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ASTROLOGICAL FORECASTS
TO HELP YOU

LEADING MONTHLY FOR HOME & FAMILY

INDIA MAGAZINE

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Stories

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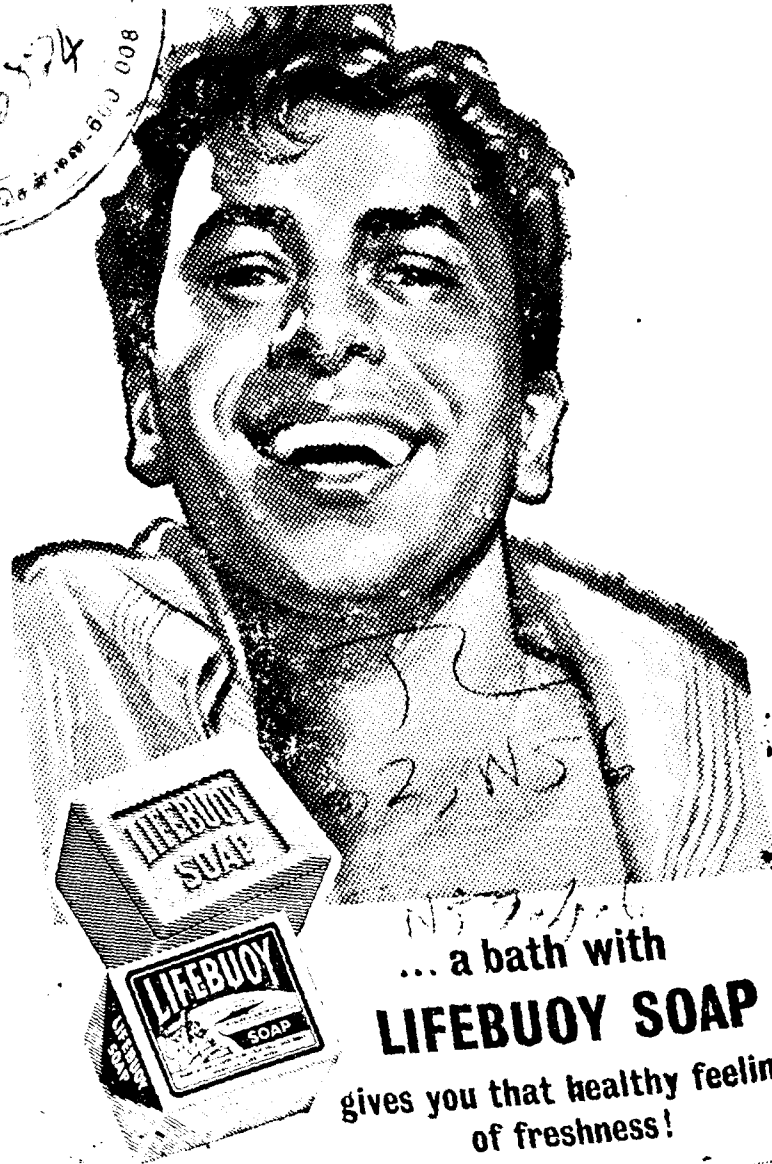
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India Magazine

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THE SWATANTRA PARTY

ALL eyes are now turned on the newly formed Swatantra Party. Will it take the nation on the road to progress? Or will it deteriorate into a mere party of vested interests, as the Prime Minister observed the other day.

Let us turn to the general conditions in the political field—and the economic, too. Congress has been ruling over the country since 1947 when the shadow cabinet was formed. What have these thirteen years conferred on us? Do we have democracy as they know it in other countries? Or is it a diluted or modified form? Or in the outward garb of democracy is it concealing many undesirable features like oligarchy, personal or one-man or one-party rule to which the paramount interests of the nation have to be subject?

It certainly is not easy to answer this intriguing poser. True it is that Congress under Gandhiji fought for freedom not only for the country but also for the man in the street. Often did the Mahatma emphasise that every man and woman must be enabled to enjoy the content of freedom and he envisaged a Ram Rajya in which all men would be considered equal. Soon after the attainment of independence he advised the Congress to go into voluntary liquidation and re-emerge in the form of a Lok Sevak Sabha which would have nothing to do with politics.

Of course, Congress did not pay heed to his suggestion and the leader himself passed away suddenly without elaborating his scheme. Congress went on to consolidate the freedom it had won. It did put up a brave and hard struggle to wipe out the traces of foreign misrule.

No sensible patriot wants the Congress to be reduced to a mere rump or powerless body. Its services to the country have been unique. But herein comes the rub. Democracy itself is threatened with extinction in the near future if no effective opposition is enabled to function. Mr. Rajagopalachari's charge-sheet against the Congress is true though one would not be so vehement in his denunciation. The gravamen of the charge is that no new blood has been infused into the Congress. Almost the same old men are in the administrative saddle and absolute power has tended to corrupt. Criticism from the people of muddle or bungling is strongly resented in high quarters. And response to the people's wishes is neither prompt nor voluntary.

If only an Opposition Party—say, under the leadership of a man of the stature like the late Syama Prasad Mookherjee—had been formed a decade ago, the present unfortunate trends would have been arrested. And Congress would have stood corrected.

Under these circumstances the Swatantra Party has been born, and may it grow from strength to strength. Its main object is to make democracy kicking and alive and make the party system create a more genial climate for its growth. There can be no two opinions on the fact that indefinite, one-party rule will lead to undisguised dictatorship. Already Congress has lost sight of the many ideals and principles which the great founders held up at the turn of the century and won the silent approval and appreciation of democrats the world over then.

The question may well be asked whether the Communists who are a well-knit party cannot play this role and act as a brake on Congress. It is an absurd proposition which does not need close scrutiny. The Communists owe their allegiance to a party that ignores the country's interests. Their main aim is to subvert the Constitution by pretending to work within its four walls and destroy democracy without leaving any possibility of its revival under any circumstances. As for the Socialists they are split into groups and can hardly be expected to do any useful work in the form of an Opposition Party.

The Swatantra Party has come out in the nick of time to save the nation from a great disaster. Led by a veteran leader, who has no axe to grind and whose only anxiety is to promote the welfare of the people under truly democratic institutions, the new Party has a future full of promise. It does not want to seize power but if it comes its way, the people may well rest assured, that it will not be misused.

Fairest Of The Fair

By RAMESH GUPTA

A RETIRED engineer, Simha was well past seventy. He had amassed an enormous fortune and had two sons by his first wife—Kumar and Bhimsen. Both the young men had just been launched on a career after brilliant academic education. five years after the wedding. The old man was still living a fast life, sporting costly clothes, diamond rings and using heavy scents. "His snow-white hair was dyed black and though he used a walking stick to support himself he had a straight back

He was an old rake and wanted to take a third wife! There were no two opinions on the fact that she was the most beautiful girl...

When they were studying they were residing in the college hostel. After they graduated and got their jobs they chose to live apart from father though they were bachelors still.

The young men lost their mother when they were mere children. Simha married for the second time but she died

With the help of some Ayurvedic physicians he took some *basbams* and tried to rejuvenate himself. He took the best of foods and drank two measures of cow's milk mixed with almond paste.

It was Simha's proud boast that he never fell ill even for a day. He walked ten miles every morning and took other exercises

that kept him in trim. He did all this with a particular aim in view. He hunted after women in the city and had his fill of pleasure. When he set his heart on some fair Helen he would capture her at any cost. The city provided good hunting until the old man began to feel weak about the knees and fell ill for the first time. His sons or relations would not care to go near him and pretended not to have heard from him at all.

One night as Simha lay thinking of his lonely, miserable life with none to attend on him, he had a sudden brainwave and smiled. He would marry again and spend the evening of his life in peace, happiness and contentment. If there were children in the bargain he would divide the property evenly. Could he not live up to a hundred and disappoint those who were praying for an early end to his life and adventures?

With this end in view he undertook an intensive search for young girls one of whom would make an ideal wife. With a vengeance he would pick up an educated lass and parade her before his people who scoffed at him and would make them bow their heads to her and humble themselves to the dust. He roamed about the neighbouring towns but did not succeed very well. Then he hit upon a fine idea. He inserted advertisements in all the daily newspapers calling for a well

accomplished young woman not above twenty-two years, "must at least be a graduate to marry an elderly widower with no encumbrances. If photo satisfies advertiser and his other conditions, parents of the girl will receive ten thousand rupees on promise of marriage. Correspondence strictly confidential."

ALMOST every day for a whole month Simha received batches of registered envelopes from poor parents, enclosing photos of their daughters and letters giving graphic details about their physical features and accomplishments. From among these he selected a photo of a perfectly beautiful girl who had a willow-like figure and gazelle-like eyes. Simha decided that she was the girl for him and it would be the crowning glory of his life if he spent even the shortest time with her and then kick the bucket. It certainly would be the height of bliss for him and he would do all in his power to compensate her. He would leave her all his property and deny his sons.

The father of the girl was a poor debt-ridden man and Simha's offer of ten thousand rupees was a gift of which he could not even have dreamt in his life. Instead of having find money for her dowry he was a cash present which would help to liquidate all his liabilities and even enable him to open a small shop.

Of course his daughter had stupid modern notions. She had studied up to the Third B. A. class in College and was earning seventy rupees a month as a typist. She had brought a young man who professed to love her and offered to marry her without any dowry. But he himself seemed to be in difficulties and talked of ideals and principles which his hard practical mind could never appreciate. He did not care now whether his daughter earned that petty salary of seventy rupees when the cheque of the advertiser was on its way. So he called in his daughter and spoke in a stern voice. "Susheela, a different life is opening for you and I shall tell you all about it when the proper time comes. Till that time hold your soul in patience and refrain from asking me any questions. But, remember, I am here to make you happy. So from tomorrow stop going to that office. You write out your resignation letter and I shall hand it over at your office with a medical certificate about your illness. As for that fool of a young man who is knocking at your door every night, write to him a note that I forbid his visits and that the affair must be at an end. Let there be no mistake about it, Susheela," he warned with an impatient gesture, "I will not forgive you if you don't abide by my instructions."

SUSHEELA was in tears and hastily ran in to hide her grief. But she never understood

the significance of her father's words. She thought that her father was off his head and was raving under the weight of some pressing worries. She hoped and prayed to the Lord to rescue her from the brink of some sinister disaster.

Only a fortnight later did she grasp the meaning of her father's words. With a small party of relations her parents took her to the city where her wedding was to be celebrated.

SIMHA went into raptures at the sight of his bride-designate and her parents. He had arranged for the wedding to be celebrated in a small choultry. He had invited only a handful of his relations and his two sons—Kumar and Bhimsen—had come there with the greatest reluctance. They were too deeply shocked at the sight of their aging father at whom Cupid was constantly aiming his arrows. The two sons were so ashamed that they dared not face their relations and friends who seemed to snigger at them over the forthcoming event. The two young men were dimly aware that a new alliance would complicate matters for them.

With their consent their father had sold away all the ancestral property. What remained of lands, houses and money—by themselves they formed an enormous fortune—was earned by Simha and he could sign it all in favour of his wife. They got an inkling of his intentions through

the personal secretary who knew their father's mind perfectly. Lately Simha was hardening in his attitude towards his sons.

BUT the young men consoled themselves with the reflection that they had their own talents to rely upon. It would not seriously affect them or their future if their father denied them their legitimate share. Anyhow duty was duty and they felt bound to attend the wedding and see the type of woman who had cast such a spell on the old man. Kumar said he would undergo vicarious penance for the sake of his father by remaining a bachelor all his life and shunning the company of all women. The numerous affairs of their father had brought a standing reproach and shame to the family name which it would be hard to erase. He knelt before a picture of the family deity and vowed never to taint himself with the touch of a woman so long as lived and breathed. Bhimsen was about to prevent him from taking the pledge but the earnest expression on his brother's face was awe-inspiring and he kept silent, choking down his words of protest.

They stood close behind their father as the purohita kindled the flame and began to chant their mantras when a young female voice cried out in unbearable agony. "Oh, Bhimsen! How could you look on at this tragedy overtaking me?"

In the flash of a second the bride decked in all her finery flung herself against the breast of Bhimsen, her veil lifted and the tears flowing down her cheeks.

Simha clutched at his throat and fell down in a swoon. And he never recovered from the shock that his chosen girl was his son's sweetheart. †

NOT HIS EMPLOYEE !

An efficiency expert once posted this sign in a factory : "Any employee caught loafing or smoking on the premises will be discharged immediately."

Next morning an employee was nabbed violating the order and was approached by the efficiency expert, who asked : "What is your salary ?"

"£15 a week."

"Well, I'll write you this order for £ 30. Go to the cashier who'll give you the money—then get out and stay out !"

As soon as the fellow got the dough and left, the efficiency expert asked another employee : "What's the name of the guy I just threw out of here I ?"

"I don't know—he works in some store down the block !"

THE ESCORT

[There were two escorts in fact for the young man lost in the city—one was a woman and another a policeman !]

IN the bazaar area of the city it is always a pandemonium.

All sorts of hawkers cry themselves hoarse. More deafening is the noise of traffic of which there is an endless stream on the various roads and lanes. The electric horn of the motor cars, the jingle-jangle of the tram cars, the whine of the auto-rickshaws as they zig-sag through the maze of vehicles and screech round sharp bends stun the newcomer and he wishes he were back to his village where he can enjoy undisturbed peace and quiet in the country-side.

But, then, a city draws people from all parts of the country and there is a sprinkling of foreigners who either do business or go about sight-seeing as tourists. There are parks where you can relax yourself or cinema theatres where the latest pictures

sweep the people off their feet. On the wide boulevards, promenades and tree-lined avenues you see hundreds of men and women, walking about holding hands in love and parading in a picturesque manner.

BY

R. RAMAKRISHNA

That is why you see, I steal trips to the city from my village where the dull routine of life bores you to death at times—where it is difficult to see more than twenty people together, where the cows, buffaloes, the goats and the street dogs are an eternal source of nuisance. The allurements of city life are always irresistible to a young man like me, leading a life of enforced idleness.

There was a time when I passed my S. S. L. C. examination and wanted to go to the city in search of a job. But my parents derided my very idea and turned down my proposal.

“Shivapriya,” they said, “there is absolutely no need for you to work. It is enough if you are with us. Our lands and farms bring enough money to feed us all and your own family when you marry.”

MOTHER was tearful at the very thought that I might leave her for ever and make her world gloomy and cheerless. From the day I was cradled she was seldom separated from me except during the few months when I studied in the final year of the school. She often wished I were a girl and to indulge her fancy she adorned me in my childhood days with jewels, gold necklaces and anklets. When I went to the elementary school the boys began to laugh and leer at me, pulling at my flower-licked pig-tail. When Mother saw me weeping loud and understood the reasons for my distress, she took off my adornments one by one until one day Father took me to the barber's shop and had my hair cut.

But the habits of childhood were too deeply ingrained in me to get rid of. I was soft-hearted, shy and timid. While Father always mocked at me for it,

Mother liked me all the better. Let that pass.

Now I was in the city for the fifth time. My marriage was scheduled to come off in another month and that meant I would be tied down for life to my home and the new responsibilities.

Without telling them where I was going I suddenly left the village for the city to spend a few days and have my fill of excitement. I stayed in a lodging house and took my food and lunch where my fancy directed.

But every evening I visited a milk a cosy bar before I visited a picture house. It was small but exquisitely neat, furnished with polished tables and wicker chairs where I could sit for a while and relax myself. It was during one of these evenings I took a cigarette, encouraged by an impish waiter, and began to smoke. It was my first attempt. The smoke, though not disagreeable, got into my lungs and I began to cough until the tears came into my eyes.

There was a slight giggle but before I could turn round two soft hands gently patted me on the back and head and considerably eased out my feeling of irritation. And those hands belonged to a sweet-looking little woman whose dress and body exuded an overpowering scent.”

"Poor dear!" she said as she gave me a little of the cool orange juice which she had been drinking at a table just behind mine. She held my mouth with one hand and forced it down my throat. much to my relief.

"ARE you all right now?" she asked me with concern in her voice.

I stammered my thanks, being overcome by my shyness. But she put me at my ease and spoke reassuringly as if she knew me from my boyhood days. She was very pretty but she wore a very ordinary saree in blue with a blouse to match. She had only a pair of gold earrings and wore glass bangles. But she was the very picture of neatness and I conceived a liking for her at once. You might call her pretty though she was slightly older than myself by seven or ten years, and she seemed to know more about the city than I could have known even if I had stayed there for fifteen years.

I had noticed her once or twice before at the bar but I had been too timid to look at her before. Needless to say, I introduced myself as a visitor from the village whose stay in the city was almost at an end. And she in turn introduced herself as a hard-working woman at the local factory who had to support a useless husband who was given to drinking a lot. But

she admitted she was never shy in the company of men and would go home only late in the night.

When I rose saying that I was late for the cinema and expressed my thanks for her kindness she offered to accompany me to the picture house. It suited me to a T, because I felt rather lonely of late and badly wanted to talk to someone. She did all the talking while we sat in the dark—rather she went on whispering—complaining of the unkind Fate which had made her a victim. Now and then when the theatre was very dark she nestled close, rubbed her cheek against mine. Her arm stole round my shoulder and once she pressed her moist lips against mine. When the show was over we went again to the milk bar. She disappeared behind the inner door, talked with a man and then came out. We ate buns, fruits and drank plenty of milk and then sallied out.

It was past eleven. The road lamps were dim and the shop lights were all out, deepening the blackness of the night. What was frightening, there was no vehicle on the road. In sharp contrast to the terrific noise of the traffic in the evening silence brooded over the city as if some ghosts were presiding over the place. I would have yelled in horror but for the comforting company of the woman. There was a drizzle

which developed into a sharp shower and drenched my clothes. But Sujata—that was my fair companion's name—did not seem to mind. She took my arm lovingly.

"My dear," she said after thinking for a while, "I have a suggestion to make and I hope you will agree. You can't go to your lodging-house now. It is impossible as it is five miles off and there is no taxi available. I am residing in a room in a dilapidated house a furlong off. Come there and spend the night with me."

I didn't need a second invitation. She led me like a lamb through narrow lanes and a dark corridor. She took me into a room and lighted a small hurricane lamp. Then she embraced and kissed me but seeing how wet I was, helped me out of my coat and shirt. She gave me a towel to wipe myself dry and showed me a bed on the floor. Tired and exhausted I dropped on it thankfully and soon found myself in her arms. But soon a loud knock was heard on the door and a man was shouting and cursing. Sujata was wringing her hands in despair and trembling. "It is my husband and he will kill both of us. Oh God! Run away at once through the back door and run straight until you reach the street."

With only a towel round my waist I ran blindly for life until I stumbled into the road.

Then I realised I had left behind a purse containing a hundred rupees—all my money—and my wrist-watch.

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I went on running until the rays of a torchlight were flashed on my face. "Stop, you scoundrel," roared a policeman. But I was too exhausted and frightened to reply. He dragged me to the police station not far off. But a different reception awaited me at the station. The Inspector took out a photo and identified me as the villager's son who had run away. You see, my father had notified the city police of my flight and supplied them with copies of my photo. I didn't tell them of my experience with Sujata. But the police fed me well, booked a seat in the train and one of the constables escorted me back to my village! ‡‡

DOCTOR'S FIANCÉE

Mary, a very pretty girl, seemed to be the star of the evening. She was in constant demand for dances, and a man standing watching the dancing remarked to another: "That girl seems to be having a good time."

"She certainly does," was the reply. "You know her fiancé, a young medical officer abroad, is coming home to marry her next month."

"Well," remarked the other, "She certainly seems to have solved the problem of what to do till the doctor comes."

AT THE CROSS-ROADS

By MURALI MANOHAR

[She had been married to a young doctor who went overseas with the Allied army to serve in the Burmese jungle. She bore him a boy but both her husband and son died in the same month, plunging her into deep grief.]

“WHERE are you, Jumna?” enquired Suresh as he placed the suit-case on the round table in the living room and looked about. The door had been slightly ajar and he had no difficulty in entering the flat. He had just then returned from Delhi after two days’ weary journey. He couldn’t sleep a wink all the time he was in the train. It was crammed with passengers who wouldn’t yield him an inch of space. And during part of the journey he had to keep standing.

He had to pick up a quarrel with an old passenger in particular who was selfish enough to place his trunks on half the bench and sprawled over it. A kindly middle-aged man seeing his plight invited Suresh to squeeze himself between his two small sons, and Suresh was extremely thankful. His feet were aching and his body was feeling like heavy lead.

So when he came and threw himself on the easy-chair awaiting the return of his wife, his

nerves were frayed and he was considerably vexed. But in spite of sheer exhaustion and the two sleepless nights, he couldn’t go to sleep though he kept his eyes closed.

On the home front also there were good reasons why he couldn’t sleep. He found himself at the cross-roads of life and had to take the most painful decision of his life. Pity and commiseration welled up in his heart as his thoughts turned to Jumna, his wife, and the necessity for breaking the news gently to her.

His mind travelled fast back to the period when he met Jumna in front of the maternity hospital. She was young and comely, looking like a golden statue that had suddenly come to life. He was working as a canvasser for a leather goods manufacturing company and was earning a good salary plus a handsome commission. He soon picked up enough details about the ravishing beauty to know when she came to the hospital and left for her home. A fine highly priced vanity bag which he presented to her started the friendship. He learnt that the wife of a friend of his had her baby in the ward where Jumna was working. Approaching her with his present, he accosted her and conveyed the grateful appreciation of his

friend on whose behalf, he said, he had the privilege of passing on the token.

Wouldn’t she accept it? She looked him all over and gave him a knowing smile but extended her pretty hand to accept the gift. It was a meaningful smile for his friend without his knowledge had presented her with a nice wrist-watch. But she didn’t want to embarrass him with the truth. The gift was tempting enough. Moreover, she liked the young who was handsome by any standard. It was clear to her that he was crazy about her and she couldn’t resist the feeling that here was a fellow whom she could like if she couldn’t love exactly.

He always waited at the gates of the hospital for her like a faithful slave. He went to her parents’ home where he was received with unusual cordiality and welcome. They were allowed to go to any place and keep out as long as they liked. His college education, polished manners and speech and a salaried position engendered in her parents a new respect and confidence. Then one night as he lovingly rested his arm on her shoulder she wept and told him about the tragedy that overshadowed her life.

She had been married to a young doctor who went overseas with the Allied army to serve in the Burmese jungle. She bore him a boy but both her husband and son died in the

same month, plunging her into deep grief. Her husband's colleague who was working in the local hospital persuaded her to accept a job as a nurse and she was given special facilities and pay. The authorities of the hospital remembered her husband's services in raising funds for the building and securing for it the latest equipment for a cancer clinic.

Hard work and the cheerful company of other nurses made Jumna forget the severity of the blow and she was glad to be able to help her poor old parents and finance her sisters' education. Suresh's advent brought a new change and challenge in her life. She realised that she had fallen in love with him and that he was worshipping the very ground which she walked on. His parents were immensely rich and he would get a very big fortune for his share.

Unable to resist Cupid's pranks, they married and set up home. For a time he did not inform his parents of this union but he thought fit to inform them when Jumna became the mother of a baby girl. She had to give up her nursing profession and was happy to give all her

undivided attention to her little one.

Then started the fireworks. Too deeply shocked at Suresh's marriage to a widow, his parents wired to him to come to their village home near Delhi. Stormy was the meeting. The old father made it clear that he could have a share in his prosperity if he left the widow and married the girl of his choice—a daughter of his cousin's sister. What was worse, the old man forced the company manager of the leather goods firm of which he was one of the directors to terminate the services of Suresh at once.

Confused and saddened, the young man came back home to discuss the matter with his wife but what was his surprise when a shadow darkened the door and he looked up to see Jumna in the nurse's uniform? She threw herself into his arms and forbade him to talk. "I knew all about your parents' terms and your dismissal. Never mind about money. I have gone back to my job on double pay now and our daughter is now being looked after by my old parents."

He was too happy to hold her in his arms and kiss her. †

There is no such thing as a great man or a great woman. People believe in them, just as they used to believe in unicorns and dragons. The greatest man or woman is 99 per cent. just like yourself.

—BERNARD SHAW.

FEED YOUR BABY FULL

(CONTRIBUTED)

FOR years pediatricians have been hoping to find a feeding schedule that would banish feeding problems. Once babies were fed the way our grand-mothers fed their babies. Then there was the scientific way of infant feeding. Babies were fed strictly by the clock every three or four hours, depending on the size of the baby.

Mothers were advised to lie down while they nursed their babies. Bottle-fed infants were also fed in a horizontal position. The theory was that both mother and babe were more relaxed and this helped prevent colic and digestive upsets in the baby.

This clock-watching system went on for quite some years but neither doctors, mothers nor babies were totally pleased with it. So it wasn't too surprising when not too long ago this strict scheduled method was challenged by a self-demand system.

The Backswing

The self-demand method was supposed to be the answer to feeding troubles. The baby was fed when he was hungry and cried for food, and not

made to wait until the clock said it was his feeding time.

The theory was that the baby would gradually work into his own feeding and sleeping schedule. Naturally, this swing-back to grandmother's methods caused considerable controversy in the medical circles and great confusion in the nurseries. Some doctors would not budge from the definitely timed feeding hours; others went all out for the self-demand feeding. But time has proved that self-demand feeding wasn't the entire answer to infant-feeding problems.

Some mothers found babies thrived, were happier and less frustrated on the self-demand. Others complained that their infants demanded food so often they were up night and day feeding them. And there were still many babies who were fretful, colicky and unhappy. Now research scientists have come up with another idea. Feed your baby full.

Using X-ray pictures to determine just what happened inside a baby's stomach when he was fed by various methods, and held in different positions, it was discovered that a baby has a

natural schedule for eating and sleeping. That is if he is allowed to fill his stomach chockful at every feeding.

In a new-born infant his stomach regulates his schedule for eating and sleeping. A full stomach if filled to the top, with the same food, which is what usually happens to a new-born baby, empties at the same rate each time. And the baby sleeps until his stomach is empty and hunger pangs waken him, and cries to be fed.

Feeding Rules

X-Ray also showed that air which displaces food in the baby's stomach, is the most common cause of feeding troubles. Since getting a baby's stomach really full at each feeding seems to be the big problem, here are some rules and facts on how to fill your baby full.

Rule : Sit up to nurse or bottle-feed your baby. Support the baby in an upright position in the crook of your arm.

Fact : Feeding baby in an upright position prevents air bubbles forming. Feeding your infant in a lying-down position, air gets lodged in his stomach. Then baby has painful gas pains and is still hungry, because air replaces the food.

Rule : Let your baby's cries be your feeding guide and feed only when he cries for food.

Fact : New babies who are normal, healthy and getting food that agrees with them and enough of it, will sleep as nature

intended they should. When baby's stomach is really full, he'll have a slap-happy expression and be as relaxed as an old rag doll, ready to sleep until his stomach is empty and he cries for food.

Rule : Feed your infant as soon as you can, after he cries for food. This is important and it isn't spoiling your baby.

Fact : Baby doesn't need to cry to exercise his lungs but he does need to cry for his food. When an infant cries for food his stomach is ready to receive it. Feeding too early, his stomach isn't empty. Feeding too late, and your baby has been crying, he swallows air, and no amount of "back patting" or "bubbling" baby will remove all the air.

Besides baby gets raging mad and that makes his stomach contract all the more and he cries all the harder. Between crying, gas panic and hunger pangs, your infant gets all tired out. In fact, he may even go to sleep without eating. If he does eat, his stomach is now so filled with air, there isn't room for enough food to satisfy him for long. Consequently, he awakens soon and is still tired and still hungry.

As your baby thrives and grows he will eat more at a feeding, but eat less often, and his sleep periods will shorten. This means he will be awake longer and be a part of the family. Your infant is growing up!

SHORT STORY

THE BROTHER

*[Here was an amazing tangle of love and abduction.
The younger brother of the two was unwittingly
drawn into the vortex...]*

"YOU are quite welcome, brother Lahiri," said Devender, extending a large hairy hand.

The younger brother gripped it warmly. "Let me see now—one, two, three, four, five—It is five full years since I left your house."

"And it has taken one full year for my younger brother to comply with my wish. You didn't even write to me that you were moving the military authorities for a transfer?"

"What could I do, brother?" explained Lahiri. "My application for a transfer to my home town was passed from table to table and rejected by the Chief Accounts Officer. So the matter was kept in abeyance until he was succeeded by a younger man, Choudhuri, whom I know

very well. He passed immediate orders for my transfer and has also given me leave for three months. The Military Accounts Department has become more active since Choudhuri has assumed charge.

"So what is your pay now?" asked Devender.

BY

R. S. DHURVA

"Three hundred rupees including allowance. I will take fifty rupees for pocket expenses and give you the balance."

"That is the right spirit, Lahiri. I hope the small business I have just started will bring in more money."

He stopped suddenly as the door opened and a dazzlingly beautiful woman of twenty-five summers appeared with a tray of tea and cakes. At once she was covered with confusion and bent her head low.

"Don't be so shy, Vajreshwari," boomed Devender. "It is my own younger brother, Lahiri, who has transferred himself to this place and come to live with us. In all this world, my dear, you can't find a more loyal or devoted brother."

VAJRESHWARI gave an inimitable smile as if in welcome to the newcomer. "I shall bring tea for him, too," she said and disappeared into the kitchen.

Lahiri stared in amazement at his brother. "Where is sister-in-law Kanan Devi?" he asked. "Has she gone to her parents' home?"

"Not so loud, Lahiri. Your sister-in-law is living in a small portion in the next street. Of course, I am having one meal with her and another here. You know," he added grinning, "Vajreshwari is my new interest. I expect you to remain here and keep an eye on her in my absence."

Vajreshwari entered the room with steaming tea and the two men stopped talking.

Lahiri stopped questioning

his brother about his new interest! He handed his brother a month's pay and went out. He came home at regular hours and took his meals. His brother was more frequently absent now but darted in at odd hours. An old friend, Dharu, often sought his company and together they would go out, visiting places of interest and chatting away the time. It was from him that Lahiri gathered some interesting details about Devender's amorous exploits. Not content with a pretty wife who was true to him, he had fallen in love with Vajreshwari and enticed her away from her home.

It was quite a scandalous affair. Vajreshwari was a married woman, living in a mofussil town when Devender met her. He forgot his home and wife and stayed on in the town which he swore never to leave until he got the woman. Vajreshwari was the wife of a tea-stall proprietor who left home at four in the morning and returned after midnight. Devender found out that Vajreshwari was bored with life and was yearning for excitement and adventure.

HE bribed her servant woman and induced her to introduce him secretly as a very influential person from the city, who knew all the film producers and was looking for a lovely woman to act in the films—a woman as lovely as Vaj herself. From that time she was eager for his company and listened to his

glowing accounts of film stars having rides in noiseless cars that spelt luxury and lived in richly furnished bungalows, waited on by servants, attendants and admirers. He knew that she was a quiet woman devoted to her husband and home. If only he was sure that she would come to the city and have a taste of acting in films before making up her mind—well, what did she think?

In a short while, he had the young woman eating out of his hand. He pretended to have some pressing business to transact in the town and she began to press him to take her with him at once. She was dying to become a glamour queen of the films, the centre of male admiration and to make piles of money. She was already disgusted with the poverty and squalor of her dull, drab home and badly wanted a change.

LIKE a ripe plum she fell into his hands. They ran away one night and took the express train to Bangalore. There he pawned her jewels and raised a comfortable sum to sustain a false standard of living in a posh hotel. Needless to say they began to live as man and wife.

It was only after two months when he made sure that neither her husband nor the police were hunting after him that he took her to his town and installed her in his home along with his wife. But they did not get on together.

They often quarrelled and even came to blows.

So Devender moved his wife to a small residential portion far from his home and divided his attention between the two women. His resources had run out and he desperately cast his mind about for the means to run his two homes. That would explain why he had been urging his younger brother Lahiri to transfer himself from Simla. He was a bachelor and the elder brother could be sure of a major part of his salary.

That was how matters stood. Lahiri pitied his brother's romantic ways but only shrugged his shoulders and made no comment to his friend who gave him all this information. He was convinced that Vaj was a disillusioned woman who came to hate Devender for all his wicked lies to lure her out of her home. She could never forgive him his stunt about making her a film star.

Life in the city was no better for her with Devender. At least her husband sent her sweets from his stall and refreshing drinks at regular hours. Here she had to stint and starve.

What was more she fell for Lahiri who, however, had no thought of love or romance. But the woman was subtle with her blandishments and made him her own slave in no time.

—Please see page 29

IF ALL MEN WENT DUMB!

By N. CHANDRASEKAR

WHY does man talk at all? When he opens his mouth he makes some peculiar noise. It was at first indistinguishable from the chirping and twittering of birds. But later on he developed a language which was understood by his fellowmen or members of his own tribe. This was how language, as we know it today, developed.

Whatever was the motive when man began to talk at first? Could it not have been better for the sake of humanity and for the progress of civilization if we had been dumb from our birth and made silent gestures to make known our wants? Our beloved earth would have been a very nice place to live minus all the din and noise of men and women and children. Suppose for a moment all the inhabitants of the earth (bipeds

of course) went dumb what a peaceful atmosphere would exist!

First of all, there would be no radio sets or loudspeakers to plague the life out of you. Where would the radio be, in fact where would all the radio stations be if all men and women stopped talking and moaning in the name of music? There would be no need for you to glare at your neighbour or berate him if he is persistently tuning in to some foreign station for some Hula-Hula dance music when it is well past midnight.

Let us come to the home unit, for instance. No prospective bridegroom will ask whether your daughter is well versed in music. You need have no necessity to shift to another house in a distant locality just

because the girl in the neighbouring house is practising on the harmonium and screaming her head off. And then if you come home late your wife will not shout at you in her choice language. Nor would she be gossiping with her neighbour over the wall just when you are in the middle of a meal and hiccuping to death for want of a little drinking water.

If he himself was dumb would man have made all those noisy vehicles and gadgets—the shrieking railway-engine, the motor car with its hideous electric horn, the screeching factory siren, the humming aeroplane, etc. etc.?

Personally speaking, you would be free from the inflictions of bores and chatterboxes who knock at your door or wake you up in the midst of a pleasant dream? Shambu, the bore, goes on whining about his glorious achievements in the past and his present involuntary obscurity. Then there is Prasad, the gossip-monger and tale-bearer. He saw so-and-so's sister whispering to some undesirable chap or the rich old man angling for the newly arrived buxom widow. Only the morbid mind would crave for these unsavoury details. And most probably Prasad, as you are aware, is a traducer and mud-slinger. He paints other men black as he is a jealous fellow.

It is really an intriguing

posers how a man is received at the gates of Heaven (or Hell). Legends have it that Orpheus charmed the God of Death with divine music and got what he wanted. Our elders keep on saying that devotional music opens up the path of Heaven. But then why does Death silence our tongue when He lays his icy hand on his body? Or does the soul find its voice after shuffling the mortal coils?

They say that the joy of a man who has realised his self and holds communion with God far exceeds the pleasure that mortals derive from the strains of good music. But most of us have heard only tinned music.—I mean film tunes. As for myself I can't bear the thought of being silent or being shut up in a noiseless hole. I am off to the pictures now! ‡

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Girls At A Game!

By R. N. ACHARYA

RAMESH crawled from his bed, yawned, and reached for the light, as he heard the dogs barking outside. Opening the door, he saw a car parked in the dark. "What do you want, Nawab?" Ramesh shouted. "I'm sorry to disturb you at this hour—a puncture in the front wheel," said the

very tired. Having the workshop annexed to the house, proved a nuisance, he thought to himself. At odd hours, customers came and went, and during working hours the phone seemed to ring incessantly. He went inside a bit annoyed, washed his face with cold water, and brought the jack, and other

*Here is a story of friendship between
a man and a woman being distilled
into love...*

Nawab in a mournful tone, showing the wheel. "I've got to Mahbubnagar now, as my wife is seriously ill. Will you please help? This happened just outside your compound."

It was almost ten o'clock and Ramesh was still half sleep and

tools to work. He dragged a long flex-wire bundle attached to a lamp and threw the materials on the ground. He sat gazing at the cigar-champing Nawab and the flat tyre.

Why were people always in a hurry, he wondered. Why

couldn't they keep things spare, for use in emergency? He pushed back the jack under the car, and in a few minutes had the tyre rolled out. He traced the puncture and fixed the hot-patch onto the tube, and looked surreptitiously at the Nawab again who sat watching him. The awful cigar smoke circled in his eyes, choked his breathing, but he didn't say anything. He put back the tyre, and took the pump out, and was growing weary of the work. He pumped and pumped air.

Finally, the work was finished, and as he collected the materials, the Nawab gave him some money and said, "I'll see you on my return. I'll have some more air filled at the gas-station. Thank you very much, Mr. Ramesh," and started the car. Before he could answer him, the dogs started barking again. As the vehicle moved he called the dogs and silenced them. He said a prayer, and with a sigh of relief sank into bed.

RAMESH was a good motor-mechanic, and knew how to repair all makes and models of petrol driven engines. He worked in his brother's workshop from eight to six, lifting batteries, repairing cars, and handling other automobile equipments, and by the time the day ended he found himself very tired. Yet there was always a lot of work left undone.

The other labourers and mechanics didn't take to their work so seriously, as he and his elder brother did. Ramesh was a hardworking man, and handsome. He hadn't much leisure time. On holidays his younger sisters always pestered him to take them some place—pictures picnics, hotels.

THE next morning as he was going out to buy some parts, he saw his girl friend Anita on her way to school. Looking out from his car, he waved out to her, and parked by the side of the road. He watched her as she approached him with her note-books in one hand and her handbag dangling from the other. He was fascinated by her rhythmic walk and swish of her bright green-embroidered skirt. She looked pretty in those gypsy earrings, and her dark flashing eyes completed the picture. With a mischievous smile, she looked at her wrist-watch, and hopped into the car.

"Gita is arriving from Bombay today," she said with a pleasant smile.

He turned to her, and remarked, "Oh!...how wonderful."

"Why do you seem so excited?" she enquired. "I thought you two were through with each other."

Ramesh drove on in silence. As Anita alighted, he gave her

hand a tight squeeze, started the rickety jalopy and was out of sight in a moment.

ANITA walked into the school, her memory going back to the day she had first met him. He was then in love with her younger sister—Gita. Both the girls though they looked alike were quite different in temperament. Ramesh and Gita were once desperately in love with each other but since they had quarrelled a year ago, they didn't have much to do with each other. Anita had loved Ramesh from the start. And now that Gita was out of the picture, she had a chance of showing her love for Ramesh.

Ramesh sat thinking about Anita during his lunch hour. His memory flashed back to the time she first came into his workshop, in her red jeans. Her car had needed servicing; as she had entered the workshop, he had just left her and gone inside the house to attend some function. She had waited for him for nearly twenty minutes, expecting him at any moment.

"We have some ceremony today," he said, "sorry to have kept you waiting, Miss," and he couldn't take his eyes off her beautiful face.

Then she told him what to do with her Morris Minor and casually asked if religion came before his work, to which he replied in the affirmative.

"Not when you have customers waiting," she said and that started an argument.

"I don't see things the way the present generation does," he said. She wouldn't give in. "You religious people always talk a lot of nonsense. You're all hypocrites. Religion today is quite oldfashioned, especially in this Godless age of science."

Looking at her watch, she whistled as she realised how time had flown! At her request he drove her home (in secret pride) and took back the car for servicing.

Anita hailed from a well-to-do family but having spent most of her life in Bombay she had forgotten most of her family traditions and religious customs. She had just passed her B. Sc., that year and had accepted temporarily a teacher's job.

Anita came back for her car within the next two days and visited him the following week and conversation soon turned from religion to their own private affairs—likes and dislikes. As time passed Anita and Ramesh became very good friends, and started dating steadily.

THEN one day an idea struck Ramesh. He persuaded Anita to go with him to a picnic and she was thrilled at the prospect. She acted according to his plans, not knowing his motives. He had lied to her.

He said there was some trouble with his car and that it wouldn't start. He'd have to repair it. It was getting quite late in the evening and Anita sat worried. Later he told her of his plans and she found he had made a fool of her. "I just gave that excuse about the car, so that we two could spend the time here. Let's stay here till the night and have a good time, all by ourselves. We could go for a walk and enjoy ourselves."

Anita was shocked at this revelation. "Why did you have to go and do such a thing, Ramesh? You know my Mom will be worried. Don't you think I ought to go home immediately since I've not informed her about this picnic? I only mentioned that I was going to a friend's—as you asked me to say so. We can have all the time when we get married and settle down here."

RAMESH soon realised his foolish mistake, but it was too late. Anita was crying—she had never lied to her mother before. She knew her dearest mother would be much worried about her—but she couldn't help it. She was angry with Ramesh, and she knew her mother wouldn't let her go out alone again. She became frightened and cried. She lost all confidence in him and could trust him no longer.

"I trust we'll have to get back home," was all she could say.

Ramesh drove her to the house and tendered his apologies to her mother. Anita refused to see him any more. And so did Gita. And both the girls boycotted him for a long long time. Anita had gone to Bombay on a holiday and did her stenography there. And Gita had followed her. But Anita had returned earlier, to assist her mother and things remained calm for quite some time. It was during her sister's absence that Ramesh and Anita became good friends again. They had made up their difference, and the mother welcomed Ramesh again into her home.

It was during her sister's absence that Ramesh and Anita became good friends again. They had made up their differences and the mother welcomed Ramesh again into her home. She knew he was honest and a boy of excellent character. Now as Ramesh sat back, smoking his cigarette Anita came in.

"Will you drive Mom and me to the station?" she said pulling his cigarette out of his mouth. "How many have you smoked today?"

"Only a packetful," he smiled.

The train arrived late in the evening, Ramesh extended his hand to Gita but she just gave him a cold "hello" and turned to welcome her mother and sister in a warm embrace. She was soon lost in an animated con-

versation, ignoring Ramesh while Anita tried to talk to him. Poor Ramesh could not get over the change that had come over Gita. She never gave a thought to him.

HE liked her ways and manners. He had even loved her once and was prepared to give up everything for her but now it seemed he meant nothing to her. How was it possible for this girl to behave like that, he thought to himself. He tried to forget this hard-hearted girl. Anita had brought the sparkle back into his eyes. If he didn't have a glimpse of Anita every morning he felt miserable. He felt he'd never want anything to think about, eat or talk to anyone, unless he saw or talked to her.

He had grown wiser after the affair with Gita. He had become very fond of Anita and he sincerely loved her. Probably his brother and her mother would come to some understanding and maybe he could marry her? But things were still uncertain for him; he must find a way out, and be on very good terms with Anita. He knew, God tempers the wind to the shorn lamb.

Soon his attentions towards Gita made Anita jealous and angry. Though Ramesh pleaded with her and cried before her, Anita couldn't believe him. She thought he wanted to get on friendly again with her sister. He just wanted to

talk to her and be friends, and Anita was his true love and sweetheart. Anita and Ramesh quarrelled and stopped talking to each other.

Anita joined the Tobacco Company as a steno and drew a handsome salary. In the course of time, Gita was engaged to a Captain in the army. Though Gita secretly loved him she found it was impossible to make Ramesh love her; misunderstandings set in on account of Anita but they parted like very good friends. This event was a triumph for Anita, as she did not wish Ramesh to marry her sister. But Ramesh didn't take things to heart as he had previously. He wasn't restless anymore; he just took things as they came and put his heart and soul into his work.

WHEN his elder brother fell ill with typhoid he worked with great acumen as a good foreman. As his brother convalesced, they started the work again in full swing. This time the workers were given better wages, and learnt to shoulder their responsibilities. The workers turned out better work than before, and the brothers made money hand over fist. A servicing station was installed to improve the booming business.

In the meantime Gita was married, and moved out of town. Two of Ramesh's sisters also started working in the Tobacco Company and became friendly with Anita. They

often teased her about Ramesh, but she took no notice of their jokes. Ramesh also accompanied them on a picnic but neither Ramesh nor Anita felt like speaking to each other, though they found that their eyes often met. Ramesh found no fun in places with his sisters with Anita around and he invented some excuse for staying at home.

As he brooded at home he realised the price one had to pay to have a girl friend. It was not worth it, he thought—all the time and money and energy he spent—since he had lost the one and only girl friend he had ever loved. It was a painful process—the disagreement and moods one had to put up with—the breaking up and making up—and he had still to make up with his girl friend! He understood now that one should not rush into things, especially with a girl!

Though the thought of Gita was out of his mind, Anita still had a place in his heart. All of a sudden it dawned on him that it cost less to be just friendly with a girl (as he had been with Gita) than to give one's heart to her, as the cost of distilling love from friendship and brewing it into a love-affair—became priceless!

On a breezy January afternoon, Anita drove her car into his workshop for major repairs. It was then that he felt he must talk to her, but she treated him as a casual friend. "How's

Gita? Has she any kids?" he asked her.

"Oh! she's very happy; and she has a beautiful baby—just two months old." "You know...I liked Gita and I thought...it does not matter now," he said without completing his sentence, and removed the greasy brown cap from his head.

"You thought she'd marry you after the mistake you made with me? I'm afraid she just pitied you, and tried to be kind to you for my sake," Anita just hardened her heart, and refused to break down her reserve.

Ramesh then just grabbed her hand and looked into her soft dark-brown eyes and her angelic face with the kiss-curl resting on her forehead. It was a long time since he was seeing her beautiful face from so close quarters. She stood there with her hand in his, silently, without any emotion and watched Ramesh struggling to control his own.

He still held her hand in his until the cool breeze blew her hair over her face and as he looked at her again, he dropped her hand and turned away. "Satisfied?" she said with a painful smile. He did not answer her but started checking the car again, and gave her an estimate for the repairs. "She went into the house then and started chatting with his sister:

When he went in to lunch he was surprised to find her at the table with his sisters.

"Have you no work today?" he asked one of his sisters.

"Didn't we tell you earlier—today is a holiday."

"He's absent-minded and not quite himself today," said Anita slowly as she looked across at him. There was silence for a minute or two. Then—"you know him better," said one of the girls. All eyes were now turned on Ramesh and Anita who felt quite embarrassed, while they nibbled at their food. Then Ramesh's brother Pratap broke in with, "What *did* happen to the love-birds anyway?"

RAMESH a bit annoyed said, "We prefer to discuss our affairs in private," and with that the conversation soon turned to the weather and the day's happenings, while Ramesh and Anita sat through it all in silence. Lunch over, the family retired to their rooms, but Ramesh and Anita seemed reluctant to go. Pratap tried on as well and when he looked enquiringly at Anita she said quietly, "we might have been married and settled down by now, if I hadn't lost confidence in Ramesh. Why did he have to tell lies and keep me the whole day at the picnic. He embarrassed me."

Pratap jokingly retorted, "You were fools enough to accept his

invitation in the first place. But later, he did apologise to your mother, didn't he?"

Ramesh encouraged at this, went on, "When you're desperate, you plan quickly and you don't think about the consequences," and with a smile gulped down a glass of water while he watched Anita's face. She seemed to be thinking things over.

"I THINK should give each other a second chance," Pratap concluded and with that the trio broke up.

On the day of Sankrant Ramesh drove his sisters, Anita and her mother to the temple. After their prayers, the girls visited Anita's place. It was many years since Ramesh had visited her. Anita's mother straightaway got him to stuff and tie the "til" packets for the girls who had quickly disappeared. His job done, he sat down with a cup of coffee as he looked around admiringly at the paintings hung in the drawing room. He was examining the books lined on the bookshelf when the room was invaded by the happy group of chattering girls. He watched them amusedly with his glance repeatedly turned towards Anita. She felt his glance and returned it with an understanding smile, but they had no chance to speak to one another.

Some months later, Gita arrived with her husband quite unexpectedly, on leave, and Ramesh became a regular visitor at their house. Now he began to see more of Anita. Though they spoke to each other neither of them seemed to show any affection for each other. Gita was instrumental in getting them together quite often. She sought the help of his sisters as well. When Ramesh's birthday came along, Anita was at last her old self again. She presented him with a tool-kit and kissed him a happy birthday. They had so much to say to one another that they wished to be alone. Pratap crashed in, and lifting them to their feet, said, "You'll have a life-time to talk things over with each other," and with glowing faces and arms linked in one another's they joined the party. ††

The Brother

—Continued from page 19

Devender's continuous absence provided them with opportunities of clandestine love making and they were happy in each other's arms.

But she was bolder than Lahiri and persuaded him to take her to pictures and parks. Some of the friends of Devender were shocked at his strange behaviour of Lahiri and hinted to Devender about it. He pretended to ignore these whispers and hints but suspicion slowly took root in his mind.

So late one night he came out from his wife's room and stole into his own home. As he came near the door he was surprised to see the front door ajar and the electric light burning. Horror of horrors! His brother and Vaj were lying dead together on the bed—in a pool of blood.

He picked up a blood-soaked dagger and stood there for hours stupidly gazing at the dead bodies. When morning came he was still standing there until the neighbours called in the police. They caught him and remanded him into custody. What nobody knew was that the tea-stall owner tracked down his wife and killed both Vaj and Lahiri, thinking that the latter it was who had abducted his wife. †

AT THE AUCTION!

In the course of an auction sale, the business was interrupted by a whispered conversation between the auctioneers and one of the prospective bidders. At the conclusion the master of ceremonies announced: "A gentleman present tells me that he has lost a wallet containing five hundred crowns. He authorizes me to state that he offers a reward of fifty crowns for its return."

There was a short silence, and then a member of the crowd nodded his head to the auctioneer and said: "Sixty!"

Romantic Pairs Off The Screen :

SHAMMI

KAPOOR-GEETA BALI

THERE are not many star couples who are at home both in the profession and private life. Among such star couples the Shammi-Geeta pair is one.

Shammi Kapoor, the second son of Prithviraj Kapoor, had his earlier training in his father's Prithvi Theatres and followed in the footsteps of his brother Raj Kapoor. Until very recently i.e. till the release of 'Tumsa Nahin Dekha' recognition was not his. After the release of that picture he is now in great demand.

Geeta Bali hit the pot in her first vehicle 'Sohaag Raat' and since then she has not looked back. She owes her success mainly to Director Kidar Sharma who groomed her to stardom. While working in one of the films with Shammi Kapoor she fell in love and married him without much fanfare.

Shammi and Geeta were married on 24th August 1955 at 4 a.m. secretly at a way-

side temple in Malabar Hill. Though Geeta was a year elder to Shammi, the differences in age did not matter much to the pair. Shammi says: "Geeta and I love each other so much"—and Geeta has no regrets in marrying the rebel star Shammi Kapoor. Geeta and Shammi are the proud parents of a 2½ year old son Aditya Kapoor and their family is a happy one.

On the occasion of their marriage anniversary we wish the couple and the boy good luck.

FILM QUIZ

1. Do you remember the year in which Abhi Bhattacharya and Pronoti Ghosh were married?
2. What is the full name of writer-director P. L. Santoshi?
3. What is the real name of Krishna Kumari?
4. Can you tell the name of Kumar's wife?
5. Name the film in which Prem-nath made his debut.

(Turn to page 32 for answers.)

NONE MISSES NAYYAR'S MUSIC

NONE misses Nayar's music, I mean the masses. Judging from the popularity he has gained already this can be easily said: After his recent success in pictures like 'Do Ustad' the master rhythm maker O. P. Nayar's fame has rocketed high.

No doubt, Omkar Prasad Nayar caters music for the masses, but still he is a favourite of many a film-goer. What brought him such a big success? It is his control over rhythm and his feeling for the pulse of the common man. Many a picture in recent times has made box-office history because of O. P. Nayar's scintillating music. Want an instance? Filmstan's 'Tumsa Nahin Dekha' became a box office hit just because of O. P. Nayar's music.

Truly this mass-music-maker is right when he says that if his pictures became popular and if his tunes were on the lips of cine goers he was rewarded. And who will not feel proud at such an achievement. Having made his name in giving Indian versions of foreign tunes O. P. Nayar has achieved popularity. But this does not mean that he is not at home in composing classical tunes.

He did give classical tunes in his very first picture, Pancholi's 'Aasmaan.' The tunes did not become popular. Nayar was disappointed and he told this sorry tale to his wife Mohini who is a good adviser to him

for she is a poetess in her own humble way. It is no wonder then that she should be his inspiration.

Because his first film 'Aasmaan' failed, though he gave classical tunes, he has resorted to the popular music and uses Western musical instruments.

O. P. Nayar has his own playback singers who, it is curious to know here, do not include the melody queen Lata Mangeshkar.

Happily married O. P. Nayar is a father of three daughters and he is proud of them.

O. P. Nayar has scored music to scores of films and some of them are: "Cham Chama Cham," "Choo Mantar," "Baapre Baap," "Mr. and Mrs. 55," "Baaz," "Aar Paar," "C. I. D.," "Hum Sub Chor Hain," "Naya Daur," "Duniya Rang Rangeeli," "Daake-ki-Malmai," "Ustad," "Mai Baap," "12 O'clock," "Qaidi," "Srimathi 420," "Johnny Walker," "Mujrim," "Bade Sarkar," "Tumsa Nahin Dekha," "Do Ustad," "Kabhi Andhera Kabhi Ujala," "Phagun," and "Mr. Qartoon, M.A."

Nayar successfully tried classical tunes in "Aasmaan," "Daake-Ki-Malmai," "Naya Daur," "Phagun," and "Raagini." It is gratifying to note that at last he was recognised and he won the Filmfare Award for his best music in B.R. Chopra's "Naya Daur."

FILM REVIEW :

GOONJ UTHI SHEHNAI

A LOVE STORY

Prakash Pictures who have given such memorable films like "Ram Rajya," "Bharat Milap," and "Baiju Bawra," have once again come out with a memorable musical—Goonj Uthi Shehnai.

There is not much to say about the story for it proceeds in the same way in which traditional love stories go. In short, it is the story of an orphan shehnai player Kishan and his lover Gopi. The story takes a tragic turn when Ramkali the daughter of his guru and protector also loves him. Kishan goes out of his village to get recognition and Ramkali follows him not as his lover but as his well wisher. She unites the lovers but only for a while. By that time she is married to another man. Gopi is taken to her husband's house and she dies during the journey. Kishan meets the same fate. The lovers are united in the other world.

There is no novelty in the presentation of the story by Director Vijay Bhatt. The dialogues by Pandit Shiv Kumar and Qamar Jalalabadi are good and aid in making the story interesting. Bharat Vyas's lyrics are very fine and they are set to music pleasingly by Vasant Desai.

Rajendra Kumar as Kishan and Ameeta as Gopi acquit themselves well. Anita Guha as Ramkali has given a very fine performance which is sure to take her to greater heights. Ullhas is stagey some times. I. S. Johar does not impress. Manmohan Krishna and others lend adequate support.

Art direction by Kanu Desai is in keeping with the theme but definitely not distinguished. Other technical standards maintain the concern's reputation.

The highlights of the film are the soul-stirring superb shehnai by Ustad Bismillah Khan and the Tipni dance, a group of folk dance of Saurashtra, presented for the first time on the screen. Credit should go to Music Director Vasant Desai for his clever usage of shehnai and giving pleasant classical tunes. In one word it is a good musical with a too familiar love story.

Answers to Film Quiz :

1. July, 1957.
2. Pyarelal Santoshi.
3. Rajendra Kaur.
4. Pramila.
5. Barsaat.

—By N. Rajashekhar

LONG COMPLETE STORY

THE ROMANCE

By SARADA PRASAD

TWENTY-TWO, tall, sprightly, Sita, the daughter of Col. Laxman a retired I. M. S., sat in her swivel chair, facing the avenue, which ran in front of her house, situated in the busiest quarter of the city. A society beauty of status and prestige was assailed by a mood foreign to her make-up and

The college season was over and the long tedious summer vacation was one long painful stretch of dragging time. This young woman seemed to have forgotten that. Accustomed to the routine, she waited for the passing of this young man every day at the precise hour. The first thirty

The college girl and the boy were ideally suited to each other but they had different ideas...

training. The mood was about a young man, who had conquered her soul with his unspoken charm and integrity. This young man by name Raghu, a student of her college, was a scholar but poor. She used to wait for her car to get ready for the college, when the young man appeared just about a quarter to ten every day, in clock-like precision for over three years.

days went by normally. The other two months nearly drove her mad. She did not see this young man from the day the college closed for the vacation.

Accustomed to having her own ways, she could not do anything to find out the state of affairs concerning this young man, Raghu. She sat there

watching all those who passed along the road on their business. She studied them in the abstract not exactly knowing what she was trying to find among them. But her man was not one among them.

This hurt her and annoyed her. In her mind she had built up a figure of this young man, aged about 27, tall with a slight stoop, threadbare clothing but clean, thoughtful face, aquiline nose, wide set eyes, shaded by bushy eyebrows. Being a student of the same college, she knew him as one of the best scholars. This saved much of trouble about his appearance and necessity for funds. She knew almost everything about him but she could not very well take the trouble to meet him and talk to him.

BUT she had made up her mind on a single point. She wanted to marry him in spite of objections that might be raised by her parents and relatives. This idea was born out of sheer motherliness in her breast, when she first saw him in the college on the day of admission. When she began to know more about his intelligence, which was superb, the flimsy instinctive thought had grown into a kind of obsession which practically ate her up, but being a woman she had the grit to conceal her thoughts and behave normally in spite of the temptation which nearly made her waylay him and talk to him.

"What if he is poor?" she thought. "I have more than what I need. Poverty is not a crime in any sense, except if it is by laziness. He is not lazy in any sense, and I wonder if there is any one who works that hard. He stands first in everything he does. I wish I knew more of him." This she could not, but the thought was persistent.

THE newspapers announced the results. She had secured a first class pass with distinction in the M. Sc. This did not elate her, she expected it and knew it. The results concerning Raghu bothered her as she did not know his number. For this she had her answer.

Her mother Gowri came in just as she folded the paper and threw it into a corner. A bad habit. Gowri did not like this and remarked so. "Well Sita, I want you to meet someone and I don't think you are in your usual temper."

"I am all right except that I am not feeling well." She said without any thought, as she followed her mother into the main hall where a girl of about twenty waited for them.

"This is Rukmani," said Gowri as she introduced a young woman to Sita.

They exchanged greetings.

"My brother has secured a

first class pass," said Rukmani to Gowri.

"I am really glad to know that. Tell him that I am very glad to have heard this for perseverance has its rewards."

"Thank you."

"My brother will be glad to know that there are well-wishers like you."

TO Sita, it did not convey her anything except that the young woman's brother had secured a first class pass. She did not dare ask the name of the man in question. She did not exchange a single word with Rukmani but saw a resemblance which told her the news. Raghu must be the brother of this young woman. She was glad too.

Suddenly, when the college reopened, she noticed a radical change in Raghu's general appearance. The stoop was gone, he now showed a spring in his walk, well dressed; he passed the road as of old. She could not understand this change but she was happy to see happiness and an interest in everything. In fact it was a metamorphosis. She also found out from Rukmani that Raghu had joined the Medical College. A mathematician in Medical College—a surprise.

On and off, she noticed another young man with Raghu, taller, handsome, with the walk of a

majestic lion. He was one Prabhu, whom she did not know nor cared to know. She had watched them, engaged in animated conversation and for no reason felt jealous of that young man. Prabhu she found out was a reckless, daredevil, who cared for nothing or anybody, and slighted every one and respected none. She wondered how these two could possibly be friends. But it was a fact. The meeting of calmness and chaotic temperament on common ground.

Three years went by. Sita spent her time in practical idleness. Her father had told her to have rest and do what she liked and to take up a career if she wished. She hated idleness. She spent her time in singing, dancing and taking an active part in social functions. Her heart craved for Raghu, to cherish, obey and exalt. Her entire being was bound up with the personality of the man who had absorbed her heart and soul.

SHE sometimes wondered whether this young man knew of her existence but the instinct told her otherwise... She was speculative in her thoughts, when Rukmani came in followed by her mother and invited her to grace a tea party which her brother was giving in honour of one of the professors of his Medical College. Even now Rukmani did not tell Sita that Raghu was her brother. Rukmani always referred to Raghu

in the typical style of calling him her brother, as Gowri knew him from his very childhood. To Raghu to visit people was a headache. He kept to himself, and his thoughts were his own. He spoke seldom but thought too much. Sita had no idea of this.

She drove the De-Soto saloon against all instructions from her father. Col. Laxman could not understand this sudden change, he had been noticing in his daughter, who never kept thoughts to herself but now she seemed to have become silent all of a sudden. They alighted. The first person to greet them at the entrance was Raghu. To Sita, it was a shock, thought she knew instinctively that Raghu was Rukmani's brother. To come face to face made her heart leap with expectation.

HE smiled a welcome. That smile bewitched her. To Sita it was a wonder, for in that she saw recognition. She knew it. She returned the smile, a smile that imparted her mind, like flimsy cloud, now here, telling her secret, her surrender to him, whom she loved in her heart. Raghu looked at her for one fleeting second. Their eyes met, in the ecstasy of understanding.

He gave her a bouquet of roses. Their fingers met. The electrical impulse of communion completed its circuit. She dipped her hand in the sandal paste

and a drop fell on his hand. He smiled again.

RUKMANI led them into the main hall, where the guest of honour was seated on the dais. Sita knew him as Dr. J.S. Gupta, E. N. T. Specialist of the Medical College where Raghu studied medicine and also some well known and influential people. Raghu came on the dais and addressed the gathering and welcomed the chief guest and others. The guest thanked Raghu.

The tea party was a grand success. The next item of the programme was a speech by Raghu on Surgery. Sita watched her man make the speech in the finest flow of language she had ever heard with the metallic type of voice which demanded attention and drew even the layman to know what he talked about. His speech was loudly applauded.

Then Raghu entertained them with vocal and instrumental music, with accordion, a present he had received from Prabhu from far-away Germany. The song, a song of beauty in turmoil, greatness of nature, turbulent and calm; another on life and its opportunities. Sita sat fascinated. What fascinated her, the man, the music, or the instrument, the song, or the wind that created this harmony! Not one particular thing—one and all, they swayed her.

In her mind, the imp of mischief said, "Oh, no, dear, that man has mesmerised you. Hear how he sings. You have learnt music. What for, I would very much like to know? Indirectly, she felt that he was addressing her and speaking to her in the language of music. In this she found a nobility of spirit and she wanted to answer him back in the same language.

She beckoned to Rukmani, who was hovering in the background. She told her about her wish. Rukmani went straight to her brother and told him. Raghu glanced at her and beckoned to her to the dais. When she reached there, he said, "Friends, let me introduce one of the finest exponents of Indian and Western music and a classical dancer, a recipient of the gold medal, and a student of Bose College. She has also secured a first class pass in M. Sc. She will entertain you with the best music you have heard so far."

SITA was in a state of confusion and her head was in a whirl. She was thinking of Raghu's comment on her and about her abilities.

"Friends, I thank you and Mr. Raghu. I shall sing as he wants me to. Speech-making is not my forte for I am a chemical analyst. I like to analyse things myself and other things, if circumstances permit."

She took over and sang songs,

both light and serious. Her songs centred on the problems of life, happiness etc. Raghu was spontaneous in his praise and appreciation.

WHEN it was over, Raghu simply said, "You are great in everything you do, Miss Sita, I thank you very much."

She thanked him with all her heart, performing gyrations. The incidents of the past two hours had landed her mind in a state of lethargy; it refused to function.

She could not gather her thoughts for, to her, Raghu whom she thought did not know her at all was well informed about her and he had spoken to her like that. Was he a philosopher or a complete fool! He was neither, but a scrupulously clear minded, even tempered person who kept his opinions and thoughts to himself. This annoyed and angered her.

They left the house with usual formalities of leave taking. Sita also took the wheel on her way back home, when her father, Col. Laxman noticing the absent-minded look in his daughter's face asked her, "What worries my little one?"

"Not one particular thing," she said, "somehow I feel I am being fooled by someone and I would like very much to return in the same kind of coin and

something has happened to me without my knowing what it is."

"You talk in riddles, my dear."

"No, not riddles in the sense we understand them but a change is likely to take place in the nearest future."

"Let it, my dear, let it."

Three days later, her mother Gowri broached the subject of marriage but not by its name to her.

"Sita," she said, "about the future. How about it?"

"Yes," added her father, "we would like very much to know."

BEING a shrewd woman, Sita easily grasped the trend of these questions and said, "I shall take a lecturer's post in some college," and managed to keep a straight face. Sensing the drift of the questions, she was as ambiguous as her parents. They could not understand her, and were baffled by this. Knowing their daughter's temperament, they decided to speak straight to her and leave the choice to her to decide. Sita could be firm in her resolve if something did not appeal to her.

She decided to open the attack and said, "Mother, I know what you want to tell me."

"You can tell us."

"It is about my marriage, yes. But on one condition only. I will marry the man whom I prefer and select." She emphasised the words.

"So, you have been in the know, all the time? You know, Sita, you cannot select the husband all by yourself."

"I know nothing is done in any way by anybody. No individuality. No one can do anything for oneself. So, my dear parents, I shall do what is best for myself and for my personal happiness. I don't think you will stand in my way."

"But I have given word to a party, hoping you will obey us."

"Indeed! Tell me, then, who is this prospective groom you have selected for me. If you have a photo of him please give it to me."

"Yes, we have got one, but not a new one, a little faded."

"You mean well," she said as she took a faded print from her mother.

She looked at it. Her heart leapt for very joy. The face that looked at her was Raghu. She screwed her face comically to cover her confusion, deliberately. She managed to fool her parents, and gathered

her forces and calmly said, "He is a like chimp out of the zoo."

"You are naughty and childish," said her parents rather severely.

"I know I am. After all, I am your daughter. I am hard like father and soft like you, mother and, you are trying to pack me off and put an end to my independence. Don't let your child suffer at the hands of a stranger, who may change me to a plaything."

With that, she marched off to her room, leaving her parents in wonder. Inwardly she was happy beyond her wildest dreams, at the prospect of marrying the very man whom she had respected, loved and liked, in spite of their not exchanging a single word. She was jealous too. She had overheard her father speak of Raghu to her mother, about his suffering, industry, perseverance and patience. Raghu's father was a friend of Col. Laxman whom he called a gem of a man.

Her mother who never argued gave her consent to give Sita to Raghu. What they did not know was Sita had already given her heart to him and all of her personality too. She was proud of her secret. She made up her mind to serve him in his efforts whatever they might be.

In the evening, dressed in the sky blue nylon saree and a blouse to match, she drove to the park. A kumkum mark adorned the forehead, the head neatly combed and tied in a knot high on the head, a string of jasmine completed her make-up. She parked the car and went in. Seated by the side of a huge tree trunk, she watched the trees, foliage, the flies that danced in the evening breeze. The children were playing hide and seek round the tree trunk.

The sun was dipping in the western horizon, prelude to dusk and night thereafter. She took out a book from the vanity bag and began to read.

"If," said a voice, "a treatise on 'Man and his million years' can absorb you so much, how about the realities of life, Miss Sita?"

THE voice shattered her self-control. Recovering quickly, she continued reading, avoiding the earnest face that loomed from a height of five feet odd. Raghu sat a little distance away and hummed a song for few seconds.

Suddenly, for no apparent reason, he began to laugh. Sita closed the book with a snap. The man was laughing alone like a mad man. Managing a very serious face, she said, "Well, Mr. Raghu, what do you mean by this stupid laughter?"

"Of course," he conceded, "it is indeed stupid of me to laugh alone. To do so is an indication of insanity as the medical science says. You are right, but they," pointing to the tree top, "they are very funny, to chase each other, but not to know who is chasing whom."

SHE kept a straight face, just as Raghu shifted her glance towards her face. She looked up but found nothing except the flowers. She knew there were no monkeys in the park. Raghu did not say they were monkeys but she saw the humour of the situation. He had fooled her, and completely.

She laughed too in sheer happiness and said, "Mr. Raghu, you know very well, there are no monkeys in this park. It is bad to disturb, you know, Mr. Raghu, I want to tell you a secret. My days of freedom are coming to an end. My parents are packing me off, to be delivered to a prospective bridegroom whom they have selected. And, Mr. Raghu, they gave me a faded photo to distinguish his features," and she added, "I could not find anything."

Raghu was silent and made no comments.

"You are very silent. Why?"

"I don't know. You must tell me."

"Yes, I will. He is a brother of an acquaintance of my parents and they tell me that he is a nice, well behaved, patient fellow and many qualifying adjectives, plus achievements. They want me to marry him but I told them, the selection of my partner is my right and responsibility and if they don't, I shall take up a teachership in some college and forget the thing called marriage."

She said all this glibly enough, all the time covertly watching Raghu's face. That showed nothing.

Unaccustomed to the ways of women, other than his own sister, he took her at her word, as if she was confiding her secret and said, "A nice profession but don't you think, it is better to marry and settle down as a woman should?"

"SETTLE down is right. Indeed, Sir, that is the fate of a woman. She is down all the time and all the way of her life. No individuality, no say in anything in worth while affairs. It is mean to be born a woman. They are just production units."

"So, my dear Sir, I don't mean to marry, if I don't get a man who cannot treat me as an individual on a par with him, then I don't want a male animal. Suppose a stranger is selected, I could not be knowing anything about him or he of me. It is a risk, not worth taking. I know of the lives of men and women

wrecked, shattered by the shackles of marriage.

"THE whole thing from the beginning to end is a game of surprises and surmises. Each may not have the qualities each is supposed to have. They may be completely absent. What then? Consequences, which no one can change, unless the parties themselves agree to settle them and their differences, which is rare and seldom."

"You talk as though you know all about marriages and their consequences."

"Yes, I do. It is said, anybody with intelligence must learn from the mishaps and misfortunes of others, the meaning of such consequences, examples, facts and experience etc. and act accordingly. You dare not say 'No' to it."

"There is divorce in the western countries. A wife cannot chuck herself out in western countries and claim alimony. So, my dear Mr. Raghu, I am not prepared to accept the unknown quantity and the risks attached to it. I think you understand me?"

"Yes I understand you, perfectly. Your opinion is an enormity. If all men and women do what you suggest, where will this world be?"

"World! A fat lot you know about this world, if you cannot

settle your problems, find a thing to suit you, I don't think you have any right to worry about the world."

"But, I believe in the sanctity of marriage because it is a better evil than allowing man and woman to seek their pleasures and partners. Nature has to function," said Raghu thoughtfully, "systematically to suit modern conditions."

"I think you are wrong. Nature will prevail as it has been functioning from the dawn of creation. Nature is healthy. There is nothing wrong in anything except in the human beings like you and me. Nature will punish those who wrong deliberately and wilfully. U. 235 is safe if it does not come in contact with water."

"You estimate every marriage to be a potential piece of destruction then?"

"Yes, for practical and mundane purpose, it is so. A crucial moment decides the success or otherwise of it," she said. "My idea is like the critical mass in the Atom bomb. It is a symbol and nothing else. The main point that can consummate is the under-current of deep and everlasting interests. It should not be mainly for the sake of physical communion or enjoyment and satisfaction but something subtle, everlasting and to last a life time with emphasis on comradeship."

"Yes, I understand you perfectly. You want a man to be your friend and comrade, understand you and do things with a common interest and understanding. Have you a man like that in view?"

"Have you a woman in view?" she countered.

"Yes," he said promptly, "I have. A potential critical mass like U. 235. Inert for the present. She is cold blooded. She analyses everything in the laboratory of her mind. I know her very well indeed. And she has been discussing the problem for the past two hours. I mean you, my dear."

"Thank you. Like every mathematician, you want your answers delivered to you on a plate. My parents have selected a man for me and I am supposed to agree with their decision as a dutiful daughter. I wish they had given me a clear picture."

"Meet him, if you must. Discuss the matter as we have done. You can judge him and your mind later."

"I THINK that has been done too," she said all of sudden becoming shy.

"So, you have been ragging me all the time. You are critical, practical and highly imaginative. Oh, when you sing, I feel I am sailing on a cloud to

that symbol, the origin of the very creation, but unseen and unknown."

"I like beauty in whatever form it may be, but physical beauty has no attraction for me for it disintegrates. The subtle beauty of the mind, the courage and bravery appeal to me. I like music because it is free. Speech-making is an effort because you have to select your words."

"ALL the while you knew it was I."

"All the while, that is about three or four years. The chief conspirator is your sister, of course indirectly, for I had already given my heart to a young poor man etc. He never knew the existence of a girl like me. I admired him from a distance. I noticed the change, a metamorphosis for the better. I liked him more because he was something like a character out of a story book—a Cinderella."

"Yes, a Cinderella—of course. In the days gone by I had nothing to think about except my own problems which were heavy enough. I have known a girl who stood first in everything she did, a rare specimen—too independent, straightforward and who spoke her mind."

"You know what two women speak. Marriage or scandal? Your sister began the game. My mother who seems to know you from your childhood decid-

ed on the issue. Your sister told the truth of your circumstances. My father claimed your father as his childhood friend and gave his consent too. That, he said, was sufficient recommendation. They wanted a photo as though you were a stranger to me! I overheard this conspiracy and I was suitably shocked when they told me. She lectured about you last night. Today, we have discussed the subject to our satisfaction, and by the way, Mr. Raghu, who is that young man I used to see with you?"

"You are jealous," he said in sheer happiness, "Dear, it is a good sign. You spoke of a metamorphosis. The cause is that young man is the wizard, who changed the Cinderella. He is generous and one who is born to give. He is now in Germany and he invited me to Germany just to tell me to get married. I told him the difficulties. He laughed that away. His idea is that every marriage is a game to be played. He even went to the length of telling me that he will risk dislike too."

"HE said that, did he? Very well, Mr. Raghu, I do dislike that man for what he had done to you. He had taken away friendship from you. Those young kids have taken away your affection. What is left for me to take, Mr. Raghu?"

"Sita, you have owned me in my thoughts, and they are full of you as the cloud that

sails in the clear blue sky, unhampered and without impediments. The boy, Prabhu, is one phase in the scheme of my life and that is dedicated to you. You seem to have known all about me."

"I DARE say, I do. I have known you. I am glad indeed. I am glad for you have a friend, glad because you have not lost your individuality in spite of the over-generosity of your friend. Glad of your charitable nature which provides some school children their education. But all these are being handed over to me to make or mar."

"I can't say. I don't know. Life can be surprising and it is indeed surprising. We will play the game and he has a scheme for us."

"Scheme. We shall do it."

"But you don't ask me what it is?"

"I can guess the answer. Either a hospital or clinic."

"And, he wants us to take care of him too."

"Not a brilliant idea at all. It is like keeping an elephant in tether."

"That time alone can decide," said Raghu rising, as the tower clock struck eight. Sita rose too.

Sita invited him to visit their house and meet her parents.

Col. Laxman and Gowri who were in the hall invited the young man who was closely followed by Sita.

"RAGHU, why have you avoided coming to us as of old?" said Laxman as he made Raghu sit by his side. Gowri saw a radiance in Sita's face. She understood. She took Sita's hand, pressed it and sat by her husband's side on the sofa. The radio was playing soft music. Abruptly Sita left and almost immediately returned with a tray full of sweets, which she kept in front of Raghu on the teapoy. Raghu looked up from the tray to Sita.

"Eat," she said.

"All of them?"

"Yes, the whole lot of them," she said, "I must know your capacity to eat at a time."

"And who is to bear the consequences of overeating?"

"You, of course."

"Don't be silly, you two," said Col. Laxman, "eat as much as you wish."

"No, nothing of the kind," said Sita, "He eats all or none at all."

"But why?"

"He takes all or none at all."

"Oh, I see your meaning. He eats all or none. You have no choice. You eat all or none at all."

"I don't understand."

"You need," said Gowri, "not at this moment but later."

"When digestion is impaired and the stomach pain begins, I suppose!" Raghu tried his best to understand these. He was at sea. Sita who saw this laughed and said "My husband-to-be, you are to take all of my sweets."

Raghu saw the allegory and laughed outright.

"I will risk the stomach pain etc." he said, "of course I see your point. That is very sweet of you, my dear sweet. Indeed you are, I shall hold as sweet for your sweetness and perhaps my life shall be sweet too."

"Your sister will be very happy and glad, I hope" said Laxman Rao "and we are proud of you."

"I AM very happy beyond measure. I never thought life would smoothen out like this and the passage of time made easy for me with such a partner and, she will be my torch-bearer."

"You are being rhetorical, Mr. Raghu" said Sita practically, "and I think the sweet has unloosened your silent tongue."

"That compliment is to you. You have loosened me right out from my petty trifling ideas about life. You have led me from the darkness of the road in front to light my path. In fact you have redeemed me from my morbidity."

"Nothing of the kind. You have yourself to thank and your friend in Germany. I am only a part in the whole."

"What is all this you talk, I would very much like to know," said Col. Laxman.

"Yes, Daddy, you shall know. Mr. Raghu is able to stand on his legs because his friend has by generosity made him what he is to-day. Whatever might be his private thoughts regarding his life, he has to take his consent from that friend. His consent is more essential than ours."

"Yes, it is."

COL. Laxman had no comment to make. To him, his daughter now looked a stranger and an unknown quantity. They, the father and mother, saw a new personality getting ready for an adventure with her eyes wide open.

The sweets disappeared rapidly.

Col. Laxman broke the silence and said, "Raghu, there are certain formalities to be observed. You know about them, I take it."

"Yes, only too well and experienced them too. Not a sweet experience from my point of view and, to me they mean nothing."

There was finality in his voice. The subject was rather annoying to his sensitive temperament.

SITA looked at him, liked him more for his plain speaking. "Just leave that to me" said Sita, looking at her man sternly; for a moment he suspected that look. He saw before him a sweet trouble maker to all.

"What do you mean?"

"Those customary formalities. I will take care of them and arrange with Rukmani," she said.

"Will you kindly shut up, my sweet?"

"Why should I, Sir? It is my wish. I shall do what I like for it is my right. Mr. Raghu, I shall take what I want as it pleases me."

She was rude. Nature's dynamite. Raghu wondered. He could not quell her. He remained silent. She could be stubborn when it suited her. He glared at her. She looked at him with a smile, the same smile that imprisoned him to her. She had shown by her eyes and smile the unstinted love, comradeship and understanding and above

all a sternness in her personal opinions regarding all matters.

With the usual leave taking, he left the house, a very thoughtful man. "Sita perhaps would pull more weight," he thought, "She is woman enough to know me. Only time could decide."

It was eleven when he came home. Rukmani waited for him. He took his bath and changed but declined to eat.

"Why?" asked Rukmani.

"Oh, I have sold my soul to an angel."

"Sita," Rukmani said promptly, "What did she tell you?"

"Tell me! She lectured to me about how husbands and wives should live. She wanted to discuss the so-called formalities with you. You are the conspirator."

Rukmani ignored the thrust.

Rukmani asked, "Do her parents agree?"

"Agree, I think you get their consent even before Sita knew about it and she knew it in her heart long back even before you people even thought of it. She had known me for the last three or four years. Sometimes I used to notice her watching me in the college and compete in all the subjects I took interest in.

She always ran second place in every debate and test in which I took part. Her parents, poor dears, they still don't understand her."

"Do you understand her?"

"I don't think I do well enough to speak about her and how long have you been thinking and planning this marriage?"

"Three years."

"Why did you not tell me?"

"For a reason. Sita's mother wanted her to finish M. Sc and I wanted to see you pass M. B. B. S. All these happened before my marriage at Madras. Mother met Sita's mother and when I knew the relationship between our father and Col. Laxman, I pestered them. All is well that ends well."

"All is well that has a good beginning, you mean" said Raghu.

NEXT morning, Raghu woke up with the sun. He mentally thanked his friend Prabhu and Sita for taking him for what he was worth. He thought he was a doll in a puppet show, Prabhu and Sita pulling strings.

"I am a fool, an atrocious fool" he spoke as he faced the mirror and contemplated his charming face. Rukmani who

entered the room with the breakfast tray had overheard his words and said, "Who are the fools?"

"Every one of us" he said.

"Maybe you are right. One way or the other we are fools. Let us discuss our follies and foolishness at leisure."

As a practical and stable-minded woman, Rukmani lived with her husband an accountant in a bank and looked after her family as only a born optimist could. She never had any black clouds in her systematic life, but her brother like a man tried to solve every problem of life on mathematical basis. If he failed to arrive at a solution, he plainly showed his disgust. Sometimes he disagreed with his sister and her views. He said so.

"No, Raghu, no one is said to have achieved anything in life unless one commits mistakes."

"Of course You are right, for obvious reasons. We do commit mistakes and it takes guts to right a wrong."

Rukmani left the room with the tray, leaving Raghu with his thoughts, which were pleasant indeed.

In his diary, he made an entry "Some times, I wait for an opportunity to knock on my door and to do the perfect thing

and I do nothing. To get ahead, I find, is to start right away. I can't afford to sit tight for the right moment to come, which never comes, unless I create the right moment."

In the far away Germany, Prabhu received a short, crisp cable which read, "Selected a bride-Raghu."

He smiled. It softened the harsh, strong lines, giving it a radiance. He was happy because he had made another man happy and succeeded in it. This young man stood for every thing strong in Nature for he had made himself a son of nature by thoughts and actions.

RAGHU received the reply cable in the hospital. He slit open the envelope and drew out the cablegram. It read: "The necessity it appears to me for a reasonable basis for selection of a bride seems so obvious as to be trite. And yet people are so often foolish, amazingly unthinking in the choice of their partners. If you consider the average young couple in advance of marriage, if they are intellectually, spiritually and physically consistent, they would laugh and say "we love each other. This does not ensure physical compatibility but would assure, that it is so.

"Yes. And while the joy of physical union promotes happiness certainly, it will not by itself sustain marriage on a

permanent footing and basis. I think, apart from physical union and sense gratification, something subtle should be there, they are companionship, mutual understanding and respect; a sense of equality, sharing of goals and ideals and dreams. Assure yourself there are no conflicting emotions where each of you try to supersede the other. I think that is an ideal marriage. Wish you the best of luck. Yours sincerely—Prabhu.”

HE read the cable twice and said to himself, “That is that.” Sita had spoken identically the same but in a different way. Prabhu had put it bluntly to cultivate the habit of adjusting thus avoiding collision of principles.

At about seven in the evening, he met Sita who waited for him with the inevitable round of sweets. Silently he gave the cable to her. She read it and succinctly said, “That, Mr. Raghu, is that.”

The marriage was a success. Sita and Raghu were an ideal couple. They felt the absence of Prabhu. His congratulatory cable compensated for his absence and a large package was delivered to crown his affection towards them. Prabhu’s grandfather, on the express wish of his grandson attended the marriage, showered gifts on them. The old man was happy and when he left he said, “Mr. Raghu, my grandson tells me

that he likes you immensely well and tells me to understand more of you. Also to advance you in your efforts. I wish all the luck in the world to you and your charming wife.”

“Thank you, Sir, I shall try to justify your trust and also that of Prabhu.”

Three years went by—Raghu had built up a good practice. His patients trusted him not only with their ailments and also their problems and confidences. He was ready for anybody’s call at any time during day or night. Sita, though ideal in every respect, sometimes could not stand this. She was great enough to realise how much was Raghu to his patients and others and then only to herself.

She wrote to Prabhu “The shrill call of the telephone drags me from the depths of sleep. It goes on ringing without my husband attending to it and answering it. I vaguely remember him leaving on an emergency call from the hospital. I stretch my hand, pick up the receiver and say, ‘Hello’ The voice at the other end is agitated and commanding, ‘Will you please ask the doctor to come away at once? It is urgent.’ I reply as calmly as I could and quietly ‘The doctor is out and I will give the message as soon as he comes in.’

“But the voice says, ‘He cannot be out at 2 a. m. My mother is sick. She needs the doctor

right away’ In the best reassuring voice, ‘about many being ill at the same time. The next question is, When do you expect the doctor back?’ ‘I don’t know’ is my reply. I had experienced the duration of these calls from seconds to ten minutes normally. My husband invariably makes an entry where he would probably be and on looking at it I see the entry that says, ‘I will be in the hospital mending a broken thigh and to the person who has called I say, ‘You please wait near the car No. B M Y. 444. You will be saving a lot of trouble and save a lot of time. This will help you and the doctor and your mother as well.’

“The caller is not satisfied at all. This I gather from the voice. I try to convince but rarely succeed. I make out an entry on the pad and try to sleep but could not. Then I find my husband’ stand by my side. ‘Any calls, dear?’ he says. ‘It is on the pad,’ I say. ‘I know, they were waiting for me as you instructed them. I sent her to the hospital. I think I can have some rest’ he says as he undresses. It is now 4 a. m. I glare at the instrument. It does not ring again that night.— That is my husband the doctor and I am his wife, the doctor’s wife.”

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Between The Fires

By MAJOR-GENERAL C. ROSS

[With a prisoner on hand in the open African plain and facing a shower of bullets, the Intelligence Officer had some of the most thrilling moments of his life...]

"IT happened many years ago," began the Superintendent, "during the Boer War. I was a detective at the time and had been chosen, because I could speak Dutch, together with another man, to follow and arrest a certain criminal who had made a bolt of it to South Africa. We tracked him to Swakopmund in German South West Africa, at that time a German Colony. Here my companion fell sick, and I followed our quarry to Cape Town. Here I found he had joined one of the local volunteer forces which we were

raising at the time, obtained his khaki uniform and equipment and been sent up country to Middleburg in Cape Colony.

Then, however, he had vanished, deserted to the Boers, it was supposed, with his rifle and pony, a common happening, with many of these so-called 'volunteers' just at that time. It was an excellent method by which a 'wanted' man could disappear."

Having filled and lit his pipe, Barcher brought up his chair,

planted it in front of me and sat down:

"I explained my mission to the military authorities," he resumed when he was comfortably settled; "and they, entering promptly into the spirit of the thing, and being, moreover, hard up for thoroughly trustworthy Britons who could speak Dutch, suggested that the best way in which I could carry on my enquiries was to become one of the 'Intelligence Officers' who were being placed at various centres in view of an expected irruption of the Boers into Cape Colony from the Orange Free State as it was at that time.

So, presently, I found myself, on the railway line, ostensibly to ascertain and report the feeling amongst the widely scattered farmsteads, whether the people were favourable or unfavourable to the Boers, but in reality to find out what had become of my bird. As a matter of fact, being a patriotic Englishman, I found no difficulty in combining the two missions. It was interesting work, I had a couple of ponies, and my task consisted in riding to the outlying farms, taking each in turn, spending a day or two at it as a welcome or unwelcome guest according as the inhabitants were friendly or hostile to the British Regime."

of course," he exclaimed, "you know all about this as well as I do. You were up at Middleburg when I first arrived there—weren't you? I knew you were a detective who had been commandeered as an intelligence officer, but that's all. I went up to the Transvaal just after you arrived."

"Sure?"

"Quite," said I, "please go on."

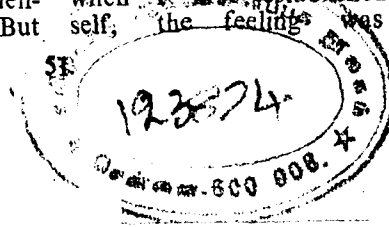
"All right," said Barcher, "it's your own fault if you've heard it all before.

Assuring him that I had not, and that I was perfectly ignorant of what had become of him after I had left Cape Colony, I induced him to continue.

"I found that, generally speaking," Barcher resumed, "the people off the railway line were neither very pro-British nor pro-Boer. They just wanted to be left alone to sell their stuff at the highest price. Mostly, however, they feared that if the Boers came down, their ponies, stock and produce would be commandeered without payment, whereas though the British also commandeered where necessary, they paid up royally for everything they took.

"On the whole, at the time, when I first established myself, the feeling was in Here Barcher stopped suddenly, staring hard at me. "But

* Each detective story in this series is complete and separate by itself.



favour of the British. There were, however, as is invariably the case in a war of such a nature, two pronounced minorities. The one, of pure British extraction, was strongly in favour of British rule and the conquest of the Boers; the other equally strongly in favour of the Boers and openly desirous of seeing the British tumbled neck and crop out of the country. In other words, a few farmers were on one side of the fence, a few on the other, with most of them sitting on top of it. That was the position when I arrived.

But in a few weeks it changed. A couple of Boer Commandos, one under Devet, had broken in over the Orange River and entered Cape Colony with the expressed intention of reaching and capturing Cape Town and the other Cape ports and driving the British into the sea. Their numbers were, of course, greatly exaggerated, into thousands where there were hundreds. Their ruthlessness towards those of the inhabitants who were hostile to them was also greatly exaggerated.

"Stories of lifted horses and stock, burnt farms and hanged farmers came sweeping through the countryside; and, as was to be expected, those sitting on the fence, made haste to get off on the side of the Boer well-wishers. Where formerly I had been received with open arms, I now met gloomy looks;

where formerly I had been received gloomily, I was now spat upon, literally spat upon, especially by the women. It has been necessary to explain the position so that you may understand what follows."

Here Barcher rose to his feet for a short perambulation while setting his thoughts in order.

"There was one of these farms," he resumed, "about thirty odd miles from the railway, to which I had tracked Harrison, the man I was after, though, so far as I could make out, he had assumed an alias or rather two or three, changing his name at each of the farms he had visited. At this last farm he had called himself Peter K. Blair, saying he was an American.

"The people in this farm who were British sympathisers, set me on the road to Rondehoek, the farm of one Maritz to which my friend Blair had probably gone some three months before, warning me however, that I should find the owner but little inclined to help me, and that I had better watch out or I might get myself into trouble. Though I had not the least hope of finding my man, as I had been warned by the Intelligence people that any recruit the Boers obtained in Cape Colony was sent off at once to the Transvaal, yet I determined to chance it and visit Rondehoek, if only to ascertain whether Harrison, alias

Blair, had again changed his name.

What I was anxious to discover was the name under which he went on actually joining the Boers, so that when the general surrender, which was confidently expected by the authorities, occurred, we should be able to lay hands on him before he was packed off as a prisoner of war to Bermuda or Ceylon. So a couple of days later found me approaching Rondehoek another forty odd miles from the railway, seventy in all. The road over the Veldt, or rather track, for it was little more, crossed a 'nek' in between a couple of high Kopjes and dropped down into a wide valley in which the white homestead with its grove of trees and dam was to be seen.

"I stopped to reconnoitre, examining the place through my field glasses. All was quiet; one or two figures only were to be seen; a small boy driving cattle; a couple of women on the stoep, one old, the other young. So hopping up again on to my pony, I continued my journey.

"As I came closer, I could see the two women standing side by side, hands on hips, watching me. Riding up I dismounted with the usual greeting and was pleasantly surprised to find that, in spite of my uniform, I was going to be received as a friend.

"The girl called to the boy, who took my pony and led it away behind the farm; the older woman welcomed me, and, ushering me into the house, gave me food, asking me my business and destination. I told her I was following a friend of mine who I believed had passed that way, and I mentioned his last alias. What, she enquired, was this friend of mine like, upon which I described him. She knew nothing about him, but would I say why I wanted him.

"She was in fact fencing with me, trying to discover my business, that is, as I shrewdly suspected, whether I was, or was not another deserter. I was equally cautious, disliking the idea of posing as a deserter, yet becoming more and more convinced that I must not expose my true design, still less admit that I was both a detective and an intelligence officer.

"So here we were at an impasse; and yet I felt satisfied that Blair had passed this way and been sent on. Finally, I put my qualms aside and blurted out that I also was a deserter, wished to join my friend, and asked to be set on the road to the nearest Boer Commando, upon which the lady grinned broadly."

Barcher again rose and walked backwards and forwards.

"The trouble was," he continued, "that there was some

countersign or password of which I was ignorant, and the fact was just beginning to dawn on me when, quite suddenly, the women spat at me, following up this effort with a volley of vituperation and calling me all the foulest names, of which dirty spy was the least opprobrious she could lay her tongue to."

Barcher stopped to laugh.

"It is amusing now when I look back on it, but at the time I was so utterly astounded that I merely stood staring at her foolishly. Then I became aware of a sound like a chuckle behind me; and, turning, saw half a dozen men, dressed in khaki, who had crept in and who, on seeing my flabbergasted face, burst into loud guffaws.

"I thought at first that they were British troops, but was quickly undeceived when I noted the unshaven condition of some of them, and various discrepancies in the uniform, and amongst them was one whom I recognised instantly, though I had never seen him before. But I had his photograph in my pocket book.

"I had no time to decide on anything; but I knew I was in a tight place, in danger of being shot out of hand as a spy; and I knew that in desperate circumstances, the boldest course is the best. So fixing my eyes on Harrison, alias Peter K. Blair, I walked straight up to

him, and taking him by the arm, said: 'James Harrison, I arrest you for forgery.'

"He made no attempt at resistance, but just stood there and laughed. They all laughed.

"But not for long. I was seized by a couple of them; my pocket book was taken, opened and examined. In it was not only the photograph of Harrison, but my credentials both as a detective and, unfortunately, as an intelligence officer. It was this last which, I quickly understood, might be the death of me. Not that they had any quarrel with the bona-fide intelligence officers of the Army, recognising that they were part of the military organisation. No, the point to which they took exception was that a non-combatant, one who had no connection with the Army, should serve against them. This, however, I easily explained, saying that I was first and foremost an Englishman, and had therefore a perfect right to fight against my country's enemies. If, I added, they could accept the services of a common criminal, a citizen of the nation with which they were at war, how much more justified was I in fighting for my own country. This argument finally convinced them; but they then turned to my knowledge of Dutch, cross-examining me as to whether I had ever before been in South Africa.

"For the one type of man they could not stand and

who they usually regarded and treated as a spy if they laid hands on him, was he who had been born and bred in the country and who yet was fighting against them. You see, they were trying to convert this war, which originally had been between Britain and the two Boer states, into one between Briton and Africaner. Here again, however, I was able to convince them that my Dutch had been learned in Holland and not in South Africa, and that I had never been to the country before.

"You must understand that examination was an informal drum-head court martial, and that had I been convicted, I should have been shot out of hand. I was acquitted, however, on the charge of being a spy; and they contented themselves with stripping me of my uniform, revolver, pony and equipment, which they required for their own use, and told me I might go. A seventy-mile tramp back to the railway on my own flat feet, and in my socks, mind you, by no means appealed me! Still, it was something to have got off with a whole skin.

"Determined to show a bold face, however, I asked for the return of my credentials, upon which my pocket book was chucked back to me. Then I demanded my prisoner, explaining that from the moment I had him locked up my task in South Africa would be at an end.

"This request made them

laugh again; but it turned their thoughts to Harrison, alias Peter K. Blair. They withdrew to consult, leaving Harrison and myself to glower at each other. He, it seems, had posed as an American, a Boer sympathiser, who had come all the way from America to join them from purely altruistic motives.

"In spite of the fact, however, that he had grown a beard, the photograph in my possession proved his identity. 'We want no criminals,' said the Boer Commandant when they returned, and I wondered at a gleam of amusement in his eyes as well as in those of his comrades. The Boers sometimes had a pretty sense of humour. They stripped Harrison of his Khaki, too. Then they handed him over to me, gave us each a pair of old *veldschoon* and told us to be off, standing laughing as we plodded away from the farm in our shirt-tails.

"I don't quite know what I should have done; made my way, I suppose, with my prisoner if I could have to hold him, to the nearest farm and tried to beg, borrow or buy ponies. But that was the question, could I hold him? He was a big, hefty chap evidently in hard training with his three months' trekking about the country, and I could tell from his bearing that he meant mischief and was only biding his time to tackle me.

"If he could get the better of me he could easily

join up with one of the other commandos which had penetrated into Cape Colony and whose Commandant would not be so squeamish as to the antecedents of his recruits. But—and this fact was fully apparent to me—he would never be safe so long as I was alive to hunt and identify him if captured.

“So that the coming tussle would be a fight to the death, on his side at least, though, so far as I was concerned, it was my job to take him alive. In that fact alone I was at a serious disadvantage. I had in fact, caught a tartar. But though I felt certain qualms as to the outcome, yet I was by no means despondent. Because, in those days, I was a pretty sturdy chap with a sound knowledge of how to use my hands in a rough and tumble. I began, accordingly, to plan how to take him on.

“Being shorter than he, with a shorter reach, I must get to grips with him as soon as possible and throw him heavily; and, at all costs, I must settle for the business one way or the other before nightfall; for it would never do to give him the opportunity of knocking me on the head in the dark. I’ll admit that the thought did cross my mind of bolting and trusting to luck to pick up his trail again. But I very quickly discarded it, not only because all my training had taught me to face any odds in the execution of my duty, but also because I was con-

vinced that he would never let me go.

“Such were my thoughts as we stumbled along side by side, separated, however, by about three yards, watching one another warily from the corners of our eyes. I had tried to drop a pace or two behind him, slowing down a trifle, upon which he had slowed down too. And the Boers, still thronging the stoep behind us, had evidently tumbled to the comic side of the situation even if they had not deliberately engineered it, for we could hear the rumble of their laughter as they watched our slow and cautious progress and manoeuvres.

“There was another small farm about a mile to the eastward of Rondehoek towards which I was making. We were about half way there when a distant shot was fired, a second, a third, a dozen or more. They came from a cleft in the hills a mile or so beyond this little farm, and they were not all fired by Boers.

“I could tell by the double report that some of them were aimed in our direction. A minute later, out from the cleft came half-a-dozen Boer scouts galloping back, followed almost immediately by a body of horsemen, British cavalry, unless I was much mistaken. Those deployed as they debouched from the pass and came on at a canter. They were followed by another troop which similarly deployed; away to right and

left of them appeared flanking parties; while from the mouth of the pass itself the head of a column issued.

“I was in luck. I should now have no trouble with my prisoner.

“In the meantime, a party of sixty or seventy Boers, bolting from the little farm, came galloping straight down towards us, while one of them, turning in his saddle, fired a shot at us. They pulled up at Rondehoek, and the next moment opened fire on the British who were by now occupying the little farm. These latter also opened fire while their flanking squadrons swung round in wide turning movements to envelop the Boers and cut off their retreat.

“It became distinctly unpleasant while it lasted; for here were we between two fires in a flat, open plain, where there was little or no cover. We stumbled on towards the little farm, holding our hands up over our heads to show that we were unarmed.

“But, presently, it became too hot. Bullets were whistling and striking the ground all round us, some of them ricochetting with a shrill scream, others roaring away like railway trains. It seemed as though both sides were plugging at us instead of each other.

“We dropped down into a slight depression, blotting ourselves out as best we could. Then Harrison spoke. ‘It’ll

mean five years, I suppose?’ he asked.

“‘About that, more or less,’ I replied.

“He lay quite still for a couple of minutes. Then he laughed.

“Suddenly he jumped to his feet and stood there, turning to look, first at the Boers, then at the British.

“‘Get down, you fool!’ I exclaimed, catching hold of his leg.

“I heard a flop; and Harrison coughed and slowly sank down again beside me, with a sigh.

“A minute later the firing ceased, and I rose cautiously to my feet. The Boers, having been outflanked, had cleared from Rondehoek, and the British from the little farm were quite close to us. One of them, on foot, brought his rifle to his shoulder as I appeared. Hastily, I put up my hands, and he lowered his rifle.

“Then the British were all round us, and an officer was asking me questions.

“I explained the position, but Harrison lay without speaking.

“‘Come, get up!’ said the officer to him sternly.

“He made no move and no reply. He was dead. Shot through the heart, but whether by British or Boer bullet I don’t know.”

My Step-Mother

[Father made the most tragic mistake of his life when he took a second wife—a very pretty siren. Disastrous were the consequences that flowed from that step...]

I DON'T know why my father took it into his head to marry for the second time. His first wife—that is my mother—died fifteen years ago. I was only ten years old then. She had fever accompanied by shivering from which she never recovered. Father had been on tour. He rushed home only a day before the tragic event. Of course, it was all too late. Father was very much devoted to her and he seldom smiled for a long time after her death.

I was his only daughter and he gave me good education and told my relations that all his property worth some lakhs would be mine after him. My mother's mother helped us in the household. So with the years the edge of my grief was taken away. My old grandmother gave all her attention to me and filled my mother's place to such per-

fection. "Darling Sankari," she would often tell me. "I would like very much to see you happily married before I close my eyes."

But Father paid no attention to my grandmother's plea. There was one young man of

BY

M. SAVITRI

my heart, Nagesh by name. He was closely related to my aunt. Grandmother was urging my father to have me married off to him. He said invariably that I was still a child and could wait for another three years at least. Within that time, alas! my grandmother suddenly collapsed owing to a heart attack. Just before her last moment she

beckoned to me to come to her side and gave me the keys of her trunk box. It contained several old jewels of precious stones. They were made of solid gold. But Father took charge of them, saying that they would be safer in his custody and that I could expect them on the occasion of my marriage. But then the unfortunate event happened, which blighted my life and happiness.

As usual, he went on his tour leaving me in charge of a very old woman who was distantly related to us. She was more of a nuisance than help, being partially deaf and semi-blind. She was absent-minded too and would either use too much of salt for the dishes or forget it altogether.

But she was always wide awake and would keep on mumbling and talking to herself the whole night. So I had absolutely no fears about the intrusion of burglars and undesirable fellows. Besides, there were two servants who kept watch over me out of affection and loyalty.

Imagine my surprise and dismay when Father helped a very fair young woman past thirty out of the car and led her in by the hand. I very nearly swooned when he introduced her as my step-mother. "Leela, here is your daughter Sankari and I know you will be an ideal mother to her."

And then he addressed a few words of advice to me. "You see, Sankari, I have married for the second time just to make you happy. I know you will obey your step-mother. Never talk back to her and remember that what she says must always be right. Now, give her all the keys. From now on she is the absolute mistress of the house."

I tried as well as I could to hide the tears before them. I knew that my step-mother was a greedy, cruel-hearted woman hating me even at first sight. She was very fair in complexion with brown eyes and a pert nose. She had a very curvaceous, voluptuous figure. No wonder that Father fell for her and lost his head completely. There was a difference of twenty years or even more between them.

HE had met her in a little town—the daughter of a family of actors with doubtful reputation. When they heard that a rich widower was camping in their place, she was egged on to set her cap on him. With all his wealth and age, Father was no match for the wiles of a siren and in less than a week he married her, cancelled the rest of his tour and came home.

Within three months after her arrival the entire household was transformed beyond recognition. She dominated every aspect of our life; what hurt me most was that she quietly took possession

of the jewels that Grandmother had given to me on her death. For the first time I raised my gentle voice of protest and requested Leela in all humility to hand over those jewels. It was more a matter of sentiment than of any material value attaching to them.

BUT she looked sternly at me and then shouted to my father to come down. He almost raised his hand to strike me but I escaped into my room and barred and bolted the door.

"Another act of disobedience and I will drive you out of the house and disown you. Don't forget that, you wretched naughty girl," he exhorted me.

One by one her relatives from the little town trooped in and took possession of the house. Father had fallen ill and was confined to bed. I knew what was happening to him but I had to keep mum. Every night she drugged his milk and sent him into a state of stupor.

There were always two of her male relations, keeping watch over the old man and preventing me from seeing or talking to him. Even in daytime he was in a comatose condition and was either stupidly grinning or weeping. I was positive that he had forgotten all about me.

My only beacon of hope was Nagesh but I was forbidden to leave the house without my

step-mother's permission. Once or twice he wrote letters but Leela tore them up in my presence after reading them herself.

Another stunning development made me most miserable and there were occasions when I wanted to hang myself and commit suicide as a way out of all my troubles. A young doctor by name Bajri had recently set up in practice and had his dispensary just opposite to our house. He was very handsome and cheerful and we could hear his incessant chatter with the patients from across the road.

Naturally Leela was irresistibly drawn towards him and invited him to attend on my father. He often sat upstairs talking to all the relations of Leela. They pressed him to stay on for lunch and supper and he very rarely started his small car for home before midnight.

ONE night when all was silent I stole upstairs and went on tiptoe to my step-mother's room. As I looked through the keyhole a most revolting scene met my eyes. Leela was scantily clad and sitting on the doctor's lap and the rascal was kissing her passionately on the mouth. She was laughing at his attempts to take further liberties with her. But he switched off the light and the room was plunged into darkness. I clenched my fists and boiled with indignation at

this outrage right under my nose. As I turned back I confronted Leela's brother who stood barring my way. He had his arms folded on his chest and glared at me for a moment. Then suddenly he swung into action. He seized me by my pigtail, dragged me down into my room and knocked me down with his fists. I don't know what he did to me or how long I lay in that condition. The old servant later on told me in a whisper that I was hysterical and was screaming most of the time.

Leela saw now the opportunity of her life. She wanted to get me out of the way and inherit all my father's property. And she requisitioned the services of her medical lover towards this end. He drugged my milk too and while I was raving used his influence to have me admitted to the mental hospital. I had lost count of time. I didn't know on what grounds I was shut up in the lunatic asylum and how long I was to stay there. Nobody would believe me when I assured the visitors that I was as sane as anyone of them. All that I learnt was that my father died soon after I was thrown into the asylum. Leela married the doctor shortly after, and left for some unknown destination. And all my father's property had passed into her hands. The doctors had certi-

fied that I was insane and the lawyers argued and proved that she was the rightful heiress to all my father's money.

A few days ago they suddenly released me from the mental hospital for the simple reason that more new cases had to be admitted. For days I wandered from town to town loafing through the streets and begging for food. The air of freedom and the merciful light of the sun which I had not seen for months dazed me into a state of stupor. I had even forgotten the name of my home town until I staggered my way into it.

One hot sultry afternoon I had swooned at the corner of my street. Some well-meaning soft-hearted souls revived me with cold water and I sat amidst a crowd and stared about me. Someone was able to recognize me in spite of all my shabby dress and dirty appearance. Then they began to shed tears over my fate and pamper me.

I am now the guest of a kindly old man whom Father had helped once. I am looking for Nagesh. Will he care for me still? Am I still attractive enough for him? My host says I am and asks me to wait. The future alone holds the answer to my question. ‡

SHORT STORY

The Silent Bride

By HARIHAR URSEKAR

[Lovely she was but she was so dumb that he began to dislike her but...well, read it all yourself !]

I WAS married to Kamala two years ago. Our marriage was celebrated with great show in Padli, my home town. It was quite an event and according to people with memories never before was such a wedding procession seen. People said even the sun paled into insignificance before the fireworks, and the din of the drum was louder than all.

Our Dada, my father, was a shrewd moneylender and an unrelenting landlord. He was a terror to the ryots who dared to cheat him. A strict disciplinarian himself he never brooked any departure from the accepted mode of behaviour. He was equally stern with his sons and daughters. However, he was like the jack-fruit, apparently thorny but luscious in the core.

We were a joint family, and an orthodox one at that. Dada was the head of our family consisting of his two brothers and five sons. All of my brothers were married. I, being the youngest among them, was left—unmarried beyond the age at which my brothers were married. Not only was I permitted generously by Dada to cross the family age-barrier of bachelorhood but I was also allowed to stray beyond the education bar. Thus unlike my brothers, I was given the facility of taking college education in Poona.

Each one of my brothers had a kid or two. I wondered never to have seen any of my brothers talking to their wives. They never went out for a stroll with their spouses. None of them ever took his wife to a

picture of the touring talkie which used to visit our town every three months with the regularity of a municipal tax bill. It is true that the brothers alone occasionally went out of their way even as far as Poona to visit a show ; but only as a ' Men Only '—affair.

I WAS educated in Poona. After graduation I was reading for my first Law Examination in the Law College. I put up in the College hostel and like others had acquired usual adolescent ideas about love and romance. I received my grounding in that subject from the twin sources of fiction and films.

One day I was simply shocked to read a telegram from Dada informing me that my marriage was settled.

My first impulse on such *ex parte* decision was to revolt. I thought the best way was to non-cooperate. On second thoughts, however, I made up my mind to go home under protest. Of course, I was not afraid of Dada, but I was a bit shy of his disciplinary action.

I was determined not to see her girl at any rate. My honest view in the matter was that Dada had no right to approve a bride for me in my absence.

Late on the day of my arrival at home I overheard Sushila—my brother Shankar's wife whom I respected like my late

mother—saying to someone in the house :

" Our Madhav is really lucky. His bride is beautiful among a thousand."

My curiosity was whetted. With the help of Shankar, I could manage to catch a glimpse of my prospective life-partner for a split second. From that moment I began to respect Sushila's aesthetic sense, too!

Appearances are often deceptive! What about the likes and dislikes, the ideas and ideals of the proposed girl? How can I throw in my lot with an unknown entity? In spite of my misgivings Shankar finally succeeded in persuading me to take my chance of a life-time. Of course, it is plain that we two took the expression in contrary senses.

You remember, as I told you, our marriage was a great social success.

LAXMI nee Malati and myself became man and wife. Laxmi! I would have liked to call her Kamala. But you know Dada would not consult me while baptising my wife. It was none of my business! Primarily she was Dada's daughter-in-law and only incidentally my wife!

Kamala had sky-blue eyes. She was a beauty but she was too shy. Submissive in the extreme she would not like me

call her by name. She always turned a deaf ear to my request to accompany me for a walk. I would have liked her to drape herself in a five-yard saree but she would not go for it for the conventional nine-yard piece. Kamala knew a little Sanskrit and less English. I loved both these languages. I offered her to teach them. But she would not let me. She never said 'No' in so many words like a Parliamentarian but would regret her inability by a down-cast look.

KAMALA used very few words. Whenever she spoke, she spoke to the point. Being a great prattler I could hardly reconcile myself to this rationing of speech. How long can one talk without getting a response even though the listener presents a beautiful face? It is as dull as talking to oneself all the while on a full-moon night on a desert island.

One day in June, about a month after my marriage, I read the result of my first LL. B. Examination. I had secured a first. I was glad. Dada too was happy but he seemed to be little upset as I won no prize.

I told Kamala that I had passed with flying colours. Her reaction was monosyllabic. In a nutshell she said "H m."

My college was opening the next day. Preparations were afoot in the house for my departure. Finally while bid-

ding good-bye to Kamala I asked her to write to me, in reply to my letters at least as a matter of courtesy. I encountered the hackneyed downcast look. She seemed to say Dada would not like it.

As expected our correspondence was singularly one-sided. I felt like one writing letters to an imaginary pen-friend, on the North Pole. My college friends advised me to solve cross-word puzzles instead of wasting my time on this unilateral romance.

I was exasperated. I thought my wife had no love for me. She simply did not like me. Otherwise what else could she mean by her queer conduct? I introspected deeply but failed to see the reason of Kamala's lack of love for me. Haven't I money, education and good physique? I was liked by my friends. So I could call myself affable by nature. Then where did the shoe pinch? I asked myself this question a hundred times and finding no answer attributed the whole situation to my stars.

DIPAWALI was round the corner. I had to return home from Poona. I was really not enthusiastic about going home but I dared not defy father's wishes that I should go home for Dipawali.

My expectations about Kamala were not any higher than when I left for Poona. But I

noticed some change in her. He had grown a bit bold and lumpy and her shyness was lightened with a smile.

It was the bright Dipawali night. Our house was illuminated with rows of small earthen lamps. Children were busy with crackers. Dada and all other male members of our house had gone out for some reason or another. I thought of going out myself to meet a friend, as Kamala afforded no company.

I DONNED a cap and stirred out of the house. Hardly had I gone a few yards in the courtyard when suddenly I felt something going round my left leg. I kicked in the dark. But something gripped round my calf. I became apprehensive and screamed. I felt the diurnal motion of the earth.

In the twinkling of an eye I saw Kamala turning around a reptile by its tail. She dashed it against a stone and that was the end of my enemy. Before I could open my lips I saw her losing the balance. She fainted. I knew it was the after-effect of great courage shown under calamity.

Kamala lay unconscious. Dada and my brothers thought, —for all had returned home by this time—that Kamala was bitten by the venomous serpent. But I explained to them what had happened; as to

how the serpent tightly clinched my calf and before it could bite me how she, dashing like lightning from the house, had done it to death by whipping it on the stone.

Kamala still lay unconscious. Her lips seemed to move a little. We all hung on them with the expectancy of a husband waiting in the ante-room of a maternity home.

"Madhav! Madhav!" she mumbled in a low voice. She took in a few drops of water and opened her sky-blue eyes and mine too! ‡‡

THE END

Six young housewives living in the same block of flats had a dispute of such magnitude that it resulted in their being hauled into court. When their case was called, they all made a concerted rush to the bench, and broke into bitter complaints at the same moment.

The magistrate sat momentarily stunned, as charges and counter-charges filled the air. Suddenly he rapped for order. Then he said patiently: "Now, I'll hear the oldest first."

That was the end of the case!

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 August 1959]

By T. V. RAMAN

The important planetary transit during the month is that of Jupiter to Scorpio on 16-8-59 having become free from retrogression. This apart Sun transits to Simha on 17-8-59, Mars transits to Kanya on 27-8-59. Mercury transits to Simha on 31-8-59. The overall effects of these transits are discussed in the following paragraphs.

MESHA

(Aswini 4, Bharani 4, Krithigai 1.)

Mars, Lord of the Lagna, stays in Simha up to 27-8-59 and then transits to Kanya. The Lord of the Lagna to be placed in the 5th house is considered as a "Raja Yoga" in astrological parlance. Further Vesi Yoga is formed. This apart,

Mars is in conjunction with Venus. This is a good combination. The effects will therefore be that your health will be robust and that your popularity will be on the increase. Your finances will be good. The position of Sun in Simha is a good sign as it is own house for Sun. Rahu in the 6th house indicates gains apart from liquidation of debts. Jupiter in the 7th house in retrogression indicates that some of you will get married. Saturn in the 9th house indicates rise in profession or business. Kethu in the 12th house indicates risk through accidents.

Thus the month is excellent for those in jobs or business. Those engaged in politics or

social service will thrive well. Film actors will succeed in their ventures.

Lucky Days : 8th, 12th, 15th, 27th and 30th.

Household women belonging to this rasi will find the month excellent. There will be auspicious functions at home. Your health will be good.

Some unmarried women will get married. Those in jobs and studying will find the month very good. Others will fare well.

Lucky Days : 7th, 21st and 31st.

VRISHABHA

(Krithigai 3, Rohini 4, Mrigasirsha 2.)

Venus, Lord of the Lagna, is powerfully placed in Leo the 4th Kendra in conjunction with Mars. For the major part of the month Vesi Yoga is formed. This apart, Venus' conjunction with Sun in Leo constitutes a Raja Yoga from 17-8-59. Hence your health will be excellent. Your popularity will be on the increase. Mercury, Lord of 2nd and 5th houses, is hidden in the 3rd house. Rahu in the 5th house indicates a worried state of mind. Jupiter in the 7th house indicates all round peace and prosperity at home. Saturn in the 8th house indicates wasteful expenditure and risks through accidents. Kethu in the 11th house indicates gains.

The month is not good for those in jobs or business due to Saturn in the 8th house. The month is average for those engaged in politics or social service. Those engaged in film careers will manage well.

Lucky Days : 8th, 21st and 31st.

Household women will find the month excellent. Your health will be good. Finances will be excellent. There will be auspicious functions at home.

Women in jobs or those studying will progress well. Women engaged in politics or social service will thrive well.

Lucky Days : 8th, 21st and 31st.

MITHUNA

(Mrigasirsha 2, Arudra 4, Punarvasu 3)

Mercury, Lord of the Lagna, is placed in the 2nd house. Your health will be excellent. Your popularity will be on the increase. Your finances will be good. The position of Mars, Sun and Venus in the 3rd house indicates courage to meet situations, gains and help through brothers. Rahu in the 4th house indicates a disturbed state of affairs at home. Jupiter in the 6th house indicates sorrow, Saturn in the 7th house indicates futile journey apart from Sun, Mars and Kethu in the 10th house will keep you well in office or business. Thus the effects are mixed.

Lucky Days : 7th, 12th and 28th.

Household women will find the month adverse due to Jupiter in the 6th house. The finances will be ordinary. There will be misunderstandings at home. The month is not good.

Women in jobs or studying will manage well. The month is not good for others.

Lucky Days : 2nd, 8th and 21st.

KATAKA

(Punarvasu 1, Pushya 4, Aslesha 4.)

Your health will be good. Your popularity will be the increase. Your finances will be excellent. The conjunction of Mars, Venus and Sun in the 2nd house indicates increase in wealth. Rahu in the 3rd house indicates gains. Jupiter in the 5th house indicates financial gains and rise in status. Saturn in the 6th house indicates gains apart from liquidation of debts. Those in jobs will manage very well. Business men will make good profits. The month is excellent for all others.

Lucky Days: 8th, 12th and 13th.

Household women will find the month excellent. Your health will be good. The finances will be good. Those in jobs or studying will manage well. The month is good for all others.

Lucky Days : 7th, 17th, and 28th.

SIMHA

(Makara 4, Pooram 4, Uthira 1.)

Sun, Lord of the Lagna, though in Janma, is in own house. Hence your health will be good. Your finances will be good. Your popularity will be on the increase. But the presence of Mars in Janma is not good. Avoid journeys. The presence of Rahu in the 2nd house and Kethu in the 8th house are disastrous in effects. The presence of Jupiter in 3rd house will cause evil. Saturn in the 5th house indicates sickness to children apart from mental worries. The month is not good in general.

Those engaged in business will meet loss. The month is not good for politicians, social workers or film actors.

Lucky Days : 8th, 18th and 21st.

Household women will find the month miserable. Your health will be upset. Your finances will be poor. The month is not good in general. The month is not good for all others.

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

KANYA

(Uthira 3, Hastha 4, Chitra 2.)

Mercury, Lord of the Lagna, is well placed in the Cancer in

the 11th house. But Rahu is in Janma. Hence take care of your health. The presence of Jupiter in the 2nd house in retrogression indicates all round improvement. Saturn in the 4th house indicates a disturbed state of affairs at home. The presence of Kethu in the 7th house indicates a distant journey apart from sickness to wife. The conjunction of Mars, Sun and Venus in the 12th house indicates wasteful expenditure and risks through accidents.

The month is not good in general. Those in jobs will manage well. Those in business will thrive well. The month is good for others also.

Lucky Days: 7th, 18th and 21st.

This month is excellent for household women. Jupiter in the 2nd house promises all round prosperity. Some unmarried girls will get married. Some married women will become expectant mothers.

Women in jobs will thrive remarkably since Lord of 10th house is in the 11th house. Those studying will make surprising progress. Women engaged in politics or social service will make good progress.

Lucky Days : 8th, 21st and 29th.

THULA

(Chitra 2, Swathi 4, Visaka 3.)

Venus, Lord of the Lagna,

is powerfully placed in the 11th house. Further *Vesi Yoga* is formed. Hence your health will be excellent. Your popularity will be on the increase. Your finances will be excellent due to 2nd house Jupiter. Saturn in the 3rd house will give you courage apart from financial gains, from liquidation of debts and disappearance of enemies. The conjunction of Sun and Venus indicates gains. Rahu in the 12th house is the only evil planet. Avoid cycle riding and journeys.

Businessmen will meet with a boom. Those in jobs will get rapid promotions. Those engaged in politics, social service and film acting will thrive well.

Lucky Days : 8th, 19th and 21st.

Household women will find the month excellent. Your health will be good. The finances will be pouring. The month is good in general.

Some maidens will get married. Some married women may become expectant mothers. Women in jobs will get promotion and those studying will fare well. The month is excellent for all others.

Lucky Days : 8th, 13th and 27th.

VRISCHIKA

(Visaka 1, Anuradha 4, Jyeshtha 4.)

Mars, Lord of the Lagna, is in 11th house which is good.

But Jupiter is in Janma besides 7½ years' Saturn. Further Kethu is in the 5th house. The health of your children will cause anxiety to you. You will be worried mentally. Mercury in the 9th house and Sun, Mars and Venus indicate good fortunes. Rahu in the 11th house indicates gains. Avoid journeys and cycle ridings.

The month is good for those in jobs. It is not good for businessmen. They will meet with loss. The month is not good for those engaged in politics, social service and film acting.

Lucky Days : 2nd, 22nd and 23rd.

Unmarried women belonging to this rasi will have to wait till the whole of the year for getting married. The month is not good for household women.

Those studying or in jobs will pull through.

Lucky Days : 8th, 18th, and 21st.

DHANUS

(Moola 4, Poorada 4, Utharada 1.)

Jupiter, Lord of the Lagna, is hidden in the 12th house. Further Saturn is in Janma. Hence your health will not be good. Take care of your health. Kethu in the 4th house unaspect- ed by benefic planets will cause irksomeness in the household. The conjunction of Venus, Sun

and Mars in the 9th house indicates some luck. Rahu in the 10th house will keep you well in your office or business.

The finances will be poor in general. The month is good for those in jobs. Businessmen will meet with loss. The month is adverse for those engaged in politics, social service or film acting. The month is not good for all others.

Lucky Days : 8th, 18th and 21st.

Household women will find the month miserable due to the position of Jupiter in the 12th house and Saturn in Janma. Your finances will be poor. Take care of your health.

Unmarried women will have to wait a year more to get married. Women in jobs or those studying will pull through. The month is not good for all others.

Lucky Days : 8th, 18th and 29th.

MAKARA

(Utharada 3, Sravana 4, Dhanishta 2.)

Saturn, Lord of the Lagna, is in 12th house. Hence take care of your health. Avoid journeys. Devote your spare time to prayer and meditation. Kethu in the 3rd house indicates gains. The conjunction of Sun and Mercury in the 7th house indicates a journey. Mars and Venus in the 8th house indicate risks through accidents.

Avoid cycle riding and journeys. Rahu in the 9th house, unas- pected by benefic planets, indi- cates serious sickness to father. Jupiter in the 11th house indicates gains. Thus the posi- tion of planets on the whole is not very promising. Those in jobs will manage well. Those in business will meet with normal profits.

The month is not good for all others.

Lucky Days : 8th, 18th and 21st.

The month is good for house- hold women due to Jupiter in the 11th house. The finances will be good. Take care of your health.

* Some unmarried women will get married. Some married women will become expectant mothers. The month is good for those studying or in jobs. The month is not good for all others.

Lucky Days : 2nd, 22nd and 28th.

KUMBHA

(Dhanishta 2, Sathabhisha 4, Poorattadhi 3.)

The position of Saturn in the 11th house is very good. But Jupiter is in the 10th house. Kethu in the 2nd house indicates irksomeness on the home front. The position of Sun and Mer- cury in the 6th house indicates gains. Mars and Venus in the 7th house indicate a distant journey. Rahu in the 5th house indicates risks through accidents.

The month is not good for those in jobs. Businessmen will meet with normal profits. The month is not good for all others.

Lucky Days : 8th, 18th and 21st.

Household women will find the month miserable due to Jupiter in 10th house.

Women in jobs or studying will pull through. The month is not good for all others.

Lucky Days : 2nd, 22nd and 23rd.

MEENA

(Poorattadhi 1, Uthirattadhi 4, Revathi 4.)

Kethu is in Janma. Hence take care of your health. Rahu in the 7th house indicates a journey and sickness to wife. Jupiter in the 9th house promises great luck. Saturn in the 10th house will keep you well in office or business.

The month is excellent for all. Businessmen will meet with big profits. Politicians and social workers will make sur- prising progress.

Lucky Days : 7th, 8th and 21st.

Household women will find the month splendid. Some unmarri- ed women will get married. Some married women will become expectant mothers. Those in jobs or studying will manage well.

Lucky Days : 7th and 17th.

Just For Fun

RETORT

An old lady from one of the Yorkshire dales was giving evidence in a court of law. Her reply to nearly every question began with "Aa think." At last counsel became angry and said: "Look, my good woman, stop that thinking and answer my questions properly."

The aged witness looked down on counsel for a moment and quietly remarked: "Noo ye mun try an' keep ye'r temper, Maister, an' excuse me if ye can. Ye know Aa's nut like ye lawyers. Aa can't talk without thinking."

SPOTTER AND FIRE

In Hudson Bay, Canada, a keen-eyed forestry employee spotted a fire from the look-out tower and alerted the fire-fighters, who promptly went out and extinguished it.

The crewmen returned and were about to congratulate their spotter, when they had another alarm. This time one of them

had to shin up the one-hundred-and-twenty-foot tower with a pail of water to quench a fire started by the spotter's cigarette!

FORGOT

"Tommy, you have had enough. You've eaten nearly a whole bag of sweets. If you ask for any more, you will go straight to bed."

"Oh, Mum," replied the small boy, "you've forgotten all you said to me yesterday about persevering!"

CORRECTED!

The villain was foiled, love was triumphant and virtue rewarded.

The leading man clasped the heroine in his arms and cried: "At last, my darling, we are alone!"

From the gallery came a voice: "No, young fellow, you're wrong. Tonight, you're not alone. Tomorrow night you will be!"

COMPANIONS!

A farmer's wife complained to a country bus company that when she and her companions tried to get on one of their buses the driver refused to let them aboard. "I was fully prepared to pay the fare," she said, "but he drove off and left us standing in the middle of the road."

The bus driver gave his explanation: "Her companions were a black-and-white calf and two dozen baby chicks!"

NOT FAIR

Shortly after he had made his mark in the infant movie industry, film pioneer Carl Laemmle engaged in a bigger fight with the motion-picture trust. After months of legal debate, the case came before the U. S. Supreme Court. Laemmle was out of town the day the decision was handed down. The court decided in his favour.

Elated, his lawyer wired him: "Justice has triumphed!"

Laemmle promptly wired back: "Appeal at once."

IN LOVE

On location for a few weeks, a film director had fallen head over heels in love with the leading lady. Upon his return, rumours of the affair reached the director's wife.

On the night of his homecom-

ing, the director started talking in his sleep. "Darling, you know I love you. There's no one else in the world for me but you."

Suddenly he awakened and met his wife's accusing eyes. Sensing the situation, he was asleep, and remarked: "Cut! Now bring in the horses."

EXPLAINED!

"I've got a rather distasteful job before me," remarked the genealogist. "A woman employed me to look up her family tree, and I've got to inform her that one of her relatives was electrocuted in America."

"I shouldn't worry about that," replied his friend. "Just write that the man in question occupied the chair of applied electricity at one of America's public institutions."

NOT THAT WAY

On a short trip a passenger aboard a steamer asked the captain why they had stopped.

"The fog is so thick that we can't see to proceed up the river," he said.

"But, captain," the passenger protested, looking up into the sky, "I can see the stars up there."

"Yes, madam," he replied patiently, "but unless the boilers burst, that isn't the way we're going."

Your Questions Answered

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.

K. Chatterjee, Calcutta.

Q.—How can an illiterate man pick up education?

A.—Where there is a will there is a way. Many famous judges and leading scholars read under street lamps and became great.

S. Sundaresan, Coimbatore.

Q.—Have you any intention or idea of converting "India Magazine" into a fortnightly? You see, it has become so popular.

A.—Thanks for your idea. We shall consider it in all its aspects.

Kailash Ch. Mohapatra, Anandpur.

Q.—"Plain living, high thinking" In what profession will it be possible?"

A.—In the profession of an elementary school teacher! Nowhere else!

Q.—Why is there a special attraction of women for gents in all spheres?

A.—Because you find women invading all walks of life and sharing the former preserves of men.

V. Haribabu, Kharagpur.

Q.—Why are the moderns so sex-minded? Is the advancement of science the root-cause of it?

A.—You are right! In the post-nuclear age you can expect most of the ultra-moderns behaving like sex-fiends. No doubt about about it.

B. C. Sampath, Bangalore.

Q.—What is love?

A.—As the common man knows it, love is the craving of flesh which man or woman feels for the opposite sex. It flies out of the window when the attraction dims like the dying lamp.

Q.—What is true friendship?

A.—The selfless devotion of a man to another in distress and expects no return.

P. Ghunder Mohan, Allahabad.

Q.—Will inter-racial and inter-caste marriages solve our problem? What will happen?

A.—There will be new races and new castes, as a result! The Indian problem will always be a mystery. It is very difficult to root out caste and Hinduism which is based on it.

C. Kaul, Delhi.

Q.—When a modern lass wants to kiss a man, how will she invite him?

A.—Another girl must tell her that such and such a man will resent a kiss from any woman!

Navaneethan, Madras.

Q.—Why are film stars' dresses shrinking on the screen?

A.—They apparently reflect the wishes and dreams of fans like your good self!

Anu Prasad, Patna.

Q.—Last month an elderly friend snubbed me for buying a magazine with objectionable advertisements. What is wrong?

A.—Your friend said it: "Objectionable." There is nothing objectionable in what he said!

The Love Letter

By SARASWAT RAM

The young fellow was an adept in the art of making love and his tactics raised not the least suspicion...

My dearest Pran,

WHEN I received a big envelope this morning I was sure it was the manuscript of a short story returned from a magazine. You see, I am venturing into the literary field! And what a pleasure it was when the envelope contained your letter. I kissed it half a dozen times before I began to read it. What a joy to recall in your picturesque language the origin of our love affair, which has no parallel in any romance written in any part of the world.

Pran darling! You are really wicked and scheming when I think of it all. Not that I hate you for it. The heart that contains my love for you sometimes threatens to burst my body because it is too small.

At first you pretended to be such a saint, absolutely disinterested but eager all the same to help a young maiden out of her difficulties.

Did you not make friends with my poor old father and wait round the corner of the street to carry his bags, packets and other things to our home? You pleased my old daddy listening to his platitudinous talk and nodding 'yes' to all that he said. I know you didn't hear a word, all the time casting your admiring eyes in my direction.

You acted very well, pretending to look in the other direction whenever Father directed his gaze at you. He thought he had found a new-born son in

you—my elder brother having died suddenly five years ago during an epidemic wave. Of course, he couldn't get a worthier son than you but to me you are no more a brother, and you know it!

Thus slowly, oh, so imperceptibly did you creep into the household and establish a sway on my father. Do you know what he used to tell his friends after my mother had gone? 'Until I was married and went to my husband's home no male breath should taint the atmosphere in his own house.'

WHAT solicitude you showed when Father was hurt in a street accident and was confined to bed for weeks. You sat and watched over him, neglecting your studies and braving the wrath of your professors and your own parents who wrote anxious letters from their village. True, Daddy recovered because of your attention and little ministrations.

That was a time when I was too timid to go shopping and awfully nervous before strangers. You laid us both under a deep debt of gratitude for shouldering the burden of buying provisions and other requirements—all on your own—when Father was quite oblivious to his surroundings. When he knew that you were borrowing from friends, pledging your wrist-watch and your gold

ring to help us he called you to his bed and warmly and affectionately embraced you.

How glad you were when he begged of you to stay near him and invited you to occupy the outer room and carry on your studies. At first you seemed reluctant and looked towards me as if you did not relish the idea of staying under the same roof with an unmarried girl. How nicely and in what a soft spoken way did Father overcome your scruples and persuade you to come in. He told you your stay in the front room would in no way inconvenience or embarrass us as the room was almost detached from the main building and formed part of the outhouse, more or less.

Even then after you had moved in, you left your room every evening for your friends' lodging and spent the nights there. Then, again, Father advised you to keep to your room and devote more time to your studies. But on the first night itself which you spent in our house you were coughing and expectorating so loudly that Father didn't sleep a wink.

WHEN by morning the found that you were slightly feverish he personally attended on you, brought you medicine from the doctor and forbade you to move out of your room. What was more, he insisted that I must give up my reserve and shyness

and serve you gruel and hot water at stated intervals. He assured me that you were my real brother and that I could rely on you during stress and stormy weather.

How you welcomed me when I entered your room for the first time with a pounding heart and an uneasy feeling. "Come in, sister Jyoti," you said, smiling mischievously. Father thought that everything was all right under the sun and slept in peace and contentment.

That very night, you dragged me by my hand, kissed me warmly on the mouth and held me in the tightest embrace which only inflamed our desire. I still wonder what a great psychologist you must have been to plumb the depth of my feeling and passion for you. Of course, with characteristic female shyness and proper show of alarm I threatened to shout and scream if you wouldn't release me from your arms at once. But instead of struggling from your hold I burrowed myself into your embrace and gave you back kiss for kiss. How we floated to the seventh heaven of happiness together from that night onwards, of course, keeping up all outward pretence of brother and sister.

When an urgent telegram from my paternal uncle, summoning father to his village came, he wanted to take me, too.

But seeing that you were still in bed and needed some care, he left me, without another thought, to serve you. That week, oh boy, was one of unalloyed happiness. Didn't we revel in each other's arms and found new joys and thrills? We talked many silly things and whispered the sweetest of promises.

But we didn't notice the fly in the ointment. Our servant maid one early morning watched us through the half open window sleeping in each other's arms. And promptly she reported the matter to our neighbours who in their turn told my father first thing on his return home.

But a few hours before his arrival you instinctively smelt trouble and slipped out of our home and out of our town.

Now, on hearing of my father's death you have written again expressing your longing for those glorious hours of happiness. I too would like to recapture them with you. But, Pran dear, that is clearly impossible. My auntie, my father's sister, is there and she has arranged for my marriage to her son. And my wedding is coming off on next Monday. I suspect, my husband-to-be knows all about our affair but he is too much in love with me to mind it all.

So dearest Pran, good-bye for ever—Jyoti.

WHEN MIND BECOMES SICK

BY A PHYSICIAN

MENTAL illness should no longer be something to be discussed in hushed tones. It is the response to a stress that is too much for the person concerned just as much so as an attack of appendicitis is a response to infection which requires treatment, and in each case, the sooner treatment is begun, the sooner the person will return to normal.

A nervous breakdown may be a straightforward response to conditions of worry and anxiety that became too much for the individual to face. A man faces financial losses: a housewife cannot make both ends meet on her housekeeping allowance: a young man finds himself too inexperienced to cope with his job: a young woman has an unhappy love affair. Each feels that life is too much, and a nervous breakdown may result. More often there is a basis of ill-health.

Little things begin to become irritating. Small tasks that were easy, seem far too difficult to manage. Life begins to get on top of you. Personal appearance seems to be unimportant. It is too much trouble to change into a pretty frock, or one's best suit, or even to go and see one's friends. The children seem to be much more difficult to handle, and their noise almost unbearable.

Warning Signals

A rest, a change, a holiday, a tonic—any of these may be sufficient to bring you back to the normal enjoyment of everyday living. But suppose you find that you are no better? You begin to feel that you have no friends, that everyone is against you, that husband or wife no longer cares. These are all warning signals that the stresses and strains of modern civilization are upsetting your emo-

tional balance, and that you should do something about it.

You have a toothache—you go to the dentist. You have dermatitis—you go to the skin specialist. You have a chronic cough, so you have your chest X-rayed. You find you cannot cope with life—why not see someone you can explain it to? Your doctor will do what he can to help you, and if he feels that you can be helped by seeing a specialist in nervous diseases, he will make the necessary arrangements. If the specialist wants you to have some treatment—don't be afraid of it.

Nice Sleep

After all, you let the dentist fill your tooth! The specialist may find you nervously exhausted. You may have wished you could sleep for a week. The specialist may agree, and you will literally sleep for a week! He may decide that a course of electric-shock treatment will put you back on an even keel. Don't be alarmed—you won't even feel the shock! Many mental hospitals and clinics are giving courses of electric shock treatment to out-patients. You lie down on the treatment couch. You have a prick in the arm—usually pentothal, and scoline which is a relaxant—and you wake up in the recovery room feeling that you have had a wonderful sleep and on top of the world. The electric shock

has straightened out the tangles in that wonderful switchboard, your brain, and the world seems a very pleasant place once more.

The longer you go on when things are too much for you, the harder it will be to put you back on the road of normal healthy living. Early treatment is so important, and it needn't be dreaded. Mental hospitals have taken longer than other specialist hospitals to throw off the stigma left by the middle ages. Just as chest hospitals treat chests, and eye hospitals treat eyes, so do mental hospitals treat sick minds. Sickness of mind is just as real and just as distressing as tuberculosis of the lungs, and catarract of the eyes, but all can be treated, and once again the earlier the better.

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