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India Magazine

March - 1960

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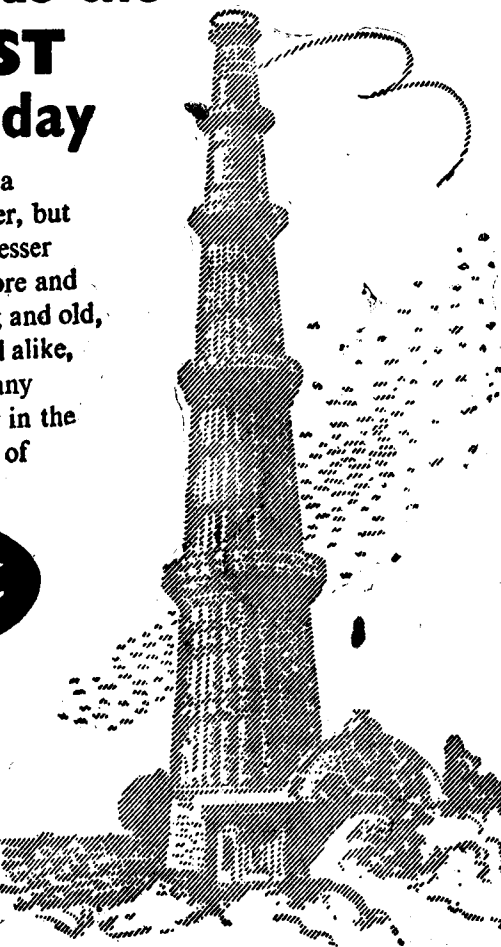
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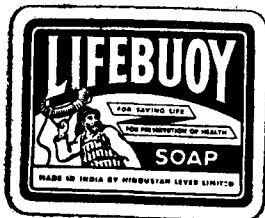


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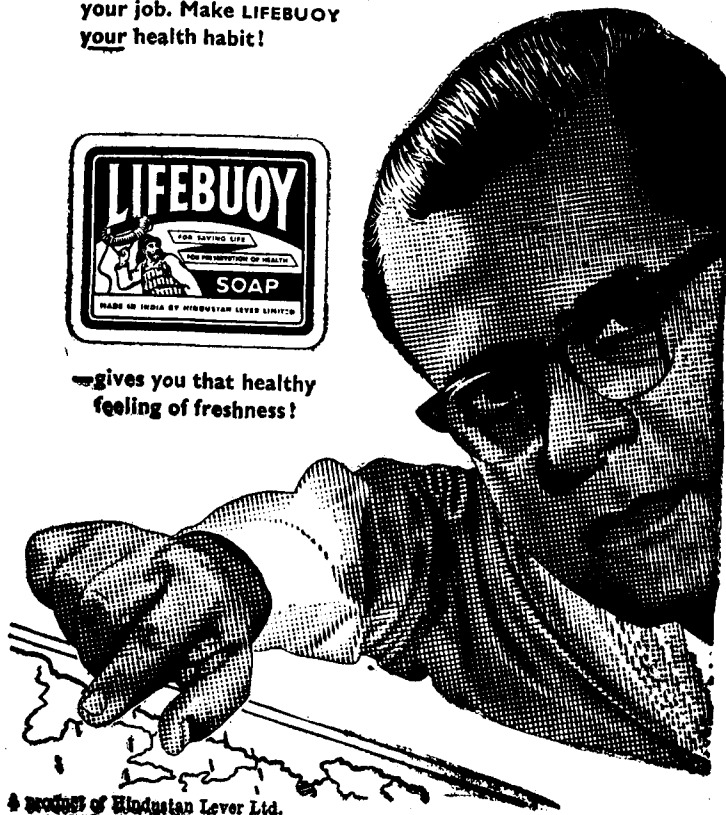
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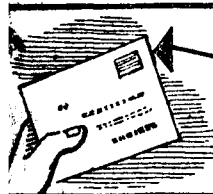
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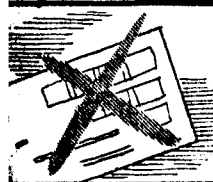
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March '60

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

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INDIA MAGAZINE Comes Out In The First Week Of Every Month

EDITORIAL

INDIA MAGAZINE

LEADING MONTHLY FOR HOME AND FAMILY

FIFTH YEAR OF PUBLICATION

VOLUME 5 } MARCH 1960 { No. 1

NEW MINISTRY IN KERALA

IN the small State of Kerala in the far South, President's rule has happily ended. The mid-term elections resulted in a resounding victory for the anti-Communist forces. And a Congress-P. S. P. coalition Ministry has assumed the reins of administration. Where chaos and confusion reigned a year ago, peace and order prevail now.

For the first time in many months the people of Kerala are enjoying a sense of security which was conspicuous by its absence when the Communists took over the State. Democratic forces were helpless before the onslaught of the extremist elements and even when there was a wave of violence no attempt was made to curb it. In the plantations conditions were far worse. When the employers were assaulted or overwhelmed on the estates, the police, even if requisitioned, just looked on and seldom interfered to restore law and order. They were told to keep their hands off and lawlessness was on the increase. Many parents who were concerned about the career and future of their youngsters came over to the neighbouring State of Madras and had a hard time getting admissions for them in the already over-crowded schools and colleges.

A special word of praise is due to Mrs. Indira Gandhi, then

President of the Congress, who had the courage of her conviction to differ from her father and demand the termination of the Communist regime and elections after a time. There were prophets of gloom who predicted that Communists would return to power with a thumping success. But the people of Kerala showed their wisdom and patriotism in inflicting a crushing defeat on the Communists. Supposing for a moment the latter had won, the cause of democracy would have been lost and the morale of the nation would have suffered a grievous blow.

In our view nothing would have been lost and everything would have been gained if Congress had been magnanimous enough to include a member of the Muslim League in the Cabinet. The general impression is that in recognition of the League's services in defeating the Reds, a portfolio would be given to its nominee. To many of us the name of the Muslim League stinks. It stood for separate electorates which ended in disastrous partition. Even then it is well to remember Congress agreed to hand over the portfolio of finance to Mr. Liaquat Ali Khan in the Interim Government.

Have we not been tolerating the Communists whose extra-territorial patriotism is common knowledge? Some of our leaders who must know better hobnobbed with them and even professed admiration for their ideals if not for their policies. We even allowed them to assume office and they have done their worst. The Muslim League, though contemptible, supported the Congress.

An understanding, even if not fully authorised, is an understanding all the same. A League member can even now be appointed Minister without portfolio or with a minor one. That would have been a grander gesture.

TO OUR READERS

We are happy to record that INDIA MAGAZINE is entering, with this issue, on its fifth year of publication. To the vast number of our readers—subscribers, news agents, advertisers, contributors, and well-wishers—we offer our grateful thanks. To them all INDIA MAGAZINE owes its increasing success and we hope they will continue to extend their support in the years to come. In keeping with their desire INDIA MAGAZINE contains more stories than before. We, on our part, take this opportunity of reassuring them that it shall be our constant aim and endeavour to present a richer and more sumptuous fare every time.

COVER PAGE STORY

THE ARTIST

By U. ANAND SAGAR

He was quite a clever artist and a devil with women. What could he do but make love to them when beauties threw themselves on him?

A N artist of established repute, Chandur Gupta was young for all his talent and fame. Many aristocratic landlords (we shouldn't be calling them zamindars or princes any longer) invited Gupta to paint them in different poses. The portraits in natural colours against a splendid background were duly framed and hung upon the walls for generations to see and admire.

With brush and paint he became a wizard. He reproduced down to the minutest detail any figure of man or woman or beast or all of them together. In particular, Gupta's pictures of women on the canvas in all seductive poses simply

stunned the art-loving public. He would make a pretty woman ten times more attractive by bringing out in full bloom an enigmatic smile, the sparkle of her teeth, the dimple which imparted perfection to her face or the rising swell of her young bosom.

When film producer Sawa saw his pictures at an exhibition he was gushing with admiration. He motored to the residence of Gupta facing a small lake at the foot of a hill and waited there for hours until the artist returned home. He potted about the artist's gardens so beautifully well laid out with flowers blazing in all colours, a refreshing breeze from over

the hill range was wafting the fragrance of the flowers which not even the best of scent bottles could imitate. In such a spot, thought Producer Sawa, no man could get old. There was sunshine in the day and coolness in the night even at the height of summer. Nature's beauty cast a hypnotic spell on one and all who visited it. No wonder Gupta had named his house as Indra Nivas. The very ruler of heaven would readily prefer it as his personal "nest."

GUPTA was very apologetic when he learnt that his distinguished visitor had been waiting for him for more than ten hours. He treated him to refreshments and took him round the house every room of which displayed the artist's taste and refinement. It was like Indra "lok" what with divans, cushioned sofas, soft, feathery beds draped in velvet, full-length mirrors, coloured bulbs that gave an eerie effect, pictures of the women whom he had painted in too scanty costumes.

The central hall which had a marble floor so polished that one could gaze down at his reflection served as the artist's studio. There was a huge canvas behind which was a cot and bed to which the sitter might retire for a brief hour and change dress.

Sawa marvelled at Gupta's genius and forthwith engaged him as the chief artist for all his publicity campaigns. He

was to bring to life huge figures of his stars on the canvas. He had to paint them in new poses — 'stills' which the fans could not see in the films proper but which in the advance publicity campaign captured the imagination of the public and set them raving mad.

The box office appeal of the Sawa Company films increased a thousand fold after Gupta took charge of his new assignment. The huge posters with the leading actress of the Sawa Studios were the talk of the town. His latest picture of Malti caused quite a sensation. She was in a sarong and a bra as if getting ready for a bath.

The selection of Malti to play the feminine lead in all his pictures was a happy choice on which Sawa received glowing tributes from the press and the public. She looked natural and spoke natural and she had all the charms which any man would like to associate with his ideal woman. She needed no playback and sang all the songs that formed part of her role. She wore a dress that dazzled but at no time was it immodest or scanty. Her popularity as the reigning queen of the screen was unquestioned. After the advent of Gupta she definitely became the idol of the screen world—the film fans' Sweet-heart No. 1.

TRUE to her reputation, she was a modest housewife, devoted to her husband, Mitra, and never

longed for the caresses of another man. At one time there were any number of directors, producers and actors who swarmed around her like flies around a honey pot. Each of them was dreaming of taking her in his arms. She was not married then and reigned in the heart of every bachelor. When a film magazine took a poll as to which actress they would vote for as their companion on a deserted island, ninety per cent of the readers plumped for Malti.

SHE was naturally very friendly with Gupta. The latter, accustomed to painting the loveliest of lovelies, had many women in his life. Even the best of artists are, as a rule, Bohemians, irregular in their ways and habits. And here was the most intelligent and ablest of them and, as could be expected, he was more erratic than most of them.

In Gupta's life there were many beautiful women. Some of them surreptitiously came to his studio and thrust themselves on him. And some of them he courted and pursued until he conquered them. He endeared himself to them by his unconventional manners and methods. But all his mistresses were disillusioned at the discovery that he was as pitiless in throwing them out as he had been tempestuous in his love-making. The very nature of his work made him fickle-minded and disloyal and he hopped from one beauty to another.

He would never so much as take another look at a cast-off mistress.

Of his treacherous and shifty moods Malti had often heard. She was not much interested because she had no sympathy for the women who had thrown themselves on him. "Why should they lose their heads and run after him?" she would ask.

She moved with him on a different footing. She talked with him as she sat for a portrait now and then. She knew that he was in love with her. But her position and prestige kept him at a respectful distance, though they joked and chaffed each other in intimate language. Her husband knew that she would never waver in her loyalty and would look on as they talked or would wait outside until the portrait was finished.

MALTI was fuming like a volcano in eruption when she saw her own picture on the canvas that Gupta had painted. She did not object to the sarong and bra in which she had never posed. Gupta had drawn on his imagination. She was upset over the discovery that on the left side of her back five inches below her neck there was a mole which the artist had reproduced at the exact spot. Her husband alone knew about it. No other male could have seen it. How did Gupta manage to see it? Had her hus-

—Continued on page 15

groom your girls

MANY mothers feel, and rightly so, that one of the first duties to little daughter is to see that she gets a good foundation for adult beauty.

This job is one that requires constant supervision for a little daughter gets her first grooming habits from mother. A girl who grows up knowing that cleanliness and neatness are part of being pretty, becomes the attractive woman who knows how to make the most of her appearance. There is no "awkward stage" in teen years, if she's been trained in poise and charm that began early in childhood.

Most mothers could afford to have chief concern about grace in the young daughter. Good carriage is very important and should be taught in early childhood. The young girl should learn to stand easily and naturally erect, the lower abdomen pulled in, chest and head up, back straight—not a "military" posture, however. Posture errors or a habitual pose, such as standing

over a school desk in a stoop with weight on one foot or leaned posture, may cause a permanent "bowing" of the spine. But don't make your child do corrective exercises or wear braces unless your doctor advises them. Young bones are soft and the wrong exercises or braces may do more harm than good.

In walking and even standing still, the toes should be pointed straight ahead or slightly inward. Shoes should fit well—tight socks may cramp the toes. But shoes that are too large may rub against the toes and cause corns. If the arches seem weak or flat, get your doctor's advice about shoes and foot exercises, because more can be done to correct this condition during childhood than in later life. Here are some rules to follow in laying the foundation for your little girl's grooming habits.

Make sure she gets plenty of sleep and rest—she plays hard and certainly needs both.

—Continued on page 15

On To The Moon

HAVE you ever noticed the figure of a little hare on the moon? And have you heard the story of how it came here?

The legends tell us that he was born many, many times on this earth—five hundred and fifty times in all. Sometimes he was born as a man, sometimes as an animal. Once he came as a little hare.

The hare had three close friends: an otter, a jackal and a monkey. They all lived close to one another in a forest, and the little hare was the wisest and best of them all. He taught the other three to be kind and charitable, and never to complain. He also taught them to fast on all fast-days. One fast-day they all went wandering about the forest, each on his own.

The otter suddenly smelt some fish, of which otters are very fond. The smell seemed to come out of the earth, so the otter began to scratch up the

soil. Soon he found a large fish that somebody had buried. The hare told his friends never to take what belonged to other people, so before touching the fish, the otter cried out three times;

"Does anybody claim this fish?"

As nobody replied, he picked it up and ran off home with it, feeling very happy about the nice meal he was going to have. Then suddenly he remembered that it was a fast-day, so he stored the fish away for the next morning.

"How good I am!" he thought proudly. (Now *that* is not the way to be good, as I expect you can see for yourselves, without my telling you, but I suppose the poor otter didn't know any better.)

The jackal who, in spite of the hare's teachings, was a rather nasty, thieving sort of fellow, had gone wandering in quite a different direction to the otter

and soon to a little hut. Peeping inside the door, he saw a large joint of meat roasting over the fire, but the owner of the hut was nowhere to be seen. Now, if you see some food cooking over the fire inside a house, you can be sure that the food has an owner, can't you?—even if he doesn't happen to be in sight. But the jackal was very crafty. Seeing that the owner of the hut must have gone out, he called out three times, as fast as he could: "Does anybody claim this meat?"—then snatched up the meat and ran.

When he got home he remembered that it was a fast-day and so sadly put the meat away for the next day.

The monkey found some ripe mangoes, and as they were growing on a tree, he did not need to ask anybody's permission before taking them. But remembering, like the others, that it was a fast-day, he put the mangoes away on reaching home.

Now Sakra, the King of the Gods (whose other name is Indra) wanted to see if the four friends were really as good and pious as they seemed to be. So he took the form of a poor old beggar and came down to earth.

First he went to the otter and begged for food.

The otter generously offered him the fish which he had found, but Sakra politely said that he did not want fish.

Then he went in turn to the jackal and the monkey. The first (who had a good heart, in spite of his faults) offered the meat, and the monkey kindly brought out the mangoes, but Sakra declined these things too. He did not really want to take anything away from them, but only to test them.

When he came to the little hare he found him sitting on a patch of grass. This grass was the only food the little creature ever ate. When the beggar asked for food, the hare was troubled. He had nothing but grass and he was sure a human being would not like that. But he could not even think of sending the beggar away hungry.

"Please light a fire," he said at last to the beggar, and the old man made a fire of dry twigs and leaves.

When the flames were leaping high, the brave little hare jumped into the heart of the fire, so that the beggar might have roasted meat to eat.

But the flames changed into cool snow, and Sakra, in all his heavenly glory, stood smiling in the place where, a moment before, the beggar man had been.

And to make men remember for ever the great deed and generous loving-kindness of the brave little hare, Sakra painted a figure of a hare on the moon, where you can see it to this day.

THE ARTIST—CONTINUED
band already seen the picture and drawn his own inferences?

For three days she thought and wondered. One evening after finishing her work in the studio she asked the driver to go home and drove the car herself to Indra Nivas, the artist's abode. He had been absent for some days and she wanted to tackle him on this intimate detail as the matter was fraught with grave consequences. Her husband was on a visit to a friend's house and would not be back before midnight.

ALL her anger disappeared when Gupta came out to receive her with a gracious smile and hearty welcome. He took her to the room adjoining the hall which was the most luxuriously furnished. After tea he asked her what he could do for her in a tone of humility that surprised her. Sitting on the soft bed under more glamorous lights she forgot the purpose of her visit and embraced him. She had fallen under his hypnotic spell. There was something about his powerful magnetic eyes which she couldn't resist.

Three hours later when she started her car homeward she asked him about the mole. He laughingly told her how a small bribe to her servant woman elicited the truth and he had done the picture accordingly.

Like all other stupid mistresses she daily went to Gupta's

house and spent some hours with him. Late one night when she returned home she was horrified at the discovery that her husband was hanging from a beam in the roof. The unfortunate event received the fullest publicity and that marked the end of her popularity. When Gupta too left her, she retired into obscurity. †

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GROOM YOUR GIRLS—CONTINUED

Teach her how to use the toothbrush as soon as possible. Attention to teeth is the basis for proper care of her permanent teeth. Guard her teeth by regular visits to the dentist.

Don't forget the hairbrush. Here's a chance for you both to spend a few companionable minutes at the dressing table. Together you can count the brush strokes that bring out the sheen in your hair.

Teach her the importance of cleanliness. This means thorough hand washing before meals as well as daily bathing.

A well-balanced diet is important to beauty, so see that she gets plenty of fresh fruits, vegetables, milk and other health foods.

Have her eyes checked. Ask your physician about diseases she should be immunized against. Good health is essential for good looks!—N. N. †

SHORT STORY

He drove away his wife to marry the most lovely girl. Five years of new-found happiness left a bitter taste in his mouth...

His

Two

By

Sambu Mitra

Wives

HARIVADAN was a very cunning unprincipled man. He was very poor and struggling before he married Kaushalya, daughter of a dealer in foodgrains. She was a charming sweet-tempered woman who placed absolute trust in her husband and faithful like our traditional heroines. She was extremely happy when she became the mother of a boy.

Harivadan would have been as happy as his wife but his son Kundan was very deaf. He began to dislike his son when other boys in the street and his neighbours jeered at Kundan. It was a pity that the boy stam-

mered also, much to the father's consternation. Whenever Kundan ran to his father for some affectionate petting even as his playmates were fondled in their homes, Harivadan would simply ignore him or push him aside.

Whenever Kaushal noticed this scene she felt hurt but dared not protest. For, her husband had a streak of cruelty in him which manifested itself in crude forms of behaviour. He spat at his wife and brutally struck her down at the slightest provocation.

Soon, however, he lost interest

in her and his heart inclined towards a young beauty, Savitri. To his cycle shop she used to come twice or thrice a week. She rode on a cycle and that feat enhanced her attractions for him. His business increased because other cyclists came to his shop for repair. They stood staring at her and admiring her beauty while the vehicles were being mended. The outcome was obvious. Their friendship ripened into love.

ON the death of Kaushalya's father, Harivadan became suddenly rich. He took over all the landed property which his father-in-law had willed away to his wife. It was a clever move the implications of which Kaushalya could hardly understand. She had great faith in her husband and far greater faith in God.

But the next move that her husband made almost took her breath away. He announced his intention of taking a second wife. He told Kaushalya plainly—brutally—that Kundan was more a burden than an asset to the family. At any rate, he wanted a boy who was not deaf and who did not stammer. The distraught wife went on her knees and made tearful pleas to desist from such a disastrous step. Would it not ruin both mother and son?

But he paid no heed to her. Soon it became clear to her that

she would not get a copper from him. Her father's property which she had transferred to him in good faith was now as good as lost. The young woman had agreed to marry him on condition that he settled all his property on her and gave a solemn written understanding to that effect and endorsed by an advocate of good repute. Her request staggered him. He knew that her father was a loafer who used to swindle simple-minded fellows. But Savitri was a luscious beauty with a voluptuous figure, with sex appeal oozing from every curve. His one burning desire was to possess her and he capitulated to her demands.

On the eve of his second marriage he packed off his wife and son to his mother-in-law's house. The old woman was living on the little money left by her husband. When her daughter and grandson came to live with her she was very sad. Of course they would be a source of solace to her but she had not much to offer them. Their lot would be as wretched and miserable as hers.

HARIVADAN was extremely happy with Savitri as his second wife. Within five years she came to have a complete hold on him. She converted all his assets into hard cash and would grudge and grunt if ever he asked for any extra sum. If his first wife had been afraid of him, he in turn was terribly

scared of his wife. She was cold and pitiless. In the place of a heart there must be an iceberg, he thought. At dead of the night she would wake him up and ask him to run to the all-night sweet-stall-wallah at the corner and get some cakes and fried stuff. If he refused she would neglect him for a week by way of punishment and would deny him the comfort of her company and embraces. And occasionally she taunted him as an old man of fifty, twice her age and asked him with a cruel smile why the devil he had chosen to marry her.

He winced under the lash of her sharp tongue and toiled on harder than ever. Asthma in its worst form took a grip on him and for many days he suffered without any ministrations on the part of his wife. During such hours of agony she would go out on her cycle and return late. Without speaking a word to him she would retire to bed in another room. All she would say was: "Asthma will never kill but you have to struggle with it alone. If Fate has decreed so, who can help it?"

KAUSHALYA was pining away for the husband who had deserted her. But she was all absorbed in her son and taught him to correct his speech. She had read somewhere that stammerers could cure themselves by putting pebbles in their mouths and speaking slowly, deliber-

ately. Her son, much to the pleasant surprise of her mother and grandmother, had cultivated the art of speaking without a stammer though there were awkward pauses at times. In the next two years he even got over this handicap.

AN ear specialist was regularly treating him and he advised the mother to give him more nutritious food and certain tonics to build and tone up his system. The boy became less and less deaf by gradual stages and he was able to hear others very well. Both mother and grandmother worked hard as cooks in rich men's houses to secure the best medical attention for the boy and good education. A kind-hearted headmaster gave him a full-free scholarship and put him in touch with rich donors who helped him with books and decent clothes.

It was the month of December. On a very cold evening Kaushalya proudly led her son towards her husband's house. She had come all the way from her mother's town to show what a fine boy Kundan had grown into. He spoke fluently, looked very handsome and his deafness affected him not at all. She was afraid Harivadan might drive her out and Savitri would even threaten her with a broomstick. But she risked it all. The door was ajar and she went in. "Is there nobody in?" she called.

There was no response. The rooms were untidy and full of dust. They had not been swept for days. Tears came into her eyes. She slowly went upstairs to her husband's room. She could scarcely believe her eyes. Her husband, reduced to a skeleton, was gasping for breath, the eyeballs almost popping out of their sockets. He was seized with a spasm of coughing.

HE at once recognized her and nodded to her in welcome. He wanted some water to drink. She ran down, filled a tumbler under the tap and helped him to drink it. It was ice-cold but there was no time to prepare hot water. She gathered him in her arms and kissed his forehead with all affection and devotion.

"Stay with me," he begged of both mother and the son. "It is a fortnight since Savitri left me. She has taken all my money and run away with a lover."

With tears in his eyes he told Kaushal how cruel his second wife had been. She ordered the best of food from the hotels,

invited her good-for-nothing father to share it but would leave none for himself. He recalled how Kaushal would not touch food until he finished his meal whether it was late in the day or past midnight.

"Every night Savitri was accompanied by a young man whom she called Madan. At first she had introduced him as her cousin brother. But one day he had suddenly entered her room and found her kissing him on the lips. "What is the meaning of this?" he asked indignantly.

"The meaning is that old fools should never marry." He had felt like murdering her then and there but somehow he cooled down. That very night she disappeared with him....

With patience and love Kaushal nursed him back to health and made of him a new man devoid now of all his earlier cruelty and brutish nature. She helped him to re-open his cycle shop and earn an honest livelihood while Kundan went back to school. ‡

The divine insanity of noble minds, that never falters nor abates, but labours, endures, and waits, till all that it foresees it finds, or what it cannot find, creates.—LONGFELLOW.

Family Of Man!

"We are all ready, daddy"
"All right let us get along."

WE are soon at the D route bus stop waiting for the red monster. Twenty minutes elapse but the bus is not in sight.

"Is there a bus strike to-day, daddy?" questions Arvind, my eldest son.

"I don't know; the morning papers did not say so." I answer.

"These people are clever, daddy. They strike after the papers are printed" comes out the juniormost junior.

Just then a double-decker darts up and all of us become alert in the queue.

"No seat, *jaga nahi*" announces the conductor with the air of a Supreme Commander. After a quarter of an hour another bus glides in and we breathe easy. But as the bus draws near, we breathe easy. But as the bus draws near, we see it carrying a board On Test."

"Is it the bus that is on test? Or....." asks Arvind.

"Is it the driver who is on trial?" interrupts his brother Pramod.

"No, I think it is the conductor who is being trained," argues my Shrimati.

"It is our patience that is on test," sums up Poornima, my only daughter. Poornima is a quiet girl. She breaks her silence when she is really upset. We, therefore, decide to walk a few yards back for 'B' route. This is a technical victory for Arvind, because he had pleaded for 'B' even before we stepped out of our house. When we are midway between 'D' and 'B' stops, another giant belonging to 'D' tribe comes roaring almost vacant. What a disappointment! With a heavy heart, the entire team reaches the 'B' stop. To our relief, however, we find ourselves the opening batsmen at that stop.

The devil of a 'B' dashes in

but the man in the uniform shouts at the top of his voice. "*Line muth thodo.*" *Sirf do seat hai*" My family members have hurried consultations and decide to opt out in favour of other people in the queue. For, my family believes in the maxim 'United we stand, divided we fall.'

After a yawning half hour, a special bus arrives and all of us board it triumphantly. "Three full and four half tickets to Lake House." The Junior takes charge of all the tickets. "Oh, what a speed! In no time we are at the Rana Chowk," screams Pramod. "And no further," blurts out the chauffeur. The bus develops engine trouble and we are asked to await a relief bus. I suggest the poor man's transport, the tram. But my family votes me out. "A *pada yatra*' is preferable to a tram," ridicules Arvind. I have used the tram for two decades and I know its glory. Alas! the tram is not for the younger generation. I, therefore, decide not to debate. At this stage, my wife makes a significant contribution. "Darling, a 'victoria' is the only way out. It serves two purposes. We can all go together. Secondly, I feel like reviving the sweet old memories" Poornima, the vigilant, just then draws our attention to a traffic board "Animal-drawn vehicles are prohibited in this area from 5 p. m. to 8 p. m." "Bad luck, mummy," giggles Arvind.

"Daddy, don't you have any friend who can give us a lift in his car?" hits Pramod.

"Ah, look, Jeerachand Dalchand is driving his Dodge all alone. Sethji, Sethji" I scream with delight. The Sethji, shrewd as he is, dodges us with his huge Dodge. He must have felt helpless on seeing my battalion.

"Taxi, taxi," commands the practical-minded Arvind. He orders half the infantry to enter the BMR and the other half to take care of itself. This is a snap decision of Arvind after having experienced weakness—instead of strength—in unity.

The St. George Ambulance comes to the rescue of the remaining half. It is on its return journey from the hospital. The driver is a family friend and a kindly soul. He readily obliges us. The whole army is again united at the Lake House. We heave a sigh of relief. But all is not well that does not end well. Such were the surging, uncontrollable, mammoth crowds that had gathered to see the "Family of Man" exhibition at the Netaji Hall next to Lake House; the organisers had to close the gates of the Hall for the day.

"Good heavens, Family of Man!"

Well, is ours not a great family of Man? Have we not exhibited ourselves rather well this afternoon?" winds up Shrimati.

STORY

The Stranger At Home

By SARADA PRASAD

Who was the old man? Why should Sundar ask his wife to attend on him? What irresistible attraction had he for them?

OUTSIDE the weather was in no way congenial for the sky was overcast and threatend rain. In spite of it, Dr. Janaki finished her toilet and got ready to go to the hospital and to her duties. After offering her half awake spouse a hot cup of coffee, in fact, bed coffee, she said, "I am going to the hospital. Two autopsies to perform. No idea when I shall return. Probably by eight in the night. And so make the best of the day by yourself" and added, "So long." She was about to leave the bedside, but the husband Sundar caught her by her right wrist and pulled her to his side.

"Today is a Sunday. I suppose you know that! You glibly say, you have duties to perform and autopsies to conduct. Why don't you take the day off and stay?"

"Sorry," she said, "Duty. This is a special assignment. One is a suspected murder and the other is morphia poisoning. I have to issue certificates by to-day evening. Sunday? Every day is a Sunday to you. Let me do my job at least," and rose from her husband's side and adjusted the wrinkled saree, "my wayward husband."

"Oh, you women! What of

food etc.?" grumbled the husband...

"I sent away the cook for she wanted to go to her daughter. You will find all your requirements in containers and you can make the best use of the day by disposing of the office papers. So take it easy" said the wife and left the room followed by protesting noises. She left the house for the hospital in her Morris-minor open bodied sedan.

Outside the sky was getting darker.

SHE took the main road to the hospital at a distance of three miles from home; avoiding the traffic congestion in the city area; the urchins that crossed the road at every point; the hawkers, who did their business in the middle of the street; the hooting of electric horns of the cars in front and behind, that blurred the traffic signals by the point police man; the auto-rickshaws that tried to overtake her car, managed to drive safely through this maze with skill and precision, as only a car driver could do. She reached the hospital in record time, as her custom. She was never late for her work.

Back in the big house, Sundar was fully awake. His mind was a vacuum, devoid of human feelings or emotions. His life revolved around two objects—one his wife and the

other his job as an Electrical Engineer in a private firm of contractors. He was something like a walking dead. There were sufficient reasons for what he had become. At the age of five, he had to meet some one who replaced his mother by then dead. The step-mother who lavished more interest on her wardrobe, ignored this child and took little or no care of him. His father, Rama Rao, was sufficiently intelligent to understand this situation and put him to a convent and left the property he got by his first wife to this boy, to be used as he wished. The property nearly amounted to two hundred thousand. He had refused to give this child to his brothers-in-law, who pestered him to do so. Being a man of vitriolic temperament, he had told them to go to the devil, and said, "I know how to take care of my child. I don't want my son to be brought up by madcaps."

AT the age of six, Sundar found himself a student in a convent and carried on till he attained the age of fifteen. He had developed a temperament, which had no affinity with his own way of thinking or with any one. He seldom cared for orders or obeyed instructions. He was intelligent in spite of these weaknesses. Janaki, who was then thirteen, found this boy interesting and made life easy a bit by introducing him to her parents, who took immense liking for this wayward boy,

who seemed to have been in a shell of suspicion and lack of human love. They tended him with care and love. In due course, his temperament changed a bit though not completely, but enough to carry him on in the walk of life. By sheer intelligence and brilliance, he graduated along with Janaki, who goaded him all the way up, by use of tact and womanly love. There were occasions, when he escaped suspension by the skin of his teeth. Timely interference of Janaki's father averted these catastrophes. In privacy he was morbid and took to drinking as a change-over, when he attained adulthood.

He was then twenty. He had no communication with his father and never met his uncles or any relative, nor did he care much about these.

He had developed an attractive outward personality by exercise and games. When Janaki became of age, she found Sundar interesting and their close association for years found the climax in their getting married. Sundar did not intimate this fact to his father or anybody, as he had no idea where they were.

The more Janaki moved closer, she found the man, her husband, as an over-grown, naughty boy requiring careful handling and treatment meted to a super

sensitive stallion. She did her best to keep him under control with love and care. There was that undercurrent of understanding between these two.

SUNDAR found his wife a model woman. She did not argue with him for she had learnt from experience, her husband was a mule in some respects. These aspects she never touched. He had no friends; visitors came very seldom. In the office, his activities began and ended with paper. He maintained an iron discipline among others. His staff feared rather than liked him. When he found delinquency in others, he punished them rather very severely and drastically. He had not the capacity or quality to excuse others for their faults. This was nothing but the reflection of his own weaknesses, which he never considered he had in him.

Sunday! An overcast sky. Possibility of rain in the offing. What a day to spend alone with his wife in the hospital, and the day to pass! He rose up, yawned and wandered his way to the bath room, finished shaving, bathed, dressed and then what? This "What" loomed large in his mind. He scrupulously avoided tackling the office papers on Sundays. He went to the kitchen and muttered "lousy" to himself and after surveying the containers, he turned back to his room and opened one of the drawers and pulled out a bottle

of "Black and white" whiskey from its recess. He consumed a fair amount of it in one single draught.

This seemed to steady him a bit. After carefully corking it he placed the bottle back in the drawer and locked it. Of course, his wife did not know this habit was still in him. She did not pry into his room. So, she had not the opportunity to find the presence of liquor in it. She knew him well enough to know he had that habit but never questioned him as she knew her efforts would be wasted. Knowing this, he did what he pleased without impediment or objections from his wife. Janaki, an ardent optimism abided her time.

In fact he had become immune to criticism and degenerated. But he kept his end up because of the necessity to maintain a certain status.

He went to his wife's room very neat as always. He found the book entitled "Crime and Punishment" from the shelf. Reclining in the easy chair he began to read. When he came to the portion where the young man gets jittery because of his conscience telling him about the crime he had committed, he he threw the book in a corner. Thought took over: "Crime. Punishment meted out by the prompting of the conscience. This is nonsense" This began to worry him a bit. Reason was

telling him that he was stepping into the pit of depravity in spite of what his wife was trying to do to him.

Janaki had taken him because he was a destitute and in reality an orphan, who lacked love and affection. What was he doing to her? He was not justified in his activities or his behaviour towards her and parents. With these thoughts buzzing in his whiskey-sodden brain he rose, he washed himself once again and resorted to the coffee container. He finished the coffee slowly in small doses. By then, it was eleven by his wrist watch. He rose and went to the kitchen, heated the food on the electric heater and ate. All the while his brain was busy with thoughts. Thoughts, the nemesis!

It was dreadful to be alone with one's thoughts and only then he wanted the company of his wife more than anything to share his inmost thoughts. He phoned to the hospital but was told she was too busy in the postmortem room but enquired about his programme for the afternoon.

"I have not yet decided what to do but tell her to hurry up and come home soon, if possible," he said.

"I will do that, Sir" said the compounder.

Again he picked up the discarded book and continued

reading. He finished it by two and thought of going to some picture. He locked up the house and handed over the key to the gardener with instructions to hand over the key to the mistress, when she returned.

THE gardener took the key from his master without a word and a low bow. Sundar inclined his head in acceptance of the salutation. He walked down the drive and picked up a stray autorickshaw. He who never took notice of anything began to watch the scenery that revealed itself all along the way from the rustic suburban environments to the city. This fascinated him. The autorickshaw with its limited speed afforded this. By about 3 p. m. he was standing in the portico of the cinema house where the picture, "Scaramouche" was running. He entered the portico and on to the canteen, where he ordered some coffee.

By his side an old man was standing, past sixty years with grey hairs. There was something familiar about the old man which Sundar could not place. He sipped his coffee thoughtfully. At that time he felt a hand on his shoulder. He turned round to see one of his college mates standing.

"Hullo, Sundar, how are you?" said the new comer.

"Fine and thank you, Mukund" said Sundar "and After some side reels and trailers, the main picture

what has brought you to this city?"

"I am a medical representative and on the run for business" said Mukund, "And may I know what you are?"

"I am an Electrical Engineer in the employ of H. C. C. and live here, that is, I bought a bungalow in the suburbs. My wife is a Doctor. I think you know her—Janaki our class mate. After the show you can come along with me and stay as long as you please."

"Thank you," said Mukund, "and suppose your wife objects? You see we never met. I mean, your wife does not know me and I didn't think it is right to intrude into your privacy."

"NONSENSE. I think she can recognise you and she will probably welcome you."

They took 2.50 tickets and entered the theatre and enjoyed the show. Along with them the old man was also in the picture house in the same class.

Sundar watched the old man without knowing why he was doing it. He could not account for this interest born in him. The lights were switched off and the show began.

began. Sundar, though an ardent film fan, and liked the acting of Stewart Granger and the novel by Sabatini, was preoccupied by the hazy sort of old man as his near and dear relative, whom he unconsciously watched. The old man too was watching him.

AT the closing scene when the brother flings his rapier down on the stage as he recognises in his erstwhile enemy the brother whom he had not known, the old man crashed down from his seat without any apparent reason in a dead swoon. Sundar shot out from his seat as though he had been shot with a high calibre rifle and went to the place where he found the old man inert. This was a shock to him, as he was not accustomed to handle anything inert and without knowing what to do.

"Mukund, I think this old man is very bad indeed. We shall take him to my house and phone my wife to rush up. Get a taxi."

The audience thinned out after sympathising with Sundar.

"Thank you," said Sundar unconsciously, as though the state of the old man affected him personally.

Mukund helped Sundar take the old man to the taxi, assisted by the cinema hall servants.

He made the old man comfortable in his own room. He had made the driver break every traffic rule, promising all safety from the police in case the driver was booked for over-speeding.

He phoned the hospital and contacted his wife who had just finished her work. It was then half past seven. He told her about the circumstances. "Janaki, he is so helpless, I am afraid of the consequences. You better hurry up and don't be late, for God's sake."

Dr. Janaki, though surprised, suppressed it because she detected concern in the voice, which was foreign to her husband. She explained the situation to her staff and started within five minutes after the news was heard by her. In less than twenty minutes, Dr. Janaki was by the side of the old man. One look at the face of the old man and her husband showed strong resemblance which started a train of thought in her mind. She examined her patient and diagnosed the possibility of meningitis.

"Well, what of it?" asked Sundar.

"I SUSPECT blood pressure, worry, nervous depression. I think he should have complete rest and careful nursing. What I should like to know is who is to take care of him. You know his address, I suppose?"

"No, I don't. I know him in a hazy way but I never met him. I have no recollection, whatever."

Dr. Janaki turned to Mukund and exchanged courtesies.

"I am glad, Doctor, you have remembered me. Thank you very much. There is something very familiar about the face of that old man. I think I have seen him years back at Bangalore when I was very young, probably about when I was ten years old. As Sundar says, my recollection too is hazy, very hazy."

"Could you tell me under what circumstances you have met him?"

"Yes, I could do that. I went to the picture house to see the picture 'Scaramouche' where I was joined by Mukund and the old man was also there. He took the ticket of the same class as we did and during the last scene, for no apparent reason, he fell down in a dead faint. The lights went up and I was unconsciously interested in him, rushed up and with Mukund to help me brought him home and phoned you up."

SHE heard this silently and came to the conclusion which would surprise all. She knew instinctively the old man was Sundar's father. She was glad. And to be sure how much this

sudden change in her husband would last, she asked, "And you say you do not know the address of this old man, let him remain here for a period till he gets better. I shall nurse him because he requires constant attention; if he does not recover consciousness by to-morrow morning, there is no hope of recovery."

"WHAT do you mean by that?" Sundar's voice was harsh and quite new. She noticed a change in the voice too. Her husband had somehow changed from what he was some hours previously. For what, only time and circumstances could prove or otherwise of it.

"I am afraid it is meningitis. In this, the patient loses all powers, both physical and mental. The cause could be attributed to two things. Constant worry, harassment, mental depression, and, you better run up and get me these injection vials from the hospital. Better be very quick. He requires all night watch by turns. I think, Mukund will stay the night and help."

"That I shall with all my heart and soul," said Mukund.

Sundar left the house with the prescription and within forty five minutes he was back.

Dr. Janaki instructed the men to be alert and they had to

work under instructions, which were without argument carried out.

By that time it was ten. They got their food from the nearest hotel and after food, Sundar took up watch and stayed with the old man till 2 a. m. Then Mukund took up watch till 6 in the morning. Dr. Janaki phoned up the hospital and applied for leave.

For three days, she fought death and on the fourth morning she was relieved to find the old man recover consciousness and utter one single word "Sundar." This had unravelled the mystery. The old man was the father of Sundar and her father-in-law. She was glad and nursed him till he became strong enough to speak about himself.

"Whoever you are, I thank you," said the old man, "I thought that there was nothing in this world for me to live in spite of worldly possessions. And, Doctor, I thank you because for a young woman you have done more than a daughter ever could. I have no daughter, except a son, whom I have lost sight of for over twenty years. I married a second wife after the demise of my first wife, the mother of my son Sundar, when he was barely five years old. This second wife of mine was rather inclined to be selfish and she openly told me that she cannot stand any child in the house except her own."

"You said 'was' regarding your second wife?"

"Yes, she is now dead. To continue, I put my son in a convent and also gave the money his mother brought with her for his use. You know how a male is regarding woman. He becomes too stupid and at times loses sense of proportion. She made me feel small, very small indeed. In the vigour of youth I regarded enjoyment was the only worthy thing in life and even forgot about my son. This sort of life dragged on for some fifteen years and she developed tuberculosis and died. I hankered for the past life and the son I lost sight of all those years."

I TRIED to trace him but only succeeded in ascertaining his whereabouts. I was told that he continued his college course and became an Electrical Engineer. That he got married to some one, a college mate of his. I came to this town on this day only. I tried to locate his office but thought that he might not know me and recognise me, so I desisted from making a fool of myself. I spent the day in a hotel. I thought and thought till I decided to see a picture and came to the cinema hall.

"There I met a man in whom I saw the face of my child and along with a friend of his. I could recollect the wavy hair, the aquiline nose, the sensitive mouth, the dimple etc. but in that strong

face, I lost the dimples but lines of probably dissipation and hectic life. After all he is the son of his father. He too seemed to be interested in me and kept carefully watching me. For no reason when the last scene was on, I lost my senses and fell down in a dead faint. Now I find I am comfortably placed. I am indebted to you. Thank you, my dear, for what you have done to me."

"DON'T mention. I have done my duty as a doctor. It was my husband who brought you home with his friend. You were brought here about one week back. You did not recover consciousness till today. My husband has gone to the office and his friend also stays here. He shall come now. My husband shall arrive within half an hour. Please don't talk and don't worry about the past. I think you shall have to stay in bed for about a month and take rest."

"Once again, thank you."

He closed his eyes. Dr. Janaki left his side and went out, to the hall downstairs. She was careful in nursing him. Though she had heard the name of her husband to be the first word uttered by the old man the moment he recovered consciousness, she did not credit the possibility of her husband being the son of this old man. There may be some resemblance. She thought deeply over this and

left the remote chance to fate to decide the issue and cement the relationship between father and son, if they were father and son.

Time only could decide this too. There was that subtle something which had drawn her to the patient the moment she set her eyes on him, as it did her husband in the cinema theatre. There was Mukund who could speak and tell something about this old man if he knew something. While these thoughts were flitting in her mind, her husband and Mukund came into the hall. The first question that came from her husband was? "How is the old man? Has he recovered consciousness? Has he spoken to you?"

"Yes, he has recovered consciousness. He has spoken to me. He thanked me and called me his daughter, which probably I am!"

"What did he say?" There was earnestness in the voice, the harshness was gone but there was softness which amazed her.

"He said one word, when he woke up and that is 'Sundar.'"

"Can I talk to him?"

"No, not for a long time and I don't want you to disturb him."

"Let us go. Mukund, you also come along with me."

They all went up. The old man was seated in the bed and was trying to read a book.

The patient took a long, longing look at the face of Sundar and asked him to sit by the side, which Sundar did.

To Mukund, the old man said, "You are Mukund, the son of Viswanath. Am I right?"

"Yes, Sir, you are right. I am Mukund. I recollect you though it was years back. My mother used to tell me, when I grew up, about her relationship and the subsequent strain over that. As we had gone away and as you were not to be seen by us, I almost forgot you. I joined in the same college as Sundar, my friend here, and we studied for some years together. Janaki was also the student of the same college and Sundar became close to them and I learnt that she became a doctor and Sundar taking Electrical Engineering. Of course all these years we have not met, but fortunately we met in the cinema, which was pure luck.

"I saw you but could not recollect you, even when you were intensely interested in us. Sundar also was very much interested but could not understand why. The last scene in the show paved the way to come in close contact with you, when you fell down and as we were closely watching you, we came to you and re-

moved you to this house which is Sundar's. It is Janaki who treated you" turning to Sundar, "if my guess is right, I think we are housing your father, not knowing who he was from the very first. I congratulate you, Sundar, for the reunion and I too am glad I have met my maternal uncle after all these years."

SUNDAR took a long loving glance at his father. Years seem to have dropped from him. There crept a smoothness into his face which was not there for years. There were tears in his eyes which surprised Janaki. She moved to her husband's side and stood by his side.

Sundar had no words to say. He was silent. The most inveterate talker was bereft of words, for a metamorphosis had turned the man into something which was not in him for years. This was apparent because the father and son had no words to speak or say to each other. Janaki sent a silent prayer thanking her luck for getting a husband who had human qualities which she once thought were completely and totally absent in his breast.

"Father," said Sundar, softly in a whisper, "I have not spoken it for years except to those reverends who taught me as a matter of routine and without meaning. Of course I cannot ignore them but I pined for him who was responsible for my being here in this world. I

know I have developed some nasty habits but I must thank Janaki for what she has done to me. Father, this is your daughter-in-law and I hope you will love her for handing back the son you have not met for years.

"Though she is my wife, she has been more a mother to me than any one for she chides me when I do wrong and she had helped me to make myself into a human being when I was going to the dogs. I even faced suspension in college. It was her father who stood by me and got me out of the muddle. The son, you, see is the product of Janaki and her father and another girl who used to bully me when I was in high school by name Lalitha. She somehow managed to touch a chord of memory but could not catch up with it. She strongly resembled Mukund here. Probably she is his sister or cousin. She ragged me to distraction and later she married, I suppose, and maybe she is the mother of some children!"

"Yes, Sundar, you are right. She is the cousin of Mukund and daughter of my sister, that is, your aunt. She studied B. A. and got married. I had an idea to get her married to you when occasion arose. Since we did not come across each other these years, the scheme was dropped. Anyway the life has smoothened out and let the measure of happiness be full. I am proud I got a daughter-in-law who does not shy away

from the onslaughts of life and the outcome of it."

Janaki replied, "I don't want you to leave us and go back to any place. Because, in your terms, let not the measure of happiness dwindle to nothingness but remain ever full." and, "Mukund being not a stranger also can make this as his home whenever he comes. I will invite father to come and keep company for some time."

Mukund observed, "The measure of happiness! I wonder, whether mental or physical. I attribute human happiness in terms of mental freedom to appreciate things which are very dear to the heart and those who accentuate that feeling of reality that sometimes totally disappears from the human frame and mind due to circumstances. The rebel is not a rebel at all, from what I have heard from Sundar. In fact to admit one's own depravity required deep feeling and thought. And Sundar, since how many years have you been rotting mentally?"

"I have no idea but I know that I have no right to think of the by-gones. So, my dear cousin, I have no thoughts except to make myself happy by making my father happy and with Janaki's help."

The old man silently watched the happy trio and in their happiness forgot that his measure of happiness was in want. ††

Short Story

By M. Ganeshram

NURSE REPORT

She was nurse to the very man who had once betrayed her, and she wanted to wreak her vengeance.

"NURSE," called the doctor, "if the patient doesn't wake up by midnight, give me a ring. The fever has come down but I am not sure about the pulse and the heart-beat."

An elderly woman, the aunt of the patient, turned to the doctor. "Have you any misgivings, doctor? Desai is hardly twenty-eight but he has suffered such terrible disasters in his life."

"You see, Auntie," said the doctor, forcing a smile, "You have made a correct diagnosis. Desai has sustained a terrible shock. He had just finished the obsequies of his mother when

his father died of a heart attack. The shock of it all must have brought on the fever."

"These three days I have not slept a wink, doctor, and I feel I am going crazy," she said, holding her head with both her hands. She staggered across towards a cot but before she reached it she fell down. The young nurse and the doctor lifted her up and placed her on the cot. "Miss Jamuna, this is another case for your attention but I shall give her a morphia injection and send her into a long sleep. Mind, if Mr. Desai doesn't wake up by mid-

night, you give me a ring. I shall arrange to have him removed to the hospital. Shall I go now? There is a typhoid case to attend to." The doctor hurriedly snapped his leather bag shut, slammed the door and climbed into his car.

Jamuna looked angrily at the sleeping patient. Her fists clenched, her face turned crimson and her bosom heaved. Four years ago he had seduced her and left her to bear the burden of her child all alone and utterly helpless. Were all rich young men like that to peck at fruits and throw them away—in search of other fresh fruits? Why not strangle Desai in his sleep? The doctor, being young and sort of fond of her, would not suspect anything foul. Here was an excellent opportunity to wreak her vengeance. His aunt, Meera, was sleeping like a top and not even an elephant's feet would stir her into wakefulness for another eighteen hours.

But she went near the patient to glance at his handsome face—the face that she had once liked immensely and kissed innumerable times—she changed her mind and her heart melted with pity. She suffered from a terrible conflict and confusion of sentiments and wept bitterly.

SHE had been assisting her old uncle in making dolls and minding his small shop whenever he was absent and beyond her school hours. Desai who

was studying in an Institute in the evening used to come to the shop for a chat with her.

At first he made a pretence of buying dolls for his two little sisters. He paid any price her uncle named. That was how their friendship began. Her uncle, a widower, had his small house behind his shop; in one of the rooms he used to make his dolls. Whenever Jamuna helped him he paid her at the rate of two annas per hour and shared his food and drink with her.

THE old man often left the house and shop in her charge and went out to have a chat with friends in the back street. Desai would often take advantage of her loneliness and creep in by a blind lane in the back. At first she professed to be shocked but inwardly she liked him very much and wanted his company. She would urge him to stay whenever her uncle was out. Her only other relation was her sister Bimla who was married to a farmer and settled in a village near Navanagar. Jamuna was being brought up by a foster-mother after the death of her parents but since her foster-mother herself had to work and earn her livelihood they met only late in the nights. They had rented a small hut not far off from her uncle's shop. Jamuna turned over her meagre earnings to her foster-mother and ate in her uncle's house.

Whenever she failed to turn up it was understood that new dolls were being turned out and Jamuna's hands were full.

It was Desai who kept her company. Whenever they were alone in the doll-maker's house after the shop hours were over, they agreed to carry on the conversation in whispers. But she was more often content to listen to his praise of her beauty, of the sparkle in her eyes, of her chiselled nose, of the lovely dimples in her cheeks, of the constant smile that made her face radiant. One night she was bending over a half-finished doll. Her uncle, she knew, would not return home that night. Whenever he had extra money he would go to a liquor shop and drink like a fish. If he felt giddy he would sleep on one of the stone benches round a park and stagger back home in the morning.

She was smiling at the mischievous suggestion of her lover that he would like to see and enjoy the lustre of her eyes in complete darkness. True to his word, he blew out the wall lamp and peered at her face. She laid down her clay model and went up to him.

"Now, Desai, tell me the truth, look into my eyes closely. Describe the light that you see in my eyes. But, I know, you are a liar..."

"Honest, Jamuna, your eyes

are glowing—nay, dazzling. Will it be wrong if I tell you that you are the light of my life?"

He took her in his arms and pretended to scan her eyes until their lips met in a long, warm kiss. They stayed happy in the darkness until daylight. In her new-found happiness she threw caution to the winds. If her uncle was away they would sleep together beside the dolls. If her uncle was not going out she would make a pretence of going to her foster-mother's dwelling. But actually she would accompany her lover to an outhouse in the compound of his bungalow with the connivance of the old gardener.

BY nature Desai was a selfish miserly fellow. He spent very little on her but he gladly ate any edible that she brought. Her one intention now was to retain her hold on her lover at all costs. Her hunger for his body and his kisses grew day by day and she spent all she earned to please him. Her foster-mother was wild when she came empty-handed. She had sensed the new malady that was afflicting her—love. She tossed at the young woman her little bundle of clothes and asked her not to return. "Go to the young man who wants you. But you are warned, you silly girl. How long do you think that man is going to tolerate you? If I know anything, you are going to beg in the streets when your

body swells. Get out, you slut and don't you ever see my face."

She threatened to beat Jamuna with a broomstick and sent her flying from her hut. For a month she carried on with Desai but one night the gardener forbade her to enter the compound. "Get away, woman," he told her. "Our young master will have nothing to do with you hereafter. He is to marry next week, his bride is a refined, educated woman unlike you. To silence you our master has asked me to give you this money."

THE gardener pressed into her unwilling hands some currency notes while his wife was looking on with amused interest. "Young woman," she said, pointing to her abdomen with a derisive air, "has no one ever told you that you are big with child and that you need all this money and more to have your baby and bring it up?"

She spent that night in her uncle's house, ascertaining her bearings, and resolved to face facts and accept them with all their unpleasant implications. In another three months she would be having her baby but its father refused to have anything to do with her. Her kind-hearted uncle was not yet aware of her condition and she must leave him for fear of causing scandal and gossip. With the

money given by Desai, she departed for a distant town and resided there in a rented house. When the time for confinement came, she enrolled herself under a false name—as the wife of an imaginary man.

AT the maternity hospital she was delivered of a still-born baby but even the nurses admired its perfect features. Alas! there was no life in it. The young mother wept quietly for some days but at the same time she felt immensely relieved. The physical reproach on her name was now removed. If her child had been alive everybody would have derided her as an unwed mother with a bastard to boot. At least she could re-start her life and take to a new career.

For three years she trained herself as a nurse in the same hospital where she had her child. The hospital authorities believed her subsequent story that she had become widowed and did all they could to fit her out as a nurse. On transfer she came back to the very city which had been the scene of their romance. But she lived in the quarters provided for nurses and looked smart. She had a new lover now who worshipped the very ground she walked on and was prepared to swear that she was not more than eighteen and was the very embodiment of sweet innocence.

By an irony of Fate her services were loaned at the

requisition of an influential doctor to attend on a rich patient. It was none other than Desai who was lying unconscious for three days. One of her colleagues—a senior nurse—told her confidentially that Desai had run after a gay society girl and married her. To his horror he discovered that she was a divorced woman who had a child by her first husband. When his parents came to know about his choice they were unable to bear the shame and died suddenly.

The telephone rang. She took up the receiver and listened. Her lover's voice floated up to her and it was always a treat to hear it. There was music in it. "Whatever are you doing there?" he asked teasingly.

She recovered from her initial surprise and laughed. "I feel, dear, it is years since I saw you. But duty has tied me down here. How are you getting on?"

"So you remember me?" he

mocked. "What about your promise to meet me at least twice a day? Are you carrying on with any man there? I am coming up there to find out."

She was alarmed. "No, no, dear. I shall positively meet you tomorrow." His voice died away and there was a click.

Jamuna's first inclination was to strangle Desai but she dismissed that thought soon as unworthy. He had been sufficiently punished. She waited for him to wake up and wanted to tell him what she thought of him.

By midnight he regained consciousness and looked at the face that bent over him. The sight of Jamuna affected him too deeply. He groaned and collapsed. By 1 a. m. the nurse rang up the doctor to report Desai's death in a cold formal tone. †

The imagination of a boy is healthy, and the mature imagination of a man is healthy; but there is a space of life between, in which the soul is in a ferment, the character undecided, the way of life uncertain, the ambition thick-sighted: thence proceeds mawkishness.

—KEATS

The Jealous Husband

Why was the young man frequenting the house and talking to his wife in his absence? And why did the wife send away the children whenever the fellow called?

FATHER of two girls and one son, Santosh Kumar should have been a happy man by all standards. He was getting a salary of Rs. 250 as assistant officer in a Central Department with prospects of promotion and better pay in the near future.

His wife, Urmila, was nearly thirty but her neighbours marvelled at her well-preserved beauty. Several women younger than herself asked her what exercise she took and what food she ate to keep so fit. But she only smiled at them and shrugged her shoulders. All the same, she was a cheerful woman and talked gaily to one and all of them, though she

never answered their questions.

Santosh Kumar was very fond of his wife and children. He wanted to surround them with all creature comforts. He was eager to load his wife and his two daughters, Susheela and Vatsal, with the finest of gold ornaments studded with rubies and diamonds. Susheela was growing fast and she should have a decent dowry on marriage.

Between wish and reality however there was an unbridgeable gulf. Every month he was over-spending his income. His wife herself seeing his difficulties voluntarily gave him all her jewels and even the silver bits to

be taken to the pawn-broker's. With such a devoted and selfless wife he could have been perfectly happy. But, as some poet has said, happiness is just a state of the mind. One can make a hell of heaven or a heaven of hell.

SANTOSH was very morose and miserable because suspicion was gnawing at his mind. Was his wife carrying on with Parikh, son of old Sukhlal, a distant relative of hers—on her mother's side? Why should he frequent his house during his absence and chat with her endlessly? That was the information that he gathered from one or two secret sources. She was sly enough to send her children away whenever Parikh called. Susheela was usually at school. Their little son, Nitin, was always on the street, playing with other boys.

Santosh never openly expressed his suspicion. He didn't dare to accuse his wife. But he beat her whenever there was delay in the preparation of food or she was away with some of the neighbours. He slapped her furiously until her cheeks were blood-red and he rounded off his punishment with a mighty kick that sent her reeling to the floor.

Once his elder daughter couldn't bear the sight of her mother being treated like a street dog and threw herself between them and invited all her father's blows on her

head. "Brute!" she hissed at him as he twisted and broke her right arm.

For a month she carried her arm in a sling with her penitent father taking her to the doctor in a rickshaw. She was muttering all the time. "Another scene like this and I shall run away from this home and throw myself into the river or some deep well. While her mother forgot the nasty treatment of Santosh and was already her normal self smiling and serving him as before, Susheel was cold and aloof, nursing her resentment in her little room. She often bent over her books with her arms thrown on the table, her rich mass of hair cascading down to the floor. Once while her father darted into the room to look for his spectacles, he was struck dumb at the sheer loveliness of his grown-up daughter. She was exactly like her mother when he met her for the first time—full of maidenly charm and imperious demeanour.

HE at once went back to his room to speak to his wife. "It was wrong of me to touch the girl, much less to beat her. Anyway don't you think she should be married soon?"

She was in perfect agreement with him. "But there are so many difficulties facing us. Where are we to go for money? How much more beautiful she would look if she only she had just one jewel on!"

He was lost in thought and when he woke up from his reverie he found her sighing. His heart went out to her in her distress and he kissed off her tears. He clasped her tightly in his arms and began to speak. "Urmila, dearest! Who would believe if I said that in extreme love I sometimes forgot myself and beat you!"

She looked up at him and tenderly patted his cheek.

"I CAN believe you, darling. Your violence, I know, is a passing phase and I know you are the gentlest and kindest of creatures. But are you still running after that girl typist who is working with you?"

He laughed. "No, my dear. I don't so much as cast a glance in Manju's direction. I must have been mad to fall for her and that was a time when you were expecting Vatsal. Do you know how she tempted me—the devil? It was the first of the month and after paying off some of the loans to my colleagues I had half my salary in my pocket.

"Manju begged of me to come up to her house where she wanted to consult me on a very delicate matter. I eagerly called at her house thinking that something had seriously gone wrong and that a man of my strength and ability alone could set things right. She welcomed me in.

She told me her mother had been out to see a friend.

"She gave me tea and biscuits and asked me to comment on her silk saree and the furniture in her bedroom. We were talking at random when she flung her arms round my neck at an unguarded moment. It was she who tempted.

"Late that night when I returned home I found she had helped herself to some of my money without raising a suspicion. You see, I don't have a purse. I keep my money in my inner coat pocket and she must have taken some of the notes and given the impression that they dropped out.

"For six months until you returned with baby from your auntie's home I was regularly visiting her. One night I had almost cleared out of Manju's house when I saw my colleague Ranji sneaking in. She had been swearing to me that she loved none other. And this discovery disillusioned me.

"DURING lunch hour one day when some of us—the male colleagues—were gathered, there was a talk about the wily girl typist. She was a great temptress—they all agreed—and this fact emerged. She lured in her colleagues preferably on the first of the month and pinched some of their money. We all laughed at her cleverness and I desisted from visiting her from that day."

Urmila, as she lay in her husband's arms, wondered at the mad jealousy of the man who apparently thought that women were free from such failings. She was almost on the point of telling her secret but she refrained on second thoughts. Parikh's father Sukhlal to whose custody her parents had left her for six months before her marriage when they were away on a pilgrimage cast his covetous eyes on the young unmarried girl. Sukhlal's wife was a nervous wreck, bedridden downstairs, and Parikh was a small boy then. He had often tried to tempt the young girl with presents and honeyed words but she resisted his unwelcome attentions. Once she even pushed him out of the kitchen when he daringly touched her bosom.

"It was a very chill night and she had been down with severe cold and headache. The doctor had given her some mixture that sent her into a long spell of sleep. When she awoke at about 4 a. m. she was horrified to find herself in the arms of Sukhlal. He grinned at her and almost ran to his room.

Poor Urmila! She had been deflowered and defiled.

The next day she approached Sukhlal's wife and told her what had happened. And she pacified her and begged of her not to give publicity to her shame. Soon the incident was forgotten and her parents married her to Santosh. One day, Parikh, Sukhlal's son, came with a tin box to her, saying that his mother on her death commanded him to hand it over to Urmila. She conveyed her apology to Urmila for what had happened under her roof and her soul would not rest quiet if she did not accept the token gift contained in that box. When Urmila opened it she was amazed to find a number of jewels—all belonging to the dead woman. What was done was done. She decided to give the jewels to her daughter on her marriage. She would keep the box hidden and concoct some story when her husband demanded an explanation.

Parikh stopped coming and Santosh stopped being jealous. †

"Money never made a man happy yet, nor will it. There is nothing in its nature to produce happiness. The more a man has, the more he wants."

—BEN. FRANKLIN

The two men quarrelled over the garland
and wanted each to offer it to the sage.
But the mali wouldn't allow them....

Flowers At A Price

THE dawn had broken in all its splendour. The birds, earliest risers of nature, were merry giving their shrill wakening call. The mist still hung close and the icy drops of water on the petals of flowers and leaves half-curved in sleep, shone like jewels set in the ears of a sweet maiden.

Chandu, the mali, had sold all his flowers and one alone was still left in his basket, a wreath of scarlet nenuphars. He was in no great hurry to sell this and hasten home. For he needed a piece of silver yet, to buy for his beloved a pendant which he had promised he would buy that day. So he strayed now here, now there, giving his call "Flowers" intermittently.

As he turned the lane end eagerly scanning to spot a good

bidder for his last wreath, an old man, who looked more of a mendicant, called him and asked: "Have you the jasmines, Mali? I want to offer them to Sadguru Baba."

"No, I've only one nenuphar garland," replied Chandu with a chagrin. The old man also felt disappointed. For, nenuphars were rare flowers in that season. Further it was festival day. Yet hoping against hope he pleaded his cause with Chandu and entreated him to accept the five coppers he had on hand then and sell them loose to him, but in vain.

The old man's face fell. The thought of his only child ailing in his home greatly troubled him. He had walked twenty miles to have darshan of Baba

and seek his blessings for her. But alas was he to go empty handed to the sage's presence? The ancient adage goaded him that he shouldn't. He again pleaded his cause with the mali but he only evaded, saying "Go over there."

Just then a well-dressed youth came asking for flowers. "I shall buy that wreath," he said, "to offer to my Master. What price, Mali?" Chandu wanted a piece of silver. As the youth was opening his purse to pay him a rich merchant clad in costly silk robes came that way. He too was on his way to the shrine. He saw the scarlet wreath of nenuphars and greatly admiring it thought "What a worthy offering would it make for Baba! O, if only I've his grace my riches will multiply a million fold. Surely I'll offer the flowers unto him." Instantly he said, "For Baba I shall buy that wreath of nenuphars." What price, Mali, a piece of silver or two?"

The words fell on the ears of Chandu like magic and his greed grew tenfold. Taking back the wreath from the hands of the youth to whom he had just sold it for a piece of silver he said: "Surely two silver pieces the garland will cost you," with hands folded. The youth also offered to pay two silver pieces lest he may not get the wreath and it was already late.

"I offer three," cried the merchant in indignation, his

pride piqued.

Tempers were frayed. As the two vied with each other for the wreath of nenuphars Chandu's greed also grew in like proportions. But suddenly it occurred to him "They wrangle for the wreath to offer to the Baba; suppose I offer it myself how much more shall I get for it—perhaps a fortune! Aye, who knows? Sadguru is Great!"

"Forgive me, pray," he said slyly, his palms joined in supplication. "Why quarrel over the trifle of a wreath of flowers? I'll not sell it and cause bitterness between you."

And he walked away, leaving the two speechless, carrying the garland in his hands.

UNDER the shade of a tree, on the outskirts of the village, Baba sat rapt, with half closed eyes. The stately trees that grew skyward swayed their leaves and sprays in superb majesty. The sparkling silver sunshine cast chequered circles of light and shade on the emerald tresses of the earth.

The place swarmed with people who came from far and near, perhaps hundreds of miles walking all the way just to ask one question, to hear one word from his mouth. A batch of monkeys also seemed to have gathered there specially for the occasion to provide their jocund company. Monopolizing the tree-tops they regaled the pil-

grims squatting beneath them with their tricks. The Baba seemed to understand their feelings and their cries also. When there were quarrels between two groups, they would come to him and he composed their differences.

At first the Baba looked a bit coarse and rustic to Chandu. But those eyes! Chandu saw them, and stood transfixed. For a while he could neither speak nor move. Then he threw himself at the Master's feet offering the wreath of nenuphars.

The Baba who was looking at him with infinite tenderness, now smiled—a pure smile that was a sure sermon in itself.

"THE worship is over and all my devotees are going back. Why you have come at this late hour, mali?" he asked with his divinely sweet voice.

"When others have gone, that is my time, Guru," answered the mali in all reverence.

"What is your wish?" the Baba asked smiling.

"What else but a speckle of dust from thy holy feet," said the eager voice of the mali brimming over with unspeakable joy.

"Eh, ask something else," said the incredible Fakir.

Lo! The dear face of his beloved wife waiting at the door-

step of his house for him to bring the pendent came in his vision; the greedy thoughts of accruing a large fortune unto himself rose in his mind! Then, strange to say, the picture of the old man and his only ailing child in his far off thatched hut swam and stood four square before his eyes. The spiritual exaltation of the Divine presence!

HE turned his head and sure enough the old man was behind him standing with folded empty hands.

The mali exclaimed, "Baba, pray, will vouchsafe to cure the ailments of that old man's only child for mercy's sake? O, he hath no offering that is meet and hence stands afar bowing his face upon thy feet."

"Your prayers are granted, mali." The Baba proffered his benison with a radiant smile and got up. His heart was aglow with pride at the thought that 'one more sheep hath returned to the fold.'

Chandu then greeted the old man and making a present of half of his earnings that day said "Go back to your home, my friend, and carry the blessings of the Sadguru to thy child."

Having made this gift, he walked home all the more happy at the thought that he had received the Divine grace and that the old man would soon meet his child who would no longer be ailing but happy and gay.

PARALYTIC STROKE:

SYMPTOMS AND CURE

THE real meaning of the word "stroke" is a sudden, severe attack of disease. The word can be used, therefore, to describe various conditions, including the effects produced by very hot sun, or by lightning. Probably the best known condition, however, is the "paralytic stroke" or "apoplectic stroke" which is caused by an injury to the brain.

One of the most common types of paralytic stroke is that caused by cerebral haemorrhage, or bleeding in and around the brain, from the rupture of a blood-vessel or an aneurysm. Although this occurs most frequently in men over forty years of age, and particularly those who have a high blood pressure, it occurs also in women, and at various ages. The causes of the haemorrhage include not only high blood pressure due to disease of the heart or kidneys, and other conditions affecting the blood-vessels, but also injury to the skull, and muscular strain; it occurs oc-

asionally in infants, through birth injury, and in young children as a result of rupture of a blood-vessel in the brain during whooping-cough. Cerebral haemorrhage tends to occur frequently in certain families.

A stroke may also be caused by blockage of one of the blood-vessels which supply the brain, a condition which is known as "cerebral thrombosis" or "cerebral embolism." The cause of the blockage in the former is a thrombus or blood-clot, which has been formed somewhere in the body as the result of disease or injury and has moved along the bloodstream until it blocks a small blood-vessel in the brain. In the latter condition, the obstruction is caused by an embolus, or clot, which develops during the course of some diseases of the heart or blood-vessels; in some diseases, the embolus consists of a bubble air or gas.

Cerebral embolism occurs in young people more often than

cerebral haemorrhage, and the majority of the cases occur in women.

The effects of a stroke depend not only on the age of the patient, and his general condition, but also on what part of the brain is affected and how badly it is damaged.

In many instances, the stroke occurs suddenly, and when the patient is seen he is in a condition of semi-consciousness, or even in a complete coma from which he cannot be roused. His face may be flushed or pale, and his breathing is usually deep and noisy. One of his limbs is usually partly or completely paralysed. In some cases there are convulsions, and in certain types of stroke the attack does not come on suddenly, but the patient complains, for a few days previously, of headache, giddiness, or numbness or tingling in one hand or one arm, or his speech may become indistinct. Although a patient may die as the result of one stroke, many recover and live for several years with comparatively little paralysis or other after-effects, and are able to perform light work and take a moderate amount of exercise.

The treatment in many cases of stroke consists mainly of skilled and careful nursing, which includes attention to the general hygiene, and especially care of the skin to prevent the

development of bed-sores, the giving of a fluid diet until the patient is able to swallow and digest solid food, and attention to the regular working of the kidneys and bowels, which are often affected by the paralysis. Any patient who appears to have had a stroke should be kept at rest in bed until he is seen by a doctor, and no attempt should be made to give him any solids or even liquids.

The opinion of a doctor should be obtained in every instance, for several reasons. There may, for instance, be some treatment in addition to nursing care which may be of value in some cases, and even the nursing care need varies in different types of stroke. Signs and symptoms similar to those produced by a stroke may occur in other diseases, and treatment cannot be prescribed until the diagnosis has been made. A state of coma, for example, develops occasionally in people who suffer from diabetes, and such patients would need special treatment.

Although institutional treatment is often necessary for completely helpless patients, it is frequently possible for a person who has had a stroke to be cared for in his own home, with the assistance of the family doctor, and this should always be done if it can be arranged.—P.

ARTICLE

Great Prophets

Of The Future

INDIA has never lacked in mystics who have placed themselves beyond the province of science. There have been sages even in recent times who were gifted with a vision of future events. Of course, they did not go about making pronouncements but when disciples or devotees approached them they revealed their powers. One such was the late head of the Sringeri Mutt in Mysore. It is stated that a big landlord told the Swami that his daughter's wedding was scheduled to come off in a fortnight and requested his blessings. The Swami was thoughtful for a minute and said that the wedding would take place but the bridegroom would be different.

The landlord was puzzled. The betrothal had already taken place and the arrange-

ments for the marriage were proceeding apace. How could the bridegroom be different? Within a week the bridegroom-to-be died all of a sudden and the landlord had to hunt for another suitable match for his daughter. As predicted, the wedding took place as scheduled and the bridegroom was a different young man.

The same Swamiji knew the exact date when he would shuffle off his mortal coil. One of his *bakthas*, a famous elderly statesman whose eightieth birthday was recently celebrated by an enthusiastic public in Madras, wrote to His Holiness, expressing his desire for an early *darshan*. The Swamiji replied that if he wished to see him he must come to Sringeri before the new moon, which heralded the beginning of the Puja festival.

Somehow the *baktha* could not comply with the instruction. At 4-30 on the morning of the new moon the Swamiji entered into the waist-deep waters of the Tunga for his usual bath and voluntarily gave up his life. When a panel of doctors examined his body before the Ministers of Mysore, they found that not a drop of water had entered his body and that the Swami must have given up his life while standing in the waters and praying.

Before the Second World War there was a noted Sikh settler in Australia who forecast great world-shaking events including an earthquake, and the global conflagration. And, finally, he forecast his own end.

In the West, too, there have been recorded instances of seers and even otherwise ordinary individuals who forecast future events with remarkable accuracy. An Englishman in Essex, Rodney by name, wrote to all his relatives and his intimate friends, announcing the date of his death and requesting them to give him a decent burial. Out of curiosity when they all gathered at his residence teasing him over his letter, he suddenly dropped dead, leaving them sad and mystified.

In eastern Bihar there was a middle-aged man by name Nitin Bose who predicted weeks earlier the exact date and hour of his death. Though his neighbours found him hale and hearty on the morning he took to bed in

their presence in the afternoon and passed away in the evening.

It is recorded that animals too have the gift of knowing some impending disaster. Even scientists have grudgingly conceded that animals have some sort of sixth sense which enables them to see into the future. Here is a brief but graphic account of the devastating Tokyo earthquake of October, 1923. On the night previous, "the howling of dogs in the city was so widespread and persistent that many people were convinced that it was a portent of evil. We know that the dogs' eerie wailing prefaced one of the greatest disasters the world has known—100,000 killed, 150,000 injured and 50,000 missing."

In predicting the future of individuals we have some astrologers in our midst who have a reputation for accuracy and precision. But they need to be given the date and exact hour of birth down to the second, and they rely more upon calculations and other data for fixing the landmarks in the future of a person. But it is given to a very few to look into the unknown with a third eye, as it were, and tell of the events to come, that may affect only some individuals or the entire human race. Whatever attempts scientists may make to transform us, ours will continue to be a land of sages and seers who mystify both the scientist and the common man with their miraculous powers.—S. A. ‡

SAFE DEPOSIT

By LINDSAY HAMILTON

The story so far :

Stephen Agnew, familiar to most as Stag of the *Daily Comet*, sees two men following him. The younger one he recognizes as Michael Smith who, with his beautiful sister Vicky, accompanied him to London from Marseilles. His investigations reveal that Michael has fallen into the hands of crooks. He is able to save Vicky from dangerous scrapes but the crooks are after her for the key to the safe. Mole, the most notorious of them, meets Stag and Vicky and demands the key but Stag bluffs him off.

Now read on :

WHEN Vicky entered the sitting-room in the morning, she was astonished to find Stag lying on the settee

on top of the blankets which Mrs. Brown had made up as his bed.

He was dressed as he had been last night, except that his jacket was off and one shirt-sleeve was rolled up. Instantly Vicky caught sight of the bandage above the left elbow. Where it lay against his body its whiteness was stained with blood.

She restrained a cry and knelt swiftly beside him. He stirred and opened his eyes, then raised himself on the sound elbow and tried not to yawn.

Plainly, apart from a strong inclination to go on sleeping, there was not much amiss with Stag.

"You're hurt," said Vicky, in deep concern. "What is it? How did it happen?"

Stag swung his legs to the ground and sat up.

"Nothing much," he said with cheerful indifference. "Just a skin wound. I was evidently born to be hanged. Mole took a pot at me—meant business, too, the dirty dog. I was housebreaking. He would have claimed it was self-defence. Sound shot, too. Look at that!"

He reached for his coat and took a plain gun-metal cigarette case from the breast-pocket. On one side it was deeply dented.

"Bang over the heart," said Stag. "The bullet was deflected and took the skin off my arm in passing. Quite an interesting night."

Vicky took him by the shoulders as though she was going to shake him.

"Tell me," she cried. "Tell me everything. Where have you been? What have you done? Oh, you might have been killed, and I shouldn't have known."

Stag's eyebrows went up. "It would have been in the papers," he said. "Oh, yes, I think 'The Comet' would have given me a column. 'Journalist shot in Nursing Home'."

"Don't tantalise me, Stag. Tell me this instant. Tell me everything."

"Oh, there's nothing much to tell," said Stag. "We know who Mole is. His real name is Dr. Adolphus Kant and he runs a nursing home for drug addicts in Hampstead. Summers and Green ran him to earth and 'phoned me when they were sure of their man. They've got a line on the other two and with any luck should have them taped before evening."

"Never mind them," interrupted Vicky. "What did you do?"

"I went along, of course. Those two cub reporters had managed to get hold of one of the male attendants. They had him well primed when I arrived, and it didn't take long to make him see reason. He admitted Michael was there, supposed to be a patient, of course—by the way, I hope you don't mind, I snooped that photograph of him from your room thinking it might be useful."

"Mind," she laughed. "You could steal all I've got and I shouldn't mind. But go on. You've found Michael."

Stag shook his head despondently.

"I'm sorry, Vicky. They were too cute for us. He was

there. They must have moved him last night. I didn't want to bring the police into it, so I used a little gentle persuasion and the attendant let me in when things were quiet. We found Michael's prison empty. The man was genuinely taken aback."

"But how did you get shot?"

Stag laughed. "Someone heard us prowling about, I suppose. Anyhow there was a fine uproar. Mole barred the way to the door and potted me from point-blank range. I don't just like to think what that man would have done to me if I hadn't got away. He certainly looked like a devil."

"Oh, thank God you did," breathed Vicky. "Stag, I'm frightened. He will kill you. He daren't let you live. We must do something. We must send for the police. Michael will have to save his own skin. What if he does go to prison! That would be nothing to having you killed. You must, Stag. Why should you be dragged into this? It's all Michael's fault—all..." she gave a sudden cry and stood for an instant as though petrified. She was staring with unbelieving eyes beyond Stag to the door.

"Quite right, Sis," came the languid tones of the newcomer whose entry had so startled her. "I deserve all I get."

"Michael!" screamed Vicky beside herself with joy. "Michael. Is it really you?"

"It's me all right. Hallo, Stag! Glad to see you again. I could do with a drink if you have one. Make it a stiff one."

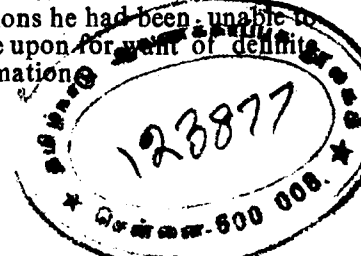
The cool young man presented a strange spectacle. His hair was tumbled. He was wearing clothes too large for him, and the jacket entirely failed to conceal the pyjama jacket underneath.

He sank into a chair. Stag, reserving speech till later, mixed him a drink and brought it over.

"Here's how," said Michael with a flashing smile, and drank the contents of the glass in one ecstatic gulp.

In the circumstances Stag showed remarkable restraint. Here was Michael safe and sound, and he could supply all the information needed to clear up the mystery of Tudor Street, and Uncle James's death. But Michael showed no inclination to talk.

Stag asked no questions. He saw that Michael's comforts, both inward and outward, were assured. Then, in a few words, he gave Michael an account of his interest in the affair, voicing finally his conclusions and the questions he had been unable to decide upon for want of definite information.



Michael listened attentively and with an occasional lively twinkle in his eye.

"Not so bad," he commented when Stag had finished. "In the main you've hit it very neatly. All I can do is to elaborate your theory. Never mind how I got mixed up in it. Those sort of things seem to come my way naturally. It's the drug traffic, as you had guessed. There were four of them, the big four, and by using their money and influence they have won absolute control of the game in this country. Those who stood in the way they crushed; the rest they brought to heel. You can take it from me, it's really big business. Carter is one of the big bugs in the Customs and Excise; Jessop is one of the shrewdest and most respected stock-brokers in town. Mole—you could call him the driving force behind the business. He runs a private home for drug addicts. The sort of grim jest that appeals to his diseased sense of humour."

"And Ogilvey—my uncle?" asked Stag.

"Very useful man. He handled the transport. The biggest clearing house for illicit drugs, as you probably know, is Egypt. More than half the stuff manufactured in Europe finds its way there. But international restrictions had so tightened things up in the past

year or so that the usual channels were too dangerous. Mole had his own ideas. He founded a base on the Gold Coast. Your uncle's ships picked it up there along with copra and what-not."

"I see," said Stag. "His kind of conscience would let him do that sort of thing, particularly if the risk was negligible."

"I was sort of on probation," continued Michael. "I'd done one or two jobs for them on the Continent, purely matters of business compacts and so on. The idea was, I think, that I might prove useful in preparing the way for larger operations further afield. I haven't been blind to the fact that the time might come when it would be convenient to 'hand me the baby,' as the Americans put it. In any case, I was out to play my own game. It looked great at first. Plenty of money, adventure, a spice of risk, and the chance of pitting my wits against some pretty clever grafters. Perhaps I've got too romantic an imagination. The real thing wasn't like that at all, just dirty and sordid. I was looking for a chance to light out. If I could do it with a kick so much the better. It seems I got the kick all right."

Stag nodded. Michael's queer behaviour was becoming comprehensible.

"The chance came, not altogether unexpectedly, though the circumstances certainly were. I ought to explain that the four principals had agreed to take it in turn to act as treasurer and be responsible for the safe-keeping of the funds. The term of office was for a year. There were five safe deposits in London and the Provinces. Your uncle's term of office was nearly up. Then, a week before the time, Mole somehow got wind of the fact that—let's call him Ogilvey—had cleaned out all five deposits. Mole arranged a meeting extraordinary. Ogilvey was to be called upon for an explanation."

"You mean," said Stag, bluntly, "the third degree and a final dose of veronal?"

"No," said Michael, quickly. "I don't say they wouldn't have put him out. They were mad enough. But Ogilvey forestalled them. He had been expecting this. But he didn't have time to carry out his whole plan; they came on him while he was in the act of writing his farewell letter. I wasn't supposed to be there, but in the heat of the moment they just took me for granted. Your uncle must have taken the poison when he heard them coming up. He knew it was the end."

"That puts a different complexion on things," said Stag, thoughtfully.

"He met them coolly, said he knew what they had come for. He explained nothing, just calmly told them he had transferred the funds to a better place. He wasn't what you would call a brave man as a rule. Altogether the way he rode the situation was eerie. 'I have the key to the safe deposit,' he said. 'There's a label on it. You'll find it useful. It will lead you to what is yours.' He sank slowly forward and his head fell in his hands. His last words were just a mumble. It sounded to be like, 'What is yours—no more and no less.'"

"Mole found the key in his pocket and the receipt with it. I didn't actually see any more. I snooped the key and hopped out quick. But I can guess what happened. They cut away the incriminating part of the letter. The top part would serve to support a suspicion of suicide. If they hadn't been in a stew about my getting away they wouldn't have overlooked the veronal phial. They'd have left it beside the dead man in his own house."

"You missed the receipt?" said Stag.

"That was the snag. I tried to get it, but Mole caught me. He was fool enough to gloat over me, showed me the paper and where he kept it. Then I was confined in a private room, and for days they used every

trick and devilry they knew to make me talk."

"They didn't neglect your sister, either," said Stag, grimly.

Michael had the grace to look ashamed.

"I've been worrying about that," he said. "But everything's all right now. She's safe—thanks to you."

"One thing you haven't explained," said Stag. "It's how you got here. I can't believe they released you. I suppose you very wisely told them where the key was."

"That I emphatically did not," laughed Michael.

"Then how?"

"Oh, quite easily as a matter of fact. I had plenty of time to myself. All I needed was a bit of wire. It came my way eventually"—Michael grinned—"I begged a mousetrap, and got it. It's surprising what you can do with a bit of wire if you know how to use it. That lock wasn't very obstinate. I broke out last night, after a visit to Mole's quarters, that is to say."

"You raided his wardrobe, I see."

"More than that"—Michael's smile flashed out showing his

white even teeth. "I got what I went for."

"Not the official receipt?" Stag demanded sharply.

Michael nodded. He was thoroughly enjoying his triumph.

"And you still have the key?"

"I have just where to put my hand on it. Vicky, you still have that label?"

"Yes, Michael. At least, Stag has."

"Come on then," said Michael, jumping to his feet. "It's time we used them."

"Not so fast," interrupted Stag with a smile. "You realise, of course, that you can never touch what we find. It's a matter for the police."

Michael grimaced. "I suppose so," he said, and then laughed. "I don't know that I care much. But I've gone so far, and I've got to finish the job."

"There's another point," said Stag. "They'll be hunting you. If they know you're here they'd never let you use that key."

"I don't see how they can know anything," said Michael with a grin. "I got into your

back-yard in the small hours and forced a way in—slept in the empty attic at the top of the house."

"Well, we'll chance it," said Stag. "But I'm taking no unnecessary risks. I'm going to 'phone Burke for a police escort."

Stag's manoeuvres for leaving the house unseen were entirely successful. Through back alleys they wended their way to the waiting police car.

Michael gave the word to drive first to a sub-post office north of Oxford Street. There he picked up a small registered parcel addressed to himself and marked "To be called for."

From there they drove to an address in the City. A few moments later they stood in a strong room before a steel wall giving the impression of the side of a ship with many port-holes. Each port-hole was a small safe.

The moment had come. Michael inserted the key, swung open the circular door. An exclamation of bitter disappointment escaped him. The safe contained nothing, or nothing of

the least value—just a scrap of paper.

"So much for that," said Stag. Very casually he took the paper and copied down the apparently meaningless collection of figures and letters upon it.

Then he compared it with the label which had been attached to the key.

"Very childish of my uncle," he commented. "It's the solution of the code. Even so, it's not so straightforward. You'll notice there are two rows. One is the cypher and the other the correct letter. The trouble is there seem to be four values for each letter and figure. Take A for instance. It appears four times and can be V, Z, Y or L."

"Well, gentleman," interrupted the inspector who had accompanied them. "If you've got what you want, there's work waiting for me and my man."

Stag laughed at the dry sarcasm. "Right you are, Inspector. Sorry to have wasted your time. You can drop us at Scotland Yard."

(To be concluded)

Diplomacy is the verbal technique of saying what you don't mean and making it mean what you don't say.—DAGGBERT D. RUNES

The birth of a child made Rupa a different woman. Her husband wondered what could be the reason for her intense hatred. He was dismayed when she shrank from his very sight...

AFTER THE FIRST-BORN

PRATAP, the very rich of a cotton magnate, renounced all title to his father's property to marry Rupa who was a paragon of beauty. She was supple like a willow; her large dark eyes had a fascinating appeal. Her full-breasted figure would enslave any man who looked at her as she walked on the city pavements, accompanied by her faithful servant maid.

Pratap had just then graduated with distinction but he was not immediately anxious to take up a career. His father had lots of money and he wanted him to manage the mills after his retirement. Pratap was an over-zealous social reformer, eager to drive away the many evils and superstitions from the land. He was the moving spirit behind

the Social Reformers' League which wanted to sweep off all distinctions between class and class. In particular the League wanted to do away with the double standard of morality—one for man who could marry several times and have sweethearts at the same time, and another, for woman who must sacrifice her all for the sake of one man.

At one of the annual sessions of the League, Pratap saw Rupa and fell madly in love with her. Though she was very fashionably dressed, she was not highly educated. The facts that he gathered about her from his friends were startling but his heart inclined towards her more and more. She was socially very inferior though she had a considerable fortune. Her mother,

Swarup, in her days, had been a more dazzling beauty than the daughter. She was a woman of dubious repute and must have had many lovers in her life.

It was Ramesh, the son of Ganpat, the retired jail superintendent, who told Pratap all this. The young man was eager to dissuade his friend from the course he was following. But Pratap simply laughed him off. "I see, Ramesh, what you are driving at. You are holding up a frightful picture of a dangerous woman setting her trap for me. But Rupa, you see, is not Swarup. The mother might have been a bad woman but I am convinced that Rupa is pure in mind and body. Whatever it is, I am a social reformer by profession and conviction. Even if she is a discarded woman I am going to stand by her. But I haven't hardly met her a dozen times and the proposal of marriage is premature."

Ramesh knew that he might as well argue with a stone statue. When Pratap made up his mind it would be a herculean task to change it. But where the heart was concerned it would be even more difficult—nay, impossible. He went out, heaving a sigh.

Pratap was now spending most of his time with Rupa. Her mother was dying inch by inch of a wasting disease which was consuming her body even as the

desire for it had formerly consumed many men like an enveloping flame. She often cried for some liquid to quench her burning thirst and her dutiful daughter poured liquor down her throat.

When Swarup was free from pain and agony she was concerned very much about the future of her daughter. Though she had money, Rupa should not be left alone. She must be married to a decent young man who would give her his name and protection. There had been several rich men who approached her with a promise to take charge of Rupa. But they were all unprincipled rascals who had slept with the mother. And now they were casting their nets for the daughter. She told them off with scorn.

Swarup knew that Pratap was different from them all. He was on a higher plane in society. His father was one of the most respectable men in the city with a prestige and reputation on which nobody—not even his worst enemy—would dare cast an aspersion. One night she called in Pratap to her bedside and asked him plainly about his intentions towards her daughter.

For just a few moments the young man was repulsed at the sight of the hideous woman who was dying a slow death—who was paying the penalty for all the horrid excesses of her life. He scanned her face for

any traces of her former beauty; he saw none. But the daughter who stood behind her cot was a grand fairy-like vision. The touch of her very hand, the curve of her soft rosy lips into a smile, the sparkle of her bright eyes sent him into raptures. Could he think of of a life without her? He would rather commit suicide if she chose to spurn him.

WITH these thoughts in his mind, he told Swarup that he would marry Rupa and stand by her through stress and strain. The old woman seemed to be satisfied only when he gave her a solemn promise to that effect. But she wanted to see them married before her death. Two days later, she sent for two priests who married the pair in a simple ceremony. There were only two friends of Pratap who attended the wedding and congratulated the pair.

That night when Pratap embraced and kissed his wife for the first time—she had always been elusive before—he was raving in sheer happiness. The very next day Swarup died in peace, happy that her daughter was in safe hands.

But truth somehow takes wings. News reached Pratap's parents that he had married a low-class woman. Intoxicated with her beauty, he had failed in his elementary duty of obtaining their formal consent. They were too deeply shocked to say anything. He was their only

son and he had done his worst to damage the family prestige. How could his father show himself before the public—before his numerous employees?

Pratap quickly saw the injustice that he had done to his father and wrote a letter renouncing all title to his property but affirming his resolve to stand by the woman whom he had chosen as his mate. It was a step in the right direction, so the public said. The son having dropped away of his own accord, Pratap's father could come out as before and attend to all his multifarious engagements and duties.

The couple migrated from Bombay to Calcutta where they thought of forgetting the shady past and living a happy unclouded life. They eagerly looked forward to the arrival of the first-born. It was a bonny girl, the spit image of Rupa and Pratap danced in joy around the cradle. But the little one did not survive more than three months. It died of fits.

RUPA was a strange woman after the death of her baby. The very sight of Pratap would make her jittery and hysterical. She would often shut herself up in her room and would not come out for several hours. He brought in doctors who prescribed various medicines for her strange ailment. But she seemed to be no better. Sometimes at dead of night she

would sit up, covered all over with perspiration and shouting to Pratap to take himself out of the room.

The young man was a bundle of nerves and did not know how to handle his wife who was almost on the border of insanity. One evening he stumbled upon a very old friend—rather, the father of his friend—Ganpat. He was in holy robes, having renounced life after retirement and wandering from shrine to shrine. It was Ganpat who accosted him and sympathetically enquired how he was getting on with his wife. Pratap took him to the Kali temple and poured out his woes. Ganpat listened patiently and asked to be taken to Pratap's flat.

THE sight of the holy man calmed down the young wife and she answered one or two of his questions. He closed his eyes in meditation for a few minutes and then looked at the

couple standing reverentially before him. "Rupa, shall I tell you what your trouble is? When you were six years old, Pratap's father (who resembles him very strongly) used to frequent your mother's chamber. Both your mother and Pratap's father used to drink and he used to beat your mother. You often looked on in terror and tried to run away.

"Now, take this sacred ash and smear it on your forehead. That terror will not creep again, when you see your husband. You are apt to be tortured with doubts. I may reassure you, Rupa, that you had been born to your mother long before Pratap's father met her."

Ganpat left them after blessing the couple. Rupa and Pratap were happy to be in each other's arms once more and no quarrel or hysterical scene ever occurred to mar their wedded bliss.

When laughter is humble, when it is not based on self-esteem, it is wiser than tears.....There is no cure for birth and death save to enjoy the interval. The dark background which death supplies brings out the tender colours of life in all their purity.

—GEORGE SANTAYANA

Too Clever

He was a smart know-all with remedies for everyone's troubles and grievances. The way he handled them was even more astonishing...

MY boss Mr. Narayan, the well-known financier and President of the City Chamber of Commerce, was in an unusual 'welcoming mood' and so I mustered courage to convey to him the visitor's request.

'Sir,' I said clearing my throat, 'One Mr. Ramaswamy Iyengar wants to see you. He says you've asked him to see you...'

'Who's he?' he drawled, 'All right, let him in.'

The visitor, a tall, thin-looking man with a turban that sat tightly on his head and attired grotesquely, stood trembling with folded hands before Mr. Narayan.

Looking stubbornly on the floor Mr. Narayan pointed to the sofa and said, 'Sit down, Mr. Rangaswamy Iyengar.'

'My-my name Sir is,' the visitor stuttered, 'Ramaswamy...'

'Well,' he said unconcernedly throwing up his arms, 'that makes no difference for me..... Ramaswamy or Rangaswamy... What brought you here?'

'You've, Sir, asked me to see you today,' he replied in a faltering voice.

'Tell me the purpose of your visit,' Narayan snapped out impatiently, 'I am a businessman, a busy man. I ask so many

persons to meet me for so many purposes. Do you expect me to remember why I've asked them all to see me?'

'You assured me you would recommend me for the post of Science Assistant in the local High School.'

'TELL so. Now I remember,' he replied considerably. He then unfolded the newspaper that lay before him and running his eyes over the columns he asked: 'Do you know the latest achievement of the Russians?'

Mr. Iyengar blinked and fumbled for a reply.

'Don't you know their latest rocket has hit the Moon. What, are you not in the habit of reading newspapers?'

'Today's paper Sir,' he mumbled, 'I couldn't read.'

'Say you didn't read,' Narayan returned impatiently, 'I know you won't read. You say you want to become a Science Teacher but you don't have the inquisitiveness to know about the latest scientific advancement. You know I am always busy like a bee with my business and yet I keep myself abreast of the latest scientific developments. I am really very sorry for a man, like you, who has no desire to enlarge the horizon of his intellect. It passes my comprehension how

you can prove yourself to be a good teacher.

Mr. Iyengar shivered apprehensively. He was reduced to silence.

'What salary does that job carry?' Narayan asked abruptly.

'All told Rs. 120, Sir.'

He then threw a crushing look at him and said (wirling his lips derisively): 'Hundred and twenty rupees! What can that trifling amount buy now-a-days? How many wives and children have you?'

'I've only one wife and four children, sir.'

'I AM really very sorry for you Mr. Ramaswamy, you are aiming at a job that can fetch you only 120 chips. How can you keep your family in comfort with that meagre salary? Why don't you look up for something very high? Why should you think you are worth only 120 rupees? Why don't you think you are worth 120 thousands or 120 lakhs? It is only on account of you people with such mentalities our country is not becoming prosperous. You are all ambitionless men. See the Americans, Russians, Englishmen or the folks in the continent. How prosperous they are! That is because they look up and aim very high. They don't unlike you restrict

their earning to 120 rupees, marry, bring forth children and leave them to work out their destinies. Unless you possess the feeling that you are full of promise and immense possibilities.....'

'Sir,' Mr. Iyengar broke in, 'If you could secure me the job...'

'WHAT?' he sputtered, 'If I procure you the job, are you going to place India on a prosperous footing? Do you want me to approach that petty Secretary or President of the School to get you that petty job? First I tell you, I have such schools where unwanted things are forced down the throats of the students. In almost all the schools the spirit of freedom in children is curbed. What does it lead to? It stunts their personalities and stultifies their cultural sensibilities. Don't you agree with me?'

'Ye—yes, sir,' he stammered, 'I do agree with you, Sir.'

'Then why do you want to join such a school?'

A look of confusion came into the eyes of Mr. Iyengar.

'Look here, Mr. Ramaswamy. Did you ever visit England?—No. Your face tells that. There the schools are all Daltonized. I suppose you understand what I mean by that. In those Dalton

schools the students are given absolute freedom. No student will be asked to read a subject which is not in keeping with his aptitude. He can read any book he likes; he can attend any lecture that pleases him; and conduct any experiment which is upto his liking. Thus their personalities are moulded there. In our country there is no such thing.'

After a pause he brought out dramatically: 'Why don't you start such a school here? I'll provide the necessary finance for it.'

Mr. Iyengar was so stupefied for a few seconds that he couldn't collect his thoughts. 'Me-me sir—such a school...' he stammered disjointedly. A look of startled surprise came into his eyes.

'Yes, after all it's going to cost about five lakhs. Let it. You be the Director or the Principal of that School. Take a salary of 2,000 or 3,000. You select some eminent men of education as teachers. If we pay them 500 or 600 we can get the best intellectuals.'

MR. Iyengar was struck dumb. He was far removed from the world of reality. He was in a dream world.

'So you really want me to...' he hissed in a confusion of delight.

'Yes. Work out a scheme in

collaboration with some good educationists. Mention my name to any professor in any college. He'll render you necessary assistance. Also prepare a rough financial outlay and bring it to me. Let us revolutionize the method of education that is pursued in our country.

The next man who could have the audience of Mr. Narayan was Sethu, a writer and a playwright (that is what he said) He had brought with him his latest novel.

'Yes, Sethu, what can I do for you?' Narayan inquired politely.

'You should do something for my novel, sir.'

'Look here,' he said brusquely, 'You know I am a very straightforward man—of matter-of-fact type. I neither would beat about the bush nor tolerate others doing it. You must plunge straight into the heart of the matter. Come down to brass tacks and tell me straightaway what do you want me to do regarding your novel?'

'If you can put a word to the Swam Publishing House.....'

'Brinjal Publishing House!' he returned contemptuously, 'I do not understand why we should beg them for publishing your work. Have they sufficient intellectual ability to com-

prehend your work? They may possess some money to bring out your novel in print. But I ask you, are they made of literary fibre to penetrate deep into your work and grasp the significance of it? You are the real possessor of literary talents and they don't have even a smattering of knowledge to understand what you've written. Yet you want to cringe before them in slavish subservience for accepting your work for publication. I am really very sorry for you, Mr. Sethu. It really pains me to see you with such attitudes. It's only on account of men like you with such slavish mentality we were flattered by the foreigners for hundreds of years.'

'If I want to publish this myself it will cost me a good lot.'

'Why, I'll purchase the copyright and publish it. If the story is interesting I'll also film it. First let me hear the synopsis of your novel.'

SETHU's face was suffused with smiles. He gave a detailed summary of his work.

Narayan sat cross-legged, fixing his eyes on the ceiling and puffing at his cigarette. After Sethu narrated his story Narayan said abruptly, without any qualification: 'Well, Mr. Sethu, I can't give more than a lakh of rupees for your novel.'

'La-Lakh Sir,' he stammered in astonishment catching his breath.

'This is a splendid story which if filmed can bring us easily fifty lakhs. So many worthless pictures are proving box-office-hits now-a-days.'

'Sir, if you can put in a word to the E. C. Studios Proprietor Mr. Ezhumalai.....'

'EZHUMALAI and Ettumalai' Narayan roared in apparent wrath, 'Why should I go to those men? Can't I produce the film by myself?'

'Not that, Sir...'

'What—not that, sir? Will it cost ten lakhs to produce the film? Come and take the amount tomorrow morning and start the film under your own direction. A good writer will always be a good director too.'

Sethu was too overjoyed to utter even thanks. 'Sir—then—shall I.....'

'Let me see your manuscript,' Narayan said and Sethu obediently handed it to him.

Flipping through the pages he remarked: 'What? You've written it so shabbily with many overwritings and scribblings.'

'It's only a manuscript Sir.'

'What if? Is it a rule that a written manuscript should be shabby? Just as it is said that face is an index of mind one's handwriting is an index of his

character and steadiness of mind. Have you seen the manuscript of so-and-so's autobiography?'

'Where can I see that, Sir?' he said timidly.

'Go to the Museum. There it is kept. Such voluminous work, he has written neatly and beautifully. All right, first get it typed neatly and bring. I'll ask either the Governor or the Chief Minister to go through it and give a foreword.'

Mrs. Narayan then brought in a distant relation of hers to her husband.

'Hello, Krishnan. Come on,' Narayan greeted the newcomer effusively, 'It's ages since I saw you.'

AFTER exchanging a few pleasantries Narayan asked: 'Where are you now employed?'

'In the office of the Company Law Administration.'

'How much do you get?'

'Three hundred rupees, Sir.'

'Quite a handsome salary,' he observed and turning towards his wife said: 'What, Indira, don't you think so? I am supposed to earn 10,000 rupees a month plus a cartload of worries with it. What is the use? Look here Krishnan, if it is possible

I am prepared to exchange your situation for mine.'

His wife forced a smile to her lips and said: 'He has three children and how can that amount suffice in New Delhi? He has applied for another bigger post and he wants you to.....'

'Now I understand,' he said and turning to Krishnan asked: 'What are your educational qualifications?'

'I am an M. Com 1st class and LL.B.'

'What salary does that new post carry?'

'The grade is 350 to 850.'

NARAYAN shook his head as though in distress and said: 'I am, really very sorry for you, Mr. Krishnan, you think that with your brilliant academic qualifications you can get only a job that might fetch you three hundred and fifty. It really pains me to know that you are all a set of incapable fellows. Why should you not aspire for a very high office? Are there no big posts in your office?'

'There are, sir,' Krishnan replied, scratching his head, 'they are also going to create a post of Joint Director in the grade of 800 to 1100. But I think I am as far from it as Heaven from Earth.'

'That's what exactly I say—you are all a set of incapable fellows. Why should you think like that? Why don't you think you are capable of holding a much higher office than this? It is only on account of men like you with a sense of incapacity that our country is passing through a period of degeneration. I am utterly sorry for you. After a dramatic pause he continued: 'First you had better apply for that Joint Director's post. You belong to the Finance Ministry, I suppose. I don't know your present one. The previous Finance Minister and his predecessor used to call on me often. Has the Prime Minister anything to do with your department? I can speak to him without any reserve. First find out the P. M.'s programme who is visiting this place shortly and come to me.'

My boss went to Bombay and Calcutta and returned a week later. That morning in the visitors' room at the office I saw Mr. Ramaswamy Iyengar with a scheme for a new type of school, Mr. Sethu with his neatly typed script and Mr. Krishnan with a detailed programme for further talks.

I SMILED at them broadly, and said: 'Welcome, gentlemen. I'll inform my boss about your coming.'

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(USE BLOCK LETTERS.)

March '60

'Sir,' I addressed my boss timidly as I noticed a frown on his face.

'What?' he mumbled.

'Those gentlemen want to see you. Messrs. Ramaswamy Iyengar, Krishnan.....'

'Stop there,' he thundered furiously, 'You seem to have no better business in this office. Firstly you should be dismissed. Everyday hundreds of Toms and Dicks come to seek my favour: Have I appointed you only to look for who comes to me and who does not. I am really very sorry for you.'

I felt awkward to face those gentlemen and tell them about my boss's anger. But I was saved from that botheration; there was no occasion for it as by the time I tiptoed to the Visitors' Room I found those chairs they had occupied, empty! ††

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A Serial Story—4

The Lady Doctor

By E. THEODORE KING

The story so far :

Two medical college students, Vilasini and Vijay, fall in love with each other. Vijay is poor as a church mouse. His father is a job typist and his mother is very sick. His brother Vinod is a truant from school. Vilasini is urging him to marry her because she knows that he alone can make her happy. After work is over they snatch an exquisite hour alone on the beach. Both of them are full of hope and expectation...

Now read on :

THE only day that medical students prize more than any other is the Graduates' Reception Day. It is the day when the students who have passed out, now doctors, are entertained by the members of the College, and make it rather

a festive occasion. It is the biggest, gayest and the brightest day in the annals of the College. There's a feast of colour and pageantry and everywhere there is joy and exuberance. A most distinguished visitor is brought to speak on the occasion, a grand party is thrown in, and a rich variety entertainment is whipped up for them. More than the graduates, the students enjoy the day because they festoon and decorate the College and take part in the variety entertainment....

After the party, the people gathered in the hall where a special stage was erected, and the important dignitaries got up on the dais and took their seats there. First, there were the introductory remarks by the Student President, the Annual Report was read by the Dean of the College, the graduates were toasted by the General Secretary, Reply to the toast

as given by the best out-going student, the distinguished visitor spoke, and finally after the Dean's remarks, the Assistant or the Associate Secretary stuttered the Vote of Thanks.

Then the variety entertainment came on.

Vijay was at the mike, giving the commentary. It was a piece of literary greatness and beautiful prose, of poetic marvel and imagery. He played with words and the words leaped to life and the audience thrilled and chewed them and a strange feeling of exhilaration came upon them.

After the Invocation and the College Orchestra giving its best in music, Vilasini's dance item rolled. It was to be a gypsy dance.

"Now we present to you, ladies and gentlemen, a gypsy dance of the people who wander where they will, whose bed is the earth and whose roof is the sky. A free people who live in a world of their own, whose joys and sorrows are always exaggerated. Their dances are the dances of passion, of excitement, of the earth that makes the earth red with blood, a race whose joy is madness, whose love is jealous, whose life is to live for the moment and live it well. The Gypsy Dance by Miss Vilasini."

Vilasini was ravishing in her gypsy dress. She wore a long shirt over a heavily-folded skirt, both of very gaudy colours, but

under the footlights, they dazzled. Her hair came down in two plaits and a bandana was wrapped around her head. She wore big ear-rings and looked exotically beautiful. She had on a small, bright, glistening waist-coat and a red sash was wound round her waist. She held a tambourine in her hand and as she swung on the stage, she sent thrills up the spines of the audience.

It was a wonderful dance, rich and colourful, lusty, with wild, impulsive gestures but yet so calculated and exact. Her body flowed in liquid lines and was the essence of languid, feline grace. Her eyes were watchfully enigmatic as a tigress's. Under the flawless perfection of her strong, beautiful face, strange fires burned and kindled others. Everyone was hypnotised. As she danced, it made the audience's blood race as if on fire.

The applause sounded with terrific impact and the shouts went up for an encore. But Vilasini gracefully slipped into the green room and changed. Vijay announced a skit. It was written and directed by him. It was humorous and everyone enjoyed it. Then came the flute solo by Venkatasubramaniam.

"THE flute has always been the reed of loneliness," Vijay spoke. "Its wail is like a lover's lament. There's always a kind of desperation about it but it isn't any violent kind of desperation. It seems rather

rational and reveals the pangs of lost love, of disappointed love, of jilted love, of forgotten love. It is the instrument of reminiscence and broken heart. Flute Solo by Venkatasubramaniam."

It was a wonderful solo and the instrument thrilled the audience with its music. He was the best man to play it and he played it like a master.

After a series of other skits, dramas, dances, shadow-plays, Vilasini came again on the stage, this time to sing. Vijay spoke:

"This is a song on love, of love, for love. All night the thought worried her and she could not sleep for love kept her awake. She writhes in the agony of love and suffers its pangs. It's a self-made fire that she has kindled and there is no one to help her extinguish it. Song by Miss Vilasini."

When the song was finished, Vijay said on the mike, "This disease of love is the oldest emotion in the world. Let me give you people a piece of advice: Kindle not a fire that you cannot extinguish."

The grand finale was a dance-drama about Vasavadatta and Upagupta where all the girls were mobilised into it. Vilasini directed it, Vimala played the Buddhist monk and another girl played the famous courtesan.

When the show was over at

last, the great day came to a close. As they dispersed homewards, there was a sense of elation among the artistes and gladness in the hearts of those who came.

VILASINI was excited. She drove Vijay to her secluded spot and watched the black sea lash and roar, with the stars twinkling above and the bright moon playing hide-and-seek with the clouds.

"It was beautiful, wasn't it?" she said happily.

"It was."

"You were great at the mike, Vijay. How you play with words! But then you are a writer. I'm so proud of you."

He did not say anything. He just looked across the horizon, his thoughts far away. A wistfulness came into her eyes and she took and caressed his hand.

"Vijay, will you marry me immediately the exams are over?"

He looked at her tenderly. He put his arm around her and drew her towards him.

"You're really impatient, Vilas. Would you think I'd marry somebody else? You know I love you and if I don't marry you, I'll never marry anybody."

"So long to wait, Vijay. This is only August. We'll have to wait till May."

"What's your hurry?"

She looked in to his eyes : dark, thoughtful, gentle.

"I want you close to me, always. I know I'm possessive but I feel so lost without you. Mamma knows about it and teases me, and I long for you more than ever."

He kissed her then, kissed her to soothe the fears away.

"You shouldn't love me so much, Vilas. I'm afraid of the pain you'll have when I'm not with you. Don't love me so much, darling."

She cried then, cried on his chest, her body shaking with sobs.

"You are mine, Vijay. If you are not alive, I will die. I will not live. I will not stay away from you. I love you, Vijay."

"That is bad. If my love has made you such, then I'm really sorry. You are not living for me. You are living for the world at large. We are doctors, Vilas. Our primary duty is towards humanity, suffering, hurt, unhappy humanity. We must not be possessive for ourselves. Our sorrows and our tragedies must not weaken or defeat or break us down but make us strong. It must help us to understand others' sorrows."

"Teach me, Vijay."

"There's nothing to teach. You learn of life as you go along."

"You know, sometimes I feel

that I am your wife. I don't know why. I cannot imagine myself anything but as Mrs. Vijay. Isn't it queer?"

"When you love, you belong. Though we are not married in the physical sense, yet our minds and hearts are married."

"I am your wife, then?"

"You always have been."

"Vijay, let us get married now."

"I told you that we are married."

"I know, but let's go through a ceremony."

"Without informing our parents? No, thank you."

"Not that kind of ceremony. We just exchange rings and make our vows and the sea will be a priest."

He smiled at her. She was such a confused but one-track-minded girl. He decided to pamper her.

"All right," he said.

And with the sea as the priest, they exchanged the rings with an air of solemnity.

Vijay said: "I hereby make Vilasini, my wife,"

Vilasini said: "I hereby make Vijay, my husband."

Then he kissed her. She nestled against him, his warmth seeping into her body and making her happy.

(To be continued)

when paunch stands for wealth!

LONG ago there was an Indian Prince whose paunch was the biggest joke among his subjects and visitors. Whenever he spoke his protruding abdomen bobbed up and down and seemed to have a separate existence of its own as distinguished from his body.

Usually a paunch is associated with wealth and prosperity, freedom from all the cares that drag down the poor mortal to the depths of depression. Among business men it is not unusual to hear this comment: "Motiram seems to be elbowing his way in the bullion trade. Don't you see that he is developing a small paunch? I mean giving my daughter in marriage to him."

The paunch makes its first bow after the age of twenty-five

or thirty though among traditionally wealthy families young men just out of their teens have such protuberances. While it may be conceded that in the early stages they are signs of happiness and plenty, they become unwieldy with the passage of time. The owners realise with pain what a surplus weight they have to carry. Especially so is it the case that when they have to get up after a heavy meal or ascend a flight of long-winding stairs or squeeze themselves through a small entrance. Some years ago a portly merchant with an enormous paunch had to be pushed into a narrow gauge railway compartment by four of his kinsmen with an impatient guard snorting with his green flag. But then, after he reached his destination he couldn't get out and the porters had a hard job, pulling him out!

Not all paunches are really as small as they appear. Tight-fitting inner vests and abdominal belts squeeze and draw in the outer folds of the paunch but their agony and ordeal under their constricting pressure would beggar all description.

But it would be wrong to imagine that people with paunches are gluttons who gorge themselves. There are some among them who eat sparingly but the mischievous thyroid gland is responsible for their quick growth in the wrong places. The tragedy is that when men with paunches fall ill and go on liquid diet for months, they look miserably thin with spindly legs and arms with this exception—the paunches refuse to get deflated. On the contrary, they become more protuberant. Some of them in their eagerness to slim down and recover the springy stride and firmness of their youth actually starve themselves but they are frustrated in their aims.

In vivid contrast to the species stands the scraggy fellow who retains from the cradle to the grave that lean, hungry look that is the envy of all fat folk. What is exasperating to the latter is that the former has an externally ravenous appetite and swallows mountains of food with no visible ill effect at all. He seems to have a stomach that stretches right from his neck down to

the heel of his foot! Whereas anything that the paunchy man takes, upsets his digestion and makes him feel heavy and dull at all times.

For all paunchy chaps, then, there is only one way out—Prevent the paunch. Flatten it out before it gets a grip on you! Cure yourself of that fatal fondness for sweets, products of milk and starchy foods and fried stuff. And here is a valuable tip to remove that extra weight. Let every man with a rising paunch follow what Gandhiji and Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan used to do. Whenever they were together, they would get up betimes, scatter a basketful of pebbles on the floor and pick them up one by one. It is superb exercise for the body early in the morning—bending down until the hand touches the floor. Let it be remembered that not more than one pebble should be picked up at a time. Jerk your body up above the waist each time after taking a pebble, look up at the ceiling and stoop down again.

After gathering all the pebbles, empty the basket again and again until the sweat streams from your body. There could be no more glorious exercise than this behind closed doors to shed all the surplus weight, to reduce the paunch and regain the prime of youth. ‡

Short, Short Story

OUTWITTED

He plied his light-fingered trade among his beautiful victims and made a great success of his job...

"THIS Sumitra is the richest woman I have ever met," said Jogindar chuckling to himself as he lit a cigarette and puffed out rings of smoke into the air. He was a smart fellow, what with his laundered suit, stiff collar and attractive tie. He had a head of curls that fascinated young women who fell for him at the slightest encouraging gesture from him.

He had victimized many young dames and none of them ever suspected that in addition to their hearts he would steal their jewels. He was one of the smartest of thieves that ever plied their light-fingered trade in Bombay. To line his pockets with money and keep himself in comfort he chose only rich girls of society—particularly, the butterflies of

fashion to whom the costliest of jewels were like pebbles that could be cast away and replaced as easily. He made love to them, robbed them of their jewels without their knowledge and suddenly disappeared from their life. His fair victims never complained to anyone if their jewels were missing. They usually moaned and pined for him until some honest fool came to solace them.

This Sumitra, the latest light in his life, was one of the prettiest girls. Jogindar was twisting her round his little finger. She followed him like a faithful dog. He did not know much about her life. She said she had come from Baroda, and had taken up one of the finest rooms in a posh hotel near Marine Drive.

Her parents would join her shortly, she told him, and their consent to her marriage with Jogindar was a foregone conclusion.

That information had made him alert. During midnight as she slept by his side, he had stolen her diamond necklace costing some fifty thousand rupees and inserted it into his purse. He always carried his fortune in one of his stockings. He would never entrust it to anyone and would sleep with his stockings on. She was utterly unaware of his nocturnal business. He went back to the bed since it was only 3 a. m.

Happy as a lark he woke up in the morning and found her

still asleep. He went out, quietly closing the door after him. After he finished his cigarette, he entered a small cafe for his morning cup of tea. Lighting another cigarette, he rose up when the waiter shouted, "Twenty-five naye paisa." Jogindar bent down to take out his purse from his stocking. Wonder of wonders! It was missing. Telling the cashier that he would come back in five minutes and pay him for the tea, he ran breathlessly towards the hotel where Sumitra was put up. But his sweetheart had already vacated the room and left the hotel! "The bitch! she has outwitted me!" he muttered with an oath.

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Astrological Forecasts For March-1960

Planets & Your Fortune

The following predictions are based on the movement of the Nine Planets in the 12 Rasis according to Gochara as also that of Uranus, Neptune and Pluto which are upagrahas. The positions of the planets from Janna 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.

By T. V. RAMAN

During this month too "Kala Sarpa Yoga" is present. This Yoga is considered to be an evil in astrological parlance. The effects will be full of ups and downs. Venus transits to Kumba on 10-3-60. Mercury transits to Kumba from 11-3-60. The position of Uranus, Pluto and Neptune continues to be the same as last month in the celestial orbit.

MESHA

(Aswini 4, Bharani 4, Krithigai 1.)

Mars, Lord of the Lagna, is in 10th kendra in exalted house. Hence your health will robust and your popularity will come to limelight. Venus, Lord of 2nd in the 7th house is in 10th and 11th house. Your finances will be good. The position of Rahu in the 6th house indicates liquidation of debts, disappear-

ance of enemies and financial gains. Kethu in the 12th house indicates wasteful expenditure and risks through accidents. The month is excellent in general.

Those in jobs will get promoted. Business men will make huge profits. Those engaged in politics, social service or film acting will come to the forefront.

Lucky Days : 7th, 18th and 26th.

Household women will find the month splendid. Finances will be pouring. Women in jobs will have a remarkably good time. Women, studying, will fare well. Women engaged in politics, social service or film acting will progress all right.

Lucky Days : 8th, 11th and 27th.

VRISHABHA

(Krithigai 3, Rohini 4, Mrigasirsha 2.)

Venus is in conjunction with Mercury, Lord of 2nd and 5th house and Sun. Therefore your health will be good. This month is not good on account of Jupiter-Saturn conjunction in the 8th house, which is an unholy conjunction in general. Neptune in the 6th house indicates sufficient financial resources and liquidation of debts. The conjunction of Venus-Sun-Mercury in the 10th house indicates that you will do well in your office or business.

Those engaged in politics, social service or film acting will be held to blame.

Lucky Days : 3rd, 13th and 23rd.

Household women will not find the month good. Your finances and health may be affected. The month is adverse for women in jobs or those studying. The month is not equally good for all others. Unmarried women will have to wait for some time more to get married.

Lucky Days : 9th, 17th and 25th.

MITHUNA

(Mrigasirsha 2, Arudra 4, Punarvasu 3)

Mercury, Lord of 8th Lagna, is in 9th house in conjunction with Venus. This is a good conjunction. Your health will be

good. Your popularity will be on the increase. Uranus in the 2nd house will keep your finances and family in good stead. Raghu in the 4th house indicates irksomeness in the home front. The conjunction of Venus-Sun-Mercury in the 10th house indicates that you will be happy and lucky.

The month is good for those in jobs or in business. Those engaged in politics, social service or film acting will however thrive well. The month is good in general.

Lucky Days : 3rd, 12th and 29th.

Household women will find the month good. However the position of Raghu in the 4th house will have its adverse effect in household matters. Women in jobs and those studying will fare well. Those engaged in politics, social service or film acting will pull through.

Lucky Days : 4th, 18th and 29th.

KATAKA

(Punarvasu 1, Pushya 4, Aslesha 4.)

Uranus is in Janma. This apart Janma is aspected by Mars. Hence take care of your health. Raghu in 3rd house is good and will give you courage to face any situation. Neptune is in 4th and therefore you will be happy at home. Jupiter and Saturn in 6th house will give you

sufficient financial resources and liquidation of debts.

Those in jobs will be very well off. Business men will meet with normal profits. The month is good for all others.

Lucky Days : 8th, 11th and 23rd.

Household women will find the month miserable due to Jupiter in 6th. Take care of your health. The month is no doubt good for women in jobs or studying. Women engaged in politics, social service or film acting will have good opportunities.

Lucky Days : 9th, 17th and 27th.

SIMHA

(Makara 4, Pooram 4, Uthira 1.)

Pluto is in Janma. Hence take care of your health. Rahu in the 2nd house and Jupiter in the 11th house will keep you financially sound. The position of Neptune in the 3rd house will offer you sufficient courage to face any situation. Jupiter is in 5th house—his own house. Hence you will be very prosperous. The month is good in general.

Those in jobs will manage well. Business men will meet with huge profits. The month is good for all others.

Lucky Days : 4th, 14th and 28th.

Household women will find the month good. Some un-

married women will get married. Some married women will become expectant mothers. The month is not good for those studying or in jobs. Women engaged in politics, social service or film acting will manage well.

Lucky Days : 8th, 18th, and 19th.

KANYA

(Uthira 3, Hastha 4, Chitra 2.)

Rahu is in Janma. Hence take care of your health. Neptune is in 2nd house and hence your finances will be steady. Mars in 5th house in exaltation will keep you dignified. Sun-Mercury-Venus conjunction in the 6th house indicates liquidation of debts and disappearance of enemies. Pluto in the 12th house indicates risks through accidents.

Those in jobs will have a testing time. Business men will have to be cautious. The month is not good for all others.

Lucky Days : 7th, 17th and 27th.

Household women will find the month miserable due to Raghu in Janma. Take care of your health. The month is not good for those studying or in jobs. The month is not equally good for all others. Unmarried women will have to wait for some months for getting married.

Lucky Days : 7th, 13th and 19th.

THULA

(Chitra 2, Swathi 4, Visaka 3.)

Venus, Lord of the Lagna, is in 5th house and hence your health will be good. Your popularity will be on the increase. Mars, Lord of the 2nd house, is in exaltation in 4th house and hence your finances will be excellent. Kethu in the 6th house indicates financial gains, disappearance of enemies and liquidation of debts. Uranus in the 10th house indicates that you will be happy in your office or in business.

Those engaged in politics, social service or film acting will be held to blame.

Lucky Days: 6th, 17th and 21st.

Household women will be happy despite difficulties. Those in jobs or studying will manage well. Unmarried women will have to wait for some time to get married. The month is adverse for all others.

Lucky Days: 7th, 12th and 19th.

VRISCHIKA

(Visaka 1, Anuradha 4, Jyeshtha 4.)

Mars, Lord of the Lagna, though hidden in the 3rd house will keep you well, since it is the sign of exaltation. You have an unspent balance of 7½ years Saturn and therefore be careful and avoid journeys. Jupiter in 2nd house will keep you financially well. You will be happy

at home. Uranus in the 9th house will keep you lucky and prosperous.

Those in jobs manage well. Businessmen will make usual profits. Those engaged in politics, social service or film acting will pull through.

Lucky Days: 8th, 17th and 23rd.

Household women will find the month splendid. The finances will be pouring. Some unmarried women will get married and some married women will become expectant mothers. The month is good for those studying or in jobs. The month is equally good for all others.

Lucky Days: 7th, 19th and 25th.

DHANUS

(Moola 4, Poorada 4, Utharada 1.)

Saturn-Jupiter conjunction in Janma is not good from the health point of view. Hence take care of your health. The position of Mars in exaltation in the 2nd house will keep your finances steady. Kethu in the 4th house indicates displeasure at home. Uranus in the 8th house indicates wasteful expenditure and risks through accidents.

Those in jobs will pull through. Business men will thrive despite other evil effects. The month is good for all others.

Lucky Days: 6th, 16th and 27th.

Household women will find the month miserable. Unmarried women will have to wait the whole of this year for getting married. Women in jobs or those studying will pull through. The month is adverse for all others.

Lucky Days: 7th, 17th and 29th.

MAKARA

(Utharada 3, Sravana 4, Dhanishta 2.)

You are having 7½ years of Saturn. Besides Jupiter is in 12th house and Mars is in Janma. The month is adverse in general. Kethu in the 3rd house will keep you courageous to face any situation. Neptune in the 10th house will keep you well in office or business despite difficulties. The month is not good for all others.

Lucky Days: Nil.

The month is not good for household women. Take care of your health. Women in jobs or studying will pull through. The month is adverse for all others.

Lucky Days: Nil.

KUMBHA

(Dhanishta 2, Sathabhisha 4, Poorattadhi 3.)

Saturn, Lord of the Lagna, is in the 11th house in conjunction with Jupiter. Hence your health will be robust. Your popularity will be on the increase. Kethu in the 2nd house indicates that you will be happy financially. Rahu in the 8th house will cause wasteful expenditure and risks through accidents.

Those in jobs or in business will manage well. Those engaged in politics, social service or film acting will make tremendous progress.

Lucky Days: All the days of the month.

Household women will find this month splendid. The finances will be excellent. The month is good for those studying or in jobs. The month is equally good for all others.

Lucky Days: 7th, 17th and 19th.

MEENA

(Poorattadhi 1, Uthirattadhi 4, Revathi 4.)

Jupiter is in 10th house. Besides, Kethu is in Janma. Hence take care of your health. Uranus in the 5th house will keep you dignified. Neptune in the 8th house indicates wasteful expenditure and risks through accidents. Mars in the 11th house in exaltation indicates plenty of financial resources.

The month is not bright for those in jobs or in business. Those engaged in politics, social service or film acting will manage well.

Lucky Days: 7th, 13th and 23rd.

Household women will find the month a bit troublesome. Women in jobs or those studying will fare well. Women in film careers will have a testing time. The month is not good for all others.

Lucky Days: 3rd, 12th and 19th.

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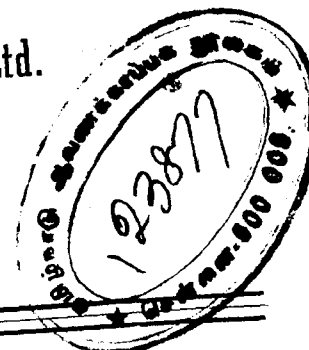
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