

BEST FOR HOLIDAY READING

INDIA

MAGAZINE

December, 1958.

Price 40 nP.

Verghese 485
MAIN CONTENTS

Stories

Break In The Journey
Purpose of a Visit
The Letter
Uneasy Hour

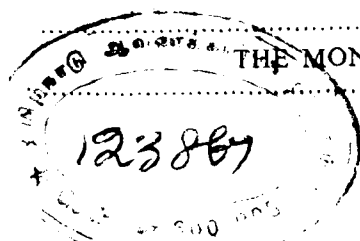
Articles

These Famous Men Were Left-Handed
Danger Spots During Thunderstorm

* * *
MORE STORIES : FEATURES : FILM : FUN
QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

ASTROLOGICAL FORECASTS FOR DECEMBER

POPULAR MONTHLY



THE MONTH'S SPOTLIGHTS

WHAT OUR READERS SAY

LETTERS INVITED—

Readers are welcome to express their views on any subject they like. They must, however, be brief and to the point. The Editor does not accept responsibility for the views expressed in these pages.

and holding up the mirror to the people.

Haridas Sen,
Calcutta.

★ ★

FILM SHORTS WANTED

CRIMES ARE INCREASING

Sir,

As a careful and regular reader of the country's newspapers, I am of opinion that crimes have increased lately. The various governments concerned are not able to check them. What kind of crimes are prominent? Sexual lust and greed for money seem to be the chief motives. Some 25 or 50 years ago such crimes were rare.

Sir,

There are film shorts and documentaries on ever so many subjects. Will India Government teach the common people, through the medium of such shorts, how to keep their surroundings clean and how to be clean themselves by the regular use of soap and water?

I hope that this letter does not stink!

K. R. A. Prasad,
Kanpur.

★ ★

AGREED SOLUTION

Sir,

Why should Maharashtrians and Gujeratis be dissatisfied over Bombay? I suggest that representatives of the two com-

— (Please see cover page III)

INDIA MAGAZINE

Member: Audit Bureau of Circulations Ltd.

VOLUME 3 : No. 10

DECEMBER 1958

PRICE 40 nP.

Stories

CONTENTS

	PAGE
BREAK IN THE JOURNEY ...	5
UNDER COVER OF DARKNESS ...	12
PURPOSE OF A VISIT ...	16
HER FIRST BOOK! (IN LIGHTER VEIN) ...	22
THE LETTER ...	25
THE CHEAT ...	30
FIRST MEAL IN FREEDOM! ...	33
UNEASY HOUR ...	42
THE GUEST ...	49
GHOST IN THE CUPBOARD! (MYSTERY STORY NO. 5) ...	54
HER MISTAKE ...	62

Articles

DANGER SPOTS DURING THUNDERSTORM ...	19
THESE FAMOUS MEN WERE LEFT-HANDED ...	39

Regular Features

THE NEW REGIME IN PAKISTAN (EDITORIAL) ...	4
WOMENS' CORNER (FOR SPARKLING EYES) ...	28
HEALTH (CHILDREN'S AILMENTS) ...	47
LIFE & LAUGHTER! ...	67
PLANETS AND FORTUNE ...	69
(ASTROLOGICAL FORECASTS FOR DECEMBER 1958)	69
QUESTIONS & ANSWERS ...	74
FLASHES FROM FILMLAND ...	76



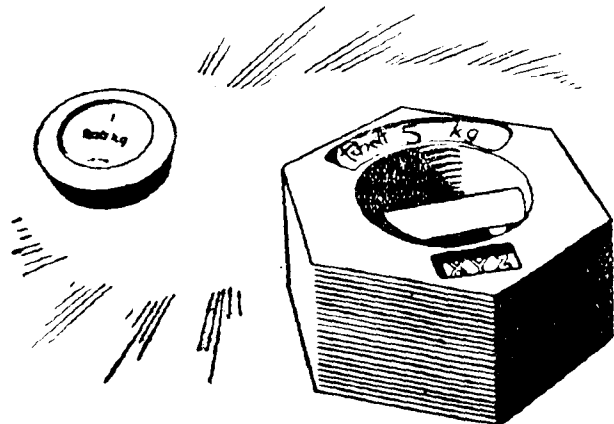
The names of characters and places appearing in fictional stories are purely imaginary and any reference to living persons is only coincidental. The Editor does not accept responsibility for the views expressed by contributors.

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Copies are not sent by V.P.P.

My honest view is that some films have corrupted the morals of our youth and society. They have begun to think that to be loose in morals and to commit adultery are the hall-marks of civilization. The French once indulged in those vices, and see how helpless they are.

Here, a word of praise is due to "India Magazine" for publishing stories on modern life

First Phase



The first phase of the change-over to the Metric System of Weights and Measures began on October 1, 1958. The use of Metric weights has become legal in selected areas of the States.

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3	105	3	4 —	200
4	140	4	5 —	600
5	175	5	7 —	000
6	210	6	8 —	400
7	245	7	9 —	800
8	280			
9	315			
10	350	MAUNDS (1 MAUND=8 VISS)	KILOGRAMS	GRAMS
11	385			
12	420			
13	455	1	11 —	200
14	490	2	22 —	400
15	525	3	33 —	600
16	560	4	44 —	800
17	595	5	56 —	000
18	630	6	67 —	200
19	665	7	78 —	300
20	700	8	89 —	500
21	735	9	100 —	700
22	770	10	111 —	900
23	805	11	123 —	100
24	840	12	134 —	300
25	875	13	145 —	500
26	910	14	156 —	700
27	945	15	167 —	900
28	980	16	179 —	100
29	1015	17	190 —	200
30	1050	18	201 —	400
31	1085	19	212 —	600
32	1120			
33	1155			
34	1190	CANDY (1 CANDY=20 MAUNDS)	KILOGRAMS	GRAMS (TO NEAREST 100 GRAMS)
35	1225			
36	1260			
37	1295			
38	1330	1	223 —	800
39	1365	2	447 —	700
		3	671 —	600
		4	895 —	400
		5	1119 —	300

1 KILOGRAM = 1,000 GRAMS

India Magazine

THIRD YEAR OF PUBLICATION

VOLUME 3 } DECEMBER 1958 } No. 10

THE NEW REGIME IN PAKISTAN

PAKISTAN today is like a simmering cauldron. Over every aspect of the Pakistani's life a military dictatorship has been established. How long will it last? Where are those political leaders whose tenure of office was one long spell of sound and fury? President Mirza encouraged them at one time and kicked them out at another time. Nobody feels sorry that he was unceremoniously bundled out when his turn came.

The new President—it would be more appropriate to call him Dictator—at least knows his own mind. He wants neither politicians nor politics. He has made a great show of weeding out corruption and carrying on a relentless war against hoarders and black marketeers. The common man thinks that the General will be their champion but he is unaware that his civil liberties have been taken away from him.

But what exactly are General Ayub Khan's intentions towards India? Everyone knows that they are not friendly but shrewd observers hold they are sinister and hostile. He is eager to catch the imagination of Pakistanis and entrench himself in power as long as possible. How best can he earn that popularity? By annexing Kashmir to Pakistan. And he is biding his time. Let there be no mistake. What sort of occasion or opportunity will suit him? Will he create confusion when our leaders are away on tour and strike even as the Japanese raided Pearl Harbour or attacked Singapore? Some may scoff that we are panicky. Far from it. None would be more glad than ourselves if we turn out to be false prophets and none can desire more friendly relations with Pakistan than ourselves. But, as the proverb says, forewarned is forearmed.

STORY IN TWO PARTS...(1)

BREAK IN THE JOURNEY

By P. RAM KUMAR

WHEN the postman delivered a letter Padma knew that it was a call from her husband. She wrung her hands in despair. Her mother, who was still in bed recovering from an attack of typhoid, urged her to open the cover and is not in a position to leave the village, you are to make arrangements to start immediately and reach this place in the next forty-eight hours. After all, it is only 80 miles by rail. Get a suitable escort and come over. I have fallen ill. This is an

Marriage spells happiness to many girls but opens a vale of tears to some, like Padma. She starts from her mother's home on what seems to be a fateful journey.

read the letter. It was a very brief communication from Padma's husband :

order, not a request.

(sd.) Sarang,
for Mother.

As dictated by my most revered Mother :

Your mother must be all right by now. Since my son Sarang

Padma's mother, Kami, half rose in her bed, beat her head with both her hands and wailed, "What a strange alliance we

have blundered into. That is because I am a poor widow. With your striking beauty and intelligence you could have been married to some high Government official. But unfortunately your father died a year before your marriage.

"MONEY could have done all that but the creditors knocked away all our property and left only this house. Even then I moved heaven and earth to get a suitable match for you. I had this house mortgaged and with the money thus raised, I visited all the neighbouring villages and contacted our relations. They saw our sinking fortunes and instead of saying 'No!' they demanded fantastic sums by way of dowry. I returned heart-broken. What else could I do? Then I stumbled upon Sarang near the Bikshu Temple village. I heard that he was looking for a bride. His big house and vast fields impressed me with his riches enough for generations to come. Two or three factors weighed against him but I ignored them. He was already twice married. He was thirty-eight years old. I didn't think much of these things because I was in a hurry to have you married by hook or crook.

"When I saw his mother, Padma, I was a bit scared. She was very ugly and evil-looking. In spite of her fifty-six years she looked remarkably strong and

her teeth were intact. I was even afraid of opening the conversation but she set me at my ease. She spoke encouraging words of welcome and when I showed her your photo she was very enthusiastic. She showed me round her big house and pointed to her golden fields with glowing pride. She expressed satisfaction at your lovely figure and said you were just the girl she had been looking for.

"SHE arranged an excellent feast for me and pressed me to stay on for a day more. And what a story she told just to impress me—about her son. Her word was law unto him. He would never step beyond the line that she drew for him. He was such an obedient boy. He was on the wrong side of thirty, he had all the money and property that his father had left to him but he would never take a decision without consulting her or asking her approval. He was such a fine boy, she said. Somehow or other misfortune was dogging his footsteps. He lost his first wife shortly after she was delivered of a still-born child. His second wife gave birth to twin girls and they all three died a month later. He had been telling her that he didn't want to marry again but the mother over-ruled her son's decision. She wanted a grandson to carry on the name of the family and she was also making sure that he should send

her up to heaven.

"When I raised the question of dowry I thought she would waive it. But she didn't. She asked me to give what I could spare. Naturally, I didn't want to lie. I promised to pay Rs. 3,000 and she closed the bargain with her seal of approval. But she insisted that the marriage should take place in her own house and I agreed.

"WE were all flabbergasted when very few neighbours of Champak, I mean, your mother-in-law, attended the wedding. It was a measure of the intense hatred that the neighbours of Sarang had for him and his mother. Only a few purohits, the farm servants and one or two personal acquaintances turned up. But we didn't think much of it at the time.

"When I stayed at her place for more than a week to see how you were adjusting yourself to the new life, she snarled at me like a wild beast and made it clear that I was outstaying my welcome. I was very near to breaking down. I wept bitter tears in a quiet corner. It was the first time that I was parting from you. But I did not show my grief lest you should be upset. I put on a smiling face and told Champak that even if she wanted me to remain in her house it wasn't possible. I had my house to attend to and there were a thousand and one things that I had neglected.

"So I took a hurried departure and came over here. I went daily to the temple to pray for your welfare. Then I understood I had made a foolish mistake in giving you to a man, far senior to you in age and whose mother began to hate you when she saw you were superior to her in intelligence. When I fell ill with typhoid a month ago Bapu sent you a telegram at my instance. I know, you came against their will. You said how your mother-in-law growled and shouted at you when you left Bikshu Temple, how your husband wouldn't even speak to you just because you were disobeying his mother and did not even care to escort you to the station. And with your own personal money you bought the ticket, not your husband's. Anyway, you had better go now or they will begin to ill-treat you.

"BUT this time you must go with an escort. I have sent the servant maid to bring Bapu. I want to know whether he can take you to your husband's place. Ah! what a tragedy has blighted our life. When Bapu asked for your hand and waived his claims to all dowry, I was a fool to think of him as a cheap, worthless chap who was unfit to earn an honest livelihood. I knew you were very fond of him

but I thought you had no future with him. Now he is earning a lot; he has got a fat job under a building contractor. If you had married him he would have been helpful to me like a son and you would have remained by my side always.

"I know Bapu has a grievance against me and a wounded heart. But he still has regard for me as his own mother and affection for you though it is that of a brother. He has said so to me often. Everyday he comes here and wants to know what he can do for me. He purchases the provisions, goes to the weekly shanty and brings me bags of things that I require but would not touch my money. He asks me to keep it in a tin-box carefully and tells me I may require it in case you are in the family way. Oh, I just threw him away in a huff and chose this wretched son-in-law. It is true, as the pandit said in a learned discourse, the sins of the parents will be visited on the children."

PADMA listened to her mother in rapt attention, the tears coursing down her cheeks. But she said not a word. She tied her hair into a knot as Bapu entered the house grinning. "Hope your mother is all right, Padma. But why do you both look dejected? Is anything wrong?" he enquired.

The mother sobbed aloud and the daughter wiped her face with

a towel and handed him the letter she had received. "The fool!" he exclaimed. "He has no independence of outlook and is still tied down to the apron-strings of his mother. He could have couched the letter in more graceful language. Anyway, Padma, I feel you should go. Better start by the afternoon train. I shall escort you to your husband's place. Only this morning the contractor gave me a month's leave because I worked hard for him all these three months.

"I MAY take a few days off from this village and intend visiting some places after leaving you at Bikshu Temple village. I shall ask my assistant Vikram here to call every day on your Mother and assist her even as I have been doing. He will be more helpful than myself. So let not Mother worry about Padma and let not Padma worry about Mother."

"May God bless you with as pretty a wife as my daughter and make you happy!" said Kami, folding her palms as if in prayer.

"Is there a girl as pretty as your daughter before I can think of marrying? No," said Bapu, sadly shaking his head. "Now, Padma, get your clothes and box ready. "If we catch the afternoon train we can reach Silver

Rock Station at 11 p.m. in time to catch the shuttle passenger for Bikshu Temple Station. By 12 midnight I shall leave you at your husband's house. But I don't propose to stay there. I shall go back to the station and take the 5 a.m. train for my sister's place. Of course, if you urgently need my presence you just drop a line to this place. My assistant Vikram will contact me, and I will attend to your needs."

Two hours later Bapu and Padma were seated opposite each other in a passenger train which was delayed at every station. He was attempting to read a newspaper and concentrate. She was bending low over

the open window, her face cradled on the crook of her elbow, trying to penetrate through the paper. He knew that she was looking at him but he was trying to avoid her gaze. A conversation with her would unleash all the dammed-up emotions of his heart and drive him crazy. For the sake of her own happiness he was anxious not to say anything that would upset her. If he had the privilege of helping her as a brother that would give him all the satisfaction. He knew that she was unhappy and miserable in her husband's home and was determined to help her make the best of a bad situation. It was her duty and he must aid her in the discharge of it.

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After a long time he lowered the paper to find that she was sleeping. Now he gazed at her beautiful but sad face on which there were traces of tears. Her breasts were heaving and threatened to burst through her dress. "She must be having some terrible dream," he thought. He contemplated the sheer beauty of her face and limbs for a while, then turned his attention to the paper which he was able to read now. At a junction, five stations off, he woke her up and gave her some refreshments. She took them without relish and finding that he was disinclined to talk, sank into sleep again.

He, too, slept for a time and when he opened his eyes and consulted his wrist-watch, he sat up startled. It was ten minutes to midnight. The train should have reached Silver Rock Station at 11 p.m. according to schedule. At 11-30 they had to take another train which left for Bikshu Temple Station. But this train was too late. They had now to wait on the platform of Silver Rock Station for nearly 4½ hours before the next train picked them up. Bapu had overlooked this possibility while taking the afternoon train. It had missed the connection for Bikshu Temple.

In those days, Silver Rock Station had no electric lights. The platform was uncovered but it was two furlongs long and had a smooth brick-laid floor. Just a few minutes before the arrival of a passenger train a sleepy port-

er would light up a gas-light and put it out two minutes after its departure. Any passengers who wanted to change trains in the night would have to wait in darkness and between 11-30 p.m. and 4-30 a.m. there would be no light at all. Situated in a rocky wilderness, the station was always wind-swept. During the night, especially, it would be very chill.

When Bapu and Padma got down at Silver Rock Station he explained that they would have to wait for more than four hours on the platform for their next train! "What do I care while you are here?" she laughed. "Bapu, I feel sleepy still. I think you must keep awake while I stretch myself on the platform for just an hour more."

"By all means," he agreed. "There is no need for you to wake up before the light is on. Somehow I don't feel like going to sleep at all." He helped to spread her bed and watched her cover herself with a shawl. Then he sat on a big trunk of hers which contained her valuables.

When his eyes became accustomed to the darkness he looked about and found that the entire platform was completely deserted. He looked up at a crescent moon struggling through the clouds and he was relieved when darkness was slowly giving way to dim light. He was surprised when the feet of the fair sleeper

came to rest on his own. How soft they were and how thrilled he was. He then looked at the face of the young woman and found that she was not sleeping at all but was gazing at him.

"I see, you are wide awake," he remarked. "Did I do anything to disturb you?"

PADMA laughed. "When I see you sitting on that box I am a bit scared. Better sit at my head, won't you?" she asked.

Without answering her, he came and sat at the head of the bed—on the floor. "Now, I suppose, you are not frightened? You see me as I am, and not as a ghost!" he said smiling.

"No, not that way, Bapu. Come and sit nearer, for I am scared. It is not the loneliness

of the place that frightens me. It is the feeling that I am going away somewhere—that I am walking into a death-trap. Feel my hands. Don't you think they are ice-cold? Warm them with your hands, won't you?"

He took her hands in his and rubbed warmth into them. Then she slowly raised her head and placed it on his lap. She locked her hands behind his neck and brought his face down to hers. Lips were glued to lips. Then she lured him into her bed and covered him with hot kisses. He had been honestly wishing to avoid this tangle. But the woman had brought it on and he knew he was lost—and helplessly, too.

(To be concluded in our next issue.)

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Under Cover Of Darkness

By S. SANJEEV

He tempted her to run away from home and husband with totally unexpected results.

"HOW well you have grown!" exclaimed Somas to Kanti. "As I walked behind I could hardly recognize the little girl who played in front of my door."

The tall woman lowered her head to hide her blush. Her eyelids flickered in pleasure. Her coarse sari and blouse, faded in colour and torn in places, did little to detract from the beauty of her curvaceous body. Somas looked greedily at her.

"Where had you been all these years, Somas? And how is your mother, by the way?" she asked in a low tone. "All the people of our village missed you terribly."

The young man took out a blue-coloured silk kerchief from his muslin shirt pocket and wiped the perspiration on his face. "You know, Kanti, we had no money and were starving. So Mother and I went to Bombay. I got a job in one of the mills there. I am earning nearly Rs. 200 a month. The mill owners pay part of my rent and sell the best of their cloth at dirt-cheap rates. I am getting on fine, I tell you."

"How about your mother?" she enquired again.

"OH, she died, poor woman, three months ago. She could have died happy but there was one grievance weighing on her mind."

"What was that?" she asked.

They sat facing each other on two stone slabs under the huge peepul tree which stood near the Durga temple. The sinking sun glowed red in the sky. The sheep were bleating in the distant fields. It was the hottest day in summer. A hot wind began to blow and even birds dropped down dead. The temple tank was the only source of drinking water for the people of the village and the water level had almost touched the bottom. Cows and buffaloes were being sold at the fair that was held once a fortnight fifteen miles off.

"My mother's grievance was," said Somas, falteringly, "that she couldn't see me married. You know, she tried very hard indeed to have you for her daughter-in-law. But your parents were churlish. They said we belonged to a lower caste. I had set my heart on you and told Mother that if I couldn't marry you I would rather remain a bachelor. I hear that you are married. Who is the lucky man? Is it anyone that I know?"

SHE did not answer his question at once. Her eyes filled with tears and her body shook with a convulsive sob. "Oh, Somas! Why did you leave me so? Two years after you left they married me off to a wretch, old enough to be my grandfather. He was on the wrong side of fifty. Vishwanath is his name. I am his second wife.

He has a house, a small farm and some cattle. He has got the jewels of his late wife but he won't give them to me. And he is very grudging with his money. I have to make do with two saris which he gives me every Diwali. And I have to toil from morning until midnight."

"Any children?" he asked shyly.

She lowered her face and giggled.

"No. I am free of that bother."

HE almost rose. "Kanti, I am glad to meet you. You know, I came all the way to have a good look at you. We have had a heart-to-heart talk. But it is no use. It makes me only sadder. Let me go now, Kanti. The heat is stifling me. At times a cough is racking me since I left Bombay. I have to catch the train at 5 a.m. tomorrow and you know the station is six miles from here. Go home, dear one. I shall come again. Suppose some people see us together, won't they start gossiping?"

Kanti laughed softly. "There is no such fear. Most of the menfolk have gone to the fair and will return late tonight or tomorrow morning. My husband has gone to dispose of three buffaloes. There is no fodder in the village and the

water scarcity is getting more and more alarming."

Somas boldly seized her right hand and held it. She did not resist. "I thought of asking you to run away with me to Bombay and warm my life with your love and beauty. Why should you toil like a slave and lead a joyless and spiritless existence? You can have everything that heart can desire—good voile saris, nice blouses, maybe a jewel or two, and a gay time in the city. Don't you think we are made for each other, darling?"

THE very boldness of his proposal made her start. She was silent for a long time but he knew she was excited. Her hand trembled, and her lips quivered. He threw his arms round her neck and strained her soft, yielding body to his. She was almost ecstatic.

"Somas, does anyone in the village know that you are here? Did you speak to anyone?" she asked, cautiously.

"Not a soul have I seen or talked to, except yourself. I came here half an hour ago, straight from the station," he told her.

She suddenly encircled her arms around his neck. "Somas, you wait here until I come back with a small bundle of my clothes and my husband's jewels. Here is the opportunity of a lifetime. Will

you promise to treat me as your own beloved and not to marry anyone so long as I live?"

By way of answer he kissed her long and passionately on the lips. Only a cough made him pause. When he was able to clear his throat he said, "Maybe I had a sweetheart or two, dear. But they were passing fancies and forgotten at once. You know how I loved you when I was here and longed for you. I promise to do everything for you. Now run along. I shall wait for you. Don't worry about money. I have enough, and, back in the city, I can raise sufficient funds to keep us in comfort. I even expect a promotion."

She left him and disappeared in the gathering darkness. For nearly two hours he waited and was even inclined to think that she had changed her mind, when she quickly came near and accosted him. She was wearing a neat sari and carrying a small bundle in her hand. "It contains my husband's money and some of his late wife's jewels," she said.

HE danced with joy. "You are now mine, Kanti, aren't you?" he asked. He gathered her in his arms again and kissed her.

"Now let us get along," she suggested. "I know the road very well. We shall go to the station half an hour before the

train arrives lest we should be noticed."

SHE took his box also and together they walked, excited at the new life unfolding before them. Occasionally he paused to embrace her and caress her cheeks. It took two hours for them to reach the outskirts of the station. Signs of a storm were thickening with vivid flashes of lightning and loud peals of thunder and a fierce gale began to blow. She was resourceful. "In the midst of that coconut grove to the right there is an old temple in ruins. But right in the heart of the temple is a pillared hall with a smooth floor. I have often sat there during hot days but nobody sleeps there in the nights for fear of ghosts. Come, dear, let us remain there until four o'clock. Luckily you have a watch which is luminous even in the dark. Let us take shelter there till the storm blows off."

She led him by the hand. They had become partly wet since a drizzle had begun. It was pitch dark but the streaks of lightning illumined the place now and then. She asked him to remove his shirt and wiped his body with a dry sari taken out from her bundle. He leaned against a pillar and she came and snuggled close to him. If the sky was rent by lightning their bodies were consumed by the fire of their passions.

He was once again racked by a cough and she smoothed his chest until it stopped and he sank into a sleep. She too closed her eyes in exhaustion, with one hand lovingly thrown round his neck.

When she woke up it was still raining. The lightning was even more fierce and lighted up the hall as if a thousand gas lights flared up at the same time. She looked at her lover and almost screamed. His body was cold as ice. She felt for his pulse. It was not beating. She looked into his eyes. They were staring. She tore off her hand from his neck. She touched his heart and then brought down her ear close to it. There was no sign of life. He must have died in her embrace.

She thought quickly and acted as quickly. She tied up her bundle, leaving none of her possessions behind and ran back to her village, the wind and the rain lashing at her. And she did not stop until she reached her home. She breathed a sigh of relief when she saw that the door remained locked as she had left it. Her husband had not yet returned from the fair and nobody had noticed her leaving nor returning.

She went in and threw herself on the floor, sobbing and shuddering. ‡

Purpose Of A Visit

By N. TULSI

Their marriage took place under very strange circumstances. Stranger, too, was the path of their love . . .

IT was a year since Keshav had married. He was proud of Janah, his pretty wife. When he set his eyes on her for the first time on the eve of their marriage, he was thrilled and joyous. She was just his dream girl—the ideal type he had long been picturing in his mind—slim and slender, with an oval face, lovely cat's eyes, rosy lips that seemed always set for a smile and perfectly even teeth that gleamed like sunshine after a dark night. In short, she was like a golden statue come to life.

Keshav wanted very much to take his bride with him to his parents' home after the marriage. Though she was very dumb he understood by the speechless messages of her eyes and the silent pressures of her hand that

she was quite willing to go with him. But he had many hostile forces to contend with and it was no use overlooking them. The parents of Janah were ten times richer than those of Keshav and they were extremely orthodox and conservative. What if they had more wealth, you might ask. Keshav's father had borrowed heavily from Janah's. They were old school-mates and long-time friends.

So when the debts exceeded a certain figure, Janah's father became a bit imperious and dictatorial. Even their friendship was forgotten and the creditor was rather cool. He ceased to visit Keshav's father in his home which stood in a town fifteen miles from his. Then one day he sent for him and gave an ultimatum. "Either proceedings

will be instituted for the recovery of all the debts totalling Rs. 21,000 or....."

THERE was a pause extending over fifteen minutes. Keshav's father was feeling very uncomfortable and did not know what the choice was going to be. He was a lawyer with very little income. He had fallen on hard times. He had sold up his assets—his lands and house—and was now paying rent for his present residence. He had to keep up a show for the sake of his profession and prestige and even his old Ford car had been pledged to a Multani. He had his four daughters to give in marriage still and he was wondering where he could get the money for them. His only son Keshav was undergoing apprenticeship under a famous advocate and perhaps all his troubles might come to an end when he set up practice. The young man was full of promise. Every teacher had praised him to the skies as a shrewd and intelligent lad. He had won several prizes in elocution contests. Many said that it was a delight to listen to the cascade of his splendid eloquence. His lawyer chief had no doubt that he would shine in court and had already expressed his intention of engaging him as his Junior Assistant on completion of the apprenticeship. A very wealthy banker Sohanlal was already negotiating with Keshav's father; he had offered his daughter's hand along with Rs. 15,000. to Keshav.

Keshav's father grabbed at the offer as a hungry bull would snap up a handful of straw. Fifteen thousand rupees! What could he not do with that sum? He could pay off some of the Multanis and keep the wolf from the door for at least nine months. By that time his son would begin to earn. He had almost given his seal of approval when Janah's father urgently summoned him and issued his ultimatum. Either he should pay up all his loans or he should immediately consent to the marriage of Janah with Keshav.

To Keshav's father it was a bolt from the blue. He almost staggered under the blow. He had no choice left indeed but to surrender to his old friend's demand. He felt that it was unjust and cruel. He did not pause to consider that Janah was a beautiful girl and though Keshav had not seen her he was sure to fall in love with her. His only consideration was money and Sohanlal was waiting at his door with a bag of currency notes. But here was a bombshell thrown at him. He had not even dreamt that his old friend would take such undue advantage of his weak position. But he was helpless and agreed to give away Keshav in marriage.

IF his father did not care for Janah's beauty what did Keshav care for his father's difficulties? He was madly in love with his bride but could not immediately take her home with him. Janah's parents wanted a year's time.

The young man could wait until he became a full-fledged lawyer, they said. But they had a secret fear. Keshav's father, in his desperate need, might pledge some of his daughter-in-law's jewels. They would rather wait for the young man to begin earning and then take away his wife. Janah's father still held the pistol at the head of Keshav's father. The promissory notes had not yet been cancelled.

THAT is not to say that Janah's parents ignored Keshav or treated him with scant courtesy. Whenever he came in his father's noisy car he was given almost a royal reception. He stayed for a day or two every time but he had not come there to enjoy the feasts. He wanted very much to speak to his wife, to clasp her in his arms and drink of her beauty. He tried to drag her into his room or meet her in dark corners. She too was dying to whisper words of love to him and was hungry for his kisses. But they were always interrupted at the appropriate moment. His young brothers-in-law and sisters-in-law popped in and squealed at them and spoiled their chances. Then it struck him. Janah's parents had deliberately set these youngsters to keep him and his wife separate.

When next time he came he was accompanied by Suresh, his closest pal. He drove the car as

Keshav pretended to have splitting headaches very frequently. He had come there to consult a famous ophthalmologist. Soon after his arrival he took to bed in a separate room.

Before evening passed Suresh had become quite a favourite with Janah's parents. He talked to them of his wide influence in film circles and waxed eloquent on the excellence of "Mother India" which no family should miss. It was a rare treat, he said. Then he made a sudden offer. He would take the entire family in Keshav's car to the last show. The Manager of the Odour Theatre was his best friend and he would take them to the first class free. By one o'clock in the night he would drive them back home.

JANAH's father was a miser in his habits and he was delighted at the prospect of a free show for his entire family who could watch it from cushioned seats. So they all had a hurried meal and crammed themselves into the car. Only Janah's father's mother, going on for eighty, refused to come and said she would keep watch over the house. Poor Janah had been very wild with enthusiasm at the prospect of seeing the picture but a few minutes before the car was to start, she complained of giddiness and a vomiting sensation and her grandma insisted that she should take to bed. That evening Keshav had an-

—Please see page 21

DANGER SPOTS DURING THUNDERSTORM

By S. K. GOBIND

ON average, lightning strikes at least a thousand persons dead in India every year. The thunder-bolt mercilessly descends on farmers ploughing in the fields, on people bathing in tanks or rivers, and on wayfarers taking refuge under trees. The sharp thunder-showers that precede the two monsoons in India (the south-west and the north-east) take a heavy toll of human life. Not fully realised is the fact that innumerable heads of cattle perish on account of lightning strokes.

When the country is baked by the scorching sun everybody welcomes an overcast sky. Dark, menacing clouds gather thick and fast and earth and sky are soon rent by vivid flashes of lightning. Workers in the fields, sweating and toiling, hail the prospect of a thunder-shower. Lightning does not frighten them in the least but all the same it claims some lives. During the worst of storms lightning, as some newspapers picturesquely

report it, "kisses" the tallest of buildings, burns down huge trees and causes injury and death to people gathered together in a thatched shed or stone building. The mere impact of a thunder-bolt is enough to shatter glass panes in distant buildings and dislodge both animate and inanimate objects. Recently, on a small hill town a speaker at the mike was addressing a meeting in vehement language despite incessant flashes of lightning and loud peals of thunder. Hardly had he concluded his speech when there was a terrific thunder clap and the man was flung a hundred yards away from the loud-speaker.

Easy Conductor

When your hand accidentally comes in contact with a raw, uninsulated switch at home, the resultant shock is very great. At times it proves fatal. It is easy to imagine what will happen to the poor mortal when lightning that carries millions of volts hits a man and sears his body. Like

green trees the human body is an easy conductor of lightning.

There is a saying, which is trite but true, that even a cobra is terribly afraid of thunder. Should we also go in fear of it? We need not, if we take some precautions. Also, there is the comforting thought that five persons in a million may be struck by lightning during a thunderstorm but we usually rule ourselves out of this little minority of unfortunates. This complacency would be justified if we ascertained our bearings and exercised the necessary precautions.

Real Menace

When a thunder-storm breaks out people strolling on the seashore must make a quick exit. Of course, they need not be alarmed at the distant flashes of lightning because these are a common sight even when there is no promise of rain. The real menace arises only when dark thunder-clouds charged with electricity begin noisily to announce themselves. Lakes, tanks, ponds, and wells, are danger spots and must be avoided at all costs. Rowing, swimming and bathing may well be postponed.

As that inimitable novelist, Charles Dickens aptly put it, trees are dangerous neighbours during a thunder-storm. Imagine a tree, all green from leaf to root catching fire as lightning strikes it, and being reduced to cinders

and ashes. In the split of a second the green tree is transformed into dry firewood and this in turn is consumed by the greedy tongues of flame. What chance does man stand if he takes refuge under a tree? Owners of bungalows with trees in their compounds must always take care not to let huge branches overhang their rooms on the top floor. Between their residential portion and the trees there must be a respectable distance. Otherwise, the danger of being hit by lightning is not altogether eliminated.

Keep Off The Oven

It is the habit of many housewives to keep near the oven and warm themselves or tend the fire during a thunder-storm. Very often this oven is placed right under the chimney which seems to extend an open invitation to lightning to conduct itself down its hollow passage. In our kitchens there are too many copper vessels which must not be kept near the open window, for they do attract lightning. It is gratifying, however, to note that vessels of stainless steel are slowly replacing those of copper.

Youngsters playing on the maidans or fields must be asked to take shelter in nearby buildings or run home. Tailors busy at their sewing-machines which are all metal should suspend work for a while until the thunder-storm blows off its fury. Lonely thatched sheds or huts

with zinc or corrugated iron sheets for roofs, situated on fields and farms do not afford protection and are best avoided.

Stupid Mistake

Even while at home do not crane your neck out of the window and peer at the sky. It is advisable to close it and remain in a corner of the room away from openings in the wall or other crevices. One is often tempted to seek recreation at this hour or some refreshing drink at the tea-stall in the street corner, to sally out with an umbrella and stand there bravely, sipping the tea and swaying to the catchy music relayed by the radio.

It would be difficult to think of a more stupid mistake. The copper vessel full of milk is hoisted on the oven, the outer edge of the stall is the only place where you can stand and listen with the rain battering your umbrella and the flashes of lightning almost blinding your eyes. And, remember, the aerial for the wireless set is grounded in the earth and has not been switched off. A recent report had it that some people standing at a tea-stall during a thunder-storm were struck by lightning.

Purpose Of A Visit

—Continued from page 18

nounced that he was dining at the house of an old class-mate

of his and would return only next morning. He had already left his father-in-law's home by five o'clock in the evening.

With a screech and a jolt the car, carrying the family, started off to the merry laughter of the children. The picture was indeed a treat and Janah's parents and sisters enjoyed every minute of the show. Janah, too, was not disappointed. She kept the door open for Keshav to sneak in. The two lovers were in the seventh heaven of happiness. They were not disturbed until five o'clock next morning. The car had broken down on the way back and Suresh tried all sorts of repairs until 4 o'clock. Then the idea occurred to him. He hired a taxi at his cost and brought them home. When Janah saw Suresh in the morning she turned on him the most charming of her grateful smiles.

FIRM !

Michael had misbehaved and had been shut in the pantry. He hammered at the door with hands and feet.

"Will you behave if I let you out?" asked his mother.

"I don't want to be let out," came the reply. "I want a tin-opener."

Her First Book!

By SUDHA RANGANATHAN

There is many a slip between the cup and the lip. So is the case between the writing of a manuscript and its printing and publication. Read this diverting skit for a few minutes of laughter.

I HAD always wanted to write and publish a book. Though I had never before given it any serious constructive thought, even about the subject, a clear idea of the attractive cover was always before my mind. The front cover would be, as far as possible, of coloured art paper, my name standing out in bold print, then one of these modern designs, which look like expositions of Euclidean theorems, would be placed just above the name of the book. The print inside would be bold and attractive, and the foreword would at least be by an M. P.

My husband always pours cold water on all my brilliant ideas. Now, he said that books are costlier to get published and to sell (no one would think so, considering the amount of trash available in the book-

shops). I said I would make it a booklet, and he went away muttering a pamphlet or better still posters would be cheaper. This remark aggravated me and I set about seriously thinking of some suitable subject.

This made me think of my grandmother. A contemporary of hers has published a cookery book, and this fact aroused all the dormant ambitions of my grand-mother. She was for ever muttering that none of her grand-daughters though all of them were well educated and had plenty of leisure, none of them, to quote her "is grateful enough to help me. Look at that woman (referring to her contemporary of cookery book fame)! Her grand-daughter has written out all the nonsense that she dictated and it has come out as a book. With my wisdom

and experience, what a beautiful book can be written! But these wretches never help me."

Well, I approached my grandmother about our (hers as well as mine) favourite topic—of writing a book, requesting her hints on new savouries and sweets as well as invalid diets. Instead of acceding promptly, she suggested that the topic should concern the festivities of South India and the correct modes for their celebration. As I was never sure, whether bath should come first on Deepavali day or sweets, I liked her idea, and agreed promptly, knowing well that many others, like me, were in the same quandary, and would like a helping hand. I was sure of the success of the book.

Everyday, for nearly a fortnight, I used to go to my grandmother's place, after sending off the children to school, and return in time to send them their lunch. From occasions like Coconut Day to major festivals like Divali, we had covered everything fairly well, to our satisfaction. We had added for each festival, a list of foods to be prepared and the methods of preparing them. I had copied down my jottings and re-written the subject fairly well to be given for typing. Then it struck me that I should verify the details with some other old lady also.

I approached a very close friend of my mother-in-law abo-

ut this matter. She was corroborating everything I had written, till, in the middle, she asked me, "Who told you these things?" I blabbed out "My granny." From that second, she found fault with each and every item I had put down. She practically tore my literary efforts into bits. I did not till then think that a person could be so sarcastic as well as vehement. After my critic (or shall I say crisis?) had left, I burst into tears, despairing about my manuscript ever seeing the printer (or, I did not mind his devil either, provided the manuscript was accepted).

My husband came home to find me sobbing on the desk with papers strewn all round. On finding out the cause for the heart-break, he advised me to amend the whole thing and write out one festival according to one person and the next according to the other and so on. He further added that I was a fool to have praised one lady to another. Then he suggested that even though the day was not a festival day, he would like to have at least his tea.

In spite of these irritations, I had the manuscript typed out and it came to within twenty-five pages. I was just calculating what I would do, if the first fifty thousand copies were sold out at four annas each, when my husband quietly dropped a brick, or more correctly a bomb: "Have you asked any publisher

to quote his price for printing this?"

"You mean I have to pay him for publishing?"

"Of course, I hope he will not ask too much. If we print it ourselves, we will have lots of trouble with the distribution. How can we sell five hundred even though the book is priced at Thirteen Naye Paise?"

"What!" I could not restrain my anger, "only five hundred! I want to print at least fifty thousand, besides pricing each copy at twenty-five Naye Paise." "Well, well, ask the publisher," he said and went off smiling to himself.

The publisher, according to my husband, was indeed very kind. He wanted only fifty rupees for five hundred copies and had added that of course, other expenses could be covered by the sale, if any. I was dumbfounded, aghast at his audacity! To suggest that I should spend at least fifty rupees on the doubtful prospect of realising just the bare cost, must indeed be considered an impertinent proposal. I decided to shelve the whole thing till a more brilliant idea

should come to me, an idea which the publishers would just gobble up.

I also tore up the dedication to my elder son. It was really a very noble one: "To my son, the world is yours. Enjoy it on festival days as our ancestors have prescribed, and may your name be as glorious and as reverent to your children, as your ancestors' are to you." I admit it is a bit long and slightly cumbersome, but don't you agree that it has a very beautiful sentiment?

"My sincere thanks are due to those excellent matrons who have enjoyed and observed so many festivals correctly (here, the names of my grandmother and the old lady were mentioned) and to my husband, without whose unfailing help and heartening encouragement, this work would never have been written. Last, but not least, my thanks are due to my publisher (name mentioned) who has been very kind and considerate in the publication of this, my first volume".....This glorious rendering of gratitude was also torn up by me and given to my children to make sailing boats. I earned their sincere thanks for that!

As they grow older, human beings acquire the faces they deserve.

—OWEN D. YOUNG

THE LETTER

By RAJAN

AS I turned the corner from the Court Road and entered the Maidan I could see the westering sun, shy and blushing like a young bride, peeping through a cluster of clouds. The sight of the sun after the many days of endless rain was so invigorating. I quickened my steps and longed to be home. Here and there in the Maidan, young boys were playing forward to that moment when I would quietly ensconce myself in my favourite armchair, deeply engrossed in the game. The mounting crescendo of confused clamour shook me from my reverie. There was a cortege of students winding their way up from the opposite end of the Maidan into the Bazaar. I secretly longed to become one of them instead of a cursed clerk

.....
A woman had written a letter, inviting him to meet her. And he had the pleasantest of anticipations...
.....

their evening games. But I had no inclination to tarry awhile either to enjoy the sun or the fun of the boys playing. My thoughts were all about home where Karun, Ram and Ashok would be eagerly waiting.

in a land mortgage bank. That drudgery and mechanical, mundane routine of office...I again went back to my thoughts. The round of bridge is the only thing that is lifting me out of this slough of despond, I concluded.

All of them are my chums; sweet chums. We are a lively foursome and play bridge every evening. I was only looking

HALF the gloom which gripped me as I followed the line of my sad reflections in the Maidan evaporated the instant I pushed

open the gate of my house, for I could hear Karun vociferously rattling over some point of his.

"HELLO," I hailed, "how long have you guys been here?" Karun lifted his big stout frame and chuckled, "As usual, Raj." I could not but look into that round, unlined and almost boyish face gone red with some fierce arguing. He was an apprentice at the bar and being blessed with the gift of the gab should make a highly successful lawyer. Ram, the medico, was sitting beside him. Tall, slender and handsome he had an unfailing humour which often livened up our listless spirits.

But Ashok's absence rather discomfited me for that should mean we could not start our game right now. Why is Ashok missing, he should have been here by this time, I became curious.

While we waited for our friend to join us, we talked on a myriad of topics. Now and then I cast eager glances at our old Big Ben poised on a corner stand in my living room. The merry tick-tock of my faithful timepiece interrupted the silence which fell in between our discussions. Soon it was seven and darkness had fallen. We concluded that Ashok would not be coming and very reluctantly decided on a short walk.

It was very cool outside. There was a slightly chill breeze

blowing against us as we jogged along. We walked silently all the while and I was preoccupied with my own thoughts about Ashok. I remembered with amusement the first time I ran across the guy. He was then an irresistible apostle of love, having become embroiled in a score of 'affairs.' I was conscious of this trait in him when he was first introduced to me and notwithstanding I invited him to play bridge at our house in the evenings. That meant he had to forego his excursions into that enchanting terrain of romance. Yet my invitation was honoured to this day. Now, four months hence, I had a vague fear that the charm and lure of his past exploits had been too strong for Ashok.

I was thinking in this strain when the sight of Ashok himself a few yards in front of me took me off-guard. He was coming towards us, with his head hung down as if working out a difficult riddle. He seemed to look glum and sad. I was at a loss to fathom the reason for this. The first question I put to him, of course, was why he failed to turn up for bridge. In reply he gave me a bland and stupid smile. By Heavens! what had happened to him, I wondered. That loud and boisterous laugh, friendly warmth and animated talk were all missing. Sure, there was something amiss. But Ashok parried our questions with that same bland, idiotic smile. Every now and then he squirmed about

uneasily. And we sensed, as the tiger senses its prey, that all was not well.

At last yielding to the heavy fusillade of our anxious queries he articulated, "Pray leave me alone, if only all of you could be patient I would proffer an explanation ere long. Well, let us then go to the yonder seat in the park and sit down." As we sat down I looked into Ashok's face. His lips were pouted into an unpleasant scowl and helplessness was writ all over his face. Karun proceeded with his queries; reminiscent of the mercilessness of a lawyer cross-examining a witness. For a time Ashok sat still and silent. He bit his lips in determination. Then rising up and running his hand down inside his banian, he produced a letter addressed to himself. With an agility which belied his stout frame Karun seized the letter and read aloud:

Dearest Ashok,

ALLOW me to address you in such a superlative for I am head over heels in love with you. Forgive my obtrusiveness—a heart weighed down with intense love and passion has no other cure. How I wish I could pour out my heart to you at Azad Park at 6 p. m. today. With kisses in advance,

Yours and yours only,
Malati.

"By God! what is there to look so blue about it, my good

friend," it was Ram advising Ashok, "cheer up. Lucky as you are, I have never been graced with such love letters."

KARUN and I were also there to pour out our congratulations and at the same time wonder what had made Ashok so desperate. Naturally, for a love letter is such a welcome thing for a young man. A silver lining in the dark clouds of emotional instability when he passes out of his teens. But here Ashok is tearing his hair and wailing. There is absolutely no reason to do so, I thought.

But with great difficulty we coaxed out the story from Ashok much to his perplexity and ours too. He had received the letter sometime in the morning. He read and re-read it. Excitement ran high—he could not wait till 6 p. m. But still he had to. He despaired. He consulted his watch, the time-piece in the bedroom, ever so many times and cursed and swore at the leaden-footed time. By evening he was dressed up sleek and smart and started off on the appointed mission one hour before schedule. From the road leading to the park he espied afar a young woman's form standing in the southern end of the park which faced the elementary school. Her beautifully curved form stood silhouetted against the cloudless evening sky and Ashok did not take time to conclude that she was none other than his own dearest

—Please see page 32

FOR SPARKLING EYES

By I. J.

CLEAR, sparkling eyes are a must for good looks and good health and a lively personality, yet too many of us misuse our eyes or substitute eye cosmetics for simple, effective eye care.

Adequate light is the number one requisite in keeping eyes clear and sparkling. For reading, sewing and other close work one light shining over the shoulder is not enough, nor is it the right kind of light.

Besides one direct light for the immediate use, you need general illumination in the room. Constant switching of the eyes from a darkened area to a light area causes fatigue. This contrast causes as much eye fatigue as inadequate light.

So the next time you read in bed, keep one light on for general illumination and another for the direct reading. By the same token a room which has dark furniture and stark white walls is also bad. Pastels and

muted shades are best for the eyes.

If you plan to do four or five hours of reading, sewing or writing take five or 10 minutes off every half hour for eye rest. Simply close your eyes and put your head down on the desk for five minutes or look out of the window.

Ordinary Care

Washing the eyes with boric acid solution or just plain warm water will help to rid one of bloodshot eyes and will relieve eyestrain and tiredness. Ordinary care should preserve eyesight for a lifetime. There is no such thing as "wearing out" the eyes. If the light is good and one gets sufficient rest the more one uses the eyes the stronger the muscles become and the more efficient sight actually is.

However, there are certain danger signals. Swollen and inflamed lids pain with or without redness, blinking, change in vision (whether double vision or

dimming), excessive granulation on the lids after a night of sleep are all symptoms of eye disorder. Do not tamper with the symptoms at home, but see your eye specialist immediately.

Eyes will Betray!

If your eyes are bloodshot and they are not clear after a good night's rest, you should see the doctor. If something gets in your eye and you are unable to remove it by rolling back the lid and flicking it out with a piece of sterile gauze on the end of a blunt probe, go to a clinic or doctor and have him remove it.

It is a good idea to go to a doctor and have him examine your eyes once a year. For the eye is an amazing mechanism. It can predict disease long before a physician can locate the disturbance in other parts of the body. Brain tumour, high blood pressure, hardening of the optic nerve indicating syphilis, diabetes, jaundice—are all reflected in the eye.

One thing not to worry about is not seeing something. Every eye has a blind spot. Sometimes you hold your head in a certain position and you can't see. You begin to notice that every time you hold your head this way you can't see for a second or so. This is perfectly normal and should not alarm you.

More Light Needed

As one grows older and the muscles become less elastic, eyesight frequently dims. The older we get the more light we need to see clearly, also. As we approach 45 and 50 we often have trouble seeing, and suddenly find we need eyeglasses. At the present time there is a sort of trifocal glass which enables one to see things close at hand, at arm's length and at a distance, an improvement over the old bifocal glasses.

In general, good common sense care will preserve your eyesight. Above all, do not attempt self-medication of the eyes. *

PROTEST!

The bus jammed with heavily laden shoppers and as a pretty girl entered a man immediately rose. Before he had spoken a word, the girl said: "It's kind of you, but I prefer to stand."

Politely raising his hat, he said: "Yes, but——"

"Really, I mean it," she said.

"But I——"

Again she interrupted him. "I assure you I'd rather stand."

"But," the man shouted desperately, "I'm trying to get out!"

THE CHEAT

By R. K. WARRIER

*He was a hero to many but his friends knew
that he lived and died a cheat.*

IT was a bright sunny morning in Burma a couple of months after Pearl Harbour. Squadron Leader Prakash Sharma sat in the cockpit of his Lysander, staring with unseeing eyes at the unchanging landscape of lush green vegetation below. He was one of that gallant band of the recently born RIAF who were unsuccessfully trying to stop the relentless advance of the Japanese war machine. They were pitifully few in number and were equipped with obsolete Lysanders which had been converted into fighter-bombers. One consolation was that this was to be their last raid for quite some time. Five Spitfire squadrons and three Mosquito squadrons were arriving this day to take over the operations. Prakash and his mates were to be sent to Calcutta for special training on Spitfires—from there they would

be shunted to the Middle East sector.

Earlier, at Imphal the Commanding Officer—an Englishman—had been delightfully vague at his briefing. He told them no more than he had the night before—that their target was a huge ammunition dump and transport. If the mission were successful the Japanese forces in that region would be crippled. At the end of the briefing the C.O. had carelessly added, "Oh! I say, chaps. We hear there are a few—about ten or twelve—Zeros operating in that area guarding the target. This is not much more than a rumour and so don't be scared. Well, here's luck and all the rest of it. Bung-ho! chaps—happy landings and good hunting." Thinking back, Prakash allowed a dry smile to flit over his otherwise expres-

sionless face. "What a laugh," he thought, "ten Zeros against eight of these old bathtubs—don't be scared—bung-ho!—bah!" He glanced to his left and saw his 21c Ft. Lt. Puran Shahani—who seemed to be checking their position.

THE sight of Puran reminded him of Leela and the letter he had received from her a couple of days ago. She said she was pregnant—by him of course—and she begged him to run down to Calcutta and marry her immediately. Leela had been engaged to Puran and he had been introduced to her at one of those noisy anglicized war-time parties. Within a week Leela had broken with Puran and had started living with him. He tried to unsuccessfully remember the names or at least the number of girls who had unwittingly lived with him in the vain hope that he'd eventually marry them. "Hell!" he thought "if I had to marry every girl I got into trouble, I'd have a ruddy harem by now." With this he coolly dismissed Leela from his mind.

Now he began thinking of his schooldays. He had always stood first in class—because of his wonderful talent at smuggling notes into the examination hall. It had been the same in college. In the UTC he had become a CSM merely by faking evidence of inefficiency against his CSM and then reporting him to the officers. He had been rewarded by being given the post himself.

After college he had hung around doing nothing. The only thing he had shown any interest in was flying, so he enrolled in the Flying Club. In those pre-war days, a pilot attracted much admiration, and he had enjoyed his share of it to the hilt. He had made any number of amorous conquests merely by playing up the fact that he was a "fly-boy."

With the advent of the war he had immediately joined the RIAF—not through any heroic motives, but simply because he felt he'd look good in uniform. He had pulled strings and had risen with phenomenal rapidity to the rank of Flight Lieutenant. When he was sent into combat he accepted it as part of the bargain. It was on his third mission that he became a Squadron Leader. They had been just over their target when their skipper caught a burst of flak, and went down in flames. Not knowing what he was doing, Prakash had screamed into his R. T., "Follow me," and streaked for home. In his panic he had jettisoned all his bombs, and as luck would have it, his bombs had hit the target dead centre. Of course, Headquarters had thought that it was his quick thinking and valour which had saved the squadron and accomplished the mission. He was forthwith given his promotion to Sqd. Ldr. Soon after this memorable event he had met Leela, and it was then that Puran's hero-worship for him

had turned into an undying hate.

He was rudely jerked out of his thoughts by Puran's dispassionate yet somewhat gloating voice in his earphones—"Red one to Red Chief. The Boss was right. Here come the Nips—ten of them on our starboard." Prakash glanced fearfully to his right and saw the Zeros zooming in for the kill. He babbled into the R.T., "Red Chief. No chance. Break up and head for base." Immediately he tried to turn and get out of this death-trap as soon as he could. He had just completed his turn when a Jap headed him off towards the target. He was almost over the target when the Jap sitting

on his tail gave him a single burst. The slugs caught Prakash in his back. He slumped over dead, pushing the stick right forward and sending his plane straight into the target. As for the rest of the squadron, three of them got away—Puran among them.

The survivors limped home and made their report. The mission was a success due to the gallantry of Prakash who plunged his aircraft into the target when he saw no other chance of accomplishing the mission! By tacit agreement Puran and the other two made no mention of Prakash's cowardly order and his panic. Prakash lived and died a cheat. He was posthumously awarded the DFC. †

THE LETTER—Continued from page 27

Malathi. He rolled the beautiful name on his tongue endearingly, ecstatic at the thought of the forthcoming rendezvous. It was not often that people are blessed in this manner, he thought. He walked fast.

Taking the letter in his hand he closed up for the most important moment. He then uttered a few introductory words, "I am glad you wrote me this letter, this beautiful letter from such a beautiful girl er..." Ashok stopped. Her eyes looked straight at him—a stern and spiteful look. He blinked.....the onrush of the choicest language of love which he had rehearsed to give expression to was rudely stemmed. He choked for breath

and at the same time became painfully aware that the lady was fumbling for her umbrella. Any moment he might feel its weight on his back. Chivalrously he retreated and by quick glances sideways made sure that the lady had not leapfrogged on to his back hankering for blood.

Out of the danger zone Ashok breathed more freely. Where was his Malathi—the authoress of the epistle? Did he meet the wrong person? As he tore away from his bitter experience, a cacophony of hoarse laughter broke into those unpleasant thoughts and mingled most innocently with the clear, resonant sound of the tower clock striking six! Was he before time?...?..?

SHORT STORY

First Meal In Freedom!

By R. Z.

He wanted to throw up his job and spend the rest of his life in the company of his second wife. But something happened... and he made a quick decision.

THE odd, wild idea first came to Ram after the office luncheon given to Shri Haribhai upon his retirement. Ram would never have had such a notion otherwise, because, after all Shri Haribhai had put in 40 years of coming in to work each morning, plodding through the day, and wearily going home at night. And how much time had Ram put in? Four years, three as a bachelor and one year since he'd married Lalita.

It was an occasion both sad and pleasant because there's something about the end of the

trail on a job and the grayness of a man's hair that makes the younger men wince. Not that Shri Haribhai felt that was so. He went around, after cleaning out his desk, thanking each man and woman for the gold cigarette case they'd given him, his fine eyes twinkling with a real joy.

To Ram he said shortly, "It's something special to say goodbye to you, son. Because you're the newest and youngest here. We're the beginning and the end, you might say."

"I hate seeing you leave", said Ram.

"Don't say that," said Shri Haribhai. "Do you realise at last I can spend all day with my wife? Too bad it takes so long."

Later, going home, Ram brooded over how much he missed his own wife all day. He almost wished he were now retiring. While driving through heavy traffic in his somewhat battered old car, he mused upon the change marriage had worked in him. Before, he had amiably worked through the hours, and when the day ended he filled his evenings pleasantly. Now even going in mornings to the job was a wrenching of spirit, a creating of loneliness and an ache, because he had to leave Lalita.

Amazing, he thought in awe. Simply amazing.

WELL, not exactly, he argued with himself as he drove into his street and parked the car. Lalita was such a wonderful girl, so incredibly alive and sparkling and such fun, that by comparison the hours of work were an unfair punishment. A lump came into his throat as he looked out of the car window at the trim, split level house they'd bought. Inside was contentment; inside was Lalita with warmth, love and laughter; inside was the astonishing leather easychair she'd found for him that fitted his angular frame like a glove; inside was

the prowling-thinking work-room Lalita had planned with him.

It isn't fair, thought Ram with sudden wild yearning. Why can't I just stay home all day with her? We could have such fun.

It was at that moment, just as Lalita came out on the porch to see what was keeping him in the car, that a wonderful idea came to Ram, an idea that sizzled through him with electric effect, making his eyes glitter and his heart pound. Why not, he thought, why not?

Lalita, a slim girl with glossy black hair, put her hands on her hips. She was his second wife. She called laughingly "You've got the right house, mister. Or did you forget where you live?"

"Never," shouted Ram. He swung his long legs out of the car, slammed the door behind him and ran to her, looked about for peeping Toms, and swept her up in his arms. He kissed her exultantly. "Never in a thousand years."

Lalita caught her breath in delight. She pulled back and stared at him and knew immediately, from the strangeness of his grin, from his wildness, that something unusual was afoot. Neighbours often watched with amusement from behind the nearby window blinds as they greeted each other, so she deferred questioning him until they were inside.

"I've got a great idea for you to ponder," said Ram, not releasing her from his strong arm.

She hastily kissed his nose, and firmly disengaged herself. "I've something pretty great for you to ponder, too," she said lightly. "But not here, on-stage."

"I'll carry you in," said Ram, "and guess your weight, into the bargain."

"No!" shrieked Lalita, but he scooped her up and lugged her inside, pretending to stagger breathlessly. He kicked the door shut behind him and they fell in a pleasant tangle on the couch.

"Keep away, you," she warned shyly.

"That's just it," said Ram, suddenly becoming serious. "I can't keep away. I don't want to keep away. I want to be with you every minute. And I'm going to," he added exultantly.

"What do you mean?" said Lalita startled.

"I've got a terrific idea," said Ram, seriously. "Let me explain it."

LALITA put her arms around his neck, her eyes fixed on his face solemnly. She waited patiently.

"You know, honey, I've been thinking how little time a married couple actually spend with each other. By the time I get home, eat, do things around the house, it's time to sleep. I spend most of Saturday afternoon taking care of small things that eat up our precious time, like paying bills or fixing things. Only on Sunday are we together, really together, for a few hours. And even then we either are visiting relatives or entertaining."

Lalita's face was softly luminous. "I know what you mean."

"Do you know that when you compute it, I spend more time driving back and forth to work than being alone with you?" said Ram. "I figured it out in the car while coming home. Just listen to these figures I arrived at; each week I get about six to eight uncluttered hours with you. In a year that means we're together about 25 days, figuring 16 waking hours a day. If you add two weeks' vacation to that, we're actually together only about six full weeks a year. The rest of the year is spent in work, household duties, stuff like that."

Lalita's smile was a sweet thing to see. "Darling, darling," she said happily. "I love you for that. But that's the way things are..."

"It doesn't have to be, though", said Ram.

"What are you driving at?" said Lalita wonderingly.

"I'll tell you", said Ram. "We have Rs. 20,000 in the bank. If we were to cut our living expenses to the bone, I mean to give up the car and things like that, we could live for nearly two years on that money." Ram's eyes were shining. He swallowed and plunged on, "I could quit my job and we could stay home together all day and live as if we were retired now, instead of waiting till we were 65."

Lalita said, "I....."

"Now wait, don't jump to conclusions. "It's crazy until you hear me out," cried Ram. "Imagine it, honey, all day together for nearly two years. lounging around, listening to music. Taking long walks together. Picnics. Time for books and talk and love, without thinking about work the next day. I'd share all the housework with you, as if we were camping out."

"And when the time is up....?" said Lalita, her face absorbed.

"Why, I'll find a job again," said Ram triumphantly. "Oh, it'll be a headache and a bad time then, for a while. But in those two years we'd have had the equivalent in being together of 20 years of living with a daily job to go to. Think of it, honey, it's like living 20 years longer."

He stopped, aware now of how close to crazy his speech was, and he stared anxiously at Lalita.

Lalita said, her eyes brilliant, "I'm with you. All the way. You can quit your job tomorrow."

They sat wordlessly for a moment staring at each other.

Then Ram said, chokingly, "I'm so full of a...a sense of freedom I feel like I'll burst wide open any minute."

Lalita uttered a laugh that was half a sob. "Don't burst here, please. Go out or something, while I get food ready."

"Oh, no," said Ram happily. "I'm going to spend every minute of those two years with you, those precious, wonderful two years, beginning right now."

LALITA called over her shoulder as she fled. "We'll still have to eat, you know. Go outside for 10 minutes, darling, so I can set the dishes without you grabbing at me."

Full of restless joy, Ram got up and went outside. He stood there watching, almost with a sort of joyful brooding, as to each house on the block came the tired, slowly walking husbands who had not stumbled across the golden hoard of time as he had. He watched each door open and close and it was

a terribly sad thing to see because each of them would, in this evening ahead, have perhaps an hour, if that much with the woman he loved. A dozen erosions of the evening would immediately begin and they would desperately try to dam up the trickles of minutes that were irreplaceable.

"I've beaten the system," thought Ram happily. "I've beaten it. All it takes is nerve."

He had to tell somebody. He just had to. He walked down the street and at the corner store he stepped in, grinning with anticipation. They'd think he was crazy, and they'd shake their heads as they said so, but inside them all would be envy for his courage and a wistful wish that they, too, had enough strength to master the elusive will-o'-the-wisp: Time.

When Mr. Ethiraj, the bald-headed proprietor, turned and saw Ram, his stout face split in a tremendous grin. "Hah", said Mr. Ethiraj, coming out from behind the counter, "from the way your face is all lit up like a neon sign I'd say she's told you, eh? Congratulations, sir, and the best I'm sure whether it's a he or a she, it'll be a credit to both of you."

RAM stared at him, his smile suddenly congealed. A wave of crimson flooded his face. Mr. Ethiraj looked hastily about the store, which was empty. "Don't

worry," he whispered. "I haven't told a soul. I'll leave that to you."

With vast control, Ram said "How do you know?"

Mr. Ethiraj looked astounded "Me? Why, It's my wife told me, who did you think?"

A slow, silly grin came over Ram's face. He chuckled and turned and ran out of the store and down the quiet street. The blood was pounding in his temples. When he came to his own house he stared in through the side window.

Lalita was seated at the kitchen, her cheeks in her hands, staring unseeingly into space, a look of worry on her face.

I love you, thought Ram deeply. You wonderful girl. I love you. I'll never forget how you were willing to do this under these circumstances, not as long as I live. Never.

And now he would show his love for her.

He went around to the front door. He entered slowly, with feet dragging and a shamed look on his face. Hearing him, Lalita came from the kitchen. For she was smiling brightly.

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"Darling," she said lightly, "come and eat your first meal in freedom....." She stopped seeing his face. "What is it, dear?" she cried, going swiftly to him. "What's wrong?"

"I.....I'm not sure now I want to do it," said Ram bitterly. He flung out his hands. "What's the matter with me, anyway? At first I was so hot on the idea. But as I sat out on the steps and thought about it I.....well," he swallowed with difficulty, "I got a feeling I don't really want to do it. I'd rather be safe, and stick on the job. I.....I'm sorry."

"Don't be," said Lalita, love in her eyes. "I understand."

As he held her, Ram knew she'd tell him about the baby later on. When all this was forgotten....

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ARTICLE

THESE FAMOUS MEN WERE LEFT-HANDED

By P. P.

AN unusual test was given some time ago to 400 students at the University of Iowa, U. S. As they filed into a large examining room they were told to perform the following tasks: Thread a needle, open a book, peel a potato, hang up a coat, fill a fountain pen. The students were somewhat bewildered; what was this all about?

testers in this experiment had been trying to find out the exact extent of handedness. Each item in the test was a dead giveaway, for they were all tasks that the naturally left-handed person would do in a left-handed way, even if he had learned to do most everything else with his right-hand—write, tip his hat, shake hands, etc.

Facts of the Case

They found out later when each one received a card telling him whether he was naturally right-handed or left-handed. The

The subject of left-handedness has piqued the curiosity of writers for centuries, but until recently the in-

One out of every 4 persons starts life using his left hand, but only one out of 20 reaches maturity as a "southpaw" or left-handed person. It is also noticed that with left-handed people, the left eye dominates the vision and left leg the gait. Psychologists, however, believe that environment, not heredity, causes left-handedness. Here are some interesting facts about the case.

formation that circulated stemmed largely from superstition and folklore. Today, as the result of many scientific surveys, we are beginning to get the fact of the matter.

Psychologist Johnson O'Connor studied 100,000 cases and discovered that one out of every four persons starts life using his left hand. The ratio changes later on, however, and only one out of 20 reaches adulthood as a "southpaw."

Handedness is determined by what doctors call "cerebral dominance." Contrary to what one might expect the right side of the brain is dominant in the left-handed person. That also makes him left-eyed and left-footed. His left eye dominates his vision and his left foot dominates his gait. (That, for example, is the one he will use when he stamps and kicks).

Early Symptoms

Preference for one hand or the other usually shows up in early childhood. Left-handed children pick up their toys with that hand and do the same with spoons, crayonesque fashion, from right to left.

They confuse the letters "p" and "d" and have trouble with the words "saw" and "was." But only one out of 500 children continues with this pattern. He is known as a "mirror-writer" and his writing looks like clear-cut imprint of an inky page on a blotter. Even though you use your right hand now, you may

be one of the unsuspecting millions who were originally left-handed.

Illustrious "Lefty"

If you are wondering about somebody you know, hang a ball over the exact centre of his crib and see which hand he uses to reach for it. But don't try this test until he's at least six months old. Before that time his reaching response is not specific and he uses both hands and his head.

Left-handedness is no indication of intelligence. A "southpaw" can be a moron, a genius or just average, and you'll find them in every field. U. S. President Garfield was left-handed; so were the painters Michelangelo and Raphael.

There have been famous sports figures, too (Lefty, Gomez, for example) who attained great success using their left hands.

Probably the most illustrious "lefty" was Leonardo da Vinci. Though he was ambidextrous to a degree, we know that he drew with his left hand because his lines run from right to left. One art expert said he could always distinguish a genuine da Vinci from the counterfeit on the basis of this characteristic.

Loros and Margery Mile, zoology professors of the University of New Hampshire, recently set forth the extremely interesting proposition that left-handedness is not the exclusive trait of human beings. Lobsters, for

example, are usually left-handed; so are common water snails and katydid.

Parrots and Elephants

The two professors observed a group of 20 parrots in the national zoological park in Washington D. C. and found that three-quarters were lefties most of the time and three were consistently so. Elephants, say the professors, are either right-tusked or left-tusked—that is, they always show preference for one or the other. Generally the tusk that is used most often will be worn down, and that's the way you tell which one the elephant prefers.

For many years psychologists and doctors felt that training a left-handed child to his right hand was harmful. There were all sorts of alleged manifestations—the child became nervous, insecure and began to stutter. This theory was so widely held that some American States have laws prohibiting parents and teachers from teaching left-handed children to use their right hands.

But recent studies contradict the long-held idea and shed a welcome gleam of light on the subject. Professor Harry J. Heltman of Syracuse university tested 1,000 students. Although 77 had their handedness changed only one showed any bad effects. Hardly enough, concluded Professor Heltman to support the old theory.

"Southpaws" Are Made

Dr. Blau of the New York University College of Medicine goes even further. He believes that "southpaws" are made, not born; that every new-born infant has a 50-50 chance of being right-handed or left-handed. It's environment, not heredity that determines which hand he will use.

Dr. Blau says that a child may turn out to be left-handed because he imitated a left-handed teacher or because his mother always put his fork in his left hand: It's not necessary for anyone to be left-handed, adds Dr. Blau, so his advice is to train your child to use his right hand.

"Don't Force Him!"

Dr. Cyril Burt, professor of psychology at the University of London, also recommends restraint and points out that left-handed people are at a disadvantage—they live in a right-handed world and will have to use right-handed equipment.

The issue is still not definitely settled, and parents who plan to change their youngster's handedness should observe several precautions. Don't force him, don't nag him, and above all don't pursue if he shows real resistance. Encourage him, praise his right-handed achievements and make sure the effort is always gentle. Never for a moment sacrifice a child's happiness to the course of making him right-handed. ††

UNEASY HOUR

[The young woman was torn between loyalty to her husband who was away and her lover who still roused her memories and passions.]

I WAS running down the muddy road in the dark, imploring Robert not to touch me again. We were six of us, out for a picnic at Mir Alam Tank. "Sue", he called out, "come here." But I took no notice of his pleading and kept on running till I fell down exhausted. He came after me. "Come on, Sue. I'll take you home." I ignored him and shouted, "Leave me alone."

"Please," he begged, "how far are you going to run?" and then added, "let us join the rest of the party, darling." I got up and walked beside him, hoping he would touch me again; and looking into my eyes he said, "Sue, you're the prettiest girl I've ever met. Sorry dearest, I think I lost my head." I knew, he meant what he said. But I had to be sure he wouldn't attempt it again. "Please don't

flatter me, Robert. You've lost control of yourself. Don't you see we are putting ourselves into temptation?" I knew he was feeling sore about it. He apologised and began, "Don't worry, I know where to draw the line. You've known me long enough to trust me in that matter."



BY

R. N. ACHARYA



"WE have been good friends. Let us not spoil our friendship."

"When are you going to grow up, babe?" There was a pause. "We are not kids. I love you, and am crazy about you, Sue," and he made me feel womanly

weak inside. But I felt wonderful to hear him again, "I love you, Sue."

"We just love each other, but we're not engaged," I cried.

"We are," he gulped, lighting a cigarette, "otherwise why should we be together?"

"We are not officially engaged, and even if we were, I cannot allow you to act that way. There's time for that—you must understand."

"Don't try to lecture me, when you know how much we mean to each other," he roared. "Sue, I just can't wait any longer. Please say you'll marry me."

"Robert dear, you must be a bit patient," I began, "my parents aren't used to the idea for they think I'm too young for marriage. They like you a lot, but you haven't a steady job, as yet—..."

"Now I know where I actually stand. If you really loved me you'd understand me, and respond to my love."

"I do, but you don't understand how. I love you, Roby, and you're not yourself tonight. If you carry on like this I don't ever want to see you again." I wanted him to respect me; else our reputation would be at stake. I did not think of what I was saying, I just said whatever came into my head.

And with that—we joined the party. Later he drove me home; we did not look at each other or speak a word. He was worried and I was confused but I knew he'd come to his senses, and we'd be very good friends again. He had roused my emotions but I was glad I had resisted him. As Mom opened the door I just dropped on my bed with a heavy heart.

FOR two whole weeks, Robert did not call. Every time I heard the phone ring my hopes would rise, only to be doomed to disappointment. I stayed home all day and spent sleepless nights, crying my heart out. One morning at breakfast Mom said, "You'll get over it, dear. You're young yet, and there are many nice boys in town. One day you'll look back and laugh at this silly romance..."

"No, Mom. There won't be anyone else," I told her softly, "I shall love Robert all my life." Dad came in just then, and tried to comfort me saying, "Baby, don't fret. You'll soon forget him. He's already left town for good." I ran up to my room, and locked myself in for I couldn't keep the tears back any longer. I did not see Robert again though I still hoped to see him during the summer holidays when we had planned a trip to Bangalore. All during the summer I busied myself with knitting and sewing. I started learning shorthand and typing, and I tried to forget Robert. I started dating other boys, and

then Bill came along and changed my world completely. I thought I was in love with him and I just couldn't imagine myself without him. We dated steadily and my parents soon got to like him. He was a motor-mechanic; we got engaged very soon and within a few months we were married.

IN four years we were blessed with three lovely babies, the last two being twins, and I was tied down to the burden of housekeeping. We stayed with Dad and Mom and they helped a lot with the babies. One day Bill came home with a fractured hand and I was all worried. But Bill just caught me up and kissed me, and was glad to be home—for weeks. But I did not feel the same way about Bill, for I realised now that I did not love him.

The following day I was surprised and thrilled to receive a letter from Robert saying that he was arriving from New Delhi, where he was employed in an electric firm. I was excited and overjoyed at the news and the old memories came suddenly back to me for I knew in my heart I loved him. That same night Bill received a wire to say that his mother in Bombay was seriously ill and in spite of his injured hand he was determined to go to her. I was almost glad at the prospect of seeing him off and welcoming Robert home.

I walked home from the station, enjoying the lovely breeze.

As I was nearing home I saw a taxi-cab parked on the street. "Robert," I said and ran into the house.

"Hello, Sue," he began, and we were staring at each other for a long time.

"Hello, Robert," I murmured as he charged me with, "still pretty as ever with three kids!" He was eager to show me the presents he had brought for me and the kids. I found he had not changed much, except that he was a little tanned. He had the same dark eyes, and his well-trimmed moustache suited his personality. He talked in the same manner as before. Then all of a sudden he stabbed me with, "Aren't you glad I've come, Sue? I'll soon be going abroad for training." And then we were exchanging small talk, and smiling and laughing. He told me how he had spent the years, and I was all wrapped up in him when Mom interrupted us with tea and then left us. He was anxious to see the kids and when they appeared he started fondling them, and teasing me.

THE next day Robert accompanied me on a shopping spree and that night we went to see "An affair to Remember." We returned home to find a telegram informing us that Bill's mother had died, and he was expected a week later. The next day I found Robert in a pensive mood. "What's it, Robert?" I asked.

"Nothing, Sue," he said, and

tried to put me off. I sat beside him. "I'm concerned about you, Roby," I said, "please tell me what's on your mind."

"You won't understand anything, Sue," he began. "I love you still. That's what is worrying me."

"You know you're my dearest friend, Robert," I said, "and we must remain good friends always. You're the finest man I've ever known. I waited for you for months, Robert, but you didn't show up.....and now we must accept bravely what Fate has handed to us."

"You remember the time when we were in college. How many picnics and parties we enjoyed together!"

"Robert, please don't rake up old memories and make it difficult for both of us."

"When Bill wrote me about the wedding, my whole world seemed to have crashed to pieces. I should have told you to wait for me.....now I must spend my life paying for my folly."

WE were still in love with each other, and it looked as though I knew Robert better than Bill. And I found it difficult to get Robert out of my mind. The following week Bill arrived. I could see he was annoyed when he found Robert in the house most of the time chatting, play-

ing cards, and hanging around. I couldn't tell Robert to keep away as I was afraid I'd hurt his feelings.

ONE day while we were playing cards my husband interrupted us and scolded me for neglecting the children and as soon as I went in I heard Robert and Bill exchanging hot words and abusing each other.

"Who do you think you are to tell me about my wife?" Bill roared. Robert, sounding cool and calm, answered, "Don't talk about Sue that way, Bill. You don't understand.....me."

"You seem to be very intimate with her. What am I to understand?"

"She's my dearest friend, Bill. I've known her all my life."

"But that doesn't give you the liberty of spending all your time with another man's wife! Tongues have already started wagging, and I cannot afford to have my good name spoilt." With that I heard the door slam and a furious Bill stamped off to his room without a word.

I met Robert next morning at the corner bookstall where I had been to collect my copy of "Woman." I could see he was hurt but he tried to smile. "Please, Sue," he said, "look after Bill. He needs you more than I do. Forget about me." The tears came rushing to my

eyes, "Roby," I whispered, "you're so sweet and understanding that it hurts. I am going to be brave as you have been."

A week of silence followed, and the tension was just killing me! There was no Robert to confide in and I couldn't face an angry husband. I just cried myself to sleep every night, and I knew my husband was awake most often. Then a day came when I could bear it no longer and summoning all my courage I boldly approached him. I suddenly felt sorry for him and with a rush of emotion, I just threw my arms about him. "Bill darling," I whispered, "please forgive me," and I poured out the whole story about Robert, confessing that I loved him. He smoked cigarette after cigarette, listening in silence. "If there's anything more, tell me tomorrow," he said in a tired voice, and kissed me good-night. I could see Bill was greatly relieved and I went to bed with a lighter heart. I did not mention Robert again, the days that followed, and I was most attentive to Bill. He was himself again—laughing, teasing and joking with me.

All too soon Robert's leave

was over, and he came to bid us good-bye. We exchanged formal greetings and sat down. "Sue," Bill ordered, "coffee and snacks please." I knew he wanted to have a chat with Robert, so I took my time over it. As I came in to serve coffee, I found them on the most friendly terms. "Robert has promised to spend his next holiday with us, Sue," Bill said, smiling at me. I couldn't express my happiness in words. Robert looked straight into my eyes, and I looked into his, and found the same happiness reflected in them.

Reluctantly he rose to go. Bill offered to drive him to the station and went to fetch the kids for a drive. Sitting next to Robert in the car, I had a quiet talk with him. "Promise you'll write, Sue," he pleaded, "I'll be just living for my next holiday." ¶¶

FINE CHANCE

To the blonde dancer who had just finished her act in the floor show, the rich young man said, deplorably, "Why does a beautiful, talented, and apparently educated girl like you have to dance in a sordid joint like this?"

"Well," she answered, "I meet a great many more prominent young men here than I did when I was a public librarian."

HEALTH FEATURE—SIMPLE TIPS FOR ALL

CHILDREN'S AILMENTS

BY A PHYSICIAN

DURING the winter months—especially at school, where numbers are gathered together—children are likely to encounter influenza, colds, coughs and other infectious ills. So prevalent are these troubles that parents almost expect them, think them inevitable, in fact, instead of working on preventive lines.

Now, what are preventive lines? Well, first and foremost, attention to general health, so as to strengthen the powers of resistance. Let the children get, and enjoy, as much sunshine as possible on cold days as well as warm. Give them all the fresh air you can, day and night, and let them exercise out of doors to keep the circulation in good order, within the limits of fatigue. Keep them warm but not in over-heated rooms, or by means of over-clothing.

Another preventive measure when an epidemic is in vogue, is, as much as possible, to keep your children away from contact with crowds of people. Avoid indoor parties, cinemas, and all gatherings where germs are likely to be active, even at a sacrifice to yourself. Public vehicles such as buses, trams and trains are veritable hotbeds of disease if an influenza epidemic happens to be rife. Keep the kiddies as far as possible from travelling while the trouble lasts.

Avoid Rich Dishes

Food also plays a large part in preventive means. Take particular care not to upset the children's digestion. Let them have the very simplest of foods. Avoid rich dishes, sugared cakes, sweets, ices and the like. See that they have plenty of fresh,

green vegetables conservatively cooked, water cress, mustard and cress, and plenty of ripe, uncooked fruit. Orange juice squeezed fresh into a glass and taken early in the morning before breakfast is a splendid preventive of disease.

Sudden Rash

Sometimes a child will alarm its parents by showing a rash on chest and arms. There are certain rashes which are caused merely by digestive troubles. If your child comes out in a rash, put him or her to bed without alarming the other children, and send for the doctor. Avoid the habit of continually taking a child's temperature. It is very worrying both to the small boy or girl and yourself. I know mothers who are thermometer fiends! The doctor will do the necessary when he comes. Experienced mothers soon learn to know by the feel of a child's forehead and hands, and its flushed cheeks, if it is feverish or not. When the doctor comes, take note of, and follow, his directions to the very letter. When it has to be used, do not forget to wash the thermometer afterwards. Cold water is necessary for this purpose, of course. If not washed, the thermometer itself would become a source of infection.

The very best way to avoid illness is to keep the children fit. It is when run down that folk of all ages fall victims to disease.

Nose-Breathing

To keep a child in good health and free from colds it is important to keep the eyes, nose and mouth clean. Nose-breathing from earliest babyhood must be fostered as a matter of health. This will, to a large extent, prevent the occurrence of adenoids and enlarged tonsils, and vastly improve the shape of the nose. Adenoids are a great source of ill health. In a child with adenoids both airways are blocked. The secretion coagulates, drops backwards and is swallowed. At first the child is a mouth-breather by day, and later on, both by night and day. Then the nose runs. The chest cannot be fully expanded owing to the want of moisture. The normal health secretion of the nose tends to arrest the organisms of the air breathed in, trapping them in its sticky embrace, and also exerting a bactericidal influence. A running nose is an effort of Nature to destroy harmful invading germs by bringing them away. ††

I started life with many gifts : the eyes of my mother, the nose of my father, and the clothes of my brother.—F. MURRAY MILNE.

SHORT STORY

THE GUEST

By P. VENKATESAN

AS she heard the sound of horn at the street end, Radha Rani leapt to her feet and hurried down half stumbling on the top stairs. Was Ramesh whom her husband had gone to fetch from the station the same Ramesh she had known years ago? She was agog with eagerness to know.

friend and college mate of whom I was talking to you last night," and then turning towards Ramesh, "Radha Rani, my wife" he added, smiling radiantly.

"Oh! Radha Rani!" I'm so glad to meet her," replied Ramesh as if he had just recognised her, his face beaming with joy.

The taxi stopped in front of

She had been his sweetheart before her marriage. When he came to her husband's house as his guest, he forgot the rules and tried to exceed his limits.

the house and Venu and Ramesh alighted.

"Old friends?" queried Venu, pleasantly surprised.

Radha Rani's heart missed a beat. Could it be he? Yes... No... She was not sure. Slyly she stole glances at him from the corners of her eyes, scrutinizing his looks when Venu introducing him to her said, "This is Mr. Ramesh Chandra, my dear old

"YES," was Ramesh's rejoinder. "We were neighbours for long when she was at Rampur."

"I'm glad to hear that, for now you can feel more at home,"

Venu remarked in all the innocence of his heart.

Just then the servant bustled in with a tray of hot steaming tea. Sipping his saucerful, Venu was chattering merrily like a magpie on a spring morning, unaware of the strange silence of his audience. As Ramesh held his cup he awkwardly looked at Radha Rani, in his heart of hearts hankering to steal a look at her face and drink in her beauty. The thumping of his heart tilted his cup just then and spilled the contents a little on the table.

"Too hot?" enquired Venu, seeing the struggle of his friend with the cup and saucer on hand. This roused Ramesh from his torpor and he replied rather hurriedly, "Yes, somewhat." This was not an absolute lie but appeared a pitifully inadequate cloak for his inner agitation.

Venu in the ardour of his animated chat had finished two extra cups of tea by now, when he heard the telephone in the drawing room ringing. Excusing himself, he ran to receive the call, leaving Ramesh and Radha Rani alone.

RAMESH now looked full at Radha. She had not changed much in the last few years. From a mere slip of a girl she had grown to a woman of fashion. Her hair, glossy and black with many a goodly curl still at the

sides, tumbled out of control. One sweet lock had escaped the tyranny of the silver hair-pin and lay in sweet disorder over her ears, fluttering in the air.

"**RADHA**," called Ramesh, in his old way. She could not escape. She knew she must face him, but she felt a vague struggle in her heart. After all, there was Venu, the ever trusting Venu, to consider. So collecting all her courage she faced him.

Ramesh seemed to her only a faint shadow of his former sweet self. Gone were the ever smiling eyes and the sweet serenity of his face. It was now heavily lined, pale and sad; his mouth was drooping piteously. He smiled at her, but not the old archy smile that used to set her heart go pit-a-pat, but a stale lifeless one.

"Radha, if you do not like my staying here, I shall go," pouted Ramesh.

"Oh, no, stay on. It doesn't matter at all to me. You are my husband's guest, not mine, are you?" she tried to infuse all the indifference she could muster into her voice. Just then, Venu came back and informed Radha that the milk pan was still on the oven. Seizing the opportunity she ran to the kitchen, greatly relieved of the embarrassment.

Venu and Ramesh then sat and talked of old times. They were in college together. Ramesh was in the final year when Venu joined as a freshman, and had taken a great liking to him and ere long became his devoted friend. The life of one was an open book to the other. Yet there remained a corner in Ramesh's heart into which Venu could not get even a glimpse and there Radha Rani's image was enshrined. After graduation Venu became a prosperous engineer while Ramesh remained unemployed.

Now he had come to stay with Venu for a few days before he was supposed to pack his trunk and proceed to Ooty to join his grandma who had gone there for holidaying. But the truth was this :

It was some years since Raha Rani was married and Ramesh had vowed that he would never more see her nor even think of her! But one day, suddenly the desire to see her, for once, came upon him unaccountably. Try as he might, he could not suppress the desire of his soul. Hence this sojourn at Venu's.

AS he sat in his room after Venu had gone to office, all his past associations with Radha unrolled before his memory and greatly overwhelmed him. Suddenly he remembered the fateful day when he first saw her.

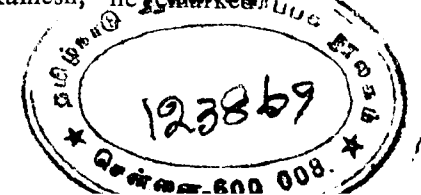
It was in the very presence of God Ganesh, the giver of success, at the neighbouring temple they had first met during the Dusserah festival. Just on the threshold of golden youth, Ramesh looked really handsome—almost as handsome as the fairy prince Radha had read about in her school book. All the eligible young girls in the neighbourhood had their eyes on him. But Ramesh was attracted only by Radha Rani who was still at school.

FROM the first day they had liked each other. Often had they met secretly in the temple, made love to each other and exchanged letters. Among such trystings one stood out vividly in his mind.

It was evening then and the ruby glow of the homing sun fell full on the faces of these two young lovers. Ramesh was nervous at being alone with the alluring idol of his heart. As they walked in mystic silence thus, with their hearts brimming over with happiness, the languid air that came wafting on, let flutter a flower on her head and it fell on the joyous sands. Ramesh hastily picked it up and placed it on her head. In return she smiled sweetly.

"Thanks, Mr...." she wanted to sing her gratitude but...

"Ramesan is the name, but I like my friends to call me Ramesh," he remarked.



"Thanks, Ramesh," she said blushing.

They lingered awhile, lost in ecstasy.

THEN came the end as all good things have a speedy end. Radha fell into evilly jocund company. Her heart and affections underwent a change. In a word she became flippant and vain, grew sick of Ramesh's ardent love-making and alas, jilted him. Perhaps she had her reasons too! Ramesh was then only a mere paper graduate with no future; while she aspired to climb the dizzy heights of society and make herself hailed as a society belle! Besides, she had her orthodox parents to consider.

And then suddenly from somewhere like a whirlwind, Venu was brought on the scene and was offered the hand of Radha Rani. Ramesh was in a fix. Whom to choose—friend or beloved?—became the crux of his life. And before he could decide Venu carried off Radha at one sweep from him.

As Radha Rani watched her simple innocent husband showering as usual all his kindly warmth on one who mattered so little to her she was sorely tempted to reveal the truth. Had she done so it would have been better for all concerned, especially so for Ramesh. But being a woman and conscious

of her own guilt she dared not. So Ramesh stayed. A day and a half dragged on.

It was Wednesday. The clock had just struck two and another full three hours were there before Venu was expected home from office. Ramesh made bold to talk to Radha once more and see if he could strike a sympathetic chord in her. So with a drumming heart, he softly entered her apartment. First she tried to ignore him as she did in the morning when he had approached her while her husband was in his study. But when he called her 'Radha' she could not escape him. So she turned on him like an enraged tigress and cried, "Oh! I know, you were born to cause my life's ruin. Is it to create a rift in my home you've come?..."

THIS was enough and the shaft went home to Ramesh. He was stunned. A tornado raged in his heart while his tongue went totally dry. Yet with a face set and calm he looked at her for the last time and turned back. But after taking a step he stopped short, perhaps to bid adieu but failed, having lost his voice. Dismissed thus, poor Ramesh could not stay there another second. Tears blinded him as he stumbled out of the room. With head bent he walked along like one dazed. At last his mind ceased to think at all, about anything, but he continued to walk on, like an automaton, with the apathy of dejection.

Venu came home in the evening. Radha greeted him with a glorious smile.

"Where is Ramesh?" he asked, tenderly taking the hand of Radha in his, seeing her alone.

"Why, I do not know," she replied, with an innocent air, as if nothing had happened at all in the afternoon and added, "Perhaps he might have gone sight-seeing."

Thus the awkward hour for her went by. The dusk grew duskier and in the enveloping darkness of night Venu sat awaiting Ramesh's return. Presently the parlour clock struck ten. Ramesh hadn't returned. It struck eleven. Ramesh still did not return, and Venu watched both the hour and minute hand of the clock moving closer and closer towards twelve. He feared that something untoward had happened, for he knew well that Ramesh hadn't either a relative or friend in that place. As the hour went past twelve Venu got alarmed more and more and the rain continued to pour in torrents. Radha's heart beat out of tune.

At half-past three a car stopped at the door of the house. The rain had ceased but the streets were full of water. Two friends of Venu carried Ramesh and brought him inside. He was wet through from head to heel, muddy all over. His head was covered

with bandages and there were blood stains on his shirt.

"It all happened like this," the two friends said. "Ramesh was walking on the road as if in a daze with his head bent and crossed the road without noticing the traffic signal. Just then a military truck was coming along at top speed and it knocked him down."

VENU immediately sent word to his neighbouring doctor. Presently he too came and pronounced in a troubled voice that the patient's condition was very critical.

Tears rolled down the eyes of Venu. Wiping them, he took Ramesh's long burning hands in his own and sat by his side the whole night. Ramesh's breathing grew stertorous and he was restless.

For a moment he regained consciousness. He pecked feebly at the sheets; his eyes slowly wandered around the room as if he looked for some one. There was an expression of sadness in his eyes. At last, with an air of hopelessness, his head sank back on the pillow:

The fever rapidly increased, and again he became delirious and he cried out: "Ah! no, dear, no, do not accuse me. I'll not harm you even in my dreams!"

—Please see page 66

Ghost In

The Cupboard!

His back was turned to me. He did not move for an instant, then suddenly he swung round. But his feet did not touch the floor. Horror of horrors! It was the face of a hanged man!

MRS. BARTRAM was badly bitten with a mania for competitions. She entered for all reasonable and some unreasonable ones. To do her justice, the prizes offered tempted her less than the entertainment she got out of trying for them.

Crossword puzzles, complicated acrostics, fragments of advertisements to be tracked to their several wholes, bullets, general knowledge questions—in short, every sort and kind of problem attempted by her with

untiring zest. As she lived in a private hotel she had plenty of time to waste over them. The worries of housekeeping did not interfere with her pet hobby.

BY

Mrs. J. O. Arnold

"I SEE there is an interesting competition in 'Everycolour Magazine' this month," she announced one evening to circle of friends.

"Yes. What about?"

It was Gerald Fleet who put the question. He was a grave-faced man who had often proved helpful over crosswords in the matter of unfamiliar foreign coinage.

"A PRIZE of five guineas is offered for an account of the most Unusual Experience actually met with by the writer," Mrs. Bartram explained.

"Plenty of scope, anyway; 'unusual' covers wide ground. The experience might be merely thrilling, simply a coincidence, or it might be—inexplicable," Gerald Fleet said.

"I'm afraid nothing of the sort has happened to me," Mrs. Bartram said regretfully.

"My cook has stayed with me six whole months. If that isn't unusual I don't know what is!" a pretty woman declared.

"And I never went to a single sale this spring," put in another.

"You are both frivolling," Mrs. Bartram said. "Hasn't anyone anything unusual to tell us? What about you, Mr. Fleet?"

"I once had an experience so unusual that I can't expect any of you to believe it," he said thoughtfully, "Nevertheless it's a true tale. I really think I shall have a shot at that prize—for I

can't believe anyone ever had an experience to equal it—at least I hope not."

"Was it so unusual?" asked the heroine who withstood the lure of Bargains.

"Which was it—thrilling, a coincidence, or inexplicable?" inquired the lady with the phenomenal cook.

"I suppose it was all three," Gerald Fleet replied, lighting a cigarette.

"And you'll vouch for the truth of it?" another man asked, "or are you inventing it for our entertainment?"

"I'm not sure that you're going to hear it," Fleet said doubtfully, yet with an agreeable smile. "As a matter of fact, I've never told it to anyone—except certain persons concerned with it."

A chorus of entreaties besought him to tell his tale. So urgent were they, and so good-natured a fellow was he, that after some demur he finally consented.

"PERHAPS I ought to explain," he began, "that I am what is usually known as a psychic person. In fact, I avoid the occult—but I undoubtedly possess certain power. I mention this as the only explanation I have to offer of this curious experience."

"It happened three years ago, I was cycling for my Easter holiday over the Yorkshire moors—as beautiful country as any in England—and at first enjoyed very fine weather.

"THEN suddenly it turned cold, with a wind from the north, and before long snow was falling heavily. In those districts the moorland roads soon became impassable owing to heavy drifts. That was what happened at the time I am telling you of.

"I struggled on in the teeth of snow and wind. My route lay over a great moor that seemed to stretch right away to the distant horizon without a church, a hamlet or even a solitary farmstead to break its desolation. I bent my head to the storm, and pedalled on.

"I met but one solitary wayfarer, a sturdy native of the wilds. He was on foot, and I stopped to speak to him.

"We were bound in opposite directions and he told me, in broad accents I could scarcely follow, that I was going all right—keep straight on for a matter of 15 miles or so, then turn left at the crossroads and another 20 miles would bring me to my destination.

"I asked if there wasn't a farm or an inn where I could put up if it came on worse?

"He answered in the vernacular, which I will spare you, that I should pass but one small cottage where a miser lived.

"Then if I need a bed, he^{was} probably be willing to put me up for an over-charge, I suggested.

"The man said 'very like, and with that hurried on his way. When, later, I looked back, he had disappeared in the now blinding snowstorm.

"It was uphill work, and I soon realized that I must share the miser's cottage or spend the night in the open—an impossible proposition.

"I reached the solitary cottage just before darkness fell. There was none of the cheery welcome about it benighted travellers in tales always seem to meet with. No lamplight shone through drawn red curtains—on the contrary the place was still and dark as though uninhabited.

"I knocked on the door, There was no response. Again I knocked, more loudly this time. I heard a shuffling footstep within, and in another moment a voice demanded to know who was there?

"I ADMITTED the wisdom of the precaution in that lonely situation, and forthwith explained myself. Either my voice or my tale reassured the person within,

for a bolt was withdrawn, a key turned, and the door opened.

"I blew in with a spatter of snow. At a nod from the occupant of the cottage, I brought my bicycle inside, after which he again barred and bolted the door.

"I asked the man his name. He said it was Shepherd, and that he had little hospitality to offer. A bite of bread and cheese and a bed were all he could provide.

"THE 'bite' would be welcome: the bed I did not fancy. I protested that with his permission I would sleep in the kitchen where we sat. The couple of chairs would serve me for a couch, I said.

"But Shepherd objected. He had to be off early in the morning, he declared, to get to the nearest village where it was market-day and he had potatoes to sell. He made a living out of his potato field which he cultivated himself.

"He really seemed quite decent, and even my vivid imagination, fired by the word 'miser', could detect nothing sinister about him.

"We speedily arranged terms for my lodging, and whilst I ate bread and cheese, he ascended to the attic above to prepare my bed. If bareness was any proof of my host's miserly

tendencies, the kitchen in which I sat was certainly miserable enough. It was almost devoid of furniture, and the fire was a handful of turf and coke in a corner of the grate. A solitary candle provided the only light. But I was at least protected from the storm and without this rough shelter might possibly not have survived until morning on the open moors.

"When Shepherd came down I asked him if he didn't find the place lonely?

"He declared that therein lay its attraction. He wanted nobody....would rather be left to himself. 'And few folks care to come,' he said, with satisfaction. 'The cottage ain't got a good name.'

"But having confided this much, he suddenly became as close as an oyster. Not another word did he speak until I rose to go upstairs. Then he suddenly asked if I could 'shift' for myself in the morning, as he must be off before daylight. He would leave food on the table, and a bit of fire and I could make a cup of tea if I wanted. It sounded uncomfortable, but I agreed to it. Then, I paid my reckoning, since I should not see him in the morning, and asked him what about looking up when I left?

"HE looked at me searchingly from beneath shaggy grey eyebrows. 'You're honest, aren't

you? I can trust you?" he asked. "I said I hoped so. And with that he confided to me that there was a red flower-pot outside the door beneath which I could put the key.

"Perhaps I'll be back afore you start," he said. "Maybe you'll lie late. The bed's made o' good flocks."

"So that was agreed upon, and I bade him good-night. My bed-chamber was at the top of a steep flight of wooden stairs. I carried a candle with me, stuck in a bottle.

"The instant I set foot in the attic, a curious feeling came over me, mastering me so completely that for a minute or two I stood motionless. Then I sat down on the one wooden chair by the bedside, and looked about me.

"The room was almost as bare as the kitchen beneath. An iron bedstead, a small rickety table, and the one chair made up the furniture. There was a window but no fireplace.

"But there was a cupboard.

"It was opposite the foot of the bed, the door of it level with the whitewashed wall. There was a latch to it, and in addition a small padlock, fastened to a couple of staples.

"I sat gazing at the cupboard door. An unreasonable—in the

circumstances quite uncalled for—desire seized me to open it. I wanted to know what was behind it. The desire was compelling, insistent.

"I KNOW what had happened. That strange sense which I possessed had been unaccountably, violently, aroused. My nerves tingled with the force of it, as I sat motionless, the candle glittering on the rickety table, my eyes riveted on the cupboard door...

"I had sensed the room. An atmosphere of dread, of foreboding, of horror was around me. In that room some wretched human being had gone through agony beyond bearing. It encompassed me—it was all about me. My brain was numbed, beads of sweat stood upon my forehead because of it. The suffering that had been endured in that bare, wretched room were so indelibly impressed upon its atmosphere that to senses capable of its perception, the terror of it lived again. And more and more as I sat there, unable to move, my psychic sense was drawn to the cupboard...

"Beyond doubt the horror centred behind that locked door! As the charged atmosphere surged towards it, I was able to recover myself somewhat and throw off the horrible obsession that held me. I rose from the chair and was about to rejoin the man below, when awakening caution made me pause.

"Had he murdered some unsuspecting wayfarer, who, like myself, had sought shelter from the storm? That violent death lay hidden behind that cupboard door I did not for one instant doubt. What was I to do? I remembered that Shepherd had seen my purse and the notes within it, when I discharged my debt I was unarmed. The cottage was lonely beyond description. It would be easy to murder me and bury me, together with the occupant of that cupboard, in an unsuspected corner of the potato patch...

"I decided to remain where I was. I would lie awake on the outside of the bed and watch for morning. Whatever might be in that cupboard was a ghostly, not a material menace—the thing inside it was dead.

"There was a bolt to the door of the room, and I slipped it noiselessly. Then I put the one chair against the door as a slight precaution; if it were moved I should be warned. Next I blew out the candle and then lay down upon the coarse patchwork quilt that covered the bed.

"TIRED as I was, I did not mean to sleep. For what seemed hours, I lay wakeful and watching. I heard Shepherd moving about below...and wondered if my bicycle would depart with him before dawn...

"But I was worn out with my long day in the open. The

moorland wind had made me sleepy; fatigue caused by the snowstorm had exhausted me. Before long, unconsciously, I fell asleep.

"WHEN I awoke the room was still dark, though a faint glimmer at the edge of the drawn window curtain, and the distant crowing of cocks, told me the night was past. I got up from the bed—and immediately my foot found some hard object upon the bare floor. I picked it up and felt that it was a key. Then I lit the candle, and considered matters.

"The key, I felt certain, belonged to the padlock that secured the cupboard door. I had no right to make use of it; it would be prying, if not dishonourable. In vain did I argue with myself: a compulsion I could not resist drew me to that door—I felt impelled to open it...

"I did so. With the glittering candle in one hand raised above my head, I peered into the space. It was larger than I had expected—perhaps six feet in length. At the further end was a man.

"His back was turned to me. His head was bent forward, and the candlelight shone upon his red hair. He did not move for an instant, then suddenly swung round...

"I use the term advisedly. For his feet did not touch the

floor, and the countenance I now beheld was a horror to look upon. It was the face of a hanged man. Need I describe the staring eyeballs, the protruding tongue, the swollen, purple skin? My horrified glance travelled upwards—the body was suspended from a large hook in the ceiling. One other fact impressed itself upon my observation—the hanged man was wearing a scarlet waistcoat.

"My one desire was to get away—to lock the cupboard door upon its ghastly secret.

"I DID not 'make a cup of tea', nor did I want my breakfast. Shepherd was gone—my bicycle stood where I had left it. It did not take long to lock the cottage up, hide the key beneath the inverted flower-pot, mount my machine and ride away as rapidly as the half-frozen snow permitted, towards the nearest village. I must, of course, inform the police of my discovery without delay.

"I had gone three or four miles when I saw a two-wheeled cart being driven rapidly towards me. Inside it were Shepherd and another man who looked like a farmer. They stopped and hailed me as I came up to them.

"I've lost summat," Shepherd called out, "A key it is, and I'm come back to get it. Didst see owt of it in t'bedroom?"

"There could be no doubt as to his anxiety. I divined at once that he had dropped the key the previous night when preparing my bed. Evidently the loss was of vast importance to him.

"Yes, I found it," I said, looking hard at him. "You dropped it on the floor. I unlocked the cupboard with it—"

"And what have you took? There was money in there—all my bits o'saving. You don't pass till I've searched you, my man!"

"He jumped out of the cart and came threateningly towards me. But I stood my ground.

"There's more than money in that cupboard: There's a dead man in it. I call you to witness," I cried, turning to the driver of the cart, "that there is a body in the cupboard of the room I slept in last night. I tell you I have seen it!"

"To my surprise the men looked at each other as though they shared some secret understanding.

"NAY, nay; There ain't no body. You've bin dreaming"—the farmer began.

"What was it like?" Shepherd demanded.

"A man with red hair and a red waistcoat." I answered al-

most indignantly. This reception of my statement was disconcerting to say the least: 'I'm going now to inform the police,' I added hotly.

"Best not," the farmer said persuasively. "Come along wi' us and we'll have a look together. There can't be no mistake. Red hair and a red weskit, eh! That's the chap, sure enow!"

"I WAS beginning to feel uneasy. The manner of both men was so entirely unexpected. Shepherd seemed to be reassured about his hoard now that I was plainly interested only in the body I had discovered.

"Finally I turned with them, and in a short time we had reached the cottage. At once I led the way up the wooden stairs, the key of the cupboard in my hand, the men at my heels.

"The padlock was secured as I had left it. I flung the door wide—the cupboard was empty! I stared in bewilderment at Shepherd and his friend. What was the meaning of it all?

"Someone must have been here—" I stammered.

"Nay, they haven't," the farmer said solidly. "But I think as Tom Shepherd don't need to be so scared about losing his bit o' money. That feller wi' the red thatch and the red weskit 'll look after it for him.

I reckon few'd care to come nigh that cupboard."

"I saw Shepherd lift a small tin box that stood on the floor in the shadow of the door, and examine it.

"All safe," he said, nodding his head with satisfaction. Meanwhile I was staring into the empty space too bewildered to speak. In the ceiling I saw a great hook fixed—upon the floor were splashes of wax from the shrunk candle.

"I'll tell 'ee what it's all about. A chap hanged himself in this 'ere cupboard a matter of 50 years ago, and more," the farmer was saying for my enlightenment. "He's bin seen inside it since. The cottage is called Hanged Man's Cot, and it's to be had cheap on account of him."

"I understand," I said.

"And of course I did."

"It was all a dream—or a sort of nightmare?" someone said.

"NEITHER, I think," Fleet answered quietly. "You see, there was the evidence of the red hair and the red waistcoat... and I had undoubtedly explored the cupboard as the wax showed..."

There was a pause.

"I should certainly send it in" said Mrs. Bartram. ††

HER MISTAKE

By T. RAJARAMAN

IT was a spectacle of Nature in her wildest mood. It was just 6 p.m., but it was pitch dark. The sky was covered with black clouds. Then it began to rain in torrents. It was if a river flowed from Heaven to Earth. Thunder rent the air now and then.

Cursing herself for not listening to her mother's advice, Kalyani stood shivering in the bathing ghat of the river. The pitcher, full of water, was by her side and glistened in the darkness. Now and then a streak of lightning illumined the place.

She suddenly heard footsteps by her side and started. What a fool she was! She was there in darkness all alone, a helpless girl shivering at the threshold of life, in her fullest bloom. What

could she do if some passer-by, took advantage of her helpless condition and made her the victim of his lust? She shuddered but it was not out of cold. She found her voice and cried, "Who is it?" There was absolute silence. Somebody was moving towards her. Her heart fluttered.

A STREAK of lightning dazzled her eyes. In the sudden light, she perceived a young man standing at the entrance. He was clean-shaven and was dressed in ultra modern fashion and had somehow escaped from being drenched. "I can't afford to wait here. Please keep this safely and return it to me when I call for it." A bundle was thrust into her hands. She took it mechanically. So majestic and commanding was his voice that she could not but obey him.

She gushed in sympathy for the prisoner and ran away with him. Then came the realisation of her mistake—the most serious mistake of her life.

Then she felt his breath near her and.....she was not prepared for what followed. With a cry of rage she tried to save herself, but there was no need. The stranger was gone and she was left alone.

"What did he take me for? Look at his cheek," she muttered. It was the first time that a man had touched her and for some time she was in a state of anger and excitement. The rain had slowed into a drizzle. She took the pitcher and started homeward. She took her mother's rebukes, silently rushed to her room and bolted the door.

The bundle was neatly tied in brown paper. She untied it and stared in blank amazement. There lay before her a bundle of ten-rupee notes! There were a hundred of them. She deposited them in her box and came out to face her mother's wrath. "How many times am I to tell you not to go out in the dark? The village constable says that Ganesh the robber and counterfeiting expert is at large and that a C. I. D. from Madras has been specially deputed to run him down. You are so headstrong! Do you know, I never left the house at your age!"

KALYANI was no longer listening to her mother's words. "So it is Ganesh," she mused. Her face became crimson when she thought of his audacity.

She could not sleep. The sleek handsome figure of Ganesh with his glossy hair, clean-shaven face and western dress revealed to her for a moment in the sudden flash of lightning haunted her. His face was majestic. He was as fair-complexioned as a prince. After tossing restlessly on her bed for some time she fell into a deep and profound slumber. Five days passed without any incident. On the night of the fifth, Kalyani just settled down to sleep when she was rudely awakened by loud knocks at their door. She rose and started towards the door. She was stopped by her mother. "How many times am I to tell you not to worry yourself to open the door? I am past fifty and can afford to do it," She said with mature worldly wisdom.

Kalyani stood behind the door and listened. It was the Police. They had found out the robber and proposed to keep him in their backyard till dawn in the custody of the constable. Kalyani's mother had consented.

HER heart was smitten with pity for him. She reflected on the cruelty of the Police and thought that the world would be a better place without them. This idea of such an 'Utopia' so much pleased her that she smiled. She went to her room and lay down to sleep and even her mother was surprised at the utter lack of curiosity of her usually meddlesome daughter. But she was wrong. Kalyani

had proposed not only not to sleep but to go to the backyard, meet the criminal and set him free! Whoever would have thought that the young unsophisticated girl scarcely past her girlhood would be capable of such reckless thoughts that would befit the heroine of an epic?

HE mother's snore set her to action. She opened her box, noiselessly took the brown-paper packet and walked on tip-toe to the backyard.

The policeman was reclining on the wall sleeping with a self-complacent smile on his face, with a lantern by his side. "The Idiot" muttered Kalyani. She hated him for carrying tales to her mother against her, whenever he found an opportunity.

It was dark in the backyard. The unfortunate victim was safely secured with ropes to a tree. "The brutes," Kalyani muttered, "They did not bother whether he could sleep or not in that position."

To untie the knots and set him free took her only a few moments. When she was engaged in this operation, she told him to make the best of the opportunity and run away. "Will you come with me?" he asked in a subdued tone. She trembled in surprise and agitation. She was not prepared for such a question. Yet, the very thought of running away with him tingled her with a novel sensa-

tion. She made her decision the supreme one of her life and said "Yes."

There was only one course left for them. The railway station was three miles away and there was a train at 2-30 a.m. If they could catch it, they could evade the Police for sometime.

They walked arm in arm to the station. The train was already at the platform. "Don't bother about tickets. I have some money with me and let us pay the fine. Let us get into the train first," said her companion.

They entered into an empty compartment. They sat face to face. In the dim light peculiar to railway trains she looked at her companion. A shudder ran through her frame. "He was not the man who met her at the river side and gave her the packet. She gazed at him in terror. The doubt, the gnawing doubt that lingered in her mind when she had glimpses of his face on their way to the railway station was a doubt no longer. "I say, who are you?" she cried desperately, "Are you not Ganesh?"

"Yes, you pronounce it very sweetly," said her companion.

SHE realised her mistake. She had jumped to the conclusion that the man she met at the river side was Ganesh. The currency

notes were in her custody. She did not know what to do and fidgeted in confusion. "My dear girl, why are you so pale? Are you afraid of me? Please don't look at me like that. Now tell me your difficulties." His voice was so soothing and sympathetic that she told him all except the intimate personal portion.

His face was clouded in thoughtfulness. After the first flush of excitement, Kalyani was calmer. She could see that he was handsome with curly hair and had an innocent and honest face. She gave him the packet.

Ganesh untied it, took a currency note and examined it. With a gasp of amazement, he asked, "You think these are counterfeit currency notes?"

"They must be," said Kalyani and watched his face in tense excitement feeling like a person on the brink of a discovery.

"I know a thing or two about such matters. I have not the slightest doubt that they are hundred per cent genuine," he said.

SHE looked at him incredulously. She composed herself and said, "That does not matter. I will have to restore them to the owner."

Ganesh looked at her. Suddenly his face cleared. "I wonder whether he is..." and took a

crumpled sheet of newspaper from his pocket. His face brightened when he found out what he wanted. He began to read the relevant portion:

"THE body of a young man was found on the river bank. It was identified to be that of Shankar, the young millionaire from Malaya. He was involved in a crime of murder and was wanted by the Police for the past three months. He had successfully evaded justice so far. The Police got information that he was at—the neighbouring village and made a thorough search for him, till they found his corpse. No foul play is, however, suspected. A verdict of death by accidental drowning was recorded."

He gave it to her. In the photograph, she recognised the features of the companion who set her heart in a flutter.

She wiped the tears from her eyes. Even if he was not dead the Police would catch him and try him for murder. Perhaps it was as well. Ganesh tied the packet again and gave it to her. "You are a rich lady now," he said in a melancholy voice. "I suppose that I must surrender myself to the Police."

When they reached the town, he arranged for their boarding and lodging. After he was satisfied that Kalyani was settled in safety, he told her that he was going to the Police Station. He

was surprised when she did not protest, tore himself away bitterly and surrendered to the Police.

But he was mistaken. Kalyani was not a silly girl to waste time over foolish sentiment. She consulted a leading lawyer and arranged for his release on bail on the same evening. The charge of counterfeiting could not be substantiated and it was dropped. The other charges were trivial and he was acquitted.

They were married the next month. She made a mistake—a fateful mistake—but had never any cause to regret it. ‡‡

The Guest

—Continued from page 53

The doctor gave him a hypodermic injection.

"Poor Ramesh!" Venu sighed, wiping the tears from his eyes. Radha sat watching

curiously the process of death. There was nothing human now in the unconscious being.

A sob rose to her throat, choking her and she scolded herself for being the cause of all this. She then saw her husband's eyes too were flushed red for want of sleep. A sudden hardness came upon her and she exclaimed: "What a heap of unlooked-for trouble has your friend given us! Hadn't we better send him to the hospital?"

"Hush!" Venu looked daggers at her, exasperated.

Ramesh heard the admonition and his lover's pride was cut to the quick. In a voice that wouldn't rise above his throat, he murmured: "Ah, no Venu, no. She is right after all. I was just going there...but they...they dragged me back again."

Silence ensued.

He was well on his way to the All-Curing Hospital. ‡‡

JUST BECAUSE ...

Whilst we want reasonable security for all, there can be no progress or happiness if everybody is afraid to poke his nose out of the front door just because it happens to be raining.

—EDWARD HULTON.



OKAY!

A Canadian judge fined a Red Indian woman 50 cents for crossing the street against a red traffic light—this constitutes an offence in Canada. She paid the clerk with a \$1 note but didn't wait for change. The judge noticed this and remarked that she should wait for her money.

"That's okay," she said, "I got to cross back to the other side!"

GOOD TRICK

After 18 years of answering calls to rescue children who have locked themselves in bathrooms and refused to come out, a certain fire-service captain has worked out this easy solution: Ascertaining the sex of the child, he goes to the door and, if it's

a boy calls, "Come out, little girl!"; if a girl, "Come out, little boy."

The indignant culprit usually emerges promptly, because what girl wants to be called a boy, and vice-versa!

* * *

NOT A LINE

An Army chaplain kept a notebook on his desk plainly labelled "Complaints." Whenever a soldier came in with a chip on his shoulder and criticized the Army or his fellow soldiers, the chaplain would open the book and mildly comment, "I'll just write your complaint in here and take it up with the Army authorities."

This always produced the desired effect of making the complainer realize the petty nature of his complaint. Consequently

ly, although the chaplain opened his book hundreds of times, he never wrote a line in it!

* * *

RESULT

"Of all my clerks, Freeman," began the boss to the young clerk he had summoned to his office, "I notice you seem to be most interested in your work. No hours seem too long for you and you never let the slightest detail escape you."

"Yes, sir?" said Freeman, with glowing and expectant satisfaction.

"Yes," continued the boss, "and so I am forced to fire you. It is such young men as you who learn here, and then go out and start a rival business!"

* * *

ANYTHING

"Can I borrow your lawn mower this evening?"

"Sorry, but I shall be using it to trim my hedge."

"But you can't trim a hedge with a lawn mower."

"You can do anything with a lawn mower if you don't want to lend it."

* * *

TERRIBLE!

"Good heavens! How terrible!" cried the professor as he finished reading the note left be-

hind by his daughter who had run away.

"Why, whatever's the matter, dear?" asked his wife.

The professor handed her the letter.

"So she's eloped with that officer," was the wife's calm comment. "Well, I can't say it's a complete surprise."

"But she's spelt 'eloped' with two l's!"

* * *

THE IDEA

"Why on earth are you going to marry that hard-up lodger of yours? What on earth are you going to live on?"

"We'll be all right, Mrs. Higgs. The poor fellow owes me enough to keep us in comfort for the next couple of years."

* * *

TRUTH

"But why did you leave your last place?" the new cook was asked.

"To tell you the truth, ma'am, I just couldn't stand the way the master and missus used to quarrel?"

"Dear me! Do you mean they quarrelled repeatedly?"

"Yes, ma'am. When it wasn't me and 'im it was me and 'er."

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 Janma 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.

[Astrological Forecasts for December 1958]

By T. V. RAMAN

MESHA

(Aswini 4, Bharani 4, Krithigai 1.)

Mars, Lord of the Lagna, though hidden in the 3rd house is aspected by Jupiter by the 9th sight. Therefore your health will be excellent. Saturn has since moved to Dhanus. This indicates rise in profession and improvement in business. Some may get new jobs. Money will be pouring on account of Mars in the 3rd house, Rahu in the 6th house and Saturn in the 9th house. Jupiter in the 7th house promises immense fortune and new ventures. Businessmen will get substantial profits. This is the time to expand the activities. Those who have been debt-ridden will now be free from debts. This is an excellent

month. Lucky Days: 7th, 17th and 21st.

Household women will find the month excellent. Some unmarried women will get married. Money will be flowing. The household will be happy. The month is good for social and cultural activities. Women in jobs or studying will reap good results. Lucky Days: 9th, 23rd and 30th.

VRISHABHA

(Krithigai 3, Rohini 4, Mrigasirsha 2.)

Venus, Lord of the Lagna, is placed in the 8th house hemmed between malefics. Your health will be adversely affected. Jupiter in the 6th house and Saturn in

the 8th house indicate misery. Somebody will lose wealth and prestige. This is a bad month. The only favourable planet is Kethu in the 11th house. Businessmen will meet with disappointment. It is better to suspend any expansion programme. Those in jobs will meet with misunderstandings and obstacles in their way of progress. The only advisable course is to take to prayers and meditation. The month is very adverse in general. Some may undertake useless journeys. There are no lucky days during the month.

Household women, women in jobs or studying will not be affected so badly as men. They will pull through. Lucky Days: 7th and 17th.

MITHUNA

(Mrigasirsha 2, Arudra 4, Punarvasu 3)

Mercury, Lord of the Lagna, is placed in the 5th house in conjunction with Jupiter. The month is very good from the point of view of health. Jupiter in the 5th house promises all-round good results. Kethu in the 10th house will keep up the profession remarkably well. Rahu in the fourth house indicates unpleasant household. Saturn in the 7th house indicates distant transfer or journey.

Businessmen should complete their expansion programme before 25th December since Jupiter transits to the 6th house, which is adverse. People belonging to this Rasi should be ready from

now on to face the evil effects of the 6th house Jupiter. Lucky Day: 10th.

Household women will find the month very bad since Rahu is in the 4th house. It is better to avoid all misunderstandings. The month is not good for women in general.

Women in jobs and those studying will pull through. Lucky Days: 8th and 18th.

KATAKA

(Punarvasu 1, Pushya 4, Aslesha 4.)

Rahu in the 3rd house and Saturn in the 6th house indicate success and gain and increase in wealth. The month will be good in general. Businessmen will meet with good profits. Your time will improve from Jan. '59. Those in jobs will have to wait for a month only for promotion and better prospects. Those who are sickly will recover. Their health will be good. Their finances will be steady. Lucky Days: 7th, 10th and 21st.

Household women will find the month splendid. Their health will be good. Women in jobs or studying will find the month excellent. Lucky Days: 3rd, 23rd and 29th.

SIMHA

(Makara 4, Pooram 4, Uthira 1.)

Sun, Lord of the Lagna, is in the 4th house in conjunction

with Venus. Your health will be robust. But Jupiter in the 3rd house and Saturn in the 5th house will keep you disturbed. The month is not good in general. Those in jobs will have to wait for sometime for better days. Businessmen should be cautious in all respects. Lucky Days: 3rd, 12th, 28th and 30th.

Household women will not find the month enjoyable. Women in jobs or those studying will pull through. Lucky Days: 8th, 18th and 19th.

KANYA

(Uthira 3, Hastha 4, Chitra 2.)

Mercury, Lord of the Lagna, is in the 2nd house in conjunction with Jupiter. Your health should have been good but on account of Rahu in Janma you should be cautious about your diet and you should take great care about your health. Those in jobs will get on well due to Mars in the 10th house. You have to face a very bad period from Jan. '59 due to Jupiter in 3rd house. Devote your time to prayer and meditation. Businessmen will have to wait for some more time for making profits. The month is not good in general. Lucky Days: 8th, 18th and 21st.

Household women will find the month very unpleasant. Those employed or studying will pull through. Lucky Days: 7th and 11th.

THULA

(Chitra 2, Swathi 4, Visaka 3.)

Venus, Lord of the Lagna, is in the 2nd house in conjunction with Sun. The effect will be good from the point of view of health. You are now free from 7½ years' Saturn. You will be generally lucky for some time to come. Those in jobs will flourish. Businessmen will make good profits. The month is excellent. Money will be flowing. Lucky Days: 8th, 18th and 19th.

Household women will find the month excellent. Their health will be good. There will be rejoicings at home. The month is good for social and cultural activities. Women in jobs and those studying will thrive remarkably. Lucky Days: 3rd, 11th, and 28th.

Our astrologer will cast your horoscope according to Drik and send your complete life reading for Rs. 5 only. Send M. O. or Postal Order together with birth time, date, year and place of birth to Sri T. Venkataraman, Astrologer, No. 13, Parthasarathi Naidu Street, Triplicane, Madras-5.

VRISCHIKA

(Visaka 1, Anuradha 4, Jyeshtha 4.)

Mars, Lord of the Lagna, is in the 8th house but is aspected by Jupiter. Your health, though affected, will not cause serious handicap. Kethu in the 5th house will keep you worried. Saturn, who was hitherto in Janma, has since moved to the 2nd house, which is a good sign. Rahu in the 11th house indicates gain. Those who are having a second round of 7½ years' Saturn will flourish. Those in jobs will have to wait for some more time for the change of Jupiter to Dhanus. Businessmen should be cautious. Lucky Days : 8th and 29th.

Household women will have to wait for the ending of 7½ years' Saturn for good results. Women in jobs or studying will pull through. Lucky Days : 8th, 18th and 21st.

DHANUS

(Moola 4, Poorada 4, Utharada 1.)

Jupiter, Lord of the Lagna, is in the 11th house till December 25. But Saturn in Janma will upset your health. Kethu in the 4th house will cause misunderstandings in the household. Rahu in the 10th house will keep the profession steady. You have to be ready for wasteful expenses for some time from December 25th due to change of Jupiter to the 12th house. Businessmen should complete their expansion programme for some time from December 25th lest they should meet with heavy loss. Lucky Days : 12th and 25th.

Household women will find the month very miserable. The month is not good. Women in jobs or those studying will just pull through. Lucky Days : 8th, 18th and 29th.

PIN THIS FREE COUPON

Name : _____

Address : _____

Time, Date and Place of Birth : _____

Rasi : _____

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

Dec. '58.

MAKARA

(Utharada 3, Sravana 4, Dhanishta 2.)

7½ years' Saturn has just commenced. Those who are having a 2nd round will do well. Those who are having 1st or 3rd round will meet with obstacles. Businessmen should be cautious. Those in jobs will do ordinarily well. The finances will not be so good. Lucky Days : 8th, 18th and 19th.

Household women will not find the month beneficial. Women in jobs or those studying will pull through. Lucky Days : 3rd and 23rd.

KUMBHA

(Dhanishta 2, Sathabhishta 4, Poorattadhi 3)

Saturn, Lord of the Lagna, is placed in the 11th house which promises good health. You must be prepared for a spell of financial setback due to change of Jupiter to the 10th house from December 25th. The month is not good in general due to Rahu in the 8th house. Businessmen should complete their expansion

activities before end of the month. Those in jobs may meet with adverse results from December 25th. Their finances will be very poor from that date. Lucky Days : Almost all dates from 1st to 25th.

MEENA

(Poorattadhi 1, Uthirattadhi 4, Revathi 4.)

You have to wait till December 25th for all-round improvement. Saturn in the 10th house will bring you better chances and success. You must take great care of your health owing to Janma Kethu. From December 25th you will be lucky. Businessmen will make good gains from that date. The finances will be pouring from then. Lucky Days : 8th, 27th and 30th.

Household women will find the month pleasant after 25th December. Women in jobs or studying will flourish. Lucky Days : 9th, 19th and 21st.

FREE SERVICE FOR OUR READERS

If you have any questions to ask, please address them to : The Astrologer c/o "India Magazine," Madras-5.

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

Questions & Answers

All types of questions from our readers are welcome. Answers may be diverting, informative or instructive as the case may be but under no circumstances is any offence meant to anyone.

N. V. Sitaram, Howrah

Q.—What range of reading does a newspaper offer to its readers?

A.—All aspects of life from sordid politics to lofty philosophy, from rape cases to ideal romances!

Suresh Chandra Gupta, Delhi.

Q.—What is the advantage of marrying a girl who is a doll?

A.—You will know the latest fashions in dress whenever you look at her and look wistfully at your dwindling bank balances!

Q.—Should love marriages be discouraged or encouraged?

A.—Should be discouraged because disaster attends such marriages when the couples have no money and their relations boycott them, and should be encouraged because it is very difficult to keep the lovers apart!

S. Muthuswamy, Trichy.

Q.—Do you like divorce?

A.—Personally we don't, but we do immensely relish the reports about cases reported in the papers!

Q.—Who is your favourite leader?

A.—He is yet to be born!

Q.—What is your opinion on the Kashmir dispute?

A.—There should have been no occasion for a dispute at all. Mountbatten was ill-advised when he advised Congress leaders to refer the issue to the United Nations. It was the most grievous error of Gandhiji and the Congress.

C. Satish, Khammameth.

Q.—Must English be banished altogether from our country?

A.—If you wish to raise a huge wall round the whole country and shut out all thoughts and influences of the outside world, you can put such a question. If you banish it today you will have to import teachers from Britain to teach English again. Don't do anything to drive that language into the black market! That doesn't mean that we deprecate Hindi. It will certainly have its own place.

S. M. Mohanty, Kharagpur.

Q.—How should a spiritualist behave among a group of materialists?

A.—Like a dried-up coconut kernel remaining loose within the shell!

P. Anka Raju, Vellore.

Q.—What is the relation between the Earth and the other Planets?

A.—The sort of relationship subsisting between brothers in a family who help one another and prosper. We get light and heat from the sun, coolness and ideas of romance for poets from the moon, etc. etc.

P. S. Maniyam, Bangalore.

Q.—What is the difference between love and friendship?

A.—Love may last for a night while friendship will weather many a storm.

V. R. Gopal, Madras.

Q.—Suppose an all-women government is formed tomorrow and it forbids all girls to marry, what will be the result?

A.—There will still be need for more maternity hospitals! Love and lust will enter by the back-door!

This month's prize of five rupees for the best question has been awarded to: V. R. Gopal, Madras-14.

TOMORROW'S GARBOS AND JEAN HARLOWS!

DIANE VARSI, a young mother who is preparing to step into a third marriage, though still in her teens, is often called the Jimmy Dean or Marlon Brando of Hollywood—a somewhat dubious title for a feminine star.

Her school friends called her an "odd-ball." Her teachers said she was a rebel, especially at examination time when she sometimes turned in a blank sheet of paper. Finally, Diane left school and tried various jobs. She was a waitress, then worked in a candle factory.

Picked Apples

She was singing folk songs as a hobby and picking apples for a living when a girl friend asked her if she'd walk to Hollywood, 440 miles from San Francisco, where they lived. Diane said, without much enthusiasm, "All right, if you want to."

They walked and hitch-hiked down the coast, sometimes sleep-

ing on a beach. In Hollywood, Diane met a student actor and became interested in acting. A grandfather helped her financially. Then she auditioned for the much talked of film, "Peyton Place."

Before making her acting debut, for which she received an Academy Award nomination, Diane struggled with the part. She read the book six times, the screen play thirty times, and spent weeks writing down everything she knew about all the characters, writes Sylvia Norris in "Tit-Bits."

Then she did the same for "Hell Bent Kid" and her last picture, with Gary Cooper, "Ten North Frederick Street." After each picture she had a nervous collapse. Diane also admits she has visited a psychiatrist.

America has long been thought of as "the land of the teenagers' delight." And Hollywood is no exception. More would-be actors and actresses under twenty

are given a chance than any other age group because Hollywood is desperately searching for the Garbo, Jean Harlow, Ava Gardner, Vivien Leigh and Ingrid Bergman of to-morrow.

First Kiss

A producer to-day knows that if his picture is to make money it *must* appeal to teenagers. And a youthful audience is likely to consider that an over-twenty star has one foot in the grave.

Not only the audience. Carol Lynley was thirteen when she won her first Broadway role in "Anniversary Waltz." She is now under contract to Walt Disney. Although she was fourteen and earning £25,000 a year, as a model, one of her biggest thrills was when she came to Hollywood last year and had her first kiss.

It was actually for publicity purposes, but I asked her if it was serious. "Goodness, no," she laughed. "He's a *much* older man—he's nearly twenty, you know."

Freshness

What do these teenager stars have that distinguishes them from thousands of young hopefuls? They are all *individual*. The one common quality is freshness, the kind of girl who looks attractive with the wind blowing in her hair.

Hollywood to-day is full of sweet young things dashing from

the school desk to the sound stage where they learn their best camera angles and how to kiss so that their make-up is not smeared, and how to turn that love light on and off in their eyes for the close-up.

Fifteen-year-old schoolgirls are movie stars playing grown-up roles. Why not? says Hollywood—it happens in real life. Carol Lynley, Yvette Mimieux, Gigi Perreau and Sandra Dee are all fifteen. They all have romantic, adult scenes. In "Until They Sail" Sandra gets married. Venetia Stevenson married Russ Tamblyn, at seventeen. Jill St. John, a recent TIT-BITS Cover Girl, got married last May, at sixteen, and is now demonstrating to her older and experienced screen sisters that it's no problem at all being a movie star and a wife at the same time, if you enjoy your work and love your husband. Lili Gentle, who co-starred with Tommy Sands in "Sing, Boy, Sing," is married and retired at seventeen.

Star Performer

Susan Strasberg went on the stage at fourteen. She has made two films, "Picnic," and then "Stage Struck," with Henry Fonda as her leading man. One of Susan's greatest parts was the lead on Broadway in "The Diary of Anne Frank."

Susan is still in her teens, but now that George Stevens is making the film version of

"Anne Frank" he has given this role to Millie Perkins, a girl who has had no experience, because he wanted a new face, a younger type!

One of the youngest teenage stars of to-morrow is Yvette Mimieux. She was born fifteen years ago of a French father and English mother. 20th Century-Fox have great hopes of this lovely little actress and she is being coached at their talent school.

Beautiful redhead Claire Kelly told me, quite frankly, "The Bob Wagners, Tab Hunters, Elvis Presleys, bore me. Tell me, where are the young Gables and Cary Grants?"

Claire is sophisticated. She'll soon be seen, however, in a rather unglamorous, skintight, rubber diving suit, in "Underwater Warrior."

The youngsters get their chances all different ways. Diane Jergens got her first break on a TV series. Judy Meredith loved to ice skate and was a star performer touring with the Ice Follies at fifteen.

Part for Sandra

Sue George was a messenger girl at Universal-International. With no dramatic experience at all, she was given a part in "The Private War of Major Benson," at sixteen, because the producer spotted her as she was cycling with the mail. Sue is proud of the fact that she made it alone and with no assistance from her uncle, who happens to be Ray Milland.

Sandra Knight got her chance because her father is a policeman at M-G-M. Every time Robert Mitchum worked at the studio, Papa would mention his blue-eyed, red-haired daughter who was studying to be an actress. A few months ago, when Mitchum was casting his independent production "Thunder Road," Sandra was one of the fifty girls who came to his office for an interview. She got the part—as co-star.

Natalie Trundy, sixteen, is a stage and TV graduate. Not long ago she pretended she was older than her twelve years. She co-stars with Dean Stockwell in "Careless Years."

Susan Oliver was an orangeade demonstrator until she had an opportunity to demonstrate something far more interesting and eye-catching, her curvaceous figure, long, blonde hair and green eyes. Her first picture? "The Green-Eyed Blonde."

Most Envied

Jean Seberg auditioned for, and won, the starring role in Bernard Shaw's "St. Joan," her first picture, at seventeen, and has since starred in "Bonjour Tristesse." Another girl who auditioned, and lost, is Dolores Hart, who later became one of the most envied girls in Hollywood. Elvis makes love to her in "Loving You" and "King Creole."

There's plenty of competition for teenage star parts, from the "Foreign Girls." There is Marisa Allasio, a delightful

talented Italian girl of eighteen. If measurements are any measure of stardom, then Marisa will be a bigger star than Jayne Mansfield. Marisa will make "Angry Hills" with Robert Mitchum, in France and Italy.

Also from Italy is Giorgia Moll who co-starred with Michael Redgrave and Andie Murphy in "The Quiet American." Giorgia, who has been winning beauty contests since she was thirteen, said wisely, "I want to live like a teenager while I still am one."

From France, there is France Nuyen, half French, half Chinese, who at eighteen gets her first acting experience as Liat in the film version of "South Pacific." Christine Carere is now working in Hollywood in "A Certain Smile" with Rossano Brazzi. She was discovered in Paris two years ago when she was sixteen.

German actress Romy Schneider starred in her first picture at fifteen. At seventeen, she played Queen Victoria as a young girl, Hollywood will show this film under the informal title of "The Story of Vickie." Romy came to Hollywood for a few days and was offered more parts than she could handle.

Before Twenty-one

Hollywood gives its teenage favourites poise, a knowledge of make-up and how to wear clothes. It gives them financial security, with a weekly salary of anywhere from £100 upwards.

They have fancy swimming pools they have little time to enjoy, and cars they are often too young or too nervous to drive. They have seen and done everything before they are twenty-one.

With all this, they often miss the fun of being just a young girl and falling in love and staying in love and getting married and living happily.

As one veteran actress said the other day, "Hollywood? I tell you frankly it's nothing but a vicious rat race. If my daughter wants to be a movie star, I'll do everything I can to dissuade her. Then, if she insists on an acting career, I'll try and get her to wait until she graduates from school and her teens!"

"TALAQ"

"Talaq" is the first independent venture of Director Mahesh (Gopinath) Kaul and writer Mukhram (Ek Hi Rasta) Sharma after their initial joint success in "Abhiman." It emerges as a film which fully and richly reflects the proven talents of both, a film with a topical theme told with a tautness so often found missing in so many of our so-called 'problem pictures.'

"Talaq" demonstrates what is often forgotten by our filmmakers namely that nothing contributes so much to the success of a film as team spirit, that a good story well told is always a better 'formula' than a dozen 'sure-fire' clichés of box office which have a tendency to misfire through odd concoctions,

writes a noted film critic of Bombay.

Marital Differences

Dealing with the problem of marital differences leading to divorce and the tragic repercussions of such rifts in wedlock upon innocent offsprings of the estranged couples, "Talaq," curiously enough, approaches the issue from the point of view of a child. The way in which it pleads for the child is, however, quite rational and convincing to drive home the moral with an impassioned fervour.

The most remarkable feature of this thought-provoking essay on divorce and its implications is that the story never reaches the court-room nor is the plot subjected to the platitudes, arguments and counter-arguments of lawyers.

For Mahesh Kaul and Mukham Sharma have confined their story to the domestic sphere and very appropriately suggested an amicable reconciliation through friendly channels as the best solution for a couple on the brink of divorce.

Erring Partners

The film also attempts to analyse the factors—the petty domestic squabbles—that usually precipitate a crisis and shows how individual pride can blind the erring partners to their duty and responsibility towards their child.

Unlike the common conception of a 'problem picture',

"Talaq" is no cut and dried affair nor is it a heavily loaded melodrama that might bemuse rather than amuse. The treatment imparted to the theme by Kaul and Sharma is quite to the contrary. For the first half literally bubbles with pep and punch, establishing the characters and depicting the romance and marriage of the principal couple in a racy style.

Even in the latter portion which is essentially dramatic, the light touches are not missing and here too the comedy fits admirably into the texture of the plot without striking any discordant note or artificiality or incoherence.

Hand Of A Master

The rift that arises between the stellar couple has been aptly compared and contrasted with the lives of two other couples, the family planning expert-friend of the hero and his ever-nagging wife, and the simple, uninhibited servant couple who not only make an ideally happy pair but, towards the climax, contribute so much to ease the tension.

Director Mahesh Kaul has handled the three couples, indeed all the characters, with the dexterity and restraint of a master with the result that every character, every sequence and all the songs except one have some purpose or motive and nothing detracts from the smooth flow of the marriage or the mounting crescendo of the drama. †

EDITED AND PUBLISHED BY B. VENKATAVARADAM FROM 59, LEXCH ROAD, TRIPPLICANE, MADRAS-5, & PRINTED BY HIM AT INDIA PAPERAZINE PRESS, 61 A, NAGAPPIER STREET, TRIPPLICANE, MADRAS-5.

THE MONTH'S SPOLIGHTS

WHAT OUR READERS SAY—(Continued from cover page II)

munities should sit round a table and find a way out. If they present an agreed solution, will Parliament refuse to accept? I think not.

M. Sunder,
Poona.

SARDAR PATEL'S SERVICES

Sir,

December is the month when the great Vallabhbhai Patel left us orphaned. We must remember the iron man with gratitude.

Supposing we still had that matchless leader in our midst, what would he have not done? He would have gladly owned up to his mistakes. He would have reversed the Congress decision on linguistic reorganisation and promoted that oneness of feeling which bound us all like a silken thread. When some patriot was shot in Calcutta by the British the people in all parts of India mourned their loss as something personal.

I ask you, frankly, do we feel so now? With Sardarji in our midst today miracles could have happened. But we have let the government that we deserve.

A Humble Patriot.

DARK DAYS

If English goes will you be able to bring out your Mag in Hindi? You must be looking for experts even now. Say something to indicate your idea.

Prem Srivatsa,
Delhi.

[!!! — Ed.]

MEN OR WOMEN?

Sir,

In America they say women are more powerful than men. They are more wealthy and it is said that men are afraid of offending against them.

We may call America a women's land. But what will you call India?

Damodar Kurup,
Trivandrum.

TOWER CLOCKS

Sir,

In some cities tower clocks have gone out of order. But the corporations concerned do not repair them. What does it show? Most office-goers are far from punctual. They don't mind if the clocks don't show the time. It is better that they are removed and sold.

T. Ramanathan,
Madras.

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