will help the public a good deal and ensure more fairness and honesty in transactions at the lower level. ‡‡

SHORT STORY

The Passengers

By T. RAJARAM

How do men and women react to sudden disaster and death? Here is a poignant story that reveals the stress and storm of human emotions...

THERE were just five minutes for the take-off. Besides the four members of the crew and the air hostess Usha, there were ten passengers aboard the aeroplane, bound for Bombay from the Meenam-bakkam Airport.

Usha, dressed in immaculate uniform, was the cynosure of the passengers. In fact most of the passengers were mentally comparing her with one of the passengers, Menaka, the young dazzling film artiste. Both were young and beautiful, but Usha, of course, lacked the glow that spotlighted Menaka, the craze of millions.

Out of the ten passengers, four persons deserved her special attention, Usha decided.

There was Ramchundar, a high officer of the Bombay Govern-

ment. To the beaming air hostess, he confided that he had caught hold of a suitable bridegroom for his daughter Janki. He was in high spirits and had good reason to be so. The bridegroom was coming to Bombay next week to see the 'girl' and give his seal of approval.

GOPAL also had reason to be happy. His wedding with the daughter of a rich "man" at Bombay was coming off on Sunday. He gaily waved the invitation in gold glittering letters near Usha's face. The air hostess instinctively loathed him. She sympathised with the unknown girl waiting for her doom at Bombay. Gopal's dissipated appearance had its own sorry tale to tell. Certainly he was not the type to make any woman happy. He was the man she would least like to be marooned with in an island.....

Then there was Menaka; Usha proudly nestled close to her when the engine roared during the take-off. She had reached the summit in her film career. She was just then working in a Hindi film for producer Suresh and had many contracts. Usha suppressed an impulse to kiss her. Hers was a beauty which entranced even members of her own sex.....

USHA also felt a liking for Sarathy, a man of the world, owning a prosperous business in Bombay. She had understood that the grim and moody man could even smile enchantingly. There was something wrong with his business evidently. He had reason to believe (so he told Usha) that Ganesh, his manager, was proving treacherous. He would have to sack him and his stenographer Rita, he said, first thing on reaching Bombay.

"Everything all right?" asked Usha of the passengers. They fastened their seat belts and awaited.

The engines roared. The runway slipped rapidly back beneath the windows. The plane was zooming in the air.

"The temperatures and pressures are exactly as they should be", Usha told the passengers, "they are going to make a good air trip."

But Usha's proved wrong.

Usha was handing over cups of coffee to her passengers when

she experienced an unusual vibration. The coffee in the cup in her hand spilled and spoiled her uniform. Outside the window she could see Nature in her wildest mood. Clouds were gathering in the sky and the roar of the wind rose above that of the engine.

Usha noticed a thin film of perspiration across the pilot's brow.

It appeared, after all, that they were not destined to live their full span of life.

The pilot and his men were talking of structural failure.

Usha heard a cry. It was the film actress Menaka. She sat by her side and patted her shoulders. Menaka could no longer hold back sobbing, "We'll be killed, all of us" she wept. Usha was reminded of a similar role which Menaka played in a recent film. But this was no acting..... this was reality in all its grimness. Then they heard the announcement from the pilot.

THERE was some trouble with the engines, they were told. They had gone wrong. The co-pilot Menon and Usha would be with them. They would tell them what they should do.

"Don't leave your seats", the pilot pleaded, "keep calm".

"Calm indeed!" Ramchundar growled. "You are told that you will be killed in a few minutes and they expect you to

be calm. It is beyond human endurance. Could we not send a radio message to our families?" he asked.

"I am sorry", said the pilot. "Our radio is extremely busy."

The idea of imminent death did not seem to upset Sarathy. His life had taught him an attitude of detachment. Let the business go to the dogs! After all, he had been too much immersed in wordly affairs. Usha found him chanting passages from the Gita.

GOPAL, the bridegroom-to-be, was cursing the airways. Inefficiency was the order of the day. Once he reached the earth, he would sue the air company for this.

The alarm bell clanged. Even Usha did not think that the end would be so near. The plane, caught in rough monsoon weather, crashed down in a paddy field; smoking bundles, that were people only a few moments before, lay scattered over the ground.

In his air-conditioned office Ganesh was talking excitedly over the phone to Rita. "Did you read of the air crash? Rita, darling.....He is not coming after all—Gone for ever.....No need to worry about accounts and false figures.....This is an occasion for rejoicing, dear. Come here quick.....". He hung up the receiver.

When Producer Suresh heard the news at Santa Cruz Air Port,

his head whirled in dizziness. A young lad led him kindly to a cushion in the office and stood blinking. He did not know what to do then. Even under the shadow of this calamity, Suresh could not help sympathising with the boy. He dismissed the boy with a curt nod and tried to think. That meant, he was broke. He had staked all his fortune on the picture, run into debt, gambled all and lost all. Bankruptcy stared him in the face. A half-finished picture with the heroine dead! Was there a greater disaster that could befall a film producer, at the end of his resources!

Meena found her father in a high state of excitement. The newspaper was in his hands and he was trembling. She was afraid to go near him—her father had never even pretended to love her—and so she waited. But what was he saying! What words did his trembling lips bark out? "Gopal died in air crash"Tears trickled down from her eyes. They were not tears of grief, but of happiness, of relief. After all, she need not marry that villain! God had granted her prayers.....She could still think of marrying Raju.....She rushed to the Puja roomHer mother found her with her palms upraised and joined together, in deep trance before Lord Krishna.

THE officer from the Airways gently knocked at the door of the bungalow. He had a sad

—Please see page 8

BOUQUETS TO INDIA MAGAZINE

When we requested our readers to give their frank appreciation of our Story Number (July 1958) we were surprised at the numerous bouquets we received. We were prepared for brickbats, too, but there was none! Which encourages us to plan for more Special Story Numbers. We would invite readers to write letters on any subject of interest for every issue.

Of the bouquets, we are publishing select few. The cash prize of five rupees has been awarded to Sri Y. V. Visveswaran, "Arvinda", 9-70, Renganathapuram, Coimbatore-1. A money order has been sent to him.

Sir,

A Night of Folly and the Miracle of the Rudraksh carry ideas from the Shastric to the Suptnik age. Day of Reckoning is followed by a night of mourning! Maiden of Malabar is a mirror of the nasty English mind diverted along immoral path. The Last Resort is a lasting piece of laughter. The Salt of Life is a lesson for every gossip-monger! The Call of Love captures the heart. When Chairs and Bottles Fly there is hell to the country and woe unto the citizens! A Girl And Her Money is the best of the lot, nicely woven with novel

ideas. From Far and Near the July issue of India Magazine is jubilant and juicy to every thirsty reader of an English magazine.

Y. V. Visveswaran.

Coimbatore-1

Sir,

Thanks for publishing this Grand Story Number. I have gone through your India Magazine's Grand Story Number of July, 1958. All the stories are selected from the practical

point of view so far as the punishment to the wrong lovers is concerned. The illegitimate lovers really deserve what treatment has been meted out to them in the stories given in this Journal. I think that this Number should be an object lesson for the public and especially the illegitimate lovers. Truly has Sherlock Holmes said, 'Violence does, in truth, recoil upon the violent, and the schemer falls into the pit which he digs for another.'

Other features introduced elsewhere in this Number are satisfactory and in future too the same standard should be maintained in order to guide the young generation which is more interested in reading this literature and which can be moulded on right and suitable lines, given in the way as adopted by you.

Thanking you again,

T.K. Bhatia.

Ajmer.

Sir,

I, for the first time, went through your Magazine, lent by one of my friends, who is a regular subscriber; and made up my mind to be a permanent reader of it, as I appreciated the matter much.

On the whole, your Magazine

is above the average. I wish you glorious success.

R. A. Siddiqi.

Ajmer.

Sir,

I have been a regular reader of your popular monthly Magazine, and feel great pleasure in going through it every month.

Please allow me to tell you frankly why I like the July issue so much. In my opinion, I like the stories best, because I have seen human life in its various aspects as, for instance, in "A Girl and Her Money," "The Call of Love," "A Night of Folly," and really I found love in all its forms.

Love plays (in these stories) such an important role in the life of some characters and I feel that each story gives me the truth.

I like also the article, "The Salt of Life" and the feature "It is Fun".

I believe that a young democracy like India requires more magazines of the type which you edit. I wish your Magazine great prosperity and long life in the service of Bharat.

Ayaneshkumar,
Editor, "Smriti."

Ahmedabad-1.

Sir,

"India Magazine" for its size and price has taken a niche in the temple of fame, surpassing all others of its kind in quality and selection. The July issue is packed with some fine stories, medical hints, fun, cinema and general world news, the pick and choice no doubt. The types of stories in this issue are varied, realistic and surprising, though commonplace, wrought with morals and naked truth. The fate of the fallen woman, the natural behaviour of the Englishman, the unfortunate position of women in general and, above all, the generosity and magnanimity of Indian husbands both rich and poor are cleverly and truthfully depicted in the various stories. We have even the delicious taste of a detective story.

Mrs. Saguna Bai Monsingh
Tambaram.

★ ★

Sir,

This issue is lovely, charming and full of sweetness.

I liked the following stories and other features most :

1. A Night of Folly
2. Maiden of Malabar
3. A Girl and Her Money
4. With Men of Other

Planets

5. The Last Resort
6. Happy With His Four

Wives

A. N. Nagor.
Ujjain, (M.P.).

Sir,

"India Magazine" which you are publishing has nowadays impressed me very much. To my knowledge I can say that the July '58 issue was really so good that I read the whole magazine four times. Every story in it was fascinating. Even more interesting are the proverbs and old sayings, which will be a guide to young men and women.

Ambarnath.

S. Arasu.

The Passengers

—Continued from page 5

mission to fulfil. He had to convey the tidings of the death of Ramchundar to his family.

A pretty slender woman answered his call. Her face paled when she saw the officer in his uniform. She waited tremblingly.

"Mr. Ramchundar died last night in the air crash, madam.I am sorry.....You will hear from the company soon." He left her house feeling the most wretched being on the earth to have to give such news. He had ruined a perfect home.

Janki gently placed her hand on her mother's arm. "What is it, mother?" she asked.

"Your father is no more, Jana. He was killed last night in the air crash".

Three children came out and joined them. Their agonised cries rent the air.

In Lighter Vein :

Among Lazy Folk!

By ESVEE

It was the year of grace, 1903.

Across the waters, in New York, two Negro postmen from Harlem were sipping long drinks—good Scotch whisky—at the local bar. Seated in comfortable armchairs they just lazed it. It was their day off.

Without, the world looked serene. Within, their tummies fairly glowed with cheerful warmth after several glassfuls of aperitif had been downed.

Soon one of them nudged his buddy and spoke up.

"Is't a' raining out?"

"Ah don't know," drawled the other with a nonchalant air of supreme indolence.

"Well, git up and look," insisted the first one.

"Aw, shucks" growled the

persecuted lazy one, "Call the dawg in and see if he's wet."

The above anecdote fairly illustrates how this scourge—lethargy—grips mankind. In our own country we may easily find exemplars of the disease, who can beat the Harlem postman.

The other day, for instance, a cousin of mine, a sprightly young man just out of college came up to the City in connection with an interview for a job in one of the Government departments. As he had a standing invitation, he stayed with us. He came in the evening, washed, dined and smoked a cigarette. Before I could take him a nightcap which I thought he might need, he quietly took his bedroll to the rooftop terrace, spread his bed and soon was sojourning in the Land of Nod.

My God, how he could sleep! I envied the bloke. He could

easily have given correspondence lessons to *Kumbakarna* in the art of slumbering!

Next morning he was up by 9. A few minutes later I noticed that he had slipped into his togs and was generally getting ready for his interview. By way of a shoeshine, he made a swipe at his shoes with a rather smelly handkerchief whisked out of his pocket.

He was tucking in his breakfast of hot *iddlies* when I cautiously popped the question: "Aren't you washing?"

"What for?" came the surprised reply. "I washed *only yesterday!*"

I felt clean bowled.

This brings me to the story of a millionaire Maharajah who was so lethargic that he could not suffer changing his suit more frequently than once a week. Once this eminent person had to keep up an appointment with the British Viceroy. The appointed hour drew near and His Highness's sleek Rolls Royce, which was to take him to the rendezvous, purred into the portico, with engines idling. The Dewan and Huzur Secretary waited for their master to emerge from the wardrobe chambers.

Soon emerged H.H. wearing a suit which looked as if he had slept in them, three nights running. Dewan and Secretary stood speechless with consternation. Soon enough, the former, in a manner keeping with the proprieties of the situation, whispered in the mighty one's ear that the trousers sagged where they should not and hinted that a new suit from Saville Row (of which H.H. had very many) would be, for this occasion, just what the doctor ordered.

"What's wrong with this suit?" groused H.H. "I am using it *only from yesterday!*"

The story sounds true enough.

This aversion for action, for change, this lethargy—if you like—is inherent in the make-up of many of us. Our parks and gardens resemble prairies with the grass growing wild everywhere. The dhobi, instead of taking your dirty linen straight to his steaming pots will throw them in bundles in a corner of his mice-ridden hut until, in sheer despair, you physically goad him into action. As with the dhobi, so with the carpenter, the mason and so on, *ad infinitum*. I have even heard of a milkman, who would not milk his cows, until forced by necessity!

A versatile writer of my acquaintance receives substantial subsidies from city editors for literary work in their periodicals. But our friend has one defect. His afflatus does not function in a normal, systematic way. For days on end, he would be in the grip of lethargy, doing nothing, whilst his distraught patrons tore their hair. Then, when all hope had been given up, the embers of his genius would once more glow: poems, stories, skits and other literary effusions would pour out of his pen like lava from an erupting volcano. In editorial sanctums the sun would shine again and birds would chirp.....!

Not many years ago, I was stationed in a municipal township, in the Tiruchirapalli District. The principal store of the place—which some wags had named "Whiteaways"—was run by a genial Chettiar who, notwithstanding his mercantile acumen and personal popularity, was peculiarly lethargic in that he could not suffer posting his letters as soon as they were written. He would allow a slag heap of them to accumulate and once in ten days...perhaps...he would send them, through a messenger, to be slipped into the letterbox. New customers often would

wonder why their favourite brand of razor blades or soap, which Mr. Chettiar had promised to get from his principals in Madras, never came. True, Mr Chettiar had written to his uncle in Moore Market to despatch the goods...But the letters were in the slag heap cleverly hidden behind his desk...In a week, perhaps, when the heap had become a mound, they would be posted...Then, if the postmaster was punctual and the guys in Moore Market responsive,...the customer would be supplied in a few weeks.....Why worry about the trifling delay? Worse things are happening...The dhobi for instance.....! ‡‡

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ALMOST!

JUDY: Is it serious between you and Mr. Billingsby?

TRUDY: Almost. The first time he visited me he played with my dog. The second time he played baseball with my father. Next time he played with my little brother. I figure, my fun is coming soon!

ANAEMIA: EASY REMEDY

BY A PHYSICIAN

ANAEMIA means lack of blood; sometimes this means total blood, as when there has been bleeding, and whole blood has been lost; sometimes it only means lack of the red blood corpuscles with the substance we call haemoglobin which they carry round with them. This is the more usual kind of anaemia, and there are several kinds of it.

First of all, what is this haemoglobin stuff, and why do we have it? It is a compound which can unite very easily with oxygen, and can also break up the union again very easily. So you can see how useful it is; the blood, circulating round, comes to the lungs and is brought into contact with lots of oxygen in the air there; the haemoglobin takes this up, as we say, and carries it round; and then gives it up to the different tissues in the body as they need it. And so, if we don't have enough of this haemoglobin, there is some difficulty about getting enough oxygen round to all the tissues, and perhaps the blood

has to circulate a bit faster to make up, and so we have lost reserve to fall back on when we hurry, and get out of breath quite easily on exertion.

The Causes

How do we get anaemic? Sometimes, as I have hinted, it can be because of bleeding. You may think, well, that is silly; if I am bleeding I shall know all about it, and be having treatment for whatever is the cause, and if it is really severe, of course I shall have a blood transfusion; so how could anaemia arise by bleeding? Well, the answer is that sometimes there is bleeding which is never very severe, or very noticeable, but which goes on for a very long time, just a little day after day, and in the long run this can add up to quite a loss of blood if it hasn't been treated.

Take Brown Bread

But perhaps there is no cause like that. Other ways in which anaemia can arise are connected with diet. We need iron in our

diet, in some form or other, to help to make this haemoglobin in our bloodstream. Red meat and brown bread are obvious sources of iron—in fact almost any coloured foodstuffs contain it, and the white foods like milk and fish are lacking—and raisins and sultanas are a rich source. The amount of iron we need varies from time to time; we need quite a lot as children, when we are growing, and women need more than men, to replace their monthly loss. Women also need more than ever during pregnancy, when they have to supply iron for the baby's very considerable needs as well as their own.

I am glad to say that we do not often see the kind of anaemia that used at one time to be so common, when it was quite clear that the person's diet was inadequate and there was little hope of doing very much about it because of financial reasons. Similarly, children's needs can be met by extra meals at school, etc., if there is any hardship at home.

Liver & Iron

There is a kind of anaemia which arises because of a deficiency in the patient's stomach contents. It is a complicated matter, but briefly, there are a number of factors which have to be present for iron to be absorbed, even if it is taken into the body in large enough quantities; so that if the vital factors were missing, the iron would remain unabsorbed and be excreted

unchanged from the body. So it is absolutely necessary for all the factors to be present. Liver or liver extract contains the essential factors, and in cases of this kind we give liver as well as iron. We used not to know about the factors in liver, and so were unsuccessful in treating this kind of anaemia, and so it came to be called pernicious anaemia; but although we still call it that, it does not deserve the title any longer. However, it is often necessary for the patients to stay on liver and iron treatment for the rest of their lives, rather in the same way as a diabetic person will have to go on taking insulin, or at least regulating his diet.

The Pills

Vitamins are also important in anaemia, partly by helping to build up the strength and resistance to infection, and partly by being involved in this business of the proper absorption and using of iron.

There are several ways of taking iron. You can get a bottle and take it in liquid form, and then you must brush your teeth after each dose or they will get discoloured. Or there are pills, for those people who can swallow pills; and if you are good at this, then they are the obvious choice. I shall only say one thing about them—never leave the box lying around, because they are coated with green sugar and look like attractive sweets, but a lot of them can be very dangerous to a child. So if you have iron in pill form, do be careful to put the box out of harm's way. ‡

ARE LOVE MARRIAGES DESIRABLE?

By S. DEVI

ARE love marriages desirable? Do they make for lasting happiness? Under a certain set of circumstances, they do. But it is unwise to ignore the factors that militate against men, and in many cases such marriages bring on misery to both the contracting parties and their parents.

All the world, as they say, loves a lover, and it thrills most of us when we hear of some love marriage. But admiration should not blind us to the difficulties waiting around the corner when a young man and a young woman of two different races or communities, or caste fall in love and marry. The opposition from the parents and relations and the orthodox members of the society is invariably fierce and unrelenting. The couple have to live away from their kith and kin, and even some of their friends pretend to be too busy to see them or even avoid them. Thus they often start married life with a disadvantage. Vague apprehen-

sions and even secret fears haunt them. For instance, the parents of the young man openly express their conviction that their son will soon be cured of his infatuation and return to them sooner or later. The mother of the young woman, however, is not so hostile. She sends up a silent prayer for the continued happiness and well-being of her daughter. For all practical purposes, she has burnt her boats. She must make a success of this marriage or go under.

Usually the partners in such an adventure are brave and ready to stand up to any challenge. They are so deeply in love and devoted to each other that they are confident that all opposition will crumble down. Of one thing, however, they must assure themselves. They must have sufficient money to keep them above want until they find their feet. Otherwise, love is apt to fly out of the window the moment the shadow of poverty looms in the kitchen. I know of many a love marriage

which went on the rocks because the couple in each case were in dire distress and neither relations nor friends would raise their little finger to help them.

But there have been men and women who have shown rare courage in their fight against tremendous odds and snapped their fingers even at poverty. It would not be out of place to record here the interesting story of Sridhar and Mohini (of course, the names are fictitious for obvious reasons). He was a Namboodiri Brahmin of Malabar, studying in Madras and used to meet Mohini who was living with her mother near his lodging-house. She was also from Malabar, a Nair by caste. In the eyes of the orthodox, marriage between members of these two castes was strictly taboo. She was studying in High School. Well, somehow they met often and when she finished High School and he had taken his M. A. degree they found that they were helplessly and hopelessly in love.

The young man proposed marriage to Mohini. Her widowed mother did not object; in fact, she was proud and delighted to have him for a son-in-law. The parents of Sridhar and their relations raised a storm of protest on learning of his marriage and excommunicated him. The father, a very rich man, was as angry as he was heart-broken and disowned and disinherited him. This was a terrible blow to the young

man. He had been hoping to get a share of the property and go in for creature comforts. But, now, he had to start from scratch. He got a job as lecturer in a college but his salary was far from adequate. He had to supplement his income by giving tuition to some boys. But, poor man, he had already run into heavy debt.

I should say, however, that Sridhar was at times recklessly extravagant. Although, as the years rolled by, his income increased by leaps and bounds, he was free with his money and was guilty of over-spending. He became a chain-smoker, too. But you couldn't see a more devoted and happy couple and three daughters were born to them. One day—twenty years after his marriage—Sridhar suddenly died of a heart attack. The widow was extremely grieved but showed her presence of mind and resourcefulness in the face of the worst crisis in her life. She determined to hand over the dead body of her husband to his parents who had lately shown signs of relenting. She asked the hospital authorities to preserve the dead body in ice for a day until the arrival of the parents of the deceased.

It is needless to add that the funeral of Sridhar was largely attended by students and friends. The parents went back to Malabar after the cremation. Mohini's mother came down to the city to take charge of her widowed daughter and her grand-

children. They were reportedly in terrible distress. The students of the college with whom Sridhar had been very popular raised a fund and gave it to his widow in token of their respect and admiration for the late lecturer. Such instances of generous help are, however, few and far between. Quite a different picture emerges in the case of inter-racial marriages. In the pre-Independence era several Indian princes fell in love with European and American women and married them. Divorce in several cases seemed inevitable and the ex-wives got away with tidy alimony. Recently, however, it is pleasant to recall the marriage of an Indian actress in Hollywood with a most handsome eligible bachelor there in the face of much heartburning and critical comment. Now she is the happy mother of a bonny girl.

In fact, when inter-racial marriages break up, there is no noticeable distress on either side. But in Hindu society convention

rules with an iron rod. Love marriages were unknown in those days. The parents and the astrologer decided the fate of the girl and the boy. They seldom saw each other before the marital knot was tied. Where the mother-in-law ruled in the house, the married pair were afraid to talk within her earshot! If, at all, love comes it does only after marriage. But one argument in support of the traditional type of marriage is that it is enduring, that it enriches the life of the pair and makes for real happiness in the long run.

In recent years, it is true, numerous love marriages have been celebrated—rather, registered—but more often than not the woman is deserted in many a case and is left with no means to support herself or her children. The thoughtful would do well to avoid such a tragedy but Cupid is blind and who would dare stop his pranks? ‡‡

INDIA MAGAZINE

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SHORT STORY

A MOTHER'S HEART

By VIJAY ANAND

*However wicked and sinful a woman may be,
her love for her children glows undimmed.
Kamla who deserted her husband and ran
away with a rake was no exception.*

THE two sannyasins greeted each other at the choultry for the mendicants. In the grip of the monsoon the city of Benares was experiencing an unusually wet spell. The streets were flooded; so was the holy Ganga. Vehicular traffic on the roads was almost at a standstill.

It was nearly eight p.m. A full moon was playing hide-and-seek with the dark clouds that were fast piling up. All around one could hear the roaring of the waters. Of the two sannyasins who sat facing each other in a small room one was very old. He was past sixty-five with a thinning grey head and a long snow-white beard. But he was glowing with health and strength. Probably years of austerity

accounted for it. And he had all his teeth intact.

The other sannyasin was a young man of thirty, but he was lean with sunken eyes and hollow cheeks and the ribs seemed to stick out of his body. But there was a gleam in his eyes which spoke of shrewdness and sagacity, and a firm line about his jaw that was unmistakable. Even to his old master he did not tell why he had chosen to give up the material world. But one thing was noticeable. He must have been the victim of a great domestic calamity; he had an air of infinite sadness about him. His guru, Devapriya Swami, did not care to enquire into his antecedents. It was enough for him that the young man whom he had re-named Harihar Swami was attending on him as his

disciple and eagerly listened to his expositions of the Vedas, the Ramayana and the Gita. The guru was only too pleased to have him, for he was of late feeling tired too often. He had pain in the joints especially during the rainy season and young Harihar Swami massaged his body, cooked his food and washed his clothes.

"Oh, Harihar," he said on this particular evening, "in spite of all my meditation and self-abnegation, I haven't got the light I have prayed for. I know my sins in my previous birth must have been washed off. But the sins of this life, oh, sishya, are weighing me down. Perhaps another birth is inevitable."

THE guru sighed and leaned against the wall. Harihar Swami did not make any remark. He only listened, bending his head down. He knew that his master was in a reminiscent mood. He was wondering what could have been the nature of his sin that years of tapas could not nullify.

The old guru drank water from a small mud vessel and spoke again:

"My life is a warning to all young men, Harihar. Do you know, I committed the worst of crimes and got away with it? But all these years, whether on the Himalayan heights or on the banks of the Ganga I could not escape from the memory of that deed and every time I shudder

at it. For days I recited God's name and went without food. True, a sort of peace soothed my nerves whenever I was meditating but once I got up I would shiver at the recollection of what I did."

HARIHAR Swami could not help asking: "Oh, Guruji! With all respect to you, I would say you are exaggerating. Perhaps, if you could tell your story to this humble self the burden would be eased. But I assure you that I am not curious. I only made a suggestion and wanted to be of some assistance as usual."

Guruji smiled.

There is nothing to hide from you and none to fear. And here is my story (he began). It happened thirty years ago. My name, then, was Mohanlal. My mother was a widow and I was working as a teacher in a secondary school. We had landed property and that brought in a regular flow of money. Since Mother allowed me full discretion in respect of all our income I was gay and reckless. She was often urging me to marry but I hated the very idea. I frequented houses of ill-fame in the neighbouring town and some friends must have advised my mother to have me married as early as possible. When their complaints were too loud, she often asked them to make a direct approach to me. Several of them asked me to marry one of their daughters but I laughed in their face. They got fed up

and ultimately ceased to worry me.

I KICKED off the teacher's post because I fell ill. I had an attack of typhoid and it took me nearly three months to recover. My mother was anxious that I should stay in bed as long as possible and that I should not exert myself. So she engaged a housemaid on a monthly salary of ten rupees with free meals to attend on me. Her duty was to serve me my meals and drinks on the bed and wait on me whenever I wanted her. Kamla was her name. Being a sannyasin I shouldn't say much about her physical appearance. Though she was poor and lowly the housemaid was one of the finest of women I had ever met—buxom and cheerful. She was married and had a small boy about five years of age. Her husband was older than herself by fifteen years but she was devoted to him.

I fell in love with this woman. When Mother was away one evening to the temple I surprised her with my attentions. At first she was furious and resisted me. Though I was ailing I proved too strong and she became my victim in the end. She was crying all the time, and to pacify her I gave her twenty rupees from my box. She seemed to be mollified. But I was afraid that she would make a scene before my mother and so hustled her out before she returned.

To my surprise, she reported for duty after a day's absence.

I sent my mother out on some pretext and was alone with Kamla again. This time she did not resist. She said her husband was very ill and she had to work hard. Without suspecting anything, he had urged her to go to my house and do some additional work or ask for increased wages. I promised her double her pay but asked her not to reveal the secret to my mother.

The affair was going on for some months, when Mother said that no housemaid was necessary as I was already up and doing and quite my normal self. I was afraid I would lose Kamla. I felt I would go mad if I missed her for a day. So what did I do? I gave her more money for clothes and jewels and that turned her head completely. Then I induced her to elope with me to the city. She knew I had money but was not prepared for such a change in her life. I gave her more and more money every day. The prospect of having a gay time in the city made her succumb. She insisted that she would bring her little son with her though she was prepared to desert her husband. But I was firm. She alone was to come.

ONE night we ran off to the city. We rented two rooms on the third floor of a big building which accommodated about a hundred families. Nobody asked us where we came from but everybody thought we were man and wife. My happiness was perfect. Kamla, too, was very

joyial. She sported new saris and jewels every week and forgot her lowly status. We would go out together in the evenings for a walk or see some picture in the night. After the last show we would go to some milk bar and gorge ourselves with cakes and tea. We were very much in love with each other.

Then came the trouble. We saw a picture in which a young boy was deserted by his mother and ultimately became a beggar. That very night Kamla began to weep and wanted to return home. She said she would fall at her husband's feet and ask for his forgiveness. If he kicked her out, at least she would see her boy from a distance and then end her life.

I consoled her and tried various stratagems to make her forget her son. Then one night she surrendered all her jewels and bade me good-bye. I was wild and seizing a large knife stabbed her in the back. She fell down dead without a cry, without a moan.

"HARIHAR, I ran away from the flat and wandered all over the country in the guise of a sannyasin. One famous astrologer whom I consulted at one of the places predicted that my life would end by steel. Neither flight nor tapas would help me erase that crime from my memory. Whenever I recall this incident I imagine that it took place only last week. You see, I killed the woman I had

ruined. Will God ever forgive me?"

"If you want to know," said Harihar quietly, "I am Gopi, son of that woman Kamla whom you seduced and murdered!"

DEVAPRIYA SWAMI gasped in astonishment but could not speak a word.

"All these years I have been looking for the man who wrecked my family—who killed my mother and caused my father to commit suicide. That astrologer was correct. You are going to die of steel."

With these words Harihar sprang up, producing a long gleaming knife from the folds of his ochre robe. He seized the old man by the neck and stabbed him in the chest again and again until he slumped to the floor. ‡‡

CAN'T SAY!

A quack was selling a tonic which, he declared, would make men live to a great age. "Look at me," he said, "hale and hearty, and I'm over 300 years old."

"Is he really that old?" asked a listener of the quack's youthful assistant.

"I can't say," was the reply. "I've worked for him only 150 years!"

SHORT STORY

THE BRIDE'S DISCOVERY

The bride discovers that her husband has played a mean trick and proved treacherous. What can she do?

RADHA shed silent tears as she looked at her daughter Indu who was the very picture of misery. The letter which the postman had delivered still fluttered at her feet. Of course, she had read the letter for the third time and her mother had listened carefully to what Bashini said. Indu and Bashini had studied in school together. Bashini was now a mother of two children. Her husband was a clerk in the Secretariat and they lived in a modest flat in the heart of the State capital.

Indu was married only three months ago. For nearly five years, Anand, her father, had cast a wide net for a suitable bridegroom. He interviewed the parents of some dozen young bachelors but they demanded exorbitant dowries. He was very poor. He was a teacher in the local school, drawing fifty rupees a month, and had four

daughters to marry. Indu was the eldest of his children. He had an only boy and he was the youngest of the lot. How could Anand afford to pay any dowry at all? He could give the girl a jewel or two—and they too belonged to her mother—and he could proudly point to the fact

BY

VISHWA SWAROOP

that she had passed the School Final examination. She was certainly an accomplished young woman. She could sing and draw pictures very well. In a recent art competition she had won a silver medal.

BUT no boy's parent wanted to hear this story. Indu's father was welcome to start negotiations

if he had five thousand rupees to pay before the marriage and the wedding expenses were to be borne by him. The old man threw up his hands in despair and gave up the search for a while. Some friend suggested that an advertisement in the matrimonial columns of any newspaper in the city would be helpful. It might not cost more than five rupees.

Anand jumped at the idea. The publication of an advertisement brought him a score of letters. One man wrote he wanted a companion and if the girl lived with him and came up to his standard of expectations he would then marry her. He was on the wrong side of fifty and he had thirty thousand rupees to settle on his future wife. Another man wanted seven thousand rupees. A third man wished to know if he could take the girl to Africa where he had business and added, "Heaven only knows when I will return."

AMONG the bunch Anand liked only one letter from a man—Thyagi was his name—who said he was thirty-eight and a widower with no encumbrances. If the advertiser cared to respond he would come and marry the girl. He would be content with a simple ceremony in a temple and take the bride with him after a few days' stay. He was working as a clerk in a cloth mill in the city.

Anand consulted his wife but Radha was a conservative woman who wanted to get things done in the traditional style. But he asked her where they could go for the where-withal. She was eager to go to the city and visit Thyagi's relations and enquire into his antecedents. She subsided into silence when she realised their wretched, penniless plight.

AFTER a further exchange of letters the marriage was arranged. Anand invited Thyagi to come over with his relations prior to the date fixed. He borrowed some five hundred rupees from friends. His colleagues in the school secretly subscribed to a small fund totalling Rs. 300 and gave it to him. His joy knew no bounds. With all this money he could celebrate the marriage in a fitting manner and invite his friends and relations to a feast.

Thyagi, the bridegroom-to-be, came with an old uncle. He was sturdy for his years but there was a blase look about him. He had beady eyes under bushy eyebrows, and though he was well dressed and swaggering in his talk he did not inspire confidence in others. He said to Anand's friends that he would soon inherit fifty thousand rupees from a dying aunt and that he would kick up his present job as a petty clerk. And as he talked he waved a scented silk kerchief. Very few believed his words and one or two shrewd friends of Anand understood him for what

he was—a rake. But what could they say on the eve of the wedding?

The marriage was celebrated quietly in the temple and all the colleagues of Anand lent him a helping hand. The bride's party took Thyagi to their home. His uncle had left for the city shortly after the ceremony was over. In their eagerness to make their eldest daughter happy the poor parents spent their all in order to feast the bridegroom and provide him with all comforts. His gay manners made them laugh. Even Indu who had been deeply prejudiced at first, grew to like him. She laughed at his smutty jokes and stories till the tears came to her eyes.

HE stayed there for a month and basked in the sunshine of Indu's love. Then one fine morning he left for the city, promising to send for his wife within a week. He gave them his address and asked Anand to bring his daughter on hearing from him. He, however, forbade him to see him at the address before he got his letter, for he had his own superstitions.

They did not understand the import of his words. They were only glad to see him go because they found it difficult to feed him. At times they had to forgo a meal to entertain their guest. Indu, too, was relieved in a way. She could not bear to see her parents suffering silently on her account.

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Two months had gone and there was no letter from Thyagi. Indu wrote half-a-dozen letters and was chagrined at the absence of any response. Her mother began to worry. Suddenly an idea occurred to her. She remembered that Bashini, Indu's best friend in school, was living happily in the city, with her husband and children. She asked Indu to communicate with her and elicit what information she could about her husband. Indu seized on the idea at once and wrote to her a long letter, detailing the events after her marriage, and requesting her friend to make enquiries at her husband's address (this she did not forget to include in the particulars) and let her know about it all at the earliest.

AFTER ten long days of agony and suspense Indu received Bashini's reply. Her friend was delighted to have her letter and she had deputed her husband himself to trace out the address and her husband. But she was extremely so sorry to have to tell a very unpleasant truth to her dearest friend. Thyagi was of course living at the address given but he had played a mean trick. He already had a wife and four children and his main pastime consisted in representing himself as a widower, marrying innocent girls and running away from them after a time. He had no settled means of income and he was a rake and blackguard. Bashini once again assured Indu of her greatest regard and friend-

ship. "My heart, Indu, goes out to you in your present distress. May God give you strength to bear up your misfortune. I am unable to say more. But write to me if you want my help," concluded Bashini.

INDU read the letter twice to her mother. Both sobbed and embraced each other and tore at their hair. In the afternoon, when Anand came and read the letter he stood speechless for some minutes. Suddenly he swayed and fell down like a tree uprooted by a heavy gale. The women forgot all about the letter and brought in a doctor. He said it was a serious case of blood pressure and that it would take some months for the patient to recover fully and move about. But he assured them that there was no danger to his life.

For two days Indu thought furiously about herself and then came to a decision. She went to see a lady friend of hers in the neighbouring street who was working as a teacher in the local convent school. She returned home late in the evening. While sitting at the meal, she looked up and told her mother. "Father is too ill and may not be able to earn anything. So, Mother, I persuaded Miss Narmada to recommend me for the post of a drawing teacher in the convent school. There was an interview this evening itself, thanks to Narmada's efforts, and I have been appointed as an art

—Please see page 32

SHORT STORY

WHO WAS SHE?

By T. RAGHUVIR

She came from nowhere and made love to him on the sands. But he acted like a fool...

"HELLO, Lal, going to the beach, aren't you?" accosted Jagat, my office colleague.

"Ah, where is your wife by the way? Has she gone home? You always used to go out with her."

"Yes, Jagat." I smiled. "What else can one do on a Sunday evening like this? Sitting in the stuffy atmosphere of some talkie house is hell."

"She went to her parents' home in Mysore last week to see her ailing grandmother with a promise to return in two days. She has not come," I groused.

"You seem to be very tired. Care to have a cup of tea in yonder hotel? Come on," he invited.

"But Hema is too much in love with you to stay away like that," Jagat commented. "Maybe the grandma is dying. Or she herself is ill. Bye-bye, Lal. Let me not stand between you and the breeze. Hope it cools your thoughts."

"No. Thanks. In fact I locked my little residence at eleven in the morning and stayed with Krishan until four p. m. After a sumptuous meal, he went on plying me with cakes, salad and tea until I could stomach no more and headed straight for the beach."

My mind was not at rest. I sat on a stone culvert watching the cavalcade of girls decked in silk saris and wearing flowers that stood blooming on their

heads as from moving, flower pots. Even plain women seemed pretty in that setting. Few could help admiring their elegance and fashion. Their males fluttered about them out of a new-born sense of devotion. My heart ached. I thought longingly of all the dames I knew.

Not half an hour had passed before a stray dark cloud suddenly dissolved itself into a sharp drizzle. It was funny to see the entire crowd on the beach hurrying from the sands. The women, in particular, were resentful at the fact that their silk saris were spoiled and that instead of sailing along with grace and poise they had almost to run. The men were more vexed; they had been denied their hour of flirtation to which they had eagerly looked forward.

I ignored the drizzle that lasted for less than ten minutes. Lighting a cigarette I ploughed through the sands and reached my favourite spot where I always used to sit. It was a few yards away from the watery edge.

Not a soul was to be seen near about though the rain had stopped. Only a few dogs ran about. Near the loudspeaker I could, however, spy a score of people sitting bravely with their umbrellas planted in the sand, ready in case of need.

With my feet I cleared off the outer wet layer of sand and

stretched my weary body on the dry surface that I had brought up. I went on smoking, gazing at the glowing end of the cigarette. A hundred yards off to my right I could see four powerful lights spreading a small patch of brightness against the darkening gloom.

I heard somebody shuffling through the sands but I did not care to see who it might be. But the sound of footsteps ceased. "Maybe some loafer like myself," I thought and did not mind whether he sat behind or before me.

But the perfume of flowers and the rustle of silk just at my head made me curious and I was not surprised at the discovery I made. It was a young woman, I knew. But I was not pleased to meet her, beautiful as she was. I had my own reasons. It would be a waste of time to tell you all about it. I had a score to settle with her and so kept mum.

"Won't you talk to me?" she pleaded.

"I HAVE forgotten your name,"

I said angrily. "Don't you know I am a married man and it is improper of you to meet me at this deserted place. Go away, please. What will my wife think? Is there no man or elderly woman to check your wayward ways?"

She seemed hurt by my harsh words but she kept on smiling. Even in the dim and inadequate light of my cigarette-end I could see she was more lovely than before and her ruddy cheeks glowed.

"I know your wife has gone to her parents' home and I...I thought you would be nice to me if I saw you alone."

"THE cheek of of it all!" I exclaimed. "I resolved not to talk to you when you ran away from me like that last time. Was it fair? What made you change your mind now?"

"I don't know," she answered sorrowfully. "A woman herself can't understand the change of her mind or mood. Don't you assume and presume things and try to get behind my mind. I myself don't know, I said."

I glared at her. "A few minutes ago, you were soft and inviting. But now you use provocative language. What can it mean?"

"I came here not to talk but to make love to you. I knew you would be alone here at this hour. And I came rushing with hunger in my heart. Won't you

be kind to me for old times' sake?"

"I think I am beginning to like you. But what will happen if someone of my wife's friends or relations sees us together like this and lets the cat out of the bag? You know, young lady, my wife is a very jealous woman. She will give me hell if she becomes aware of this affair and even wreck my home."

She smiled in scorn. "What does a woman care when she is in love? You seem to be over-scrupulous nowadays and over-virtuous, too. Shall I ask you a straight question? If you are man enough you should answer it truthfully?"

My heart sank at the vehemence of her words. She was trying to play her trumps.

"All right," I said. "Out with your question."

"Did you not, before your marriage, crush me in your arms, kiss me like a savage and leave me groaning and moaning? It was unbecoming of a man like you."

"That is a serious charge, young lady. But you did not

seem to resist me seriously. In fact..."

"What, 'in fact'?" I know you are adept in the art of *suppressio veri* and *suggestio falsi*."

"In fact," I proceeded, ignoring her interruption, "you actually enticed me into a room while your parents were away and made me succumb to your wiles. Now you accuse me. Ha! Ha!"

My laughter made her dumb. But she was getting impatient.

"Knowing I was alone in my home you could have come there, this being a holiday," I added, slyly.

"I did call for you at 2 p.m. But I found the door locked. I enquired of your neighbour who said you had left home early," she said. There was an unmistakable note of annoyance in her voice.

I threw away the stub and was about to light another cigarette when she saw the uselessness of it all. "I think I had better go," she quietly remarked, rising up at the same time.

Like a tiger I sprang up, caught her in my arms and kissed her passionately. Her body was convulsed with sobs.

She ceased weeping only when I forced her to sit on my lap and kissed away her tears.

"Hema!" cried a shrill voice, a few yards away. "Is that your husband you are talking to?"

I at once recognised the owner of that voice. It was my mother-in-law!

"Yes, Auntie," I shouted back. "I am sorry I was not at home when you and Hema called in the afternoon. When did you return from Mysore? Trust Grandma is well."

"She is well, my dear Lal. You know we hastened from Mysore by car and couldn't give you any previous intimation by wire or ordinary post. Come on, the car is waiting. It looks as if we are going to have rain again."

"So it is my wife Hema!" I whispered. "I thought it was some other woman. Drat your mother! I wanted to hug and kiss you again."

She laughed. "If only you had stopped teasing me, you could have done all that and more. We have missed a lovely evening on the beach."

I sighed. I had to listen now to my mother-in-law and follow her to the car. ‡‡

KEYSTONE OF INDIA'S FOREIGN POLICY

By WARIS ALI MIRZA

WE are living in one of the most revolutionary periods ever known to recorded history. Only a few modern historians would even disagree over the fact that the first-half of the 20th Century is perhaps the most ferocious, exciting yet fascinating era in the history of mankind. In this article, however, I shall confine myself to the task of spotlighting a few salient aspects of international affairs, particularly in the context of the emerging pattern of resurgent Asia.

Since the end of the First World War the roots of European Colonialism in the Far East came to be steadily undermined. A new wave of nationalism, slowly but steadily swept over the subcontinent of India, Ceylon, and Burma, Indonesia and Indo-China. The Second World War considerably contributed to the growth of wide-

spread social and economic discontent which formed the basis of the growing strength of the Nationalist movement in the Far East.

* * *

The story of the Indian Freedom Movement under the auspices of the Indian National Congress is too well-known to need any narration. Suffice it to say that the Nationalist movement in India exerted a powerful, psychological influence over the movements for political emancipation in the neighbouring countries of the Far East. India's struggle for freedom on the basis of Non-Violent Non-Co-operation or Passive Resistance, became a beacon light for the rest of

Asia and in a sense for all the oppressed peoples of the world. India got freedom on 15th August 1947. Other countries followed suit. The emergence of Independent Asian Nations like India, Pakistan, Ceylon, Burma and Indonesia powerfully affected the trends in international affairs. The destiny of Asia can no longer be determined either at London or Washington or even Moscow. Asian statesmen are now convinced that European problems are no more urgent or important than Asian problems. The steady decline of the political influence of Europe is clearly manifest.

* * *

India's emergence to Independence must be viewed in the background of two important factors. Firstly, the steady disintegration of European Colonialism and diminution in the political influence of Europe. Secondly, a decisive shift in the balance of power in the world political set-up. Consequent on the emergence of U.S.A. and U.S.S.R. as the two strongest of Powers in the world today, India entered into the comity of Free Nations with a rich experience arising out of her

non-violent struggle for Independence, and the attainment of the same by peaceful means, on the basis of friendship and co-operation between the British rulers and the Indian political leaders. It is the belief and practice of the right means and right ends of the Indian National Congress that gave a tremendous moral strength to the Voice of India, in which the neighbouring countries recognised familiar *echoes of their own sentiments. India's role in world affairs* thus stems and is conditioned by belief and practice of the peaceful resolution of complex political problems.

* * *

India's stature became obvious in the first Asian Relations Conference held at Delhi in 1946. The Conference was attended by delegates from the Far East. It was a great success, for it brought together the new independent nations and many other subject peoples together, and laid the basis for an Asian approach to world problems. The search for a common purpose and a common outlook among Asian Nations was not in vain. The importance of coming close together, and of co-operating in social, economic and cultural

matters came to be widely appreciated. In a leading speech delivered by Pandit Nehru at the Asian Relations Conference, India's role in world affairs came to be defined. The substance of his argument was that India is and shall be dedicated to the promotion of World Peace and to the maintenance of friendly relations among the nations. India is not attempting to foster and direct a movement in Asia against the West. She has been and will always be interested in maintaining friendly relationship with the West. Sri Nehru also made it clear that India would not be "dictated to" or "pushed about" by the pressure of Big Powers. She would take an independent stand on each international issue on the basis of the merits of the case. He thus steered clear of the cold war and the rival camps of the NATO countries on the one hand and the U.S.S.R. on the other. Neutrality is the key-stone of India's foreign policy. "Non-Involvement," "Non-Alignment", "Uncommitted" are the phrases that are frequently employed to refer to nations which are unwilling to be dragged into the position of "Camp-Followers", whether of the East or West.

India has been the first

Asian country to speak of the need for new independent Nations to avoid entanglement in the business of the cold war. She has been steadily attempting to widen the area of peace, that is the area of "Uncommitted" Nations. It is really remarkable to find that India's efforts have met with fairly good dividends. India's policy of dynamic neutrality has been adopted by Ceylon, Burma, and Indonesia. It has been adopted by the United Arab Republic, Syria and the new regime of Iraq. Tito in Europe has been making a heroic effort not only to keep out of the cold war but also to maintain the independence of his country in the face of determined opposition from the Kremlin. Neutrality in world affairs has ceased to be a mere fiction. It is being practised by a sizeable number of nations. India's contribution in this direction is none too small.

* * *

India's belief in the U.N.O. is profound. She has always been for strengthening the machinery of this International Organization. Faith in this International Institution impelled

India to refer to it the Kashmir case, which unfortunately till today is unresolved. India's efforts in Korea, Indo-China, in the Suez and recently in the troubled affairs of the Lebanon. speak for themselves. India does not believe in military alliances. She feels that the NATO Organisation and Warsaw Treaty among East European countries, the SEATO and the BAGHDAD Pact, are regarded as contributing to growing international tension, to the armament race, and to the outbreak of "localised wars" which may develop into a major world war. Bargaining from the position of strength, armaments are not only unhelpful but also positively dangerous to the maintenance of world peace.

No nation has made such a remarkable progress in international affairs in so short a time, and so soon after the attainment of Independence. In the words of our Prime Minister, "When freedom is threatened India is not neutral. Neutrality is not sitting on the fence. It is not the role of a passive spectator. It enjoins a dynamic and constructive approach towards a solution of International Disputes". India's foreign

policy originates not only from enlightened self-interest but also from a genuine desire to save humanity from the catastrophe of a Third World War—a Nuclear War. ‡‡

The Bride's Discovery

—Continued from page 24

teacher on a salary of Rs. 75 plus a decent allowance. You are wondering? Don't you know that silver medal in appreciation of my art came from the convent school? The Mother Superior heard my story and fixed my salary. Though I am fresh from school, I have been asked to take up all classes. They have that much of faith in me. Good-bye to marriage, Mother! I shall work for you all as long as life lasts."

Her mother smiled in gratitude. ‡‡

INVITATION?

SHE: Stop!

HE: You don't mean that?

SHE: You just put your arm around me once more and see!

SHORT STORY

THE CRAZY WIFE

By SAGUNABAI MONSINGH

FIVE years of separation! Far away from home and...and away from the sweet angel of a wife Sunita! She was just a lovely little wife of sweet seventeen; and would become a sweeter mother in a few months. Well, that would be the finest moment for Nandakumar. But and saddened him at the mere thought of separation. Sunita had only one year of college life to boast of. She was not rich but her beauty and sweetness attracted the attention of Nandakumar, the rich landlord's son, who had his lodgings opposite to Sunita's modest house.

The husband proved to be a low cad; he had discarded his beautiful wife for some gold-digger in America. And there was tragedy in the air. . .

he was to leave his dear wife and be off to America in a month. Yes, for five long and weary years! Poor Nandakumar was deep in thought. The few months of heavenly bliss after his marriage with Sunita, every minute of the happiness shared together flashed before his mind

He had seen her from his room every morning and evening and met her in the street also. After a month of vain attempt to forget that lovely apparition from his mind, he came to the conclusion that he adored her and wanted to marry her.

Nandakumar had a tough fight of words with his parents who had already planned to marry him off to his maternal uncle's daughter. She was an ordinary-looking girl with no beauty or education but had pots and pots of money. "If you cannot let me marry Sunita, I shall be a bachelor for life," he told his parents firmly and that was that. At last, the parents agreed to their only son's decision on condition that the future daughter-in-law stayed with them in their village during his absence in America.

AFTER getting the consent of Sunita and her parents, Nandakumar conveyed the wish of his parents expecting perhaps a gentle denial or downright refusal. But Sunita wholeheartedly agreed to live in the dull God-forsaken village with a pair of old people for the great love of Nandakumar. The sacrifice of the fond parents seemed to her enormous and what she had to do in return for that seemed to her nothing at all.

"Five years will roll by with the one precious thought of each other, darling," Nandakumar consoled her, when Sunita felt sick at his parting after a few months of earthly paradise.

"But two dear ones will be thinking of you,—I mean your son and I," Sunita said shyly and Nandakumar corrected her immediately with a happy wink. "No son—Sunita senior and

Sunita junior." And both laughed at the joke.

So Nandakumar left the village for America to specialise in mechanics. A lovely photo of Sunita and himself was ever in his pocket. On the other hand, Sunita had his photo enlarged and kept it in her room, garlanding it everyday with flowers from the garden.

The old parents of Nandakumar dictated their news to Sunita, who never missed her weekly epistles of love, until one fine morning after two years she missed the letter for the first time. She waited in suspense for a month never ceasing to write her own fears and love. But she got no reply. Little Sunita was now a year old and it seemed strange that he kept silent even after seeing her snaps. Sunita could only pray for his safety, now that every other way within her means had failed so far. Her joy in life that was full of the sweet perfume of her one precious thought of her husband had changed into a wild nightmare of doubts and misgivings. The old people blamed poor Sunita for not writing to their son regularly and she listened to their unkind remarks and discontented murmurs with a heavy heart. Now was the time that she needed comfort but the whole world seemed to rise and accuse her for no reason that she could fathom. She did not know what to make of his silence and what to say to the enquiries of friends and relations. Was

he dead? Could he be a victim to some foreigner over there? So many men returned to India with European wives. But...but, was not Nandakumar married, yes and that too to the finest creature on earth? A year of such agony rolled by without any news of him. More suspense and bitterness!

THEN one day Nandakumar's uncle's son arrived. Vishnu was a businessman with money and he had visited them only once just after Nanda's departure. He was then struck dumb by the beauty of Sunita, who innocently treated him like her own brother. Vishnu got jealous of his cousin Nandakumar for getting such a grand prize for himself and did not wonder at his refusal to marry his plain sister though betrothed from childhood. Then and there he made up his mind to wreak vengeance upon Nanda for slighting his sister as well as winning a good wife whom he himself loved madly.

"How is Nanda?" Vishnu asked his uncle and aunt. They poured out the woeful story of his silence for over a year. Vishnu was amazed and stared at them venomously. Did Sunita read some treachery or sarcasm in his strange gaze? She was much puzzled and in a way feared that sly and too-polished young man. She also remembered then that his sister was Nanda's early betrothed. Well, he may be her enemy for all his kindness but she did not want to think about it.

It was Friday. That evening Sunita was alone in the house with her baby daughter, the old couple having gone to the temple for worship. Vishnu sat down for a friendly chat with Sunita, who was weaving her garland of love for her beloved husband's photo.

"Sunita, I am really sorry to hear of Nanda's silence. I never dreamt that he would change so soon. By the way, I gave that photo of you two that you had given me last year for my sister. She is also married and wants to meet you. Do you know what she says? 'I can forgive Nanda for casting me off'. She realises the worth of your beauty and feels for your plight. Sad case indeed!" went on Vishnu flippantly. But Sunita's breath came in short gasps. "What did you say? I mean...what do you mean by 'changing so soon' please?" she asked.

"○ please do not make yourself miserable. You are already weak and sad. If he is such a fool as to trample down on an angel's love, of course, you should forget the rotter. Now come to think about things, I'm honestly thankful to God that we have, I mean, my sister has escaped after all. Just imagine my sister sitting at home, tearful and deserted like...like" and he clasped his hands with bent head, shuddering.

A nameless fear choked Sunita and she trembled. "Do tell me everything please," she managed to ask him at last, assured now that her husband got himself entangled in some love affair beyond the waters.

"Well, I heard some rumours of his attachment to an American girl but I had not believed it after seeing you last year. No sane man will desert a divine creature like you for a foreigner," and he seemed to be in deep thought.

LIKE most girls, Sunita did not burst out into violent tears or abuse her husband but sat dumb and tearless. The sudden shock was too much for the delicate girl. Glancing at her stealthily, Vishnu thought that women were the craziest people. Except for a mere shadow of shock and worry on the face so confident and beautiful before, there was no other sign.

What Sunita had dreaded and feared had come true. She wept silently and bitterly alone in the privacy of her room. Next morning Vishnu left the village, kindling surely and quietly a fire that was to burn the ardent hearts of two young lives. From that day, Sunita had become a changed girl. To all appearances, she was like a widow. Flowers, jewels, pleasures, dresses and all things dear to the young life were forgotten and set aside. The old couple were surprised at the change and began to curse their son at last for his silence and indifference.

The dull old brains worked and they whispered to one another their fear and doubt about their only son they had been so proud of. They blamed themselves for their foolishness in sending him so far away.

Four years rolled by heavily with doubts, misunderstandings and heartaches. Sunita ceased writing letters to her husband after that day of revelation during Vishnu's visit. She shed tears of the bitterest anguish alone in her room, remembering all the old days of love and trust. Little Sunita sometimes wondered at her mother's misery but she was too young to understand the enigmas and problems of life. Innocently she questioned about the father whom she saw only in the photo.

THE fifth year began and Sunita quite forgot that her husband was to return after five years. Now years had no meaning for her and life itself had no meaning, except to bring up the innocent child. Meanwhile Sunita's parents were dead and she had nowhere to go but to stay with the old people who now treated her well in their genuine and rustic way. Sunita spent hours with her daughter, teaching her and instructing her in the proper channel never letting her out of her sight. The child seemed too clever for her age.

In a simple and compact room on the fifteenth floor sat Nandakumar alone in New York gazing

fondly at a picture of his wife and daughter. After all, his wish was granted to him and he got a daughter, but what a change in his own life! His handsome face was now haggard and deep thoughts and worries had furrowed his forehead. His angelic wife! The girl whom he had married after so much struggle and sacrifice! She had turned out to be like any low woman left alone. To become the lover of Vishnu, his cousin! He closed his eyes and bitter tears poured out hot and swift down his cheeks. Then he opened a box and gazed angrily at a photo of laughing Vishnu and Sunita. She had put on the same velvet blouse he adored so much and she was wearing the same butterfly necklace he had presented her after their marriage. She was sitting smilingly on a delicately carved stool, with one tiny foot encased in the same decorated velvet slipper they bought in town during their honeymoon. Her audacity to display his things and sit with that low cad, her lover with the same intoxicating and bewitching smile! And that too in the same pose he liked best! He thrust it soon into the box and sat deep in thought. All his pent-up sorrow escaped in one gush of wild poignant tears. His adored wife loving another man in so short a time of separation drove him mad. He did not write to her. He just burnt all her letters without reading them. He did not dare to ask anybody

about her. A great dread prevented him from writing to anybody—even to his parents.

Time rolled by. His term of five years had flown away like the high hopes he once harboured in his proud mind. He had to leave America with how much heartache and shame! Perhaps the whole village will be talking about Sunita's sin and pitying him, or at least she would have left his parents and gone to her lover and was living openly, he thought with shame and bitterness. Certainly she might have left his parents, for how could she carry on in the village? The photo clearly showed their life together. When first Nanda got that photo with only a bit of typewritten paper 'From a friend and sympathizer' he nearly fainted. His first impulse was to write and denounce her. But he thought that it was perhaps best to be silent and teach her a lesson when he returned after the five years. He refrained from any sudden impulse for the sake of the little innocent daughter. He would take her away from the wretched mother and name her something else—yes, something beautiful like the chaste Sita or virtuous Chandramati—our pure-minded ancestors.

At last Nandakumar arrived at Bombay. He was appointed as the head of a great firm there but it meant nothing to him. Success seemed to him something hatefully poisonous. He shuddered to think of the dragging

years that stretched in front of him. He would have no more happiness in life. With such sad thoughts he travelled to his village. He had not written to anybody about his arrival and he was almost forgotten in the village. But Sunita? Her every heart throb cried in agony for her lost lover and husband. Her heart bled and bled, clotted and choked her at times.

[F an obscure bunch of illiterates who did not know a hawk from a handsaw could think and talk gossip, the villagers talked too, yes, whispered calumnies against which even innocence lost courage. But Sunita was deaf to the entire world and endured everything calmly.

It was Sunita's habit to take little Sunita to the garden every morning and they walked about among the jasmines and roses, gathering some flowers for her father-in-law's worship of the household goddess. She requested her father-in-law to make a seat in the side garden filled with flowers and scented leaves. It was her favourite resort when sorrow weighed and oppressed her.

That particular morning Sunita was teaching her little one to be kind to the insects and worms; for little Sunita had torn the wings of a beautiful butterfly. While thus engaged, they did not hear the noise of a

bandy that stopped in front of their house followed by footsteps and the noise in the house.

Nandakumar was greeted by his parents in the wildest possible joy and surprise, the mother hugging the tall and lean son and embracing him and the father patting him with warmth and affection. Greetings over, he sat wearily in the big comfortable chair while the handyman brought the things inside the house.

"Oh Nanda, why were you silent these long years? We thought you were even dead. The poor girl is almost crazy. I never thought you would turn out to be such an indifferent and careless husband and son. Your daughter is just a little darling, the exact image of Sunita. They are in the garden gathering flowers for your father. I'll go and bring them. What a surprise it will be for the dear girl!" And the mother hastened to go and fetch Sunita. But Nanda stopped her with misgiving and surprise written all over his face. Was he in a dreamland or was it true? How was it that the old people could love her like that if she misbehaved?

"Is Sunita staying on with you? Did she not go to her parents' house or..." he blurted out at last.

"Nonsense! The dear girl had not even stepped out of the

house without me. Who told you these stories?" the mother intervened angrily.

"Did you see Vishnu often here, I mean, does he come to see you often?" Nanda foolishly questioned, a heavy burden slowly slipping down his shoulders and his heart began to sing a song of thanksgiving.

"OH my son, somebody has poisoned your mind against the poor girl. Vishnu came here twice within the five years and stayed a day with us. That's all. Listening to the grandmother's tale of some cursed being, you, like the green-eyed monster, magnified trifles and almost killed the loving wife. Now, come to the garden and see her and judge for yourself whether she is of the type you took her to be?" went on his father equally in anger. Nandakumar was stunned but still hesitated. The photo told him a different tale. If only he could clear that too! But all the same, he was following his parents in longing and expectancy.

Sunita, gentler than ever, with a pure, soft and mature beauty clothed about her, was sitting on the bench with her child closeby talking to her and playfully pinching the petal-soft cheek. Little Sunita was the first to hear footsteps and she

turned back. Then she stared at Nandakumar in wonder.

"Mother, mother, you need not weep any more. Father has come home!" she cried all of a sudden. She had seen the photo of her father and now recognised him immediately. In a twinkling of the eye, she innocently reached the advancing Nandakumar in a swift run and was taken in her father's loving arms and kissed all over.

Sunita was dumb with happiness and the past bitterness was clean forgotten in the present joy. She stood like a statue in her simplicity and beauty. Convinced of her purity, Nanda hastened to fold his wife in a fond embrace. Sunita cried on his shoulders and amidst sobs asked plaintively, "Oh, how could you forget me for a faithless foreigner?" Nandakumar saw light at last. Somebody had played a treacherous trick to separate them.

WITH a sigh, Nandakumar took that photo from his inner pocket and gave it to Sunita. Her eyes widened with wonder and hate. "I gave our photo to your cousin Vishnu for his sister. How is it that it has come to your place like this? My God, what all bad things you might have imagined about me! One thing more. Vishnu told me that you were

attached to an American woman and I was pretty mad. What does it mean?" Poor Sunita continued in a puzzled way. Nandakumar now knew who that mischief-maker was.

"It is all that fellow Vishnu's doings. It might have led us to utter ruin and we could have drifted apart or even died." Nanda said solemnly and the poor trusting wife moved closer to him in relief.

"But we have found each other again, dear, and nothing else matters," Sunita said magnanimously.

Nanda suddenly laughed aloud and Sunita was surprised.

"A mere photographic trick has done so much havoc! But darling, our dawn of happiness

has come at last," he solemnly whispered. The ignorant parents stared at them in turn expecting an explanation, while little Sunita screamed around in joy and happiness.

Then the temple bells chimed and the old couple unconsciously brought together their hands in worship and bowed their heads as though praying for the safe arrival of their darling boy.

Seeing them thus, Sunita disengaged herself and both the young people bowed their heads and closed their eyes. Rows of tears like strings of pearl chased one another from their eyes. Happy reunion after five years!

When the old couple raised their heads their eyes also shone with unshed tears. ++

PLATONIC LOVE

I believe that mental or spiritual affection for a man (commonly the so-called "platonic love") can never be a feeling of paramount importance in the life of a woman. She is much more dependent on and subject to the desires of her body than she is herself aware. The man she loves physically will always take the first place in her life: for him she would give up the most harmonious non-physical attachment. With the one she can know ecstasy; with the other, at best, a deep mutual understanding.

—ANDRE MAUROIS.

Murdered By A Ghost!

In her second instalment of true tales of horror, the author tells of a ghost that fulfils a vow so solemnly undertaken while alive.

WE had been discussing unsolved murder mysteries and each of us—three friends at our club—had given instances in which no criminal had ever been brought to justice.

"It isn't a pleasant idea to know one may rub shoulders at any time with an unconvicted murderer," Colonel Jepson said.

"In some cases there may be evidence of such a nature that a witness giving it would risk his reputation for sanity," I said.

Jepson looked at me.

"Let me see," he said. "You yourself were a witness in the Hawthorn Cottage case—if I remember rightly—when Randall's Afridi servant was brutally murdered. That has remained one of the unsolved crimes, hasn't it?"

"I don't remember it," Major Reed put in. "Tell us the story, Pringle."

I did so, as briefly as possible.

I am not likely to forget any of the details, for I was staying in the cottage on the night of the

BY

Mrs. J. O. Arnold

murder and it was I who discovered the body of the victim."

"So Randall's man was all but decapitated by an unknown assailant, the nature of the injuries proving the theory of suicide to be untenable. No trace of the murderer discovered nor any motive for the crime.

A most unsatisfactory business," Jepson commented when I had finished my tale.

"You could throw no light on the case?"

"What I did say was of little assistance in solving the mystery," I replied.

"Then you had no theory to suggest?"

I PAUSED. It was true that I had a theory—more, a positive conviction—but if I stated it even to these men who knew life, had lived long in the East and were acquainted with the psychology of Asiatic tribes, would they credit my tale? Would they not rather incline to the suspicion that I was a little 'touched'?

"None that anyone would have listened to," I said. "Remember the police could find no clue of any sort. The murderer left no trace. It was considered at the time one of the most baffling and mysterious crimes Scotland Yard had ever been called upon to investigate."

"Then we'll relegate it to the limbo of Undetected Crime," decided the Colonel, with finality.

When my household had retired that night and silence reigned, I turned the key in my study door, and going to my bureau took from it a sealed

envelope containing several pages of manuscript.

I DREW an easy-chair to the fire and, settling myself comfortably, reread certain facts bearing upon the Hawthorn Cottage murder mystery which I had not given at the inquiry but had nevertheless carefully written down.

"A verdict of wilful murder against some person or persons unknown was returned today in the Hawthorn Cottage Mystery. For my part I am assured that the murderer will never confess or be caught. Yet I am convinced no doubt that I knew at whose hands Randall's Afridi servant met his horrible death. I herewith record what happened."

I was invited to stay with the Major at his recently purchased little place on the Sussex Downs—Hawthorn Cottage. It was a jolly little house and no one would ever have supposed that murder with its silent, bloody feet, would come near it. But so it turned out.

"We aren't quite straight yet," Randall wrote, "but you won't mind roughing it a bit. My domestic staff consists of Chunga my native servant—more handy than the average English valet and satisfied with far less wages—and an elderly female who does all the rest. We're fairly fixed up already—only my Indian trophies to unpack and hang

about the room. They've been stored in town far longer than I care to remember. You shall lend a hand with them, my boy. There's a train from Victoria at 3.15 tomorrow that will get you here in time for tea."

Randall had been a friend of my father. Together they had fought through the Tirah Campaign in 1897 and I greatly valued his friendship towards myself. His tales of the Afridis interested me keenly and he was a man of wide experience.

So that I accepted his invitation gladly, caught the 3.15 from Victoria and arrived at the cottage, as he had suggested, in time for tea.

I found the place all that and more than it had been described by its enthusiastic owner. His admiration had by no means exceeded his veracity. The little house was the sort of thing a poet would rave about.

Time had been busy upon it and in the course of a couple of hundred years had completed a perfect piece of work, picturesquely irregular, mellowed by age. Inside were oak-panelled rooms, with everything in keeping.

There was just room for us all. Two bedrooms, an attic for Chunga, a small study and a much larger lounge (furnished as a diningroom at one end) together with the usual domestic

offices comprised the whole. Nothing could have been more charming or convenient and I congratulated my host with enthusiasm upon his 'find.'

"Yes—I think it's about the jolliest little spot on earth," he said as we sat and smoked in his study, which already looked homelike and comfortable. "When we've got our frills on—the things I told you of—I shall feel I never want to leave it again until they carry me out feet first!"

Happily that was not to be for some years—nevertheless Death in dreadful shape was to visit the cottage before another day dawned.

"I've been working like a Tommy throwing up a trench under fire, to get the place straight," the Major went on, "and this morning the last consignment of goods arrived here out of storage. The weapons, as I told you, are still to be unpacked and put up on the walls. Where shall we find space for them, I wonder?"

I glanced with a doubtful eye around the cosy room. For my part I wouldn't have housed in this snug retreat any objects reminiscent of the horrors of war. They seemed to be out of place. My host, however, was of a different opinion.

"THAT wall opposite the fireplace will take a good many," I suggested.

When one was seated by the fire one's back would be to the Collection—in warmer weather one would desire only to gaze out of the window upon the wide undulating Downs stretching Channel-wards.

"RIGHT. I can see them through this mirror when my slippered feet repose upon my mantle—and think of the happy days they bring to mind." Randall said, pointing to a low oak-framed mirror over the fireplace. "I'll go at once and see about that case, if you'll excuse me. It's in the potting-shed."

I followed him and Chunga and I between us brought the case into the study.

No sooner was dinner over than the Major became impatient to get the contents unpacked. Nothing would do but the lid of the case must be opened without delay. So we prised it off and there came into view knives, swords and other weapons — altogether a blood-thirsty-looking lot. Amongst them was a kukri (sharp curved Gurkha knife), in a worn leather sheath that had been carefully repaired with long stitches. As I lifted it, the sheath fell to the floor, leaving the naked weapon in my hand.

"A horrible curve—and pretty weighty," I said.

"Yes—skilfully wielded it would slice off a limb or decapitate a man at one stroke," the Major said. "Its owner—I knew him well, a splendid fighter and a brave man; he'd have done anything for me, poor fellow—died in action against the Afridis: it's quite possible he and Chunga may have fought against each other in that very campaign. We had no stauncher allies than the Gurkhas—plucky devils!"

He took the weapon from me, examining it critically. A kukri, he explained, was to one of the 'little brown men' a peculiar possession. Each man registered a vow that having once drawn his knife, he would never sheath it until it had tasted the blood of an enemy. To break that oath would cost him his particular paradise.

"I'm afraid this poor fellow hadn't time to use his kukri before he was shot down. According to his belief, he may be in a bad way in the next world in consequence. However, he had used it to some purpose in his time. Each of these marks—" the Major pointed to a row of deeply-cut notches on the wooden haft, "represents a man killed. Nine in all, you see. Well, now we'll go into the lounge for a smoke until Chunga gets the rest out and polished up."

We drew our chairs up to the fire and my host entertained me with tales of the Tirah campaign,

recollection stirred no doubt at the sight of weapons intimately connected with former experiences. He was a good talker and could make scenes and incidents live again.

HE was in the midst of a thrilling reminiscence when suddenly he stopped short, holding up a warning finger.

"Hark! Did you hear that?"

We both remained silent for an instant. Then I heard, "something like a cricket—" I suggested.

"Or a beastly cockchafer," said the Major. "I heard it in my study before dinner."

He seemed annoyed in a manner out of proportion to the cause. We listened again and the sound was repeated—at first faint and distant, then coming nearer.

Randall flung open the door. It was unaccountable to me that he should pay any attention whatever to the sound. Yet he stood listening intently...

But the chirrup had ceased. Across the little hall we could hear Chunga busy with the contents of the box.

We went back and shut ourselves in once more.

The incident, slight as it was, had served to disturb the flow

of reminiscence. Presently my host handed me a book of sketches made by him in India illustrating the events which he had been describing. It was when I came to the last page that, looking up, I saw he had fallen asleep.

The matches had given out. I remembered that there was a box on the study mantelpiece and, moving quickly, went in search of them. As I crossed the little hall I heard a solitary, faint chirrup, coming apparently from the study, the door of which stood open.

Instantly I connected it with what the Major had been telling me—how on the North-West Frontier of India certain hill-men used just such insect noises...The idea gripped me.

I entered the room. The elderly Afridi was kneeling beside the open case, facing the fireplace. In his hand was the kukri which he was polishing with a cloth. Most of the other weapons had been laid neatly in the box, free from packing straw and ready to be placed in position next day.

I WENT over to the mantelpiece on which lay the match-box. I have already mentioned that there was a low mirror above it...

In that mirror, with a thrill of horror, I saw reflected—What?

As I live, I saw that which for an instant made my blood run cold...Bending over Chunga as he knelt was the figure of a man, his face hidden a shadowy form yet sufficiently clear to be discerned. The fingers of the left hand—wiry, tenacious—rested on the native's shoulder, those of the right covered Chunga's as he held the kukri. Even as I gazed spellbound at the apparition, the figure raised its hand and a face confronted me—a brown face of Mongolian type with horrible, dead eyes. . .

RECOVERING myself with an effort I turned sharply from the mirror, only to find Chunga kneeling alone beside the chest. There was no sign of the ghostly visitant to whose presence I could have sworn!

The native rose to his feet, shivering.

"It is cold, sahib," he said.

As a matter of fact a glowing fire filled the grate and the room was unusually warm.

"Nearly finished?" I asked, showing no sign.

I went back to my host who was now awake and already lighting our bedroom candles.

"Country customs, you see, my boy," the Major said as he handed me mine. "Well, good-night. My man will lock up."

I could not sleep. I told myself that of course the origin of my hallucination, horrible as it had been, was not far to seek.

My brain had started a train of ideas and from the curious chirruping sound had conjured up the similitude of a Gurkha—though why an obviously dead one, I could not conjecture.

I lay awake until dawn and during those long hours I twice went out onto the landing, listening and watching—for what, I could not have said, but with a persistent apprehension not to be overcome.

At six o'clock I rose and, putting on my dressing-gown, went downstairs to the study, impelled by an urgency I could not suppress.

The room was dark, with curtains drawn across the low, latticed windows, I flung them apart with a rattle—

There was not much light even then. But enough to show me the body of Chunga lying upon the floor beside the open case. Going closer, I saw that Major Randall's faithful servant had been brutally murdered, his head all but severed from his body by what must have been a severe slashing blow from behind. Beside him, in a pool of blood, lay the kukri.

AND upon the wooden haft of the murderous weapon my glance instantly detected a newly-made incision, showing almost white on the dark wood—a *tenth notch*.

Such is the evidence I did not give at the inquiry. ‡‡

MEET THESE METHUSELAHS!

By P. C. NATARAJAN

OVER a hundred and sixty summers had passed over the head of Javier Pereira when he breathed his last at Mont Aia last year, and the general belief then was that the oldest man in the world (barring the legendary figure of course) had lived and died in Columbia, South America. This claim, however, has now been superseded by current information reaching from the Caucasus region of Soviet Russia where people are said to have lived to the mellow age of 180 years.

A formidable record indeed, but it has been kept in the dark until it is too late now. The honour of being portrayed in a special Soviet Union postal stamp went to Mahmud Bagir Ogly Eyvazov of Azerbaijan when he entered his 148th year in 1956. Eyvazov has now almost completed one and a half centuries of living and is reported to be none the worse for it. He continues to work in a mountain

collective farm and is happily endowed with quite a sizable family including 160 grandchildren, great-grandchildren and great-great-grandchildren.

When people live to an unusually old age they naturally evoke much interest and become objects of curiosity. The longevity in these cases is usually traced to diverse and often conflicting causes which include, among others, vegetarianism, temperance, abstention from smoking and refraining from idleness in old age. The centenarian in the joke explained: "Plenty of out-door life—that's the secret behind my long years. You see, when the grand dame showed signs of being nasty at home I used to sneak out by the backdoor and go for a long walk."

However that may be, the oldest members of the human family have many of them been known to be odd characters with

singular habits in life. If one lived exclusively on milk and milk products alone, another drank brandy in the place of water all through his life. Another quiet gentleman recently made news on the other side of the Atlantic by the unique fact that in the course of the 107 years of his existence he did not for once smoke or drink or dance or drive a car or marry. He attributed his longevity to his poor digestion which he said made him be ever careful of what he ate. A case of the obvious being overlooked, some cynic will perhaps remark; apart from smoking and drinking, the outcome of learning dancing or driving, or accepting a woman as life's partner might possibly have been enough to send this gentleman to his grave much earlier in his life! As it is, you and I may think of his lot in life as rather unenviable, but half the world is ever wondering how the other half is living!

Statistics prove that women vastly beat men in the matter of longevity, the ratio being said to be three to one among those living beyond 90 in the Caucasus region of Soviet Russia. Surprising things are told about these Methuselahs. They have their teeth intact at 124. Their perceptions of sight and hearing are unusually keen for their age. What is more, they retain clear remembrances of their remote past. The preternatural existence of the High Lamas of Shangrila and their uncanny mental powers do not after all

belong to the realm of fictitious imagination alone!

And when we come to think of that, for all we know, our yogis may be living right now on the dizzy heights of the Himalayas lost in penance and treating weeks as days and days as hours!

Yet in the new order of things that is to come the unusual of the present may well become the commonplace in future. A leading medical hypnotist in the West has expressed the opinion that man is capable of having a much longer span of life than is realised at present. All that is needed is to instil in the human mind a strong desire to live and enjoy life. The prediction is that hypnotherapy in future will help men to live to an average age of 250 years, 50 years longer than women!

Here is yet another problem to reckon with for our statisticians already vexed over the rapid growth of the world population!

CLINGING TIGHT

SALLY: That fellow you met on the beach, isn't he rather fast?

SUE: Yes, but he won't get away from me.

His Confession

The young man was engaged in shady deals, but he thought that he could buy his immunity by stealing the heart of a Police Inspector's daughter. . .

"SORRY for having asked you to come, while I am in such a miserable mood," Ashok Mohan apologised to Bulbul during their walk on the quiet forest road around the Hill Station of Mussoorie in the early summer afternoon. "However, I need now your company more than ever. In a matter of hours you will understand everything."

"I wish you were your usual cheerful and talkative self," she replied, "but I'll bear with you."

The young man was tall and handsome, wearing white trousers and white shirt; the girl was slender, big dark eyes decorated her expressive face and was clad in a dark-blue sari and a light, pale-pink overcoat. They had known each other

since early childhood. He was the son of Subhas Mohan, a once-celebrated lawyer; she was the daughter of Inspector Premnath, the capable police officer.

The girl made a few attempts to break the silence, but his answers were monosyllabic. Eventually she gave it up, walked along his side in silence all the way back to the hotel.

"You take a rest now," he suggested. "In the evening we shall be together again."

Exhausted by the long walk in the rare mountain air, she did feel the need for a rest. She lay down in her room and fell asleep in no time.

SHORT STORY

WHEN she walked an hour later, she found a letter under the door. She tore it open and

read it with growing agitation:

Dearest Bulbul,

I could not bring myself to tell you by words. With the remnants of my scanty funds I undertook this Mussoorie excursion to end the plight of life in pleasant company and congenial surroundings.

There is no longer any hope for me to marry you and without you life is meaningless.

If you want to see me for the last time, walk down the road where we have just been together at 8 p. m. tonight.

Wear your pink overcoat so that my friend who is going to meet you, shall recognise you.

Sorry that I cannot be more explicit now. Come along at 8 p.m. and the night will shed light on everything. Love,

—Ashok.

SHE read it again and again, unable to read more sense into it than for the first time. Shocked, bewildered, frightened to the marrow yet morbidly curious, she waited for the appointed hour. She knew that it was not a joke or a bluff.

At quarter to eight she put on her pink overcoat and took her large torch. She left behind

the lively bazaar and reached the dark, deserted road, with the trees of the forest casting long shadows under the moonlight. It was after about a mile's walk in a nervous and depressed frame of mind, when a hillman with Mongolian features stepped suddenly out of the thick vegetation. His appearance frightened Bulbul almost out of her wits, but he addressed her in impeccable courtesy:

"*Memsahib* must be the lady whom Ashok *Sahib* had in mind. Please, follow me."

HE stepped back into the forest and, scared as she was, Bulbul followed him. She could hardly see anything amidst the trees and neither the moon, nor the torch was much of a help. Several times she almost tumbled over tree trunks or roots, her sari was torn at places, yet she managed to keep pace with the agile guide.

It was a long, largely uphill walk in the dark. The man went ahead in silence and Bulbul was too preoccupied with her feet—and her thoughts—to start a conversation. She was worried that she might have done the wrong thing by complying with Ashok's eerie instructions, yet at no point was she actually sorry for having done so.

They arrived at last at a clearing in the forest. Bulbul noticed a pile of wood, with several men standing behind it. Following

her Mongolian guide she walked nearer to the pyre and saw the shape of a human body on top of it. Dumbfounded with fear and misgivings she could not even scream but, as though mechanically, proceeded nearer and nearer. She still could not see the faces of the men standing in the background, but she clearly recognised the face of the body on the pyre in the dim light.

SHE began to cry and to scream, her first instinct was to run away, the second to throw herself over the body and warm with her breath the lifeless, ashen face, but a hand restrained her.

"Ashok *Sahib* chose to take his own life," she heard her escort saying, while the men in the back remained silent. "Before he died, he said that you could have a last look at him."

Having pronounced his words, the Mongolian stepped to the pyre and covered the face with the blanket which had covered the rest of the body. Then he and the other men sprinkled petrol over the wood and the blanket. The Mongolian made a flaming torch by lighting a handful of straw, and handed it to Bulbul.

"Ashok *Sahib's* last wish was that *you* should light his funeral pyre."

Her eyes in tears, her body trembling, her hand shaking, she touched the pyre with the flame.

The men in the background dispersed without a word into the forest, but the Mongolian walked with Bulbul almost all the way back to the hotel.

A few weeks later Bulbul, prompted by her father, Inspector Premnath, related the whole story to Subhas Mohan, Ashok's father. When Inspector Premnath produced the letter written by Ashok to Bulbul shortly before the dreadful ceremony, old Subhas Mohan showed the letter of farewell which he had received from his son with a Mussoorie postmark.

Dear Father,

Sorry to hurt you, but I have to disappear from this world of ours. I don't blame anybody, but the circumstances we all know have made life unbearable for me.

Love and farewell,

—Ashok.

BOTH Subhas Mohan and Inspector Premnath understood what Ashok had meant by 'circumstances we all know'. Several years ago Subhas Mohan had undergone a throat operation which left the one-time eloquent speaker reduced to whispers, so that he could no longer plead at court. Deprived of his income the old man could not continue to pay for

his son's studies. So Ashok went to Bombay in the hope of entering business, but did not appear to succeed.

Before leaving Inspector Premnath's home old Subhas Mohan apologised profusely to Bulbul for having made her recall the ghastly experience with the funeral pyre. In his whispering voice he also thanked Inspector Premnath for having arranged the interview, but left with the strange feeling that his life-time friend, the police officer, had not made a clear chest to him about everything he knew or suspected in this sordid business.

* * *

By virtue of his official and social contacts Inspector Premnath managed to keep Bulbul's connection with the sinister suicide case out of the newspapers. However, he was by no means happy about the developments. "That such a thing should happen to a police officer's daughter!" he thought, indignantly, time and again.

He sought consolation and distraction in his long hours of work at the Police Headquarters.

A few days after his meeting with Subhas Mohan three dishevelled young men were escorted into his office, accused of smuggling.

Inspector Premnath looked at the first one and then looked at

him again. It was not easy to believe his own eyes. However, at long last he had all doubt cleared. He could not help recognising, under layers of dirt and week-old stubble, the familiar face.

The long decades of police routine had taught the Inspector to control his voice, face and emotion.

"I'd better see them one at a time," was all he said on the spur of the moment and beckoned to the constables to lead the other two away.

"So, resurrected from the dead!" he greeted a nervous and dispirited Ashok Mohan, when the two of them were left alone in the room.

"Since I'm caught," Ashok said in a low voice, "I don't want to make it more difficult for either of us. But there is a suggestion I'd like to make."

"Such as?" the Inspector asked, tersely.

"I owe you an official confession," Ashok explained. "And to Bulbul a private one. Let's have the two together."

"Leave my daughter out of it!" the Inspector snapped.

"I wish I could," Ashok replied and his voice was sincere. "But she'll have to learn it sooner or later anyway."

"So what do you propose for me to do?"

"Bulbul is an excellent shorthand-typist, I remember, from the days we had been together at college—before I had to drop out. She made shorthand notes of the more important lectures and had four or five type-written copies ready on the following morning for herself and her friends."

"What has all this to do with your case now?"

"SHE could come and take down my statement for you. Her presence would make my confession..." Ashok searched for a while for the word, "more inspired."

"A somewhat irregular procedure which you are suggesting..." the Inspector said aloud. However, — publicity-conscious as he was,—he could not overlook the possibility of some flattering newspaper headlines as a result: 'Police officer's daughter makes criminal repudiate his past.'

"I put it to Bulbul," he said at last. "Obviously, I can't force her against her will."

The Inspector picked up the receiver, dialled the number and tried to break the news to Bulbul

as gently as he could on the telephone. Hearing about the 'resurrected' man's odd suggestion, she answered eagerly in the affirmative. Ashok asked and was granted permission to have a wash and a shave before Bulbul's arrival.

Assuming his official pose, Inspector Premnath prevented any manifestation of sentiment when the two young people met in his office.

"You are now a temporary shorthand-typist in the service of the Police," the father warned his daughter sternly. "You must not show any feelings towards a suspected criminal."

However, he could not prevent her from touching her eyes several times with a handkerchief. Even on the hardened face of Ashok there were signs of emotion.

He began to talk and she began to write.

He told about his enforced departure from college and the subsequent failure in finding a suitable job. It had been in a state of frustration and despair, Ashok stressed, that he had made his first contacts with dubious characters. There was then a boom in smuggling gold

and watches. The men of the underworld had the technical know-how of going about it; Ashok had the brains to co-ordinate and direct their actions in their Bombay headquarters.

However, in the course of his occasional visits to Delhi he sensed that Bulbul's father, of all people, had begun to suspect him of leading a double life.

WHEN Ashok came to that point, Inspector Premnath nodded gravely and the statement went on :

"Eventually I came to the conclusion that the only way to avoid exposure was to feign suicide, assume a new identity and transfer my activities somewhere else."

"Of course, I *did* need Bulbul's testimony as to my contrived 'demise'," he admitted. "A Police Inspector's daughter is regarded as a reliable witness. However, obtaining her evidence was not the sole purpose of my waxen image on the pile of wood. Knowing that I was to lose her for ever, I wanted to see from the background a last expression of her love by showing grief in front of my dummy

corpse on the funeral pyre. While I was very sorry that she had to be subjected to such an ordeal, I felt pleased that, as a consequence, she would never forget me."

The quivering of Bulbul's back showed that she was struggling with tears, but her right hand kept on recording the statement.

"Your repentant confession may do you some good, when the case comes up at court," Inspector Premnath told Ashok at the end, "but I must admit that the odds are heavily stacked against you."

"In the state in which I am," Ashok turned to Bulbul, ignoring the Inspector's vague protest, "it's no point in telling you that I still love you as ever—but that's the fact."

When Bulbul looked up from her notes her eyes were dry and her voice was matter-of-fact :

"I WISH I could hate you, despise you, or at least pity you. However, I must hate, despise and pity *myself* for loving you in spite of everything."

—G. A. Floris.

BEWARE !

Keep yourself from the anger of a great man, from the tumult of a mob, from a man of ill fame, from a widow that has been thrice married, from a wind that comes in at a hole and from a reconciled enemy.—H. G. BOHN.

CRIME & ROMANCE

Which young man's heart would not be thrilled if a pretty young woman visited him at dead of the night and told him of her love ! But two hours of her company to the hero of this story brought him an agony and suffering that he had never before experienced. . .

MY name is Vishnuram Mehta —Ramji for short. But, short or long, it does not matter. Tomorrow morning I will be hanged by the neck until death. So I shall not hesitate to tell you my story—rather, the sordid and most adventurous part of it. I am writing this by the side of an oil lamp. The cell door is open but the policemen

with all my favourite sweets and fruits and a packet of the finest variety of cigarettes. I have just smoked them to my heart's content. All of them from the warder down have spoken kind words to me. My old mother came and cried her heart out. She shed copious tears over my head, hugged me affectionately and laid her cheek against mine.

THE FAIR STRANGER

By A. SHIVA PRASAD

are more alert and watchful. They are standing by me, ready to shoot me dead if I try to escape. But why should I escape ? They know me to be a very sensitive and sincere man and their trust in me all these days in jail has been fully justified.

She begged of the jailer to let me go free and hang her instead. He turned his head towards the wall instead of replying. My mother gave out a loud shriek and sank on the floor into a fainting fit. They carried her away.

They are pampering me today. I was given a sumptuous meal

Somebody asked me whether I did not dread the immediate prospect of death in such a

horrid form. No. I am cool as a cucumber, as they say. Death has no horrors for me. I think I am made of steel. Nor am I afraid of bodily pain. Once I sustained a fracture of the right thigh but in spite of agony I was smiling and talking to my friends as if nothing had happened. Only three days ago a prisoner in the next cell was howling for hours and had a nervous breakdown at the thought of going to the gallows at dawn. He was a sturdy and stalwart giant of a man but had the heart of a chicken. All the people here tried to calm him down but he cried all the more. A hysterical woman would have behaved better, I would say. Only at two o'clock in the morning he dropped off to sleep, exhausted by his own shouting. I cursed the fellow like anything. At the same time I was amused at the thought how man desperately clings to life. What does it matter if its span is reduced by a few years? Every one on this earth is mortal. Oh, God! How I am digressing!

COMING to the events that led to the sentence of death on me, I shall take you to the day when she met me. It was just two months since I had lost my father. After the rites had been performed, my sister took Mother to her village for a change. And our bungalow was vacant. Being a city bird, I declined my sister's invitation to spend a few days in her village. So I stayed behind. I took up a large room

downstairs for my residence and locked the rest of the rooms in the bungalow. And I hated to go upstairs since Father had been laid up there for months and I wanted to avoid memories of his prolonged illness and suffering. Though there is a compound wall running round my bungalow I could see the people and the vehicles passing on the road if I sat on the raised platform in my room. The view would be more perfect if I put a chair on it. Looking at the crowded road always helped me to while away the time. I could see all the pedestrians and very few, except girls, perhaps, would care to see me from there.

MY father was a retired railway official and the authorities had promised me a job when I chose to ask for it. After his death I applied for a junior superintendent's job and received a communication assuring me of a favourable consideration. Not that I was in need of a job. I had money enough to carry me through life but Mother was particular about prestige and status.

It was raining hard one night. In that bungalow I was just a solitary soul. The gardener who was residing in the outhouse had gone to his village to visit his family and I did not expect him back for a fortnight. I had just finished my smoke and gone to bed. For a while I was thinking of my career and its glorious possi-

bilities and then I was startled by a gentle knock. Could it be a ghost? But I was not scared.

"Open the door quick," said a soft feminine voice.

I switched on the light and opened the door to confront a delightful vision. She was a very pretty woman of twenty-five, slight of build and with cat's eyes that sparkled in the brilliance of light. She had a leather bag slung over her right shoulder. She was not rich but her dress and manners suggested that she must be educated at least upto a high standard in High School.

SHE was drenched in the rain but gave me a heart-warming smile. "Mr. Mehta, I know you but you don't know me. Call me Jamuna if you like. But don't stand on formalities. I fear someone is shadowing me even in this weather. Close the door, won't you?"

And before I could make a move she herself closed the door and the window facing the road. Then she got behind a curtain that enclosed a small space in the room, and changed her clothes after spilling the contents of her leather-bag. All the while she was talking. "My dear Mehta, I have seen you several times at the railway station, the main park, and the talkie houses. But to be frank with you, I should say you have no eye for women. I have heard all about you from

my friends. To see you even at a distance is to admire you. Don't think I am going to rob you! For some days past I have been passing by your bungalow every day and understood that you were alone. I am getting away from the city and I want to spend the night in your room—rather your bungalow. By tomorrow morning I shall be off."

By now I felt quite at ease and even remembered having seen this pretty creature at the places she mentioned. "Ah, yes, Jamuna Devi," I stammered at last. "How I wish we had made our acquaintance earlier. I am so thrilled to meet you but I am sorry you are unhappy. Treat this as your place and make yourself at home. You are welcome to spend the night in my room. I shall go upstairs. Would you like to eat some biscuits?"

I had not said the last word when she emerged from behind the curtain like a gay butterfly, dressed in her smartest best; grace and beauty oozed out from every part of her body. Her lips were soft and inviting like rose petals and her chiselled nose was provocative.

She stretched her arms and gently but firmly held my shoulders to look into my eyes with a smile that flooded my being. "You see, Mehta dear," she coaxed, "I am racing against time. I have a feeling that some-

body is pursuing me and I shall tell you all about it later if you can come with me to Bombay or Calcutta where we will not be noticed, where we can do what we like and where we will be lost together in the cosmopolitan crowds there. If you can't come immediately I will go before and wait for you at some hotel. Do you care for me, darling?"

THE perfume and freshness of her body were overwhelming and I melted into her arms. She seemed to know at once that I was untutored in the art of love and kissed me.

Gently I disengaged myself and asked her whether she could not tell me her story and why she could not stay with me in the city.

"When the time comes I will tell you, dear. Don't think me to be cheap just because I am making love to a stranger. But I know you have regard enough for me to place your all at my disposal. It does not matter if you can't meet me outside this city but it is enough for me that I have seen you today and loved you. It is not a case of love for the sake of your money. I have enough, thank you. I fell in love with you the first time I saw you at the Main Park last year but I didn't know how to get at you until today. I just had a brain-wave and here I am."

I was a bit confused, though flattered by her compliments. "You look tired," I said, changing the topic. "You had better occupy this room and I shall go upstairs. I shall come down early tomorrow morning and call for you with refreshments. As for your invitation, Jamuna, I am your willing slave. But it will take a week for me to complete certain arrangements for my widowed mother. I too look forward eagerly to having a merry time."

I was about to open the door when she caught me in her arms. "My dear, you need not go out. I am afraid to be alone. Feel my heart and see how it palpitates."

I sank into her arms and she kissed me again. At her instance I turned out the lights. . .

I was too happy and utterly exhausted. The wall clock just then struck two. I moved away from her towards the wall and slept a dreamless sleep—rather the first dreamless sleep since my father's death. . .

WHAT was that loud noise at the gate? It must have been four a.m. or so, when I woke up with a start. Some people were gathered there and excitedly talking. I switched on the light

and only then did I remember the woman who made love to me. Horror of horrors! There was blood all over. Her dress was torn and she was lying on the floor in a pool of blood. Some one must have entered the room and stabbed her to death. By God! My own hands and feet were stained with her blood.

I did not know what I was doing. But I knew that the police had been informed of this murder and they were entering the bungalow. Without any thought of the consequences I opened the inner door that led to a lane and ran for life. A sense of shame must have prompted me to take to my heels.

THE rest of the story is easy to guess. I was caught and arrested on a charge of murder and in the trial that followed I was sentenced to death. Since neither the prosecution nor the judge would believe in my innocence despite my honest and truthful account of what had happened, I asked my relatives not to appeal to the High Court. But in my heart of hearts I loved the woman who sought my protection and I am still crazy about her. Alas! the vanity and stupidity of human wishes. Good-bye to you all!

* * *

Two hours before the execution was scheduled to take place, the

warder and the superintendent of the jail appeared. "Mr. Vishnuram Mehta," they said, "the police have arrested the husband of Jamuna who has confessed to having murdered her in your room after shadowing her there. He has also surrendered the dagger which he used. There is a fear that there has been a grave miscarriage of justice and, luckily enough for you, the message has not come too late. We have been ordered to release you on bail. It means an acquittal almost. Congratulations, young man, on your providential escape. It appears that Jamuna's husband was a rake and criminal with previous convictions. Of course, you will have to depose in the re-trial but it will not affect your freedom. Get ready, we shall take you to your sister's village. We have already wired to your mother about your release."

Mehta shed tears of joy. ‡‡

TOO HAPPY

COP: Hey mister...it's three a.m. Why don't you go to sleep?

DRUNK: Can't...I'm too busy—m'wife run away.

COP: Why don't you try counting sheep?

DRUNK: Nope...I'm too busy countin' m'lucky shtars,

WHAT IS BEAUTY?

By JOHN VARGHESE

"THERE is nothing true in the world except beauty," said Benedetto Croce.

What is Beauty?

It is a confusing concept! There is no specific measure for it. No one has so far succeeded in explaining what it is. Undoubtedly beauty exists as an ideal; but it is very difficult to lay down hard and fast rules to it since there is divergence of opinion as to what constitutes beauty. From Plato down to Russell it varies. The very concept is the product of individual taste, habit and mental outlook. Even these 'likes' and 'dislikes' change when there is an evolution or revolution in the psychology of man. Irwin Edman, one of the modern American writers on Art, has truly expressed, "Man is the fortuitous child of a changing and precarious environment."

To understand more clearly the concept of beauty, we have to adopt the psychoanalyst's system of 'Method of paired

comparison'. By this system, the psychoanalyst asks us to choose one of the two given things which appeals more to our mind. This selection usually reveals not only our sense of beauty, but also the functions of our mind. On rare occasions it used to expose our life's secrets as they are. It is because of these aforesaid reasons that the boys show an innate instinct of propensity towards the soldier's picture, ships etc., and the girls, for ornaments, dress etc. Indeed, this difference in the innate instincts is the fundamental basis of the appreciation of art.

On the basis of difference in the mental outlook, the psychoanalyst classifies human beings into four categories. In the first type, their sense of beauty is based upon their previous memories. Women and children are the typical examples of this type. In the case of the second category of people, their sense of beauty is based not only upon their sweet reminiscences, but also on the reactions that the thing brings

in them for the time being. People who are moved by the sudden hearing of melodious music or by seeing a beautiful painting, come into this group. The third class of people get themselves absorbed or immersed in the beauty of the thing. People of this kind can be frequently seen in the film theatres, football grounds and circus-tents. Without being aware of the presence of others, they express their emotions in an eccentric manner either by shouting or by action. The fourth type is supposed to be the most difficult type of men to be analysed. Their appreciation of beauty is based on some technical measures. When they get a thing, they analyse it, view it from angles and carefully pass a judgment. They are known in the world as the critics.

The above analysis of the four categories of people helps us to understand that the sense of beauty of the majority of people in this materialistic world lies not in the things, but in the mental outlook of men. It might be due to this reason that the logicians and psychoanalysts came to the conclusion that the sense of beauty is nothing but the expression of individual taste. Philosophers of earlier times were of opinion that sense of beauty lies not in the things, but exists in the mind. Hume observes: "Beauty is no quality in things themselves, it merely exists in the mind, which contemplates them and each mind perceives a different

beauty. One person may even perceive deformity where another is sensible of beauty, and every individual ought to acquiesce in his own sentiments without pretending to regulate those of others". The same idea can be seen in the words of Philosopher Spinoza also: "I would warn that I do not attribute to the nature either beauty or deformity, order or confusion. Only in relation to our imagination can things be called beautiful or ugly, well ordered or confused." But this view has been violently attacked by the modern philosophers and writers on aesthetics of the new school of thought who believe that beauty is a quality in things themselves. They bring forth an argument that we cannot call a thing beautiful, when it lacks beauty. It is an instinct in all human beings to dislike a thing which is ugly in appearance.

The fundamental basis of art is the appreciation of beauty. Beauty plays a prominent part in the historical drama of art. When the primitive man appreciated beauty of nature and wanted to beautify himself, his environment and utensils of art gushed out as a natural spring. "Throughout the ages the artist has been ahead of his generation in seeing beauty and its significance. Being more sensitive than the ordinary man, he may be said to have his fingers on the pulse of life." So from the earlier days down to the present day, beauty was the factor which had been inspiring the artist.

The entire history of art is full of anecdotes regarding the above fact.

Praxiteles carved his world-famous statue of 'Aphrodite of Cnidus', when the beauty of the 'Celebrated Courtesan' Phryne inspired him. Leonardo da Vinci was inspired by the beauty of Madame Lisa, and painted his world-renowned painting, 'Mona Lisa'. Michelangelo's 'Adam' was done under the inspiration which he got when he appreciated the beauty of an Italian athlete. Roerich painted his best paintings when he was moved by the beauty of the Himalayas. Wordsworth and many other romantic poets wrote their best poems when they were inspired by the charms of the famous Lake District.

'Plato's theory of beauty, truth and goodness was developed into a moral theory that beauty disposes man to right conduct and true thinking'. Plotinus elaborated his idea: "The absolute good is the cause and source of all beauty, just as the sun is the source of all daylight...". But Schopenhauer "saw that the ultimate good is beauty, and that the ultimate joy lies in the creation of cherishing of the beautiful". Kant's approach

was slightly different from others. To him "an interest in the beauty of nature for its own sake is always a sign of goodness"... From Shakespeare down to Bridges, the definitions of beauty differ.

Keats defined:

"Beauty is truth, truth is beauty",
—that is all
Ye know on earth, and all Ye
need to know."

Even though poets differ "writers on aesthetics agree that absolute beauty exists as an ideal to be striven for, although no single achievement in actuality attains this absolute standard or can be regarded as a final test of other efforts to arrive at it..."

WHAT A RETORT!

The young barrister, in a harrying cross-examination of a landlady, was trying to discredit her boarding-house in the eyes of the jury. She spoke of certain lodgers who never went out at night, and the barrister pounced on her at once.

"A queer set of people seem to live in your house, madam," he said. "Are they in training for monks, or is there some reason for hiding themselves from the public?"

"No, sir," replied the landlady, "they're studying for the law!"



IT IS FUN

DEFIANCE!

The tough-looking man at the end of the bar was getting noisy. He yelled for attention.

"I want you guys to know," he shouted, waving a piece of paper, "that I just made out a list of the guys I can beat up!"

A rugged-looking individual sauntered over to the obstreperous one. He was big, mean, and unfriendly.

"Am I on that list?" he demanded.

"Yes, you are," said the other, a bit falteringly.

"Well, I happen to think I can knock the stuffing out of you," said the big fellow, menacingly.

"What do you propose to do about it?"

"I'll tell you what I'm going to do about it!" retorted the other with an air of reckless defiance. "I'm going to cross your name right off the list!"

* * *

CHEERFUL NEWS

"Mother, daddy's lying on the porch. I think he's unconscious," said the little girl to her mother. "He's holding a paper in his hand and there's a round box beside him."

"Oh, that's wonderful," answered the mother, "my new Spring hat has come."

* * *

NO CHANCE

A man went to an insurance office to apply for life insurance. The insurance agent inquired, "Do you drive a car?"

"No," replied the applicant.

"Do you fly?"

"No."

"Sorry," said the agent curtly, "but we don't insure pedestrians any more."

* * *

NOT VERY!

The class had been told about amazing speed at which light travels.

"Just think of light coming to us from the sun at all those thousands of miles a second!" exclaimed the teacher. "Isn't it wonderful?"

"Not very," said one pupil, "it's downhill all the way."

* * *

TRAINING

The new young assistant in the optician's shop was getting his first instructions.

"We want to get a fair and honest price out of every customer," the boss told him. "After you've fitted the glasses and the customer asks, 'What's the charge?' you say: 'The charge is five pounds.' Then you pause and watch for the flinch. If the customer doesn't bat an eye, you say: 'That's for frames. The lenses will be another five pounds.'

"Then you pause again, but this time only a moment, and again you watch for the flinch. And if the customer doesn't flinch, you say: 'Each.'"

* * *

DOGS BOTH!

In one of the more conspicuous Montmartre night spots, an American in Paris met a charming hostess and invited her to go out with him. Sorry, she said, but she couldn't leave until closing-time.

Sorry, too, said the American, but wouldn't she visit him at his hotel tomorrow afternoon?

The lady said she would and the American gave her address and room number, wondering how the hotel would take it.

At 5 p.m., someone knocked at his door and there was the lady, holding a beautiful French poodle on a leash. Hardly had he ushered her into the room when the phone rang and the desk clerk said indignantly: "Monsieur, we do not allow dogs in this hotel!"

* * *

END OF MARCH!

A commercial traveller entered the shop of a grocer named March and said: "March, on the first day of April the price of tea is going up."

"I'm sorry to hear that," replied March.

A few days later a wholesale salesman came in and said: "March, on the first day of April the price of sugar is going up."

"I'm sorry to hear that," said March.

Later on, the landlord came in and said: "March, on the first day of April I must put the rent up."

"I'm sorry to hear that," said March.

Then he put up this notice in his windows: "The first day of April will see the end of March."

* * *

IDEAL WOMAN

Famous French statesman, Robert Schuman, a lifelong bachelor, has given various reasons for not getting married. An American reporter questioned him on the same subject: "Did you never look for the ideal woman—or did you never find her?"

"Oh, yes," Schuman replied to the reporter, "I did indeed look. But when I finally found her, she told me that she was looking for the ideal man!"

CATCHY WORD

The other day a woman went into a shoe-store to purchase a pair of shoes, but proved very difficult to fit. The bored assistant explained it to her by saying, "Madam, one of your feet is larger than the other." The lady didn't buy.

In the next store the task proved equally arduous, but here the alert and smiling assistant smoothed the woman's still ruffled feelings by remarking, "Madam, did you know that one of your feet is smaller than the other?" He sold her two pairs!

* * *

ACID COMMENT

During the performance of a show at a small provincial town the hero was supposed to jump into a river and, as he leaped off stage, the effects-girl would empty a tub of water with much splashing.

One night, however, the girl missed her cue, and the actor hit the floor with a mighty thud, but no splash. There was a minute of dead silence. Then out of the wings came the feeble voice of the actor: "My goodness, the river is frozen over!"

LITTLE DOCTOR

Like so many small children, little Peggy had a desire to become a doctor. She trained on her dolls, but occasionally she would receive an imaginary call to attend someone in the neighbourhood. One day she rushed out on such a mission, neglecting to close the door behind her.

When her mother called after her, Peggy begrudgingly retraced her steps and slammed the door shut.

Later, her mother asked how her patient was getting along.

"She died," replied Doctor Peggy, her lips curled in disgust; "died while I was closing that old door."

* * *

TO REMIND HER

To Biffin was delegated the honour of presenting the vacuum-cleaner purchased by the staff as a token of their esteem for Miss Dimple, the typist, who was leaving the office upon the approach of her marriage.

He rose, blushed nervously, and said: "On behalf of my colleagues and myself I congratulate you and beg you to accept this little gift, and we hope that as you employ it to

free your home from unwanted dirt and litter, you will be reminded of your old friends of the office!"

* * *

MORE WORRY

Insomnia had been troubling the tailor for several nights, and the poor man finally decided to try the old remedy of counting sheep. But the following morning he turned up for business looking more tired than ever.

"What a night!" he told his partner. "I counted 3,000 sheep. Then I happened to figure that they made 8,000 yards of wool. Then I figured that would make 2,500 suits. How can a man sleep, worrying where he could get all that lining?"

* * *

TIME TO TELL

A humorist and playwright once wrote this letter to his boy: "Dear Son,—Now that you are celebrating your 14th birthday, I think it is time to tell you about the bees and flowers. There is a male bee and a female bee, I suppose, although I haven't the slightest idea which is which. About the flowers—we get ours from the Garden Flower Shop. Well, that takes care of that. Write me soon. Love, Dad." ‡

PLANETS & YOUR FORTUNE

The following predictions are based on the movement of the Nine Planets in the 12 Rasis according to Gochara. The positions of the planets from Jaama Rasi (Moon's Place) are taken into account in forecasting the effects. Those running a favourable Dasa or Bhukthi will experience the evil effects in a lesser degree and those running malefic Dasa or Bhukthi will experience the evil effects in a greater measure. For detailed predictions, please address your enquiries to: The Astrologer c/o India Magazine, Madras-5.

Note: Each question must be accompanied by a coupon (cut from page 72 in this issue) along with postage stamps worth 15 nP.

[Astrological Forecasts for September 1958]

By T. V. RAMAN

MESHA

(Aswini 4, Bharani 4, Krithigai 1.)

Mars, Lord of the Lagna, is powerfully placed in the 2nd house. This signifies that you will be free from diseases. The finances will be steadily maintained. The combination of Venus and Sun in the 5th house promises great luck. It may be in the direction of improvement in profession or increase in business activities. Jupiter in the 7th house promises comfortable household luxuries and all-round prospects. Those under

this Rasi are marching towards a very good time. They will experience perennial luck from next month. Very Lucky Days: 2nd, 17th and 21st.

The women will find this month a bit tough. Mars in the 2nd house is likely to cause irksomeness in the family and Saturn in the 8th house is likely to cause anxiety and ill health. The women belonging to this Rasi should therefore patiently wait for some more months for better times. The combination of Venus, Sun and Mercury in

the 5th house indicates very good results, which will mitigate the evil influences of other planets. Lucky Days: 8th, 21st and 30th.

VRISHABHA

(Krithigai 3, Rohini 4, Mrigasirsha 2.)

Venus, the Lord of the Lagna, is placed in the 4th Kendra house in conjunction with Mercury and Sun. This combination is very good. You will be free from health troubles. Some may purchase new vehicles. But the two major planets, Jupiter and Saturn, are adversely placed. The effects will be in the direction of bad news, unmanageable expenses, loss of prestige and the like. Hence it is advisable to be cautious in all undertakings. Investments should be avoided. Some may undertake a journey to a distant place. For those running a favourable Dasa or Bhukthi, the month will pass smoothly. Lucky Days: 11th, 22nd and 28th.

The women will fare better than men. There will be all-round comforts and luxuries at home. Their health will be good. Still, care should be taken about food. Avoid extraneous undertakings. Lucky Days: 10th, 14th and 27th.

MITHUNA

(Mrigasirsha 2, Arudra 4, Punarvasu 3)

Mercury, the Lord of the Lagna, is placed in the 3rd house, a hidden house. Hence there will be a setback in health during this month. Jupiter in the 5th house and Kethu in the 11th house indicate great luck. But one should not be over-optimistic. For Mars in the 12th house and Rahu in the 5th house will to a very considerable extent cause evil influences. On the whole the month cannot be said to be bad. The finances will be maintained steadily. There will be small gains here and there. For business men, this month can be said to be profitable. Partnership should be avoided. Lucky Days: 7th, 13th and 23rd.

For women this month will bring mixed results. The children will be sickly. There will be cares and worries in the household. There will be unmanageable expenses. The health will suffer a setback, if precautionary measures are not taken. This month is good for women who are engaged in studies or who are employed. Lucky Days: 12th, 21st and 30th.

KATAKA

(Punarvasu 1, Pushya 4, Alesha 4.)

This month is excellent. Your finances will increase unexpectedly. The health will be good.

Success in examinations is indicated. There will be unexpected gains. Some may undertake a journey. But they should be well guarded in regard to new friends. There is a likelihood of deception. Maintain patience at home. Avoid cycle riding, etc. For business men they can expect big profit. Lucky Days: 11th and 19th.

This month is excellent for women. There will be all-round comforts. The household will be happy. Finances will be pouring. The health will be good. For those studying or employed this month is surpassingly fine. The children may suffer a setback in health. Keep quiet at home to avert unpleasantness. Lucky Days: 18th, 29th and 30th.

SIMHA

(Makara 4, Pooram 4, Uthara 1.)

This month is a trying one. It is not good either from the point of view of health or of finances. There will be misunderstandings and uneasiness at home. Those in jobs will find slight improvement. Expenditure will be on the increase. Avoid travel, investment and new ventures. Lucky Days: 2nd, 14th, and 23rd.

Household women will find the month irksome. The expenditure will be excessive. Their health will suffer a setback. The health of children may be affected. There may be bad news. For those who are employed, this month is very good. Success in examinations is indicated. Some may become very prosperous. Be guarded about health and wasteful expenses. Lucky Days: 17th and 29th.

KANYA

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

This month will be of mixed results. The evil effects are pronounced. The array of eight planets in the 12th house indicates colossal waste, loss of prestige and reputation. The health will be good. You will be able to manage on account of Jupiter in the 2nd house. For business men, they will meet with loss. Avoid new investments. Those running a favourable Dasa or Bhukthi will experience the evil effects in a negligible degree. Lucky Days: 2nd and 15th.

Women engaged in domestic duties will find the month pleasant. The finances will be steady. The health will be good. For those in service this month

is not good. Avoid new ventures and companions. Lucky Days : 18th and 27th.

THULA

(Chithra 2, Swathi 4, Visaka 3.)

Your health may be affected. You should be well guarded in respect of your food. Some may undertake a distant journey. The finances will be very much affected. There will be a lot of wasteful expenditure. Simultaneously there will be small gains too. Great care should be taken in all matters as there is likelihood of misunderstandings and quarrels. Avoid journeys. Business men will meet with loss. Avoid new investments. Lucky Days : 18th, 27th, and 29th.

For women engaged in household duties, this month is a miserable one. There will be misunderstandings and wasteful expenditure. Their health will be affected. Those running a favourable Dasa and Bhukthi will experience the evil effects in a small measure. Ladies who are employed or studying will experience good days. Be guarded while you travel in the bus or train. Avoid extraneous undertakings as far as possible.

VRISCHIKA

(Vrischika 1, Anuradha 4, Jyestha 4.)

The month is certainly not good, for Saturn, Jupiter and Rahu are adversely placed. Your health will be affected. There will be heavy loss for business men. For others there will be wasteful expenses. Some may undertake a futile journey. Kethu in the 6th house will lessen the evil effects. For those in jobs, the combination of Venus, Sun and Mercury will do some good. Avoid new undertakings. Business men should avoid fresh investments. It is advisable to confine at home as far as possible. Since there is danger through accidents avoid journeys and cycle riding. Lucky Days : 8th, 11th and 23rd.

Women in jobs and those studying will progress steadily. Their health will be somewhat affected. Great care should be taken in diet. You should be generally cautious in all matters. Household women will find the month very tough. There will be misunderstanding at home. The month is not good from the health point also. Lucky Days : 9th and 19th.

DHANUS

(Moola 4, Poorada 4, Utharada 1.)

The month is generally good

except for Saturn who is adversely placed. Those in jobs will do fine. The health will be good. There will be some unexpected gains for some. Great care should be taken by businessmen when they undertake new ventures and partnership business. In the case of persons who have children, their health may cause anxiety. Avoid journeys, cycle riding, air travel as far as possible. Lucky Days : 9th and 19th.

Household women will find the month pleasant. Their health will be good. The expenses will be under control. There will be good news. Some women may get married. Those in jobs or studying will have very favourable chances. Some may get higher posts. Success in examinations is indicated. The month can be counted upon as a very lucky one. Lucky Days : 2nd and 23rd.

MAKARA

(Utharada 3, Sravana 4, Dhanishta 2.)

Jupiter in the 10th house will bring great misery. I have seen a number of persons belonging to this Rasi in great distress. They have lost their jobs in many cases. Some are very sickly. So it is advisable for

those in jobs to remain calm and composed and avoid misunderstandings with the superiors. Businessmen will meet with great loss. So avoid new investment. The month is not good for passing examinations or attempts for high employment. Lucky Days : 3rd and 23rd.

Women in the household will find the month generally bad. Their health will be affected. There will be unpleasantness in the household. There will be huge wasteful expenses. The month is a trying one. Those who are having a favourable Dasa or Bhukthi will experience the evil effects in a negligible degree.

Women in jobs and those studying also will not experience good results. They will be put out of humour. Some may take leave and go home. Their health will undergo a setback. Lucky Days : 2nd and 23rd.

KUMBHA

(Dhanishta 2, Sathabhisha 4, Poorattadhi 3.)

This month is a very prosperous one. Those in jobs may get promoted. Some may come across unexpected gains. Their health will be good. Business men will mint money. Those

who are unmarried may get married. The month indicates all-round prospects. Businessmen can undertake new ventures. Those in jobs can attempt for higher posts. Lucky Dates : 7th, 11th, 13th, 28th and 30th.

Household women will find the month very pleasant. Some may become mothers. The finances will increase. The health will be good. Those who are unmarried will get married. For women in jobs and those studying, this month is the best. Their health will be good. Success in examinations is indicated. Gain of unexpected money is possible. Lucky Days : 18th, 23rd and 25th.

MEENA

(Poorattadhi 1, Uthirattadhi 4, Revathi 4.)

The month is not good since Jupiter is adversely placed. Your health will suffer a set back. There may be bad news. Businessmen will meet with loss. Avoid journeys and fresh ventures. Those in jobs will experience a bad time. So remain calm and composed. Lucky Days : 11th and 18th.

Household women will find the month equally bad. Their finances will be affected. Their health will become worse. There will be misunderstanding at home. Those who are having a favourable Dasa will experience the evil effects in a lesser degree.

Those in jobs or studying should remain calm and collected. Lucky Days : 19th and 23rd. ‡‡

PIN THIS FREE COUPON

Name : _____

Address : _____

Time, Date and Place of Birth : _____

This Free Coupon entitles you to ask only one question, which may be written on separate paper.

Sept. '58.

Questions & Answers

(All types of questions from our readers 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 anyone.)

V. Z. Doss, Shillong.

Q.—Don't you think that the most essential thing for one during the week-end or on holiday is change?

A.—We prefer notes!

K. Kumara Raja, Secunderabad.

Q.—What is the best thing for indigestion?

A.—Some cakes and fried stuff taken at midnight will give you indigestion, to be sure! Do you want to take leave? If you had asked us what is the best remedy for indigestion we would have suggested a dose of carminative mixture. But your question was plain enough!

Ganga Ram Singh, Patna.

Q.—My next door neighbours—an old husband and wife—are often inviting me to dinner and lunch and then suddenly leave me alone with their grown-up daughter. What is their idea?

A.—So that they can have their son-in-law next door! If you grow to like the girl it is all right—with everybody.

V. B. Shyam, Bombay.

Q.—When I had a girl and money in plenty, I thought the city was a paradise. But I have no money now.

A.—We will be surprised if the girl still chooses to go with you!

Syed Amiroodin, Quilon.

Q.—Does a kind deed ever go unrewarded?

A.—We fear it is often the case. To do a kind deed or a good turn is everyone's duty but you have no right to the fruits thereof. If a man helps a woman on the road and expects a kiss in gratitude, there will be immediate reward for him—in the form of a slap or a kick or even worse!

P. Chundra Dutt, Calcutta.

Q.—Are you not reminded of Communism when you see the painted lips of a fashion beauty?

A.—No. We are reminded of a modern rose that wastes its paint on other men's lips and cheeks! Give up your political obsession, young man, and see pretty women as they are—the flowers of Nature in our midst!

B. Srinivas, Madras.

Q.—Though I am married to a pretty woman and the father of two kids I am in love with another married woman. What is wrong if I flirt with her?

A.—There is nothing wrong with your question but we would give you the answer in the form of another question. What would you think if you saw some other man flirting with your wife?

Miss T. Leila, Bombay.

Q.—Can you mention a trait among European or American women that I should not imitate? I am eager to copy my Western sister in almost all respects.

A.—We accept your challenge, young lady. There is one thing you should never copy—having test-tube babies! We hope our Government will never approve of such a monstrosity.

N. Haridas Mitra, New Delhi.

Q.—To whom would you compare a man who runs after women?

A.—To the car that runs on without any brakes or to the mad bull that played havoc in a part of your city recently!

W. W. Coelho, Trivandrum.

Q.—I am disgusted with life and I would request you to suggest a spot where no human being will come within sight.

A.—Either the top of the Himalayas—preferably above 20,000 feet—or in a coffin deep down in the bowels of the earth!

Prabha Dhivesh, Ajmer.

Q.—I now hate the man I loved. He has got a moustache that pricks like pins.

A.—Lady dear, would a woman throw away a rose just because it happens to have thorns!

Ramesh Gidwani, Baroda.

Q.—Suppose some bad characters are bent on mischief and try to disturb the peace of a town or city. What advice would you give to the law-abiding citizens?

A.—In each street they should form a vigilance or protection committee. The residents, by means of a shift system, must patrol their street and alert the police if the trouble gets out of control.

P. L. Vaswani, Rajkot.

Q.—Why do you frown on magazines which publish objectionable sex advertisements?

A.—Just because they publish dirty advertisements that offend against the law and outrage the dignity of womanhood. One feels that something odious, filthy and indecent is staining the hands. No decent man should buy them or take them home.

G. Chander Mohan, Mysore.

Q.—Can you suggest an easy method to enter Government service?

A.—Call yourself backward!

DESIGNER WHO SCOFFS AT HOLLYWOOD QUEENS!

JAYNE MANSFIELD has actually made Marilyn Monroe look chic. And believe me that takes a bit of doing." The man who slams the stars—and they like it—is Don Loper, Hollywood's most bally-hooded dress designer whose classy customers include Marlene Dietrich, Ava Gardner and Eartha Kitt.

He hopped over to London to extend his £5 million fashion business, writes Jane Stewart in *Picturegoer*. And to make it plain he's no bosom pal of the busty girls. "I call them female impersonators. Sexy? They're just funny.

"There isn't enough money in the world to make me design for Monroe, Mansfield, your Sabrina or Dors. They're just not getting the message."

He explained: "When I dress the stars I offer more than taste. They bring their souls to me."

Gives A Shake-up

Plus a hefty fistful of cash. He'll run up a snazzy little

number for a mere £3,000. The latest customer to get his message is Kim Novak. "Her studio is crazy," he exploded. "Off screen they let her go round looking like nobody. Now I make her look like a star."

When Loper lambasts the stars he sets half Hollywood fuming, the rest smirking. About the film capital's most dressed-up shindig, this year's Academy Awards presentations, he says simply:

"A mess. Of all people, for Ann Blyth, Janet Leigh and Lana Turner to have the nerve to dress like that. They were all funnies. And how dare Rosalind Russell appear there in pyjamas?"

His Nerve!

What gives Loper the nerve to tear strips off the stars and get away with it? Imagine a Latin Danny Kaye with the wit of Noel Coward and the dash of Aly Khan. That's Loper.

This former dancer and stage designer came to Hollywood with—for him—a modest ambition: to be boss of M-G-M.

After playing Ginger Rogers's dancing partner in "Lady In The Dark" and producing, directing and designing a handful of movies, he called quits and decided to boss the stars' fashion world instead.

Nuttiest Fashions

His philosophy of luxury? "All stars were born in a swimming pool. I keep telling them—live, look and think like a star. The girl-next-door gimmick is killing Hollywood. Did old-time stars get a complex if they had two Rolls-Royces?"

The nuttiest fashions, the dizziest price tag. That's how Loper stitches up success. "Everybody has a ball."

On the drab Hollywood scene he's called a zany, a genius. Me? I wish more like him would get in the act.

* * *

HOLLYWOOD'S NEW MONSTER!

"Caution: this animal is dangerous." Hollywood hung this screen label on Jack Palance, king of the cold-blooded killers. And off-screen the label has stuck. The tiger they couldn't tame bared his teeth. But it was hardly a smile. "To imply that I resemble some of the characters I play doesn't make sense," he whispered. "And it's hardly polite."

Palance is in London making "The Man Inside," with Anita Ekberg, reports Sarah Stoddart and adds: And I went in

search of the man inside the myth—and the answer to these puzzles:

Quits America

Why should the screen's top merchant of menace sell up his home and quit Hollywood?

Why should the screen's least likely Romeo get three of the world's top glamour girls—Martine Carol, Maria Felix and Anita Ekberg—as romantic co-stars?

Why should the actor, chilling enough to give an iceman goose-pimples, have an off-screen reputation as a hot-tempered hell-raiser?

Pale With Fright!

To find out the brutal truth I had a long, long, talk with Palance at Elstree. And I have to report that he didn't twist my arm once. Yet stories about him are legion. . . .

His fanatical concentration on set unnerves other actors into fluffing their lines. His leading ladies, Linda Darnell and Rita Gam, went pale with fright when he touched them.

His fight scenes are so realistic his co-actors demand "doubles." He has been known to pick up a girl by the hair to kiss her. When a London newsman described him as "ugly," Palance rang up day after day until he got an apology. . . .

All fact or fantasy? It's a shock coming face to face with

a legend. Particularly for Palance. For he doesn't find this Frankenstein myth to be funny. When he gets angry his voice softens.

Arresting Face

It sunk to a whisper when I asked him if the sinister label annoyed him. "I don't get mad any more—just bored. I don't have to explain my looks to anyone. I'm an actor. I take the mind of the man apart to make the character believably realistic. If I succeed it's not entirely due to the camera or my physical appearance."

Once I got used to the scorching penetration of this, the most arresting face in filmdom, I began to discover the man beneath the monster Hollywood has created. His glance is startling but only because it is scathingly honest.

When he's working, Palance subjects his mind and body to the most furious self-discipline. But off-screen he's relaxed, courteous and considerate. He writes poetry, collects rare dictionaries. But he didn't need to look for words to say why—with his wife and three children—he has left America to work in Britain and live in Switzerland.

Sick Society

"Hollywood is largely a sick society. People in the picture business are getting too big-headed and too small-minded. Particularly some wonder boy directors who think nothing

exists outside their own private nuthouse. They are so mixed up themselves they insist on lousing up every good script with their own phoney psychology."

This caused the box office failure of the Hollywood expose film, "The Big Knife," says Palance. He felt the point—right between the shoulder blades. "Ouch! I owned twenty per cent of the picture. But it couldn't win.

"Now, if I know that I can't get a character's problem over to, say, Pennsylvania miners—I turn down a picture."

Palance, himself, has variously been a miner, cook, lifeguard, stoker, prizefighter. Occupations that altered the contours of his face and the horizons of his mind.

Twelve whispered lines of dialogue in "Shane" following his screen impact in "Sudden Fear" won him his second Oscar nomination and a life sentence to play berserk and barmy sadists.

Palance isn't mealy-mouthed about why he's here. "Money. I said No so often to parts, I had to start saying Yes. Remember I have three children. Also I wanted to show I'm human.

In Love Story!

"It's harder to play a straight role. And I like a challenge." That's why he made "Flower Of May," with Mexico's top star

Maria Felix. Odd to find Palance in this tender love story about an illegitimate boy. "But this kind of acting really excites me," he explains.

"The Phoenix," which he made in Germany with Martine Carol—he even gets Jeff Chandler playing the heavy—and "The Man Inside," may prove that Palance playing a good egg isn't such a cracked idea.

Could he even be a lover? What did he think about when making love to Carol and Ekberg? He looked soulful. "I think of those nice fat dollars I'm earning."

MONSOON SHOTS

Two enterprising young men hit upon a plan of shooting some outdoor sequences despite the monsoon in Bombay for producer A.S. Nathan's "Raja Beta." The plan worked all right, because in Bombay if it rains in one part, there is intermittent sunshine in some other parts.

Cameraman N.N. Shukla and assistant director Som Haksar arranged to take the "Raja Beta" unit to the suburbs of Bombay-Khar and Bandra, where Director Javar-Sitaraman waited in harness for moments of sunlight and took many montage shots. During the three days of 'outdoors' several important shots of the hero Motisagar in the streets in search of money, were also taken. Raj Mehra, the Villain, having given ultimatum to the

hero to return his money, Motisagar moves about everywhere till he comes back to his *Bhabhi* Kamini Kaushal, reports "Cine Advance."

Raman Studios' "Raja Beta," an emotional story of a childless mother and a motherless child, also presents star Shashikala with well-known dancer Helen and Randhir, Bhagwan and Master Daboo. The lyrics are written by Rajendra Krishan and the dialogue by Ramesh Pant. The film is almost complete.

DEV'S DANCE!

A surprise for Dev Anand's fans is now being planned by the South Indian producer S. Krishnamurthy, who is now in Bombay to shoot his film "Amar Deep."

Dev Anand will dance for the first time with such reputed dancers as Padmini. Also joining them in the dance will be Johnny Walker. The dance, devised by Hiralal, will be shot at the Filmistan Studios, Goregaon, by director T. Prakas Rao.

"Amar Deep" is claimed to be the biggest star-studded Hindi film to be made in South India.

ATEESHOO!

Director Satyen Bose, 'shooting' Roop Rangem's "Daal Me Kala" at the Filmistan Studios, wanted one of his artistes, comedian Kesto Mukerji, to sneeze vehemently in a big close-up.

For two hours, all known methods of inducing sneezing were tried without avail and the artificial ones which Lesto offered did not satisfy the director at all, reports a Bombay weekly.

Finally, work was finished for the day without this 'shot' being taken and all members of the unit were asked to rack their brains to find out a better way to stimulate sneezing.

Next morning Kesto Mukerji told the director that he would give the 'shot' rightaway and, to everyone's surprise, he gave the most perfect sneeze ever!

Producer Bepin Gupta, relieved that the 'shot' had come out so well, congratulated the artiste and asked him how he had managed it. Kesto smiled: "By a stroke of luck, I caught a horrible cold last night," he said.

* * *

YAHUDI—NEW HIT

Bombay Films' *Yahudi*, now running to crowded houses in different centres in the country, is a truly entertaining picture. It is a refreshingly modern version of the Agha Hashra classic which once enjoyed roaring popularity. Its romance, catchy tunes and crisp dialogue easily mark the film as far above average. Added to it all is an

imposing cast led by Dilip Kumar, Meena, Nigar Sultana and Sohrab Modi.

Dilip Kumar as the Roman prince and Meena Kumari as the Jewish girl give an excellent performance. Their romance provides some of the most thrilling moments in the story. Melancholy interest attaches to Nigar Sultana who plays the role of the Roman princess who uses all her blandishments to ensnare the hero but she feels frustrated because her love is not reciprocated. Her restraint and realism are admirable.

Sohrab Modi as the Jew is quite convincing though one wishes he rose to greater heights. Good laughs are promised by that inimitable pair, Minoo Mumtaz and Anwar. Besides, there are Baby Naaz, Tewari, and Indira who very ably acquit themselves. Nazir Hussain occupies the throne as emperor and is flashy enough. Kamala Lakshman lends glamour and enchantment to the dazzling dancing sequences.

Bimal Roy who has directed the picture shares the honours with Savak Vachha. Surely, every fan must note it in his diary that he must see this picture twice, that if he has missed the chance of seeing it on release, he must avail himself of the second chance, for "Yahudi" is a superb treat. ‡

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