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HOTCH POTCH

By

RUPERT

2nd Edition

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The Apostate.

As I graduated from the Government College, Lahore, I emerged from its barred gate and found myself set afloat on the tossing current of shifty circumstances and troublous times of slump and depression. Thinning out my way from the crowd, holding the skirts of my flowing gown in my hand as I mounted to the rostrum to be received into this new order got into being by the herculean efforts of Lord Macaulay, I had to take the vow at the initiation ceremony that I will be faithful to my God, King and country. It was an easy job and cost me not a moment of vacillation, indecision as I could be faithful to the whole trinity without being the henchman of either. But whom should I lend my unstinted active support and yoke myself in its service had a big interrogation mark staring at me for answer. The obvious choice as before every body was between Government and public. Should I identify myself with the Government or public ? Should I identify myself with the public or Government ? The question thus rotated in my brain, one of its twofold aspects ever present before me. I was torn between my fidelity to the Government whose college made me the man I was and to the public among whom I took rise and

now measured five feet over. Pondering over the problem generated brain fog and beclouded my intellect. Under the starshot silver sky I would try to cool my brain fever and set to my plodding task again. Often-times I toyed with this thought or that and did a lot of shilly-shallying. All my ideas were vague and nebulous and in a floating form and nothing had clearly crystallised as yet. As somnolence crept on me, I would dismiss them from my weary brain and fall into sleep.

The rumbling of clouds awakened me from sleep and the forked whip of lightning cutting through the clouds reminded me of the two ways of life. As the thunder rolled, I shook off my sleep and was actively going over the problem. The problem warranted a close analysis of facts and a detailed diagnosis of the ills besetting us. Whether it was the Government servants or public servants who best contributed to the remedying of those ills ? In which category should I put myself ? It was a serious matter which admitted of no dallying with it. Should I volunteer myself into the service of the public or the Government was the question that now engaged my attention.

I could not disentangle the pros and cons and say on which side the facts aligned most. The searching examination tattered my nerves. I

was non-plussed. My friend steered me out of the deep waters I was finding it difficult for myself to wade through. My tortured brain found no rest. As he came to me, I broached the subject and asked his counsel. He made out a very tangible case for the public and advanced cogent arguments in its favour.

“Will you not,” he said, “if you are steeped in debt first try to liquidate the debt of a person to whom you are indebted rather than start disbursing charities.”

My answer was in the affirmative.

“More so of those who lay you under obligation without any personal motive to pamper to.

“Quite so.” I fell in.

“Then there is an unanswerable case for the public,” he snapped.

“How” ? I queried.

“You use *public* roads, *public* library free of all charges, whereas you were taxed double the amount of the denominational institutions as fee when you were receiving education in *Government College*.” He argued.

“Really,” I drew up as a snake uncoiling from sleep.

“Rather, when I was in a Government High School, I had to pay double fee as my father

happened to be drawing a comparatively fat salary," I joined.

"The Government cribs away more than its due, wherever it sees an opportunity" he rounded off.

"I see, I see."

"You catch" He broke in.

"It has all now soaked through to my mind. The public is so generous, the public is so magnanimous. The Government is so blood-sucking, so parasitic".....I reflected.

"Will you follow a potential lord or an enervated one" ? he started afresh.

"My hat is off to the mighty lord," I submitted.

"Well, here too the public scores higher marks than the Government although it will be idle to institute a comparison between them. When there is a public holiday, it is raucous delight for all and sundry from corner to corner of the country, while the poor government can grant only Government departmental holidays to a limited number of persons in certain departments. The public wields such an influence. You cannot exactly fathom it," he spun out.

It deepened the impression on my mind.

He had so dissected the problem that everything stood out clearly before my vision. The

public is so good and great. This was the main plank of his argument. Beside it, what I had heard so far of the benevolent despotism, the divine empire seemed all piffle and rot.

The 'public' contained more of the letters of my name than 'government.' The public should share more of my elements than the government. This clinched the case for the public. I was with the public, I was for the public. I arose with a grim resolve.

At the farther end of a blind alley is the office of the S. S. P., not the Senior Superintendent Police the reader may imagine whose forces with the colours of the union jack showing rainbow fashion in their turban serve the public with the violence and injustice, the two assets of the police but the Society for the Service of the Public, At the entrance to the narrow street, there is a turnstile that sifts out men from cattle. The street in its serpentine course forks out on right and left into various narrow branches. The dwarf ill-ventilated low-roofed houses that border it on both sides are sunk amid the high-ceilinged palatial buildings that rise skywards on all sides and that are so silhouetted against the dim distant horizon in the dark nights. In the papers there ran an advertisement of the society for members. The subscription was rated at Rs. 5 annual and Rs. 2

for six months. The six-monthly members were shown this concession as the annual members were entitled to participate on a festial occasion when they were given a nice treat. Legging two miles of way through the bazaar sprinkled with slums and stalls, with crows and sparrows cawing and twittering on the awnings and eaves of shop windows, and flitting hither and thither, with garlands of wilted leaves hanging from some and unlit festoons from other, kites diving before butcher-shops and mangy dogs wagging their tails in front, the tonga horses slaking their thirst in the tankards of water, and men brushing past others, I reached the turnstile.

I wriggled through the turnstile into the street. Keeping my way along the main street without turning to the left or right, I stood at the door of the office. Seeing the card board sheet displaying the name and address of the society, I was tiptoed with curiosity. I mounted a succession of steps and went in. A dark dim-lit passage with a few musty rooms lined up on one side led to a cryptic chamber. This was the main office of the society. The rooms and the chamber took the likeness of catacombs. There were hardly any ventilators or windows in any of them as houses reared up high in the air on all sides. Inside the chamber there were a few tables and chairs disorderly placed with a

litter of papers and a few dossiers on them. The darkness was dispelled by electric bulbs. Without which it was all coaltar black. The working hours in the office were from 10 A. M. to 5 P. M. After work, the men retired to rest in the rooms where they dwelt day and night. Hardly a blade of light from outside penetrated those recesses. There was a clock hanging in the chamber by which they regulated their life day and night. The hour hand crept on while the minute-hand jerked up to the next minute. Day and night it boomed out the hours. It was a railway clock with twenty-four hours. As it chimed ten, it was time to attend office. As it rang out thirteen, it was lunch time when it sounded seventeen, they were up. office is closed. The rat-a-tap tap of the type writer ceased. They laid down pen and paper and shuffled off to the rooms.

Here schemes were hatched in secret conclave for the good of the public. Raging, tearing controversies on hot questions of the day were settled. Here too men were inspired for public work.

I met the chairman who bore urbane looks and much impressed me with his sauvity of manner. I plunged into the subject in my forth-right and down right style.

‘Do you recruit persons for the service of the public,’ I fired.

"We do," said he, with a courteous nod.

"Well. I will like to be harnessed to the task of doing public service. I am a man of parts. Besides taking my M. A., from the Punjab University in one subject, since I have given one year to another M. A. though I left off, people go about saying that I am double M. A. Believe them not. They are pulling your legs. I do not like to be referred to as MM. A. because *I am not involved in any black-mail case* like Mr. A. of Kashmir. And then MM. stands for Messieurs and not Messieur. Again I wont like to be classed, by being represented as many in one, with demons like Ravan of ten like faces and twenty hands. I am exactly $1\frac{1}{2}$ M. A., if you take it not for an item from the prescription of a doctor. Then I have plenty of zeal for the work and I am in my elements when I am doing this work I pleaded.

"To tell you frankly, we do not care much for the degrees of the worm-eaten Punjab University No person is accepted here for membership unless he is endowed with special gifts, he is intelligence-plus."

I pulled up and felt it worth while to flash out my genius.

“It is not for everybody,” he continued, ‘to guide the destinies of a nation and to be the cynosure of public eyes. Of course, everybody who is born will die is a truth that admits of no addition, subtraction. It is true to the very letter. It cannot be extended, subtended either way. Therefore it behoves every one to provide for the happiness of his future life when his existence on earth has to terminate after all and not be too much wrapped up in selfish considerations. For that the best means is to exert oneself for the good of others in his own way. But this society ranks topmost and holds the reins of public affairs. The members are hence required to be of master intelligence,’ he spun out.

“Now I must correct you on one point before you proceed further. You seem to be wrong in asserting that every body who is born will die is a truth that admits of no addition, subtraction.” I interrupted.

“How” ? he questioned. “It is as inelastic and wooden a principle as any mathematical theory,” he reaffirmed.

“No, there must be some who die though they are not born,” I banged the table.

“Who are they” ? he interrogated, “what are they ” ?

I paused a moment in reflection.

“Well, that is the still born child,” I broke out, “he has died though he is not yet born. Here you are.” I looked triumphantly.

He held his breath. He rubbed his eyes.

He was much too convinced of my unearthly talents. He had a flash of my genius. Surely none but me deserved to hold the master-position among members.

He was of set mind to enrol me as a member and opened out his register to enter my name.

“May I know your name, please.”

“Yes, you may.”

“What is your name” ? he enquired.

I gave my name which was duly put in the register.

I was given a badge to wear on the sleeve of my coat. It was an arras picture of a scene in a hotel. The customer after he had satiated himself, picking up from a plate borne by a bearer coins-the balance due to him after he had given a five-rupee note. The picked-up coins in his hand—a two-anna piece in the plate.

The thought radiated to the public was that our motto is selfless service. The bearer served the customer to the point of satiety in a self-denying manner without settling up anything with him for the offer of his services. The other idea.

transmitted was that virtue has its own reward. The bearer extended a free offer of his services to the customer. In lieu of that he was given this tip of two annas that is left over in the plate. This meaning was reserved for the initiates.

With this we were bandied forth for the service of the public and were required to report ourselves off and on to the office.

The Dewali came—that festival of lighting when the city is glittering as though invaded by fire-moths. At sundown, people began to flow out of their houses. There was a vast sea of surging humanity all around. One nudging the other to make more room for him, a sturdy person elbowing out all others and making a passage for himself. Everywhere the buildings were studded with electric bulbs and some displayed neon signs. On many roads there was one way traffic. The volunteer organisations were greatly taxed for their ability to keep the crowds under control. Everywhere there was to be seen one of those law-dogs whom I would prefer to call bungalow-bitch (kothi ka kutta), that is barking on every passer by because she is pampered by the *Burra Sahib*. Tongas in quick succession as far as the eye can peer through the dim distant light as if a procession of tongas was being taken out. Then there was

the honk of motor-horns. If the progress of cars has been checked at a crossing, the engine of some ramshackle car has ceased to work. The chauffeur comes down, rotates the handle and the engine whirrs. Then there is a roar and a rattle and a light explosion. The car starts again. Nearby on the railway track, a light engine is chugging with a backward and forward motion. Such scenes become imprinted on the memory for all time. The din and noise of it all is simply infernal. I moving solitary among the heaving masses, a shapeless anxiety was clawing inside me to do some bit of public service, something that labels me as a distinguished member of the society. How I aspired to be bracketted with Gokhale and Banade, standing in a corner as the dim glow that pulsed from an electric bulb revealed my face. A faint breeze brushed past my face making a sea-swish sound. What should I lay my hands on. My imagination was baulked.

Behind me stretched regions of darkness which engulfed aught else in their vastness. Looking in that direction I felt some vague stirrings in the immensity. As I stepped forward towards the fringe of darkness, a human shape was dimly visible. Some hissing sounds that expanded into sobs as I progressed on. What I met was a poor solitary girl lost to the world. She was

at the most on the inside of ten years. In the helter skelter and devil take the hindmost that followed a fire that had appeared on some of the illuminations going amiss, she was left by her father who led her by the finger. Amidst the welter of people, she had several times lost footing and tripped over. She thought it best to withdraw to a noiseless place less observed by the futile and thoughtless crowd. She narrated her tale of woe to me and how she had been jettisoned in the stormy moment.

I consoled her and smudged her collyrium-filled eyes. Fresh tears started up in her eyes. I thought I was only playing the role of Job's comforter. It took sometime and pains to quieten her. My brain went busy inventing some scheme of letting her have a taste of the millenium.

I could not get an idea and was as vacant minded as ever. In a secluded repose at home far from the maddening crowd here, I thought, I may catch an idea. I repaired home.

I was skimming the salient facts that should govern the destiny of this girl. As the chaos in my brain was subsiding into an order, one fact was apparent to me that now that the people had dispersed home, it was idle to look for her father any where.

Days passed and I met some women-traffickers. Into their hands I put this girl for some consideration that went to swell the funds of the society. They sold her to a millionaire who took her into his home as the finest gem of his harem. She was so happily settled in life. Oh, indescribable. The greatest happiness of all the number.

The cause of Indian freedom was dearest to my heart. India in bondage, the thought of it whipped up my indignation. My blood was up against the foreigners who held my country in subjection. The thought of Indian slavery stirred up the deepest passions in my heart. I would rise from my seat and would like that very moment to clap my cap on my head and go to the government and ask them to clear out. What an iniquity that the ablest Indians are set over by so many dregs of humanity simply because they belong to the ruling race. What a vile contempt they must arouse for their lording over. Slavery must be eradicated. I care not a hoot for what comes in my way. I must make a blazing success of my mission in this matter as this is the most important piece of public service. Beside this everything else pales into insignificance. This is the issue that looms mountainously above all else put together.

For that I could not do better than lecturing and rousing the conscience of the people to a rigid hatred of the alien rule in India. That is the most efficacious method devised by the leaders of my country whose aeroplanes take off, spill over the sky, disperse in different directions and then drop them at various places where they deliver torrential speeches to the assembled multitudes. Their hurricane oratory lifts the masses from the miserable, drab and complacent life to which they have sunk and to which they have got inured on account of centuries of subjugation. Love of freedom begins to vibrate in their soul. They want to snap the chains of slavery. If they then can catch an Englishman, they will turn him inside out.

I must embark on a course of lecturing if there is to be any salvation for my country. But there could not be a better place for the delivery of my oratorical periods than the railway train. Men in train have amassed from all places and will scatter through an inconceivably large area. My message will thus be carried to every nook and corner of the globe. The whole country will be ringing with my words. My name will be boosted up like anything. My reputation will shine forth uneclipsed. I will have breathed life into every Indian and my memory will be kept green long

after I have cast off this earthly slough. My voice will be reverberating in men's ears long after I have uttered it and the people will be so firmly entrenched against the government that the Hobson's choice for it is to quit.

Thus perceiving, I boarded a train and thus streamed forth my messiahanic sermon.

Fellow countrymen !

The theme of my lecture is battle of swaraj and how to win it. The word 'swaraj' as you know, brethren, means self-government. 'sva' means own and 'raj' means government, so swaraj means our own government. It is as Abraham Lincoln said, the government of the people by the people and for the people. We are the people and we want that we should be governed by ourselves alone and nobody else. We should follow the course that our senses dictate us and not that which is indicated to us by others. We should be free to work out our own will and no body else should have the right to wreak his will on us. These our rulers want us to learn English and we are put in the school. When we are in school, we want to play the truant while the parents require from us a knowledge of English. It is a great hardship for us. If we had not been under foreign rule, the whole educational system would have been swept away because it is based on a

knowledge of English and we would not have to work. Ours would have been a life of the Lotos-eaters.

This is a bankrupt government. They are down and out. Who will like to be ruled by one who is financially so embarrassed. In the days of the Moguls, a Mohammedan water-carrier sat on the throne for a day. He had nothing but his skinbag. He issued coins of leather. The present government has started coins of paper. Who else must they be than paperbag-sellers. What can they do for us but make a clean sweep of what we have got. Then they put before us finessing schemes of improving our lot, redeeming our poverty, harnessing the country's resources, enriching the soil and what not. It is nothing but jobbery.

If you want, my dear countrymen, that earthquakes should not topple down your houses and split the earth asunder, if you want that floods in rivers should not denude the land of crops and cattle and inundate your dwelling places, if you want that your buildings should not catch fire from electric fuses, mice run away into their holes with your eatables, cats and dogs set upon your poultry, if you want that bugs and cockroaches should not trouble you in bed, flies settle upon your food and contaminate it, rains should

come in time, excessive heat should not oppress you and cold cramp you limbs, then, my friends, there is nothing like swaraj. You must win the battle of swaraj. Swaraj is the sovereign remedy for all your ills and complaints. Now how to win the battle of swaraj ? That is the next part of my lecture. Mahatma Gandhi prescribes charkha or the spinning wheel. Did you see battles ever won by spinning wheels where there is flashing of swords, spilling of blood and truncated bodies. Nor will boycott of councils, or joining the councils and setting up constitutional agitation encompass a victory for us. In no case will loosening the forces of lawlessness and starting civil disobedience accomplish that end. The use of swadeshi will also fall short of the purpose. What you will ask have I to put for your acceptance ? That is I proclaim the honour for the flag. If you have, brother compatriots, recorded a firm resolve to honour your flag, to muster strong when your flag is held aloft, to follow your flag and lay down your lives for it, swaraj is a *fait accompli*. The greatest nations on earth shed stream of blood but did not let their flag be downtrodden. When their flag was flown on high, they gathered in countless numbers and rushed to mighty onslaughts. Flag is the symbol of unity. In unity is strength, while split in the ranks of a nation seals its doom.

In our country, see the hopeless morass in which we have fallen, it is not even settled as to what is our flag. The congress has devised a tricolour flag in which it has shown the Hindu and Muslim colours of flags in distinct stripes. This has started an acrimonious controversy. The Muslims do not want to bow to the Hindu red while the Hindus do not like to salute the Muslim green. Another mushroom minority pulling at its beard wants a stripe of its own in the flag. Away with this all. The allies in the Great War fought, each nation under its own flag and won their way to victory. We must sink our differences. When the red flag is waved aloft, the call for Hindus has come. When the green flag is unfurled on high it is clarion call for Muslims.

The audience was visibly impressed.

As the train was slowing down to a halt, the station master waved the red flag. The Hindus in the train vacated their seats, got down and formed into a line after the stationmaster. After two minutes stoppage, as the green flag was shown in the wind, the Muslims alighted with faces beaming with enthusiasm, drew up, fell into line and marched. Left, Right, Left.....
Empty train reached the next station.

Not many days after, the city was shaken with communal riots. My advice had apparently not

travelled to the four corners of the globe, the way I had nourished fond hopes about it. I cast wistful eyes hither and thither. The differences were not so much composed. Here was a lacuna in my work of knitting the various communities together. Would I be able to fill it up. The citizenry was panicky. People were stampeded into various shelters at the slightest alarm. Every body was on the alarm for anything might be lurking sinister round the corner. Hindus and Muslims were leaping at each others' throats digging their daggers deep into the others' hearts.

Hospitals were full of bruised and bandaged men while the dressing and tomponning of the so many wounds was a tough job for the nurses. The doctors' skill was much taxed for the transfusion of blood and stopping haemorrhage.

Wheresoever a man of the other community was noticed passing by, he was caught by the scruff of the neck and his jugular vein was cut. Hardly were the men discharged from the hospitals as scabs formed on their wounds than that they were stabbed afresh in the way. Hooligans brandishing their staves and shouting slogans paraded the streets and swept everything before them in their onward march. They pummelled others' heads, battered their bodies, reduced them to a pulp and left them there. The rioters of the other community pounded down

wheresoever they caught hold of men belonging to the opposed community. Whole houses were burnt down to cinders. This holocaust presented a dread spectacle. People with deep gashes or slashes from sharp-edged missiles were being removed to hospitals on stretchers. An eye out of socket, a ruptured skull, a fractured bone or broken ribs was not an infrequent sight.

In the city it seemed as if a whole bedlam had broke loose. The fire-brigands pursued their reckless career unchecked. One has to let his mind run back over decades before he can find a parallel to such a tremendous outburst of furore anywhere in India. Rowdies went berserk, ran amok and would not come to senses.

Efforts at pacification of outraged feelings proved abortive. None could lay the balm to wounded feelings. The frenzied fury could not be brought under control. How to put under leash the violent activities was a hard problem. Government was hard put to the task of restoring normal conditions. It required brain and body to curb the lawless, bridle the desperate. At last it was announced in the papers that army had been called and the city would be under Martial Law from 8 P. M. to 5 A. M.

A public meeting was arranged to reassure the people and create confidence among the panic-

stricken multitude who had ceased opening shops and the like. Among others I was invited to address the audience being a noted worker in cementing the relations of the various communities

As the clock twanged five, people began to stream in straggling lines from various directions to the park outside the city. Among them the scrawny-necked, squint-eyed, of wavy hair and podgy legs, protruding lips and stocky shoulders, of chubby hands, snub-nosed and pot-bellied. Speakers congratulated peaceful citizens on their uniform adherence to the principle of non-violence and gave comforting assurance to them to restore normal life to the city and make things hum. The need to pave harmonious relations with sister community was very much stressed. There was much thumping, gesticulating, attitudinizing. Catchwords greeted a welcome idea.

I, among them, informed the audience that there was nothing to be feared now and the city should be throbbing with activity as usual. Shops and offices should open and life should be pulsating in the city as before. As already announced, army will be posted at all the dangerous spots and from 8 P. M. to 5 A. M. during the dark hours when crime is rampant, city will be under Marshal Law. This Marshall Law, I let it be known to the assembled lot, was some cousin of Mr. Bonar Law.

who is so much in the papers and the city will be under his protection from 8 P. M. to 5 A. M. Nobody should think that he is hazarding his life and property when such an eminent personage is with his army extending his protection to the people. So that all activities should be in full swing and no fears need be entertained at all.

The meeting dispersed in two hours after being called.

In the night as I lay in bed to rest my wearied limbs and had jerked up my reflections on social problems, I heard the booming of guns. Shots rang out and shrill piercing sounds assailed my ears. Meteors shot through the air.

In the morning it was reported in the papers that quite a number of people defied the Martial Law order.

Thus far had I striven body and brain to the end of doing public service and reported myself to the office. But at last, O alas, I had to apostatise my faith in public service. I was disillusioned. The reward was missing. On the other hand I was caught in a mesh I found it difficult for myself to disentangle from. My faith was shaken. All my zeal fizzled out. My enthusiasm was as flat as ditch-water. Sore disappointment was writ large on my face. This my sweating in the way of self

denying service and such the emoluments for my labours. I was knotted with indignation but my indignation could not avail against anybody. It subsided and my head sagged with disappointment. My efforts should thus eventuate alas !

I went to the office of the society to submit a progress report of my work and was given some posters which had to be pasted throughout the city. The posters advertised a public meeting to be held under the auspices of the society in which suggestions will be invited from the public on matters of social reform and a report of the work of the society during the last year will be read.

People, I thought, in their hurry and scurry hardly stop to read any posters. If anything is announced by beat of drum hardly any who are out of earshot come to hear it. These posters if they are to score a success and a large gathering is to be herded together must be forced on the notice of the people. For that it will be an improved idea if they are pasted on city doors instead of walls. And still more if they are put up in the middle, half on the right and half on the left. When one comes to open the doors, his eyes are perforce riveted on the poster. There are men and men. Some are stunted, Others are drawn out. To fix a series of posters on every

door from top to bottom all along the meeting line of the two halves will be the perfection of an idea.

In the morning, I left my bed in the darker hours to give a practical shape to the idea. Nobody had yet stirred out and all the doors were bolted, latched or locked. Posters on houses. Posters on shops across the doors. I was progressing from bazaar to bazaar. The sun had peeped up behind the yonder tree. Now it had come overhead. I was pacing farther and farther with my work.

From behind came the law-hounds. "Hoy, what are you up to ?" Shouted one. "What is this nuisance sealing the doors of the people ? You come under section 34. I. P. C." And I was nabbed.

**Editorial Hotch Potch*

Mr. K. Srinivasan—*Editor the Hindu*

Thanigachellam listened with held breath and rapt attention to the jingle of verses of the Mahabharatam and their deep import as their meaning sank in though it would seem to a twentieth century mind as rigmarole, balder-dash accomplishing no end but the clouding of issues and obfuscation of intellect. In him it strengthened the impression he held of the gloomy horrors of life in hell which made his flesh creep. His conviction about the doctrine of man's responsibility for his actions was deepened. Time and again he had experienced that dulling of sensibilities, etiolation of feeling which choked his voice of conscience and made him lapse into crime. He was a toper. His craving for liquor in fact verged on dipsomania. Every now and then he would enter the 'Guttling' 'Guzzling works' and in the company of other tipplers, he would booze himself tipsy turvy. Liquors fuddled his brain and befogged his intellect thus leaving him lame to draw any tight conclusion about the result of his actions. Henceforth he registered a resolve not to be inveigled into the trap of its charms.

*This article has been bodily lifted from my Magazine 'The Rambler.' It portrays the style of the various editors with the thread of a story running through from end to end.

Mr. Pothén Joseph.

Ex-editor Hindustan Times.

In Mark Twain is a dialogue between a teacher and a disciple on the doctrine of Predetermination. The teacher rebuts the idea that man is responsible for his actions. Every thing is determined for him by Providence. Man is cleared of the charge of guiltiness for his sins.

L. Is it true the human race thinks the universe was created for its convenience?

S. Yes, Lord.

L. The human race is modest. Speaking as a member of it, what do you think the other animals are for ?

S. To furnish food and labour for man.

L. What is the sea for ?

S. To furnish food for man. Fishes.

L. And the air ?

S. To furnish sustenance for man. Birds and breath.

L. How many men are there ?

S. Fifteen hundred millions.

L (Referring to notes.) Take your pencil and set down some statistics. In a healthy man's lower intestine 28,000,000 microbes are born daily and die daily. In the rest of a man's body

122,000,000 microbes are born daily and die daily. The two sums aggregate—what ?

S. About 150,000,000.

L. In ten days the aggregate reaches what ?

S. Fifteen hundred millions.

L. It is for one person. What would it be for the whole human population ?

S. Alas, Lord, it is beyond the power of figures to set down that multiple. It is billions of billions multiplied by billions of billions, and these multiplied again and again by billions of billions. The figures would stretch across the universe and hang over into space on both sides.

L. To what intent are these uncountable microbes introduced into the human race ?

S. That they may eat.

L. Now then, according to man's own reasoning, what is man for ?

S. Alas—alas—

L. What is he for ?

S. To—to—furnish food for microbes.

L. Manifestly. A child could see it. Now then, with this common-sense light to aid your perceptions, what are the air, the land, and the ocean for ?

S. To furnish food for man so that he may nourish, support, and multiply and replenish the microbes.

L. Manifestly. Does one build a boarding-house for the sake of the boarding-house itself or for the sake of the boarders ?

S. Certainly for the sake of the boarders.

L. Man's a boarding-house.

S. I perceive it, Lord.

L. He is a boarding-house. He was never intended for anything else. If he had had less vanity and a clearer insight into the great truths that lie embedded in statistics he would have found it out early. As concerns the man who has gone unpunished eleven million years, is it your belief that in life he did his duty by his microbes ?

S. Undoubtedly, Lord. He could not help it.

L. Then why punish him ? He had no other duty to perform.

For after all Man is formed of three letters M, A and N which stand for Man's Answerability None. Man has an inalienable right to manage any way he deems fit for the provision of these microbes.

This was a passage that crossed the sight of Chellam as he was running over the pages of a book.

There was a shift of opinion in his mind. The religious bias went up in the balance. Again that iridescent mind lapsed from its ideal.

When his ideas were thus in a ferment, he contracted friendship with a demagogue in whom the teachings of socialism had been ingrained since childhood. The demagogue would be continually dinning into the ears of his admirers the preachings of socialism and the wiping out of capitalism by arson, incendiarism and murder.

The demagogue would be delivering his message to the world in time and out of time. Once in a ringing voice that went deep down the hearts of his audience he cried out rather frantically, "He who robbeth not the rich of their ill-gotten gains and punisheth them not for sucking the blood of the poor, let him be anathema. He who doeth not his bit for sweeping out of existence the scourge of capitalism, let him be anathema. He who bringeth not bread and butter to the homes of the poor, let him be anathema, anathema, anathema. The mob orator had worked himself to such a pitch of emotion that he fainted and fell down.

It deepened the impression on the mind of Chellam. He framed a resolve to help the poor to get their naked due. He organised a big communist loot in their aid.

Mr. Kali Nath Ray,

Editor of the Tribune.

As he was decamping with the booty, he made a monumental mistake fraught with tremendous consequences for the future of his crime and could have been of colossal import to the cause that he held supreme in his heart in that he dropped down red leaflets from which the Government gathered that socialism which is the enemy of imperialism recruits its forces from the poor classes for did not Lord Willingdon say that the international chaos which is threatened to the world by the proliferation of the ideas of socialism lists its armies from among the poor proletariat, thus setting the Government and the poor people by the ears who otherwise could have expected state aid for their relief.

and last but not least

Mr. J. N. Sahni,

Editor the National Call.

“ As I was coming on my lizzie, I met a police party in pursuit of some brigand. I said I may be of some help to them as I had seen a man with embarrassed looks sprinting in a particular direction. I took one way and the police party the other. In the way, I wanted to empty my bowels. I sat down a little from the road side in a grassy plot by the

side of a pool. As I was easing myself, something happened. Mr. Mosquito took a bite off my hips. I sort of jumped like a grasshopper, then bumped towards my lizzie flinging my limbs in the air. Seated in the lap of my lizzie, I drove hard. My head began to whizz and whirl. Worser than that a gob of snot which had peeped out of my nose like a bandicoot from its hole fell on my coat and spoiled it. Somehow I reached the filthy hole of my office. Since then I am kinder indifferent-like towards doing good to anybody.

Semantics of Initials

Nimbus connotes the device of symbolic representation of a word by certain figures, as Christ is represented by a disc enclosing the vignette of a bearded old man with a cross in the back. In the Tantric cult of Hinduism, these symbolical sketches were much saddled into use to ward off evil spirits and formed the formula for amulets as well. In the Tantric literature we find sprinkled, instances of another literary conceit which relieves the dull and drab monotony of its wild orgies and senseless incantations. To put a symbolic interpretation on the letters of a word was an ingenuity not unknown to the Upanishads but the Tantras pushed further with the art. The whole word is a chain of letters which are taken to be initials of other words though India never knew the practice of using initials for full words. This has been imported from the west and has gained currency in India with the advance of British rule. These days it is not considered good taste, to give one's name without initials. People with even a smattering of learning take to this practice. Only the hewers of wood and drawers of water will form an exception.

The semantics of initials, that titles this essay, branches off from the semantics of words and I propose to be its expositor. The initials with the wear and tear of time in the light of accumulating experience and the shift of circumstance cast off their old significance and take on a new meaning or gather much that is new. The intention of their original promoters sinks into insignificance and they put on a new garb.

As I contemplate my subject, my frolicsome fancy runs riot. I feel like pinpricking or taking a pinch of others. It will touch the risibility of readers if I have a fling on some people or spank them. The radiant smile lightens the heaviness of the subject and the tickle consigns to limbo the dreariness of a scientific treatment.

S. S. Ujjal Singh to my mind is the steamship Ujjal Singh on which the Sikh Voters of Lahore City sail in the Punjab Assembly. The course of the steamship is the weather-cock of the electors' mind.

Referendum is the practice of referring a particular question to the votes of a nation. The voters to whom it is put for decision are the Referees. M. R. Ry. Swami Venkatachalam is the Madras Referees Railway Swami Venkatachalam which carries the voice of the voters of Madras City to the Central Assembly.

There is a rag of a two-pice paper, the National call whose office is located near Mori Gate

adjoining the Jaina Bros., Booksellers, Delhi. It is one of the gutter press which will give nude pictures to titillate the readers. Its Editor is J. N. Sahni. I have oftentimes wondered as to who prescribed for him a course of journalism. The reader will elsewhere have a taste of his Qutab Minar. A like of his editorial recast from memory may be given here.

Mrs Sarojini Naidu has delivered her presidential address at the journalist conference. She has put forth certain proposals which should materialise into a better future for journalists. This ink-slinger takes up the text of each proposal in a separate paragraph, falls into line and marches to the same tune.

Thus it proceeds :

1. 1st. proposal—oh marvellous. No body can differ from it. We endorse it

2. 2nd. proposal—precisely. All must be unanimous with it. We support it whole-heartedly.

3. 3rd proposal—wonderful. She has proved herself to be a great thinker. We agree with this.

4. 4th proposal—Mrs. Sarojini Naidu should be congratulated for this.

5. 5th. proposal—Nothing like it. That is why she is called the *bulbul* of India. All we can say is, 'Wah, wah ! Mar dala.'

And thus the scribbler does black upon white and stuffs two columns of his paper. What else ?

This is all of a stock of knowledge to draw upon from where he can supplement or put a caveat to. He styles himself as J. N. Sahni, M. J. To me it seems to mean Journalism's Noodle Sahni, Monger in Journalism.

S. P. Singha, the Controller of Panjab University Examinations seems to feel very important in his job. His raspings have a military air. His face with its drawn out pointed moustaches is the dial of his bumbledom. I will dismiss him as Swaggering Puffed up Singha.

The reader from North India knows well what *L.* stands for. It stands for *Lala* an honorific term of address for a man. While *s.* and *d.* stand for son and daughter as in *s/o* or *d/o*, as well as shilling and pence. Now cross *L.* It becomes £ which is so many shillings and pence. And what is a *Lala* when crossed (with his wife of course) but so many sons and daughters.

One can talk glibly and plead a cause. But hardly one in a million rises above the multitudes who will suffer for a cause. To see the moat in others' eyes but not the beam in one's own is the way with us. Many public servants have vaulting ambitions and aspire for higher jobs for the fat salaries attached to them and not for conscientious adherence to principles on which an orderly system of administration is based. They prostitute their position for selfish ends. Theirs is not to make

distinction between right and wrong but between themselves and others. One such I can call to my mind. He was Sir Ross Barker, K.B.,K.C.I E. Chairman of the Public Service Commission, a few years back. I would interpret the long trail of titles with his name as Sir Ross Barker ; with Kindred Blame, the Knight for Catching Ignorant's Errors.

Bhagat Singh whose name provided a slogan for the revolutionaries startled the Legislative Assembly with a bomb. 'What is this farce of a talking house,' he said. He could equally call the M.L.A.s' as Member of the Loquacious Assembly.

Now let me finish this persiflage with a double thumping. R. B. L. Sri Ram Sud is notorious enough among the Indian public to need any introduction. What more than that he should find a favourable mention by Sir Michael O Dywer in his 'India as I knew it.' If anybody institutes a case in his court against a police constable even, he will not be heard. The case will be called at the time of the rising of the court and another date will be given and so on ad infinitum or it will be dismissed after a farce of a trial has been staged. His heart sinks within him at the thought that if he falls foul of a single individual, whole regiments of police will invade his house or crash over his head. That is what he confided to me in private talks. Working

out the analogy, he may be thinking that if he kicks a sweeper, all the sweepers will dump the city's night soil over him. Insanity could not touch a farther point. I have never seen a public servant of such moral turpitude. His credo of a loyalist is rotten with meanness and obsequiousness to the core. His magisterial airs only prove the maxim that a bully is always a coward. He is veritably the Regiment Recruit's Begging Beseeching Loyalist Lackey Sri Ram Sud.

The First Last and Last First

The King and dacoit to put it snappily vary in their practice and profession only in one aspect. For the rest, It will not be profitable to institute a comparison between them. They strike a resemblance in their methods and mode of life which is tantamount to a parallelism. They canalise their conduct in the same direction with such accuracy that instances can be cited where Kingship was but one step higher in the ladder from the life of a dacoit. All else is distinction without difference. A ring-leader draws towards him a set of people as to a magnet clings the iron dust mixed up in the particles of sand, forms them into a clique or clan, violates the territorial boundaries of other's hearth homes and is advantaged by committing outages against their property. So far a dacoit. If he sets up his tabernacle among the populace shorn of its power and plenty, establishes some sort of order and introduces a system of administration while all along exploiting them, he is styled a King. Established Government, thus it boils down to, is the crucial test of Kingship. Uniformity of law and practice which confers on every body a settled state

of mind in the know as to how an act of his will eventuate lends its distinctive feature to royalty and stamps it different from dacoity. The Afghan tribes on the North West Frontier of India swooping down on the British Indian territory creating convulsive unrest have a different stigma all their own. The hit and miss methods obtaining in this disorder and chaos where one addresses his effort towards a different end and is countered with something else from the great unknown bloc the progress of a society in the manifold venues open to it. It's all muddling through and stumbling across. It is not of course hinted that there is any uniformity in the universe. But there is something like the law of the land in a major portion of the globe. Various parts of the earth have crystallised into separate units on linguistic, geographical, racial or historical basis or as a victim to Imperialist earth hunger and have their own code of morals and administration. A punishment is attached to a crime that is well defined and specific and not anything that comes handy. Over the heads of these diverse constitutional systems, was propounded an International Law as the one of Grotius or as the League of Nations sought to introduce. But that was scantily taken to heart by the nations of the earth.

What is Law ? Law is a frozen mass of floating customs, traditions, religious practices,

equity, morality and a lot of hocus pocus as is evidenced in Indian Law. There may be much in Law that needs adaptation to the shifting panorama of the world. Hence the *raison d'être* of Legislatures. But it excels in that it imparts a sense of security to the agitated mind feeling shaky in its endeavours. Hence the imperative need of abiding by the letter of the law unless scratched off in the interests of stability in society. An University acquits itself well in its task if it instils this lesson in the minds of its students and puts a premium on judicial mindedness rather than on debating skill or bookishness.

My mind strays away. As one visits the Lahore Museum, his eyes will chance upon something worth consigning to the oblivion of the Museum. There on the farther side of the road, bulging on the pavement so ostentatious and pricking to the sensitive mind stands erect piercing the atmosphere so painfully the statue of some Alfred Woolner by name.

He held the reins of Vice-Chancellorship of the Punjab University a few years back. Dead and dispersed among the elements, his underlings sought to enshrine his memory on a pedestal. Was his an unblemished career and an untarnished reputation as he rode rough-shod over University affairs, oblivious of the interests of those dogged by an evil

fate in that he had been installed above them. Even 'Behaudering' in the language of Turner the biographer of James Silk Buckingham or to put an easy interpretation on the word say 'lording it over' constitutes a lesser crime than the camouflaging of Justice that this bearded wiseacre would bungle through, failing to make even a plausible case for himself. It is not of course gainsaid that he was a high priest of the church and must assume the airs of pontiff. The hypocritical note of morality we miss not but find underlined and red-pencilled in his convocation speeches and addresses.

It's a psychological puzzle worth unravelling that people who hardly mould their conduct to a certain principal may be enrolled as its most emphatic proponents Islam they say means peace. The hot temperament and the frothy fury quick to fall foul of whosoever they hit upon feature its adherents and brand them truculent. A liar may gloat over the virtues of truth to worm his way into other's confidence. Injustice and oppression make one's flesh creep and the blood runs cold. Tyrannising over them whose rights it is incumbent on him to vouchsafe, transgress the bounds of the domain of his privilege and power, infringe on their naked due and then gloze over the indescribable violation of Justice—the objurgation of a million crash on his head—the infernal satan. Nothing counts for greater mischief

than when a man who grips the steering wheels and controls the gears of an institution potent with good and evil to millions is diseased with corrupt and vile notions. Vice permeates its whole atmosphere by a sort of osmosis so to say. The musky air, the musty space that encoffins it, emits a sickening, nauseating odour that chokes fine instincts and stifles healthy feelings. Such is the plight of the Punjab University — now a hot-bed of corruption for the virus infused into its blood by Woolner.

Some *Jagan Nath, a bony bania scallywag of spidery form, was laid his finger on by the Reverend Vice-Chancellor for a lecturership in the University. A hedgehog was this fledgeling of a lecturer who would put up his prickles if you deign to touch. The touchy one became cross with the writer who was a student those days, and then the hedgehog was the Examiner of the subject in which he dabbled in the Master of Arts examination of the University—a thing to reckon with. With the passage of time, the examinations came in 1933. The results were declared and it was found that in that subject the marks given fell below the pass percentage—an evidence of his meanness. The roll no could not act as a screen to dull the vision of the gutter-

*This article is much in the nature of a memoir which feeds the substance of my allegorical satire *Mein Gamp* otherwise it would have been revolting to pollute my book with a mention of the names of these rotten worms of John Dollingers

snipe examiner who could identify the hand-writing of every student of his class. Though with the addition of grace marks given by the examination board the examinee was successful but a drastic slump occurred in the total. A complaint was filed to the now chisselled and hammered Vice-Chancellor with a request to test the truth of the complaint by having a re-examination of those papers by any other examiner. With uniform marking standards set by the University, there can hardly be any wide divergence among even a hundred honest examiners. The application was entertained to put up a show and the full text of judgment of the Vice-chancellor that reached the applicant was that the Vice-Chancellor had thoroughly gone into the question of re-examination of your papers and held that there was no need for re-examination. Doodles to believe such nonsense. Re-examination will justify its need. If a Magistrate acquits the accused in a case of non-cognisable offence, for having received a bribe from him, will not the Government investigate into the charge of bribery against the official simply because the acquitted one cannot be hauled up again. But probably the prestige of the Punjab University is undermined, if the dishonesty of its office-holder becomes public. The Government should think on these lines and will economise the trouble and expense of constituting appellate courts, High Court, single bench appeal letters patent appeal and topping all the Privy Council.

A few week later, an order was promulgated that henceforth the names of examiners should not be notified in the Gazette. One should have expected the framing of a rule for re-examination of papers and adjustment of marks if some one comes forth making out a *prima facie* case that injustice has been perpetrated on him. Far from it The prestige of the Punjab University should not go down. It's enough to blindfold the convict before you lead him to the scaffold and hang him by the neck till he is dead.

During these years, from many a lip have fallen the words into my ears 'show me a boy and I can get him through' With these ideas ingrained into our minds and such ideals set before us for fulfilment we emerge from the portals of the University and are let loose upon the world ! What an incredible achievement for Woolner to rub shoulders with the passers by on the pavement and put them in mind of his days of glory when he surged among them in flesh and bones

Ruffian Ill-bred Woolner for Reverend Alfred Woolner may be a malapropism but correctly describes the Vice-Chancellor He kept terms with his underlings who set up a bust of him in the University area as people put up a chalk bust of their own or their relative in their house.

An apt illustration of Galsworthy's *The First Last and Last First*

Nothing new under the sun.

To-day I am wielding my pen to demolish one of the popular fallacies that there is nothing new under the sun. Many such popular fallacies provided meat for Lamb's neatly turned out essays in *Essays of Elia*. Some of these fallacies that Lamb showed up were that Ill gotten gains never prosper, that hand some is that handsome does and that if you love me, you must love my dog.

Dr. Fisher, once Vice-Chancellor Cambridge University and Member Public Service Commission began to ferret out the cause of India's backwardness and visited the Indian Universities in this connection. The Universities are the rock bottom of a nation and we have to burrow deep here for the cause of Indian backwardness, he said. After much balancing of pros and cons, he gave out his well-formed opinion to a leader of thought in India that Indian students outdistanced their brethren in the Universities of Europe in hard work and *acquisition* of knowledge but they lagged behind them in originality and that counted for India's straggling behind in the march of nations towards progress and plenty. When I had to file declaration for a monthly magazine, I was of set mind to coin a name for my

paper that would answer to its attributes and be as original and unforeseen as a squall in the lake. Indian papers copy their western prototypes to the last letter. Thus Tribune takes its name after the Chicago Tribune, Bombay Chronicle after News Chronicle and Hindustan Times after London Times. One feels as if they are branches of those papers opened in India. Then the Associated Press of India and the United Press after the news agencies of the same name in the west. Why should not Indians have been such laggards when this is the plight of the Forth Estate. Much did I scratch my brain and rub my forehead before all the thoughts fused in my brain and thence was formed the word 'Rambler' Weighing the significations on this side and that, it was my tight conclusion that nothing better could be achieved

And so the declaration was filed

As the first issue was going to press and the galleys were brought to me for correction. I found that I had left some blank space for a word for which I had cast in my memory at that time but could not remember. I took out Lytton Strachey's Eminent Victorians where I thought I had read the word. As I was hurriedly running over its pages, a word in italics sprang up conspicuous before my eyes. It was the word 'Rambler'. Reading backward and forward I found qualifying it the words 'a catholic periodical.

I sank into the conviction that there is nothing new under the sun.

The paper died Long after, in Boswell's Life of Johnson, I again read the same 'Rambler'. The conviction was all the more strengthened that there is nothing new under the sun and that it is all worn out and effete.

Some lacerated feelings resulted. There was a tug of war between my desire to aim at originality and the conviction that had grown in me. How could India hope to get a place 'in the world in the eyes of men' unless men like me blaze a trail and give the lead in the matter of being original. Despair seized me. I used to frequent a library that treasured some gems of literature. As I was deep in the middle of my story 'The Apostate' given elsewhere in this book, I one day saw placed in a library shelf a novel by Forrest Reid that bore the title 'The Apostate'. I am even up to this time innocent of any knowledge of its contents but all the same I could not dodge the fate that wanted further to convince me that all my efforts at striking an original note will prove pointless and misdirected. There is nothing new under the sun. It was now in me a deep, settled conviction.

But my anarchic passion could not be cowed down. I must throw over old tracks if I have to.

tower above the rest. My bursting impatience to show a spark of my originality to the world might have been irritating to others. Without originality and newness there could be no budding and flowering of culture, no scientific advance, no progress or achievement of any sort. It will be a dull, humdrum world with nothing springy and sinewy in it. It will be all too padded and lifeless. The optimist and the meliorist will be brushed aside while the pessimist will sway public thought. Besides, it will bar the gate for me which opens to a track that will enable me to come on top.

I made a bid for originality and inventiveness which is the soul of all advancement. I must plan out daring conceits and give them a tangible shape. There is nothing in moving in the narrow rut of ideas. My conviction began to loose its moorings. I was disturbed out of my belief that there is nothing new under the sun. My crowning optimism had its own. Occasional visitations of mighty ideas occurred in my brain. Original concepts sprouted forth. As an idea lighted in my brain, I was tense with excitement. My muscles were all taut and my fingers crinkled. Much sentimental gush about keeping to the tested and tried ways and forms of our forefathers was spurned by me and I ceased treading the cold old path.

Some of these profound concepts of my fertile brain I will like to put before the public and recommend to them to adopt those forms if they wish themselves well. Here they are in rank and file.

SOMETHING NEW UNDER THE SUN.

There is a good deal of bosh heard about the right style of prose. There was Mark Twain who was disgusted with punctuation marks and would turn up his nose at any idea of using them. It is related of him that he sent a piece of composition to his publishers which was thus prefaced :—

{ ! . ; “ ” , : —

Gentlemen, sprinkle these through the body of the text according to your taste, and then followed a serried rank of words without any punctuation mark interfering between their close association.

Now punctuation if I may correct Mark Twain is the life of all good writing. As an army divided into columns and divisions is vastly more powerful than a jumble or a disorganised, crowded mass of people so does punctuation lend strength and vitality to a piece of writing. It makes the words more transparent and the meaning more clear and emphatic more than the Chinese ideographs. Perspicacity shines through the whole narrative and the author's mind more brightly reflected. Moreover even to the undiscerning reader to whom

a sentence without a punctuation mark may be ambiguous in sense, it becomes unequivocally clear in which strain the author is writing. Consider for example the following passage :—

I switched off the button that operated the light on the wall and went out for a walk towards the gardens. I took to the road and with firm assured steps that rang in the brooding darkness only redeemed by a hazy lamp here and there on the roadside, went on and on. For a long time I went on.....

Then I saw a spectre of a man coming in the distance from the opposite side. As he approached near, his outlines were broadly clear. From his gait, I made him out to be my friend P—. When he stood facing me, I wished him I was surprised to see him so reduced and emaciated ! I asked him about his health ? He told me that his health had gone down ∴ he had been lying in bed for six weeks.

The conversation rambled on to how he contracted the disease that confined him to bed for so much time. He said that the insanitary ;* dirty ; unhealthy surroundings of his house contributed to the development of the nasty disease. As

*When such a standard work as Webster's Dictionary which is the guiding light for earnest students of English uses semicolon between synonyms why should authors use a comma.

there was nobody to attend him ∴ it was prolonged.

I showed inquisitiveness about the whereabouts of his family. He told me that he did not exactly know where his family was. After a moment's pause, he said, "They are at Simla ? Simla in summer—although during winter it is shrouded with snow which covers it as a white mantle does a corpse. White is the colour of innocence. One should never commit a sin if he wishes to be saved the agonies of hell and perdition. By God never—is humming with activity all around. The bus came. I took leave of my friend and got into it.

I do not know how the publishers of Mark Twain handled his text but I would have advised them to work on the lines indicated by me.

With Walt Whitman took shape a new kind of verse in which the lines do not rhyme in the end Much in kinship with that is the blank verse of the day. A large part of the Hindi and Urdu verse of the times has been modelled after that. Rabindra Nath Tagore achieved the same for Bengali. Prompted by this venture, I have been able to invent a new style of prose to set off against the blank verse of the day.

Johnnie was a spoilt child of eight and a nothing doing idler. In spite of his mother's having

administered shocking rebukes to him repeatedly, he would not behave. His mother broke two eggs and gave them to Johnnie to beat and give back to the mother for cooking. Johnnie was hard put to it and had never felt so inconvenient. He threw the stuff into the drain, broke two rotten eggs in the same pan and gave back to the mother. When the eggs sizzled in the frying pan, his mother felt the bad smell. Still she cooked them and began to eat. They tasted rotten.

So Johnnie's mother was cross with him, and gave him a spank. Being an oversensitive child, Johnnie felt it acutely and remembered outside the city the tank. He walked to its bank. He walked bang into the water and in a few minutes sank. Lament did her mother so grievously on the death of her son whom she so much fondled. Raiment she tore hers and violently beat her breast.

If that is *blank verse* this is *inspired prose*.

Now I will give a few tips about polishing our style in correspondence. This essential art has become conventional and ossified. A few forms and a few remarks about weather and climate sum up the contents of a letter, as if it were a meteorological bulletin. It is high time that it should be animated with the vital breath and stamped with originality. One's personality should breathe through his letter and it should be full of warmth and emotion.

The following letter to a friend who has recently parted will set the style in correspondence. My dear P...,

You have been torn away from me by an evil fate that dogged me so unrelenting.

You can imagine my sorrowful plight of a man who is of an **atrabilious**, hypochondriacal temperament. Gloomy thoughts fill my mind. Sadness has settled upon my face and my doleful countenance is a pathetic sight to see. This reverse of fate has changed my visage to a melancholy expression. Mournful reflections on the hollowness of what we call a solid achievement constantly occur in mind. That I should have lost a fast friend of mine is indeed an irony of fate.

Memory of old days, of time passed in commerce with each other wells up before me. Those sweet moments that fled by in confabulation are treasured in my memory for all time. Scenes of intimate friendship start up before me. How we poured out our heart in each other's presence stands up vividly before me. Those hours have left an indelible impression on my mind. That was the pith and substance of real happiness as distinguished from the shoddy entertainment that I could get in other ways from elsewhere. We had grown so tolerant towards each other that if any of us

abused the other, it was relished by him in a masochist way and there was no squeamishness on that score.

There is much in the schoolboys' essays on the advantages of friendship and the 'mix up' of the student of the Government College, Lahore, but the advantages of our friendship were indescribable.

Because we have loved for love only.

And have searched through the shadow of
things

For the Heart of all hearts through the fire of
love

And the wine of love, and the wings.

My mind runs on a spring evening when I went for a spin on my cycle. As I was passing before a book shop and my eye travelled past the flowing crowd to a show case in the shop, there was a book that tweaked my attention. It was Dale Carnegie's 'How to win friends.' In flourishing line it displayed on the flap, 'over 10,000 copies sold.' I left the cycle, flung the door open and entered in. I made bargain for the book, emerged from the shop and whanged the door shut behind me.

I set down to an earnest perusal of the book and for a few days it monopolised my attention.

There I found six rules for establishing friendship with people.

1. Be genuinely interested in people.

2. Smile.

3. Be a good listener. Encourage men to talk about themselves.

4. Talk in terms of the other men's interest.

5. Always remember that to a man the sweetest sound in the English language is his name.

6. Always make the other man feel important.

How I illustrated each one of these rules in my efforts at winning friends needs no comment.

I was so much interested in my friends that nothing of theirs escaped my devouring interest—down to the love letters. I was always smiling at them. If a friend of mine was interested in the person of his wife you will always find me talking of that. I was always a respectful listener and thus succeeded in pumping out much useful information as I encouraged them to talk about themselves. If I would go to the house of a friend of mine, I would make it a point never to ring the call-bell and cried hoarse his name from the thoroughfare because that would have much pleased his ears.

Mr. Dale Carnegie has related an anecdote about a post-office clerk who was much bored with the day's task of giving stamps, sticking the envelopes, weighing the covers for registration and a lot of other humdrum routine that all his sort have to go through. Mr. Dale Carnegie said to him, "your hair are very shining and velvety." This freshened up the young man, 'Be sure, says Dale Carnegie, 'that day he walked on air home'

The first man I met after reading this was wearing a turban. I said, 'My dear sir, your towering personality is much enhanced by the ascending folds of your turban.' He took the two innermost folds of his turban one on each side between his fingers and pulled them up so that the turban formed a cone of one feet axis.' 'How now'? he asked.

'Still more *towering* now,' said I. 'Be sure, that day he *sailed* on air home.' In such like ways, I was then and on making my friends feel important.

All my efforts in this direction have in this case gone to rack and ruin. It is a case of Love's Labour Lost. Alas ! you are no more and I am left mooning at the sky with none to bemuse me.

Let the day perish wherein we parted.

Let that day be darkness ;

Let not God regard it from above,

Neither let the light shine upon it.
 Let darkness and the shadow of death stain
 it ;
 Let a cloud dwell upon it,
 Let the blackness of the day terrify it.
 Let it not be joined unto the days of the
 year,
 Let it not come into the number of months.

I am,
 etc. etc

Basic English is the imperative need of the day. One cannot but succumb to its charms in that it reduces the whole vocabulary to a bare modicum. It avoids all extravagance of language, unlike our legal practitioners who add B.A.L.L.B. to their name as if one who is L.L.B. can be so without taking his B.A. It is particularly to be recommended for those Indians who, if they stumble across a few hard words in a text will damn it as Johnsonian English. How can they swallow the following lines of Samuel Johnson :

Cervisial coctor's viduate dame,
 Opin'st thou his gigantic fame,
 Procumbing at that shrine ;
 Shall catenated by thy charms,
 A captive in thy ambient arms,
 Perennially be thine.

Basic English is dead against the meretricious adornment of language and holds on to simplicity of style with a vengeance. It strips the language naked to its elements shorn of all the trappings. It mocks at our lame attempts at being forceful and expressive by acquiring a potential command of language. It keeps within its fold only words that form the rock basis of the whole vocabulary and has nothing but a bursting impatience for the rest of the whole lot. Literature in all its branches can be woven round a few words. Beyond that what we find in books written in our Oxford English is literary marshmallows. There are 850 words in Basic English but the number can be much reduced according to my plan. The following example mirrors the beauties of Basic English in howsoever blunt a form it may be.

Jack's mother was not well. Jack put his head dress, body-dress, leg-dress and foot-dress and went to the doctor. He met at the door a man of China in head-dress, body-dress, foot-dress and leg-dress. He went to the doctor and told him that there were in his house two, two, two, two and two persons one of whom was not well and asked the doctor to make her well. His mother stopped to live. Now they were two, two, two, two and one. One of them said that the doctor was not good. Jack said the doctor was good. The other said that although the doctor was good but he was

not so good. In this way they said to each other for some time. Then they did not say anything.

The Illustrated Weekly of India publishes commonsense puzzles that must be wrestled with by all earnest-minded people if they want to be cured of their commonsense. The various answers in the light of the clue are so evenly balanced that pondering the matter one may rapidly sink into a serious mental state. One can continue his meditating over all the alternate solutions as long as he does not get rid of his sanity. The Illustrated Weekly once started a series of things old yet new. In each issue he would give something of the hoary past so completely buried under the debris of time that when disinterred by it, it looked like new and had no place in the nook of any human memory. The oldest tree, the longest name etc. were the subjects of this unfatiguing investigation. The longest name in history that he gave was the name of a king. It was more than a mouthful. It was a string of forty two letters which hardly obeyed any law of syllable formation.

It was :—

EQAXSTHDFRTHHNIHLOSHEI
OTROEOTTRMENYWPESZGT

Now my puzzle is how to upset the research of the Illustrated Weekly of India

From the above word delete the 2nd and 4th letters from the beginning and the 2nd, 3rd and 6th letters from the end. We have

EASTHDFRTHHNIHLOSHEI
OTROEOTTRMENYWEST.

The word stretches from EAST to WEST.

From this by anagram we have

THE SHORTEST NAME IN THE HISTORY OF
THE WORLD.

and

NIL INTO DF.....

By chronogram when we give the value to the letters.

NIL INTO the total whatever it be will be zero.

So this is mickey mouse solution.

Walt Disney's mickey mouse, cinema fans know well, reduces to a speck and grows in any dimension to any form and size at will.

This is a final answer to :—

‘The correct solution must agree with the sealed solution.’

‘Editor's decision will be final.’

I cannot close this essay without taking notice of the atrocious treatment of biography by our writers since this is becoming a hotly discussed subject. A writer in the *Atlantic* holds forth the autobiography of a dancer as a model biography. In my view there is much harping upon the folderals

while the essentials are swept out of vision resulting in a strangulation of the theme in which the spot-lights of a man's life whose sketch is attempted are no longer visible. These biographies have been handled, up to this moment by goody-goody people who sift out the chaff and let the flour of test merit pass through their sieves. Where on earth is there any justification for gloating over the unusual happenings in the lives of great men that mark them out as distinct from the rest of humanity. It is only a difference between tweedle-dum and tweedle-dee. Pages upon pages are blackened towards the exposition of their opiate philosophy which will dose a man to a warped outlook on life while the incidents that should be stressed are carefully turfed out or lightly touched upon. If a great man ever had a tiff over a telephone call, even that will be minutely preserved and its memory embalmed for all time to come. The whole biography from end to end proves dud.

I will now aim at a lifesketch which should be a torchlight for future biographers to guide their narrative. I will embark upon the life history of Raza Ali of which only a few prominent patches will be given here, the banalities being left out as not much significant in illustrating my method.

CHAPTER 1

Birth and Parentage.

Raza Ali was a leading Mohammedan divine. His father was married on a windy night and it so happened that his mother was also married at the same time. Then his mother produced minute eggs. These minute eggs were fertilised by ascending spermatozoa in the upper part of the oviduct called the Fallopian tube. During their passage down it, they underwent segmentation. In the lower part of the oviduct called the womb, the embryos swelled up and were converted into little vesicles called blastodermic vesicles. These vesicles acquired an adhesion to the womb wall; in each the outer layer of cells became modified into an organ called the placenta which was adopted to absorb nourishment from the maternal blood-vessels with which the womb was richly supplied. Then the embryo grew rapidly in size and weight. The womb being provided with powerful muscles, when the embryo was ready for birth, it was expelled by strong contractions of these.

Thus Raza Ali sprang upon this earth like the proverbial cat out of the bag.

* * * * *

Early in suckling infancy, Raza Ali showed signs of being a promising child and expanding into a

great man. We find in ancient legends and old religious histories that such an one was a paragon of beauty. A slip of the moon in the sky would not be visible while the full moon lost its lustre before the refulgent beauty of his face. That such an one had a lotus like facial beauty so that droning bees hovered around about his face that camouflaged its real self. And so we find that flies winged their way from a long distance, flitted about the face of Raza Ali and settled on his lips and nose. What a sweet face it must have been!

* * * * *

Coming events cast their shadows before. Raza Ali foreshadowed in his life the blooming future that would materialise in India preparing for it the road to salvation. That happy combination of East and West, the sweet dream of our reformers, the synthesis of the spiritualism of the East and the materialism of the West, volumes could be said about it. Raza Ali gave us the first glimpse of it. At as early an age as the teething stage of his childhood, he would be seen evacuating his bowels in the streets to fertilise any chance wind-driven seed lying there and using the toilet paper as against the water of the Indians who consider the five elements as the only pure and purifying ones in nature. A precocious child indeed he was, which is supplemented

by the fact that he would be frequently uttering English words as Mama, Papa* etc Raza Ali had thus visions of India's splendid future of which at that time not even a dim hope could be seen in any human breast and to which India was later just nozzled along by the British. He in so much played a true prophetic role.

* * * * *

Some say that Mahatma Gandhi initiated the move for boycott of schools run on English educational lines. Others maintain that the idea originated with Moti Lal Nehru. Still others father it on to C. R. Das. In my opinion, only the satellites of each of these could sustain such a claim. In this way Hitler can also be made to share the credit when he gave impetus to mass evacuation of children from schools. It was Raza Ali, I hold and I am prepared to propagate my view, in whom the idea germinated and later on spread so contagiously that it took the form of a mass-agitation. As Raza Ali grew seven, his father admitted him to school. Raza Ali knew only one word for the school—boycott. He would not establish any connection with the school and if any existing, cease it for all time. He would leave his satchel hidden somewhere, and boycott the school and bolt away.

* * * * *

* Children babble syllables like Ma, Pa repeatedly.

CHAPTER X.

Transformation of Raza Ali

In the lives of all great men there comes a change once in their life the turning point, the high light of their career that marks off the new life from the old, that elevates them above ordinary mortals and sets them on an eminence. Henceforth it moulds their life in a new form so that the hero cannot be recognised as the same man of old that we were accustomed to see. He is altogether a new being. His new self and old stand in separate water tight compartments and hardly can any body mix them up. He is not what he was and he was not what he is. There is no remote identity even, no overlapping between the two lives. There is no close parallel. It is a new birth altogether. It is such a profound change wrought in the man. This change comes in its own way in every great man. Thus with Buddha under the Bodhi Tree where he saw the light, in the words of Edwin Arnold.

.....aroused and sane.

As is a man wakened from hateful dreams,
Until—greater than kings, than gods more
glad,

The aching craze to live ends and life glides

Lifeless—to nameless quiet, nameless joy,
Blessed Nirvana—sinless, stirless rest.

That change, which never changes

Thus with Mohammed,

We regard then Mohammed's assumption of the role of medium as due to the receptivity of Abu Bekr. It was in the Prophet's character to bide his time—to wait before taking any step till the favourable moment had arrived. But such a new role cannot be taken up suddenly—there must be *some period of transition between the old life and new*. Most mediums have for such transition a period of solitude. Thus Joseph Smith founder of the Mormon sect, wandered into a wood and there under the guidance of angles unearthed the Book of Mormon. Mohammed retired to a cave in Mt. Hira and there in the theophany God himself descended, addressed the Prophet and asked him to read matter contained in a well-guarded tablet.

(Margouliouth's Life of Mohammed).

and thus with the hero of our story, Raza Ali :—

As Raza Ali completed twenty years of his life a marvellous change came over him. He was no longer the Raza Ali of prankish boyhood, the urchin with a countenance beaming with mischief and a snotty face. He was now a changed man. Bristling moustaches and a sweeping beard grew all over

his face. No body could recognise in him the Raza Ali of old. A wide gulf stood between him and the old Raza Ali. He was now the chosen one of the Lord. People cottoned to him for inspiration. He was now the High Priest of Islam. He was carrying the weight of the world on his shoulders. He now piloted the storm tossed souls to a safe and sure destiny. The rank and file of Muslims held him in great reverence. He charted for them the route to paradise. That was a long mark to his credit. Mohammedans flocked to him from all quarters of the country. He was specially so put on a pedestal because he claimed relationship with the very founder of Islam in that tracing back he had with Mohammed a common ancestor Adam.

CHAPTER XVI.

The Great Renunciation.

Renunciation—the word conjures up before the mind's eye whole vistas of glory. That such a great personage renounced the world bespeaks of the dizzy height of his character. From fussing over his comforts, one should come to the subduing of his passions and senses is indeed a gigantic achievement that makes people gape and gasp at him. Only a man of a solid fibre can be expected this and not we people with a gush of rhodomontade

to impress others. It involves the realisation of the impermanency of things like a quickly passing shadow and transitoriness of life, the cessation of desires and the annihilation of action. A conviction of the fleeting nature of the joys of this world becomes firmly seated in the mind. It is a whacking idea that violently shakes you out of your snug notions and ways of life. It puts us in mind of the beatitude that is ours if we renounce the joys of this world. Edwin Arnold has thus given an alternate name to his 'Light of Asia' and that is the 'Great Renunciation'. But how it moves our gall when we see some person posing forth as having renounced the world and at the same time being of the earth earthy. He partakes of the things of this earth and cashes in at his 'renunciation'. This is a mockery of renunciation or just a grading down in that direction but not renunciation complete and thorough-going. Consider the colourless and insipid tale of Buddha's renunciation.

.....the time !

The time is come ! where at Siddhartha
turned.

And lo the moon shone by the Crab ! the stars
That same silver order long foretold,
Stood ranged to say, " This is the night !
choose thou,

The way of greatness or the way of good.
To reign a king of kings or to wander lone,
Crownless and homeless that the world be
helped ”

Moreover with the whispers of the gloom,
Came to his ears again that warning song,
As when the Devas spoke upon the wind :
And surely Gods were round about that place.
Watching on Lord, who watched the shining
stars.

“I will depart,” he spake, “ the hour is come !
Thy tender lips, dear sleeper, summon me
To that which saves the earth but sunders us,
And in the silence of yon sky I read
My fated message flashing, unto this
Came I and unto this all nights and days
Have led me, for I will not have that crown
Which may be mine I lay aside those realms
Which wait the gleaming of my naked sword.
My chariot shall not race with bloody wheels
From victory to victory, till earth
Wears the red record of my name. I choose
To tread its paths with patient stainless feet
Making its dust my bed, its loneliest waste
My dwelling and its meanest things my mates
Clad in no prouder garb than outcasts wear

Fed with no meat save what the charitable
Give of their will, sheltered by no more pomp
Than the dim cave lends or the jungle bush.
This will I do.....

(Edwin Arnold's Light of Asia).

Now compare with it the renunciation of Raza Ali the Great.

Profoundly disgusted with the world and its coarse pleasures and amours, Raza Ali sought to renounce it. This world was stinking with sin and corruption. He was filled with nausea and disgust to a point of revolt. He had been lashing people out of their torpor till this time. He could not hope to stave off the evil fate that may befall him perchance he catches the contagion from the surroundings in the midst of which he was. Renunciation was the only hope. He could not be left in the lurch in this matter

He was tense with hatred. He shook his fist grinded his teeth, kicked his feet and cast a last long look at the world and was lost to it.

Lives of great men all remind us
We can make our lives sublime.
And when going leave behind us
Foot prints on the sands of time.

CHAPTER XVII

An Estimation.

* * * * *

* * * * *

Raza Ali was a great man but every great man has his admirers and detractors. Our Raza Ali could be no exception. He had men who openly reviled him. He had those who were glued to him with devotion. There were others who satirised him or whose satires glanced upon him. Particularly so was he held in contempt by the Hindus who thought he was taking refuge behind a snuffy piosity. In accordance with their Hindi shorthand (Lande) in which only consonants are taken down, he was written and was by them called Razil (mean fellow).

The Book of Similes.

In Sanskrit literature, Kalidasa's similes are very apt and fascinating. An apt simile transports one to loftier regions of delight, but a grotesque simile has a delight all its own, if the grotesqueness is creative enough. With a masochistic urge one cannot miss the rippling humour of this mickey mouse in literature. It is on these considerations that the author has staked a modest claim to being heard in the following few pages. The character recounts his doings of the day in his own language.

I was sunk in sleep, with my body stretched full length buried among a pile of cushions and pillows and covered with a quilt and shawl in a cosy and snug position. I had been dreaming long that night. Sweet visions floated before my mind's ken in a shifting panorama, each brighter than the preceding holding out new promises and heralding better prospects. For me, no more the days of baulked ambitions, blasted hopes that was my lot till now. A future pregnant with potential powers, unchallenged authority and dominating position was mine as I envisaged it in my dreamy state. But a damper was not far

off. It ran cold water on my luring possibilities. The gong banged out the morning hours in the distance and the sound fell dimly on my ears. A trail of ideas spun itself out in my dreamy state. To the world it seemed that I was dead and encoffined. They were tolling my death-knell. People had gathered outside my house. How they recalled and pieced together the unfortunate events of my life. Some shed tears at my tragic end—a man dogged by adverse fate. How they pitied me for the hard circumstances which sooner encompassed my end. I thought I should assert myself now that a better future was in store for me. I should get up and proclaim to them that I am not dead as you take me to be and not the same man as before. With a voluntary start, I sat up in bed and all the dreams were dispersed.

In the bed, I sat up with my trunk forming with my stretched legs a right angle and yawned and coughed and sneezed as if the lid of a gramophone box had been opened and the needle set. I mused a while, sniffed and hiccupped, then sang a song to dispel the drowsy trance that still held its sway. I rubbed my eyes before they could open wide, then called for the servant to prepare my hukkah. It is a habit with me not to go to ease myself before taking a few puffs at my hukkah. I do not feel the call of nature unless

I have inhaled the fragrant smoke of my hookah. My bowels only yield their contents when I have listened to the hubble-bubble of my hookah as milk flowed forth freely from the udders of cows at the notes of the mythical flute or the scientist's rain showers from piled up clouds at the thundering sounds of trumpets ascending to heaven. After these preliminaries, I had to go for bath. I picked up my towel and a loin cloth. I put on the latch of my door, fumbled for the key in my pocket and then put the lock. I cast aside my night dress, slipped on my jacket and trousers and set to going. There was the rumbling of the key in the lock and I had left my place.

The pool where I take my bath is located some distance from the town. Legging two miles of road in an unfrequented quarter, I reach there when it is pitch dark and stony silence a watch before day. The moonlight filigreed through the trees. Wafting of the gentle breeze animates my spirits and soothes jarred feelings. There is not a flutter or flapping of the wings, no rustle of leaves of fronded trees. As I am padding noiselessly along in the spidery silence of the jungle, a sense of the immensity of the universe dawns upon me. A vast canopy all around and I in it the only sentient being. It is in this peculiarly exultant

mood that I wrap up my loin cloth and descend to the water. A cold shiver runs down my spine I take a few steps further down and reach a greater depth of water I take my dip in the pool and bob up. As I take a dip, the dirt of my body is washed off All my sins are cast away and I feel lifted above the sinful grovelling humanity as the jackal who strayed into the city at night, fell into the pot of blue of a dyer, returned and set himself up as the king of the jungle

I came home and did my toilet. I oiled my hair and applied powder to my face By some sort of atavism, this latter practice has specially taken my fancy. As I put powder on my face a sense of elation runs through me. I feel far above the common rut of human beings as the ascetics of old with ash-bedaubed faces, the direct ministers of the Almighty

The day broadened. There were stirrings of life and banging of doors. Houses straightened up. Immediately the hustle, bustle and hubbub sprang up all around. The shops opened and boys began trooping to school. The cars whisked away and there was the rattle and clatter of the horses' hoofs as the coachmen plied their tongas. Life resumed its normal.

I went for shopping to the bazar. I bought some articles of domestic use and gave the

shop-keeper a rupee with request to return to me the balance. As the shop-keeper scrutinised the coin, he flung it in my face.

‘Is this any courtesy to me,’ I protested.

‘This is counterfeit’ returned he, took it from me and clicked it on the floor in demonstration ‘Well, Mahatma Gandhi, Jawahar Lal and all other leaders of repute enjoin us to encourage swadeshi, you know. If this is a home-made article, all the better. You should put a premium on it rather than spurn it,’ I argued unsuccessfully. The shopkeeper could not be won over and I had to give him another rupee. He examined it critically but could not find his way to accept that too.

‘Its milled edge is worn off,’ he observed.

‘If the wheel of a car is worn off, you treat it second hand and pay lesser price. You may credit me with fifteen annas for that, if you like,’ I debated the matter dispassionately with him

But he was adamant in his refusal. I had none else and so I returned home as blank as when I had stepped out.

It was noon time. The sun had assumed an intolerable glare. The fans had been switched on in houses and were sending out cool swirling waves of air, while others had been set at full speed and were convulsing the air with the mild fury of a

tempest. The birds and beasts had withdrawn to the green foliage of fronded trees to have their mid-day siesta. A humming quietness had assailed the air. Life was dull and drab all around. A man who had lately felt drawn towards me had asked me to lunch. My car whisked away in the hushing stillness presided over by the tropic sun. It was prickly heat all around. The air was simmering in the distance. I reached my friend's house and banged at the door. A window above was thrust open. In reply to the query, I gave my name. My mate received me at the doorway, and led me into the dining hall. The day was far advanced. I was feeling gnawing hunger, twitching thirst. At an invitation, the Indian host strains every nerve to get full marks for the funicular side of life in his house. Hence the tantalising delay in serving the dishes. The sight of a child nibbling at his piece of bread further accentuated my appetite ? I was pining for food. While my host was so finicky as to busy himself with trifles of arrangements I was experiencing such pangs of hunger that I closed my eyes like a heron in the shallow waters contemplating a catch of fish

The meals were served at last. There were such dainty dishes done in a delicate flavour and bearing such a nice savour with the hanging

aroma that they spoke eloquent for the chef who had managed it all. I ate to my fill lingering over the sugary tastes of dishes. Then there were peppery dishes. And the sparkling aerated waters Each came in its round. I ate voraciously until I was fully satiated. Then I rose to depart.

As I was returning, the thermometer registered a fall in temperature and the sweltering heat of the noon had lessened in its severity. The sun had lost its glare and had taken on a mild aspect. I retired to the dark recesses of my house which exercise a somnolence over man. A restful sleep after meals aids digestion There I slept like the wolf of the fable who had preyed upon an unwary lamb and sumptuously feasted upon it

As I got up, I yawned like an abyss into which anything may fall howsoever dimensional and is known no more. I stretched my limbs to cast off the spell of sleep that still held me in its bondage. My eyes were reddish. I put on my evening dress and went for a walk.

I strayed away into idle paths as my fancy led me. In the course of my rambles, my eyes lighted upon a circular palisade erected on a plain. Above

were hovering myriads of kites and crows, vultures and falcons casting covetous eyes down below. I thought it was the Tower of Silence. As I took a few steps further, indistinct sounds filled my ears. My curiosity was piqued and I approached a bit nearer. Loud noise, jarring sounds, hullabaloo, slogans and boo'ing and baa'ing flooded my ears. 'What is this Tower of Silence with the Babel of tongues?' I wondered I went to the gate and took a peep in. Oh, it was the annual gathering of the All-India Muslim League and the bones and shreds of meat thrown as offal by Muslim delegates and visitors camping around which formed so many focus points of attention of the carnivorous winged species.

Kashmir.

Since this subject has been much thrashed out, I am giving only my own scrapings of what had been left over by others.

The valley of Kashmir that saucer-like depression made by nature amid snow-capped mountains where she incubates and promotes her own species is called the paradise on earth. There are three routes to this paradise winding their tortuous circuitous way on the flanks of mountains plunging now into a tunnel, emerging now on hill top and thence slithering downward, here interred under the snows of an avalanche shaken from its roots, there looking spineless because of the mountainslide. The route from Jammu to Srinagar courses through state territory. The second route is from Rawalpindi to Srinagar *Via* Abbotabad where Domel drives a wedge between the Frontier province and Kashmir State. The third route from end to end is from Rawalpindi to Srinagar *Via* Murree where the Kohala bridge is shared fifty-fifty by the Punjab Government and the State administration. The vehicles of transport cannot ply through the territory from the government of which they have not obtained permit to that effect.

I will not array my forces on any side as to which of the three routes best leads to paradise. The Hindu trinity translates itself into the gods Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva. The High priests at the altars of fane sacred to the particular divinity enshrined in them are bawling to the people about their dire need and with pontifical airs proclaiming to them that their way for which the word they have saddled into use is *marga* (way) *e. g.* Vama Marga, Dakshina Marga or Panth *e. g.* Kabir Panth, Dadu Panth forms the best route to paradise, meanwhile pocketing the offerings of their devotees. Let Dewan Bahadur Gopal Swamy Iyengar, Dr. Khan Saheb and Sir Sikander Hayat Khan step forth and each announce in stentorian voice that his route best reaches paradise and meanwhile swell the coffers of his pay masters.

The city of Srinagar sprawls along the Jhelum which is here spanned by seven bridges with their arches striding along across the river from bank to bank that give access to the city. Dharma in Hindu theology receives the appellation of 'setu' *i. e.* bridge, that helps us across this tumultuous world of misery to paradise. This Dharmasetu the bridge of faith, is often five fold as in the Ramanuja sect. Manu details a tenfold Dharma. Meseems, the bridge here is sevenfold that opens out to paradise and capacitates us to leave the

stinking world behind. In the dim medieval ages, men with a fat purse carved for themselves a niche in paradise by warming the hands of the pope. Now alas as of yore, only those do saunter forth into paradise with easy airs whose purse is not lame.

How often have I felt intrigued by the spectacle of gables and slant roofs in clashing contrast with the high-ceilinged flatroofed houses of the plains. Why do these houses piled one after the other carry a dromedary-like hunch-backed appearance. I was much mystified. My intuitive intellect failed me. At last I cast the plummet of my mind into the problem like Paul Brunton into the architectural mysteries of the sphinx and the daylight clear solution thus mirrored itself in my vision. The flat roofs of the plains follow the pattern of the level land on which they rise. These houses take shape after the rocks that environ them on all sides. When you are in Rome, do as the Romans do.

Dear Readers ! You must be familiar with the pucca vegetarian. Second to him ranks the meateater who is a bit abstemious with his meat. He will be on all fours with the pucca vegetarian on days of ceremony and observance. But come with me and land in Kashmir. I show you the pucca meat eater whose ceremonies and

observances are never spic and span without the lump of flesh. Visit the meat market on Sivaratri at 10 A. M. in winter and the flood of Pandits has denuded the shops of their all-in-all. The Tantrik form of Hinduism is the rage here and hence the sarcophagy.

The temple of Shankaracharya perched on the hill top sentinel-like puts the people in mind of the consequences of violation of the moral law. A narrow precipitous track amidst rubble and loose boulders zigzags its uphill course. From top of the hill Srinagar looks like a splash of tumbled houses. Inside the temple is installed a huge Sankaralingam circumferential as the bole of the pipal tree. The temple is but a small solitary circular chamber with a semi-circular dome that canopies over the Sivalingam and itself has a phallus-like appearance. Clothes are the foundation of society, said Carlyle The apparel oft bespeaketh the man, said Shakespeare.

The winter capital of the state is Jammu which traces its descent to the Sanskrit word Jambu *i.e.* Jackal. I cannot account for the designation. In official communications, the Railway timetable and the tickets of Bus services, Jammu Tawi is the accepted word. So Jammu Tawi seems to be the original name while in colloquial language the latter part is chopped off.

Tawi is a river rather a rivulet that meanders its course through Jammu. In South India the village name is prefaced to the personal name, as Mayavaram Dandayudhapani Iyer *i.e.* Dandayudhapani Iyer who belongs to Mayavaram. So Jammu Tawi would stand interpreted as Jammu that is situated on the banks of Tawi. I think I can trace here the influence of the Madrasi visitors to Kashmir or is it the influence exercised by the Madrasi Prime Minister of Kashmir. Ah ! caught it. Meseems this place was originally inhabited by Dravidians who were pushed south as the streams of Aryan invaders poured from the north and this is a vestige of those times.

The country side along the Jammu route is studded with beautiful picturesque towns. Among them twenty miles from it is Anant Nag. This place is also called Islamabad. Here in British India we have disputes as to what a particular street or road should be christened. The Hindu and Moslem members of the Lahore Municipality hold bludgeons over each others' heads as to whether it should be Ram Gali or Sultan Gali. This is the best way of composing differences. Adopt both the names. Again Indian India has set the example. Need any body entertain the shadow of a doubt about the Congress claim that in a free India, there will be no Hindu Moslem quarrels.

The snow-wrapped Gulmarg, twenty-eight miles from Srinagar is a health resort. Marg, they say in Kashmiri means plain. I am in abysmal ignorance of the language and will not vouch for it. But how can I disbelieve the evidence of my senses. I have a scrappy knowledge of Persian. Marg in Persian means death and 'gul' of course is 'extinguished' disappear.' Gulmarg will thus paraphrase 'where death hovering over the patient, disappears' and is thus loyal to its name. With this key solution, I leave it to the reader to explain Tangmarg.

These are the tentacles of Srinagar as far as the eye of the telescope can reach.

Srinagar the land of beauty would have been shorn of half its beauty but for that silvery sheet of water the Dal lake. Shikaras glide along on its breast like skaters. Here logs are rolled together, earth is spread on them inches high, and seed is cast. Crops grow and ripen Land, houses under the Civil Procedure Code of 1908 is immoveable property and they are laid under attachment in a different way This agricultural land on the Dal lake can be moved from place to place. Is this immoveable or moveable property ? I have grown rusty on my law. Mr. Justice Tek Chand should answer my question. A decreeholder taking out execution of his decree against agricultural land

held by the judgment debtor jointly with another as in a Hindu Coparcenary, enters into possession of land by walking round the land in presence of the patwari, the judgment-debtor and a few villagers. How is possession to be obtained of this agricultural land on the lake As I start moving round the land, the judgment debtor tows it along with me so that my circumambulation is never complete. This is another tangle I cannot resolve. I have got a judgment-debtor in Kashmir. How will I face the difficulty ?

Often during the polar winters, the Dal lake freezes stony. Men walk on it with impunity and it is the best skating hall of nature. It is sometimes said of a person that his position is now unassailable. He is not in deep waters as before. He is on terra firma. Webster should modify the meaning of terra firma so as to noose in the waters of the Dal lake in winter and no tinge of the meaning of the deep waters of the preceding sentence should be there. The city of Srinagar is a sickening sight with its jumble of slums, ramshackle houses and higgledy piggedly streets pinned together by the Jhelum but for the flowerage and foliage that fringes it on all sides Its lush vegetation, lambent branches with succulent fruits, flowers and flowerets with their pollen floating on the air, the wind sougning in the leaves

of the trees, the green verdure, the velvet air and the swirling waters of the river make up a catalogue of the garden of Aden. The Kashmir Exhibition visited alike by the Brahman gentry and the bedizened rustics gives each much to stare at. The vegetables, cereals and grain if a specimen of any of them were to come to the vegetable market here would be a Gulliver in Lilliput. It would be a crank, a misfit. The tomato with one ft. diameter and all else of a like dimensional measure will dazzle the imagination. The fruit trees of Kashmir have a peculiarity, they say. They bring forth the glossy, juicy fruit first and the feathery blossom afterwards. Justified, I say. There is nothing peculiar in it. The hen lays the gleaming tasty yolky egg first and hatches the fluffy little chick later, of streaked beauty and variant hues. On Kashmir I will not exercise my pen but to remove any stigma that may be attaching to it as I have some sort of connubial connections with it.

As I was sitting on the velvet lawns of the Shalamar the pleasure-talk went round the circle. The cupolas, the abacus, the spouting founts and the crenellated walls with arabesques on them done so delicately had singular delight for the visitor. Each was regaling the rest with gossip. As the burden was rolled away from every heart. My friend drew a heavy puff at his

cigarette and blew out. The blue smoke curled up in a spiral. My sight wandered to the yonder mountains bleak and barren of all growth. For a few moments I was lost to my environments. Sundry idle thoughts swam meaningless in my brain. I was nonplussed as to why the mountain side was so clean shaven. Then I was informed that mountains here have trees and vegetation on one side only. The other side is smooth and sterile.

Geologists may have in readiness learned disquisitions on loamy soil and rock formations. They may burrow under the surface and find the geological contents of the earth. Climatologist may be trumpeting their own theories while the biologist may have a different tale to tell. Away with them. My theory is more convincing and authoritative because it is so simple. It commands belief because it is based on ancient texts which have not been tampered with or mangled in any way. These texts have been published by the Government and the galleys were well gone through by its accredited workers before the lead was put in the formes and the roller went over them. It is there stated that this mountain range is the arm of the Himalayas, that the Himalaya extends its arms towards Kashmir and the Indo-Tibetan border and this is one of its arms. Well! the arm has hair on one side only while the other is satin smooth skin.

As distinguished from the other sciences of geology, biology, zoology etc., this is my dear readers, called the science of analogy.

The women wear only a kind of full-sized frock which is their blanket and bathing ghat. As the day breaks over the city and the sun peeps above the distant mountain, men shake off their slumbers. As the day broadens, women folk will be seen trooping to the river to take a dip in its waters. The sloping sands of the river record their visit. As they begin their descent down the banks they have not to undress themselves. The water line kisses their feet, as they have gone one foot down, they slightly lift up the loosely hanging borders of their frocks. As the water reaches the waist line, the frock is so much above it. As they are five or six feet down, they slip off the frock from their body, hold it aloft in one hand and take a few dips in the river. As they begin to emerge from the river, they slip it on. The sun has now leapt far beyond the mountain and is high on the Dal lake. They repair to their home and straighten up the household. These women have a curious relic of basket-fighting. Two women living in the same street will pitch up a quarrel between themselves. They will spit abuse after abuse upon each other in their throaty Kashmiri dialect. They will pour forth such billingsgate that God forbid and do a lot of mud-slinging. They will cast snooks at each

other and grit their teeth. No word in the vocabulary of filth and abuse will be left unused. In addition to casting aspersions at their backs they will taunt each other for their vices and misdeeds when thus faced. From their house tops they will attract such a crowd that there will be a traffic bloc. When these women become so hoarse as if a lump of something had been rammed down their throat, they retire from the field meanwhile turning down a basket. Next day they overturn the basket and resume the quarrel. When the match is drawn for the day, the basket is again turned down. Next day the fighting cock is again let loose as the basket is overturned and so on till one of them is vanquished.

The clarity of my memory of the days of tumult and turmoil in Kashmir has gone dark but one incident still stands embedded in it. The city was convulsed with riots. The rioters formed into a procession one day and swept everything before them. The dissatisfaction growing in them was having its full vent. Their hearts were all afire. They were all aflame with a burning passion to wreak vengeance on the Government for their wrongs. Suddenly they were confronted by the police who had a fire brigade squad at their command. The fire-man began to play hoses of water on the rioters. Their clothes were drenched and dripping. The ground was running with water.

The hooligans missed footing. They began to disperse in different directions and the place was dead silent like a necropolis.

In an Urdu symposium, a poet read a couplet which would thus convert itself into English:—

If the lovers' hearts takes fire, the fire engine can be easily requisitioned to quench it. The audience relished it much for its humour. Humour is in the incongruity. But where's the incongruity. Kashmir police showed it practically.

Srinagar's museum and exhibition are the two high lights of attraction for visitors. The Partap Museum rears its edifice on the bank of the Jhelum which reflects it. In the verandah of the Museum there are two huge earthen pitchers. Verily among them, in which Ali Baba and forty thieves hid themselves ! Inside the Museum, there is much that has grown out-moded now and other oddities. In the exhibition, there is the papier mache and a lot else that forms a bristling medal on the breast of Kashmir. In the poultry section, I saw an incubator which would hatch chicks in any number of days you like only the heat had to be graded and regulated accordingly. It could hatch chicks even in one day, only they will not survive long. I would recommend some such device to be patented for Hitler who wants to multiply the German population to its square and cube. Instead of nine

months, a child will spring into existence in a fortnight after conception. He may not survive much. It is an indifferent matter. Hitler only wants them to be cannon fodder.

Swami Shankaracharya founded four maths or monasteries in four places corresponding to the four points of the compass. Whosoever comes in the order of the succession and becomes the head of a monastery, names himself Shankaracharya irrespective of what his individual name might be. Swami Ramanuja adopted the practice and Ramanuja becomes the established name of the heads of his monasteries. They are his transanimate successors. Jaipur takes its name after Raja Jai Singh while Madhopur derives its name from Sawai Madho Singh. Combining these two practices, I would suggest that each of the ruling princes of the Kashmir State at his investiture should be christened anew as a Hindu bride when the marriage ceremony is in progress and their successors in office should get the same name as they are installed on the gaddy. Thus their names will be Kashmir Singh (the Lion of Kashmir), Poonch Singh (the tale of the Lion), Jambu Singh (the Jackal Lion), so that all the three proverbial lions are there.

The Progress of the Soul

When I grew six, my parents admitted me to school. But I won't, I won't. At the very mention of school I pissed. The thought of submitting myself to the iron discipline of school whereas I could name my own terms to anybody at home, to my parents by sulking and to my brothers and sisters because I was the eldest among them sickened me and made my brain whirl in a frenzy of movement. From capering about or monkeying, lying tranquil steeped in sunshine or feeling the cool breeze as my mood dictated, I should come to be rounded up in the stuffy room of the school was a nauseating idea. Upto this time I had a crowded daily programme of playing balls, singing snatches of songs that floated to my ears from unknown quarters, rattling off some nursery rhymes at times, stupefying myself with food at inopportune times throughout the day. There was no interval in it which I could heartily give to school attendance. No fluffy-minded person could take to such heavy pursuits. But my parents were those namby-pamby people who must do me a good turn. At last the horoscope was cast and an auspicious day singled out for admitting me to school. Amidst the congratulations of people and my violent protests, I was marched off to school. I kicked up a highly exasperating row and amassed crowds in the way

which strangled the free flow of the traffic. As the school loomed into vision, I clung to the skirts of my mother. The impending doom of being hooked to the procession of those dead-out-of-luck ones tore the very protoplasm of my life. Inside the school, with my noise and cries I would have brought down the roof over my head but for fear of being hurt.

My biography was set down in all detail. The time and date of my birth, parentage, the age of my brothers and sisters, when I was vaccinated, all duly noted. I would not stay among these outlandish people and chill surroundings. When my parents chose to depart, edging by this door and that column, I entered the loosely hanging skirts of my mother and under cover smuggled myself home. The following day I was again escorted to school. After two hours, taking my satchel under my arm, I again appeared at home.

'It's holiday, jolly well, all have dispersed home,' said I chirpily. The third day before I had had my full sleep out, I arose heavy-lidded and stale. When I reached the school, the master said in a heavy authoritative voice, 'you sneaking snippet, yesterday you escaped home in the middle of the day's work.'

'The whole class left the room. It was not a single boy asking for permission to urinate.' 'So I too picked up my way home,' I explained apologetically.

‘ That was the drill period. They dispersed to assemble in the maidan again, while you reached your sweet home,’ rang out the voice of the master in tones of wrath.

‘ Thank you, master, for your having made me acquainted with the rules!’ I withdrew accommodat-
ingly, and the matter was patched up.

My soul was not in the task. I could not pin my attention to my books. My mind wandered and never rested on anything. I beat down my first repulsion and got down like a suicide to the stuff. I could not proceed much further and my mind shot off at a tangent to something that could not be linked to my lesson with a chain of concatenations even, the popular device of pneumonics. Back again to my lesson, I was jerked to something else which could not claim the semblance of connection with it. I had a very feeble concentration. My flighty unstable mind could not settle on its work. Even the Illustrated Farmyard ABC with its

A is for apple

And Amy you see

Has found a nice sweet one

Just under the tree.

C is for Calf

And for chick and for cow

The cow will come later

The chick is here now.

could not shove me much further. My mind ran to diverse objects. Stopping the run of thought I again tried to fix my attention on my lessons

‘Count upto hundred and in a short while I will take your test. Action, action’, boomed the voice of the master, addressing the whole class.

And immediately there sprang up a hubbub and din of noise and every one of the boys was counting upto hundred to himself and where he missed the link he sought the other’s aid. A boy was dropping off to sleep. He was roused from his torpor by the master.

‘ One ’, I began.

‘ Two ’, I proceeded.

‘ Three, three’, I stumbled at the words.

‘ One, two, three’, I repeated but felt the rest clearly swept from my memory.

‘ Get on, you chumps ’, again roared the master.

‘ One, two, three ’, my mind wandered and I thought of the auction to which my father would lead me on Sundays. And I was living through the whole scene.

One, two.

One, two, one.

One, two, three and the pen of a classmate slipped into my pocket.

One, two.

One, two, three.

And the inkwell of another flitted out of the window.

Year in, year out, year in, year out, I reached my B. A.

Those were the days when I, the scatter-brained had hardly any mental grip. These were the days when I could maintain my attention in perfect focus. Thus far had I developed my concentration by gradual ascent with an incessant application of will and effort. I was not now the child of old who shipped his oars and let the stream of thought take him whither it will. I was now capable of concentrated attention for hours on end. I plumed myself on my close concentration. Once engrossed in my studies I was lost to the outside world. If I went to the library and took out a book, I was plunged in it. As it was time to close and the clock of the library rang out twelve times, I had no knowledge. I had to be shaken up or pinched on the shoulder and informed that the library has closed.

The examinations were coming fast. Two days more and I would be sitting up for the n. I took a book from the shelf, stuck my hat on my head,

removed myself to a secluded retreat in the garden and under the pendent boughs of a low-sized tree was deep down in my work. I was rapt in a trance.

Someone came and hung from a branch of the tree a bush of sharp prickly thorns and was away with my hat. At the end of the day's work, I awoke from my trance, stood up to go and my head bobbed up into the tangle of thorns. My face was ploughed all over in queer geometrical patterns.

Triangles, quadrilaterals, rhombus and parallelograms, parabola, hyperbola, and ellipse with epicentre and locus complete and tangents meeting at infinity were dug out all over my face. Signs of plus, minus, equilibrium and parallel with shooting arrow marks were etched wide over my face.

In a day or two, scabs formed over the raw wounds. Hard lines stood out in place of the blood red streaks. The examinations began with the paper on Mathematics. As I sat solving my paper, my wounds were continually itching. I felt like scratching with my nails but for fear of generating puss. I ran my cool smooth fingers on the hard lines to ease the irritation. The supervisor was regarding me intently.

I proceeded a bit with my paper.

Again I felt an itch here and my cold finger was all over it.

The supervisor came to me and led me to the superintendent.

This student has got the diagrams of all the problems sketched on his face at a little cost to himself. He feels the diagram and as you know it usually happens, the solution immediately suggests itself to his mind. Thus he is solving the paper.

And I was chucked out of the examination hall.

Child is the Father of the Man.

Child is the father of the man. The sense of it could not soak down to my understanding. If a man produces a child, how does that child become the father of that man. The matter passed my comprehension, my head was in a whirl. The inspiration descended on me as I switched off my mind to the throne of the British Empire. Oh, I see Edward was the son of George and I was once told that the father of George was Edward. So child is the father of the man. Thus the truth dawned on me. The masses of gloom and darkness rolled away and the clouds of doubt dissolved from my mind. The heaviness that weighed on me and the incubus that sat on my mind paralysing my mental faculties was lifted and the profundity of the truth shone forth with a throbbing halo of light. I felt grand.

Now I emerged a hard-baked and confirmed exponent of the popular saying that child is the father of the man which I had now elevated to a doctrine. I sought to weave out its exegesis in philosophical strains, drew upon customary law for example and put everyone in mind of its altitude of meaning, as opportunity offered.

The turgid atmosphere of oppressive heat rose in tier upon tier in thick strata as I watched the

shimmering waves swirling and curling in the viscid air of the midday sun. The shadows of things were shortened beyond comparison as the sun was high over head at its zenith in the sky and was casting its intolerable glare which bleared the sight of sentient beings. The drowsy leafage was still and stirred and rustled occasionally as a faint whiff of breeze brushed past.

At times a hot blast of wind raised a cloud of dust with a sharp clear sweep and trailed its way impalpably into the unknown. Then a whirlwind of hot air gathering strength ascended in a dusty spiral towards the sky and dissipated its elements high up. Hens with drooping wings panted for breath and yapping dogs with lolling tongues moved listlessly about. A line of people with clammy shirts and streams of sweat pouring down their faces trickled past. The muzzy heat dulled my senses and sent me into a reverie. With half closed eyes I lay for a moment, then jerked upto attention.

I took up a book and began a desultory reading.

History moves in a circle. History repeats itself. There are cycles of history.....was the burden of the author's philosophy of history.

I started into a train of cogitations. Does history repeat itself.

Does it cover the same stages again. Does it go all over its past so that the future is an exact replica of the bygone ? Does it work like a spindle which flies to a point, back again and again it darts off or the shaft of machinery that works with a droning hum in regular precision. Napoleon sought to weld the nations of Europe into a United States of Europe. A similar idea was projected by the League of Nations a century later exact This lends colour to the idea that history repeats itself Russia seeks to enthrone the masses equalising them and levelling out all differences reverting to the law of nature when every man was just man with nobody to ride roughshod over him. History moves in a circle. History revolves round itself. It traverses the same points in its compass over and over again. This is the law of the universe to say the least. Planets and satellites wheel round the sun and other planets in geometrical precision to the march of time and emancipation of heat and energy with an even tempo. Their mad whirl round and round and round will only stop when an erring planet falls out of its course and with a cataclysmic clash the planets fly apart, sunder and disperse to atoms and the doomsday has come. Only then will it end.

I progressed with my philosophisings. A great change is what to us signifies the word revolution.

Revolution comes from the word revolve. A change thus is nothing but revolving round to the original position from which events coursed forward.

Bursting into a monologue I continued.

‘So I suppose’, said I, shifting in my chair.

‘Look at this counsel of mine’ said I holding the record of a case lying on the table in my hand, this bloke is an M. A., LL. B. He was a bachelor first, then he became a master and he was trying to be a bachelor again. Cyclical periods in the life of man recurring like the ticking of a clock. I soliloquised. There was a tap at the door and a few friends of mine broke in upon my solitary mumblings.

Among them a dressy youngster Narain his name was, with a shiny face, stiff collar and starched clothes. Another Nares with a top knot and caste marks on his forehead and a blotched face. Another will need a passing line. He was Surindar, a lean lanky man with poverty blanched white face.

‘What were you maundering just now ?’ asked Narain in a sharp shrill voice.

‘I had just indulged in thought about this legal adviser who is an M A. LL.B.’, said I.

‘Don’t you be pondering the mysteries of the universe all the time. Too much of strain on the

brain sets a man wild. Mind that, I tell you', said Narain.

'These M. A. LL B's .. a hard lot, steer their course in one direction then not sighting the goal change gear and turn in the other direction. Such is the tragedy of unemployment', sighed Surindar.

'There are no doles for the unemployed in this country as there are in Britain. Young men with shrivelled bodies, pallid faces, skinny thighs and lustreless eyes die of hunger and starvation like so many worms and the supercilious lords of the country turn not their glance towards them. They have been equipped for a career in the bureaucracy and cannot take to anything else. They are sacrificed at the altar of the monstrous Moloch of Government service. Many careers are shut out to them as the army. They cannot set their hand to the plough. Invidious laws have been made discriminating against them. What cuts up an Indian patriot most is that all these arrangements have been made to set at loggerheads the various sections of the Indian nation in pursuance of the policy of divide and rule. Cold feelings prevail between one section of the Indian population and another. 'Political bondage – the stinking sore', perorated Nares.

'Our luck is right out. Will it ever be possible for us to achieve emancipation', despaired Surindar casting a wistful glance.

‘To have our breast pressed down under the weight of centuries of slavery means a job. To snap the shackles of bondage and to despatch home the rulers who have fastened themselves upon us, with all their tanks thrown into tanks, guns into gunny bags and aeroplanes on the plain is a hell of a task. Impossible of accomplishment’, said Narain giving an inkling of an idea of the might of the British sovereignty.

‘History, my friends repeats itself’, said Naresa, his eyes lit with a beam of hope. ‘This Aryan race once mounted on the crest of the wave of civilisation was riding the ocean of humanity in solid solitary splendour till it broke into foam and frothy frustration and other civilizations came in its wake. They are its spawn. The sons of our soil were the leading lights in this world. In all the domains of science and art, Aryans had the field. Our Chakravarti kings ruled the globe. Chakra in Sanskrit means a circle, the Aryans being well aware that the earth is circular in all its dimensions. Will those days return if history repeats itself’, said Naresa with a ring of longing in his voice.

‘Why not’, said Surindar covering up the lull in conversation.

‘Why not’, echoed Naresa brightening with hope, the signs are broadly visible on the horizon.

This Aryan race is asserting itself. The dawn of an intellectual domination has broken out and the political domination will soon be on its way. Two of our sons have received Nobel Prizes. The startling discoveries of Sir C. V. Raman sent the scientists of the West upon their feet. The miasma of stagnation and decay that India had given out with centuries of slavery and political subjugation is fast disappearing. Indians had been inured to a hard lot. The nice stiff wine of complacency had made them blotto and they had been thrown out into the hard street of fatalism. Sir Chandra Shekhar Venkatraman augurs, the dawn of a rosy future for the Aryan race', continued Naresa.

'Whose son is this illustrious Sir Chandra Shekhar Venkatraman' I asked Surindar.

'He is the son of Chandra Shekar that comes first in his name', replied Naresa.

'It is an established practice that father's name comes after the personal name as in Parshotam Das Thakur Das', wondered Surindar.

'See our religious texts, the Upnishads. The names of sages are given in the style Kavashputra Ailusha, *i.e.*, Ailusha son of Kavash. So here also father's name comes first', exemplified Naresa.

‘ I know nothing of that. What do you say to Mohamed Ibn Abdulla, Khalid ben Walid whence the practice spread,’ countered Surindar.

‘ In South India it is a different practice.’

‘ How can it be that the place occupied by the son in a man’s name should come to be that occupied by the father ?,’ said Surindar bump-tiously.

‘ Well You have it before you’, I interjected ‘ my dear, don’t you know child is the father of the man ’

‘ This Aryan race is,’ resumed Naresa, ‘ bound to scale the dizzy heights of glory. I can see in the dim purple distance signs of its oncoming greatness, when the whole world will embrace Aryan culture and civilisation. It will be a fateful day for the human race when the Aryan tenets will print their seraphic impress on every human mind. The whole Aryan race be they Buddhists, Jains or Hindus distinguishes itself by one principle which is none of the lot of the Semitic or Nordic people to cherish and that is the doctrine of metempsychosis. Any other belief may be shared in common with any part of the non-Aryans but not this.’ Naresa lapsed into deeper thought.

‘ This is the doctrine of reciprocity, of do as you would be done by—a sublime thought. It is the

doctrine of a span of births and deaths, What you have done to another will be inflicted on you in a future birth when you will be in the position in which he was and he will be what you were. The etymology of the word mamsa, *i. e.*, meat sums up the whole idea. Mam in mamsa means me and sa means he. 'Me he will eat whom I am eating.' There will be the heralding of the dawn, I firmly hold, when the whole human race will set it up as its ideal, when the whole world will believe that

'Child is the father of the man', I crooned.

The Pate Unshorn.

Even people from southern India hardly seem to have grazed any knowledge of the Sikhs from anywhere, not to speak of the millions beyond the shores. Their hilarious ignorance does not do justice to the Sikhs when they offer them a cigarette. This has actuated me to record the information that I have gleaned about the Sikhs in these pages. Barring imperfect recollections and decayed memories this is a faithful account and will be useful for future generations in having a tale their grand-children to tell, when the Sikhs become an extinct species like the dodo.

The surest means to detect a Sikh is his rank growth of hair. See the face of a Sikh with its bushy beard and it reminds you of the honeycomb beset with bees, with a thin grey beard of a sucked mango stone, with a sparse growth, of something from the limbo with strands of gossamer and soot hanging loose from it, with beard moistened and set with a bandage, of a freshly hatched chick out of the shell. His long hair tucked on the top of head much like a snake in its coil while hanging loose on the shoulder like the branches of the *Ficus Retusa*.

The dacoits and murderers in the Punjab every day sentenced to be hanged by the High Court

recruit their forces mostly from the Sikhs. Hence the word sardar for a Sikh. Sar in Persian means head and dar means the hanging noose. The head for the hanging noose. The word also claims a Hindi origin. Sar in Hindi also is an equivalent for head and dar means a woman.

Durjan dār bhaj bhaj be sambhār charhīn
uttar pahār dar Sevājī narinda te.

The females of the enemies climbed up the
northern hill for fear of Shivaji
Maharaj

So sardar means head like a woman's. And that is that. The word vernacular traces its origin to vernaculus i.e. a slave and thus literally stands for the language of the slaves. But just as vernacular has lost its nasty sense to those who use it, a Sikh leaps and jubilates if he is addressed as sardar.

All Sikhs must wear turbans. A Sikh can't come out with head uncovered. This can afford useful clue to the police in laying its hands on the real culprit. As a Sikh dacoit escapes when he is given a hot chase by the villagers, but as the folds of his turban come loose over his head so that it falls off, it may be picked up intact by the police. The arrangement of the folds will give out the man. The man who binds such a turban may be safely put under arrest.

Among them the Akalis wear black turban.

Meets an Akali in black turban another Akali who had made a lapse in this respect, coming from the opposite direction.

‘The Akali in black turban :—‘How is it you are not putting on any black turban to-day’ ?

‘Sardarji’, says the other, ‘our hearts should be black. What is there in turbans’ ?

Every Sikh name must rhyme in Singh. I have seen such names as in an English paper Mohendar Singh, which presumably means from mohen i.e. to me (in Hindi) and dar is fear, the pusillanimous singh, in an Urdu paper Gunda Singh, i.e. a hooligan and Fool Singh.

I lately saw a tract *Birth of the Khalsa*. Khalsa it explains comes from khalas i.e. without a mixture as unadulterated ghee or milk is so called. Now the whole world is born from the mixture of spermatozoa with ova. Whence is this birth without mixture is something which I cannot comprehend. Like the table eggs perhaps.

At twelve o'clock in the day time, it is said, they are completely out of wits and clearly off their heads. In the oppressive heat of the midday sun when his bones are crackling with lethargic inertia and the stalactites of his impenetrable cavernous mouth are dribbling with oily sweat, when he

can be easily caught in a snooze, when the tangled growth of his hair readily lends itself to a tangle of ideas in his brain, he is in a fuddle. His brain is whirling in a frenzy of movement and his wits have gone off for a razzle. All this heaped upon the fact that a Sikh is intellectually dwarf produces something fascinating in its total effect though repellent in its details.

*Scene :—*An office with a neat arrangement of chairs and tables and clerks straightening up the accounts. A clock ticking on the wall. Somebody puts in a call on the phone and the exchange calls back. The telephone rings and an employee takes up the receiver and attends to the call. The hour of twelve booms out from the clock and the last stroke is reverberating. The hands come together one over the other. The man on the other side has hung up on him. A click and the clerk slams down the receiver. Comes the sardar ji and says (his eyes catching sight of the clock), 'Oh I see, one of the hands is missing.'

Azan, the Muslim call to prayer rises from the minaret of the mosque five times a day in a throaty voice ringing vibrant through the air. The five prayers of a Muslim that punctuate his daily activities are fajr, zuhr, asr, maghrib and isha. The call goes strident in the air to remind the Muslim steeped in worldly activities that it is now

time for him to be at his devotions. It goes forth to wean him for a while from the pursuit of wealth and lucre. As it ascends the devout Muslim is put in mind that he should now be counting the beads rather than counting the coins. The devotee calls halt to his mundane activities in which he was busied and bolts away to his mosque to say his prayers.

The Hindu worship is a long-winded process. Singing of songs, chanting of hymns, recitation from a holy book, circumambulation of the shrine, kindling the sacrificial fire and saying the prayers are a few that number among them. Following up at the end is the '*arti*', at the fall of night when the deity is closed to view and laid to rest till morning. A song is sung and it puts a halt to the temple worship. At the beginning of *arti* the temple gong goes clanging forth in a continuous strain to persuade the Hindu to tear himself off from mundane affairs and to join at least the last act of worship, if he has not been able to give himself upto his deity for a longer time. Hearing the sound of the temple gong, even the Hindu who is not filled with the fervour of a devotee's sort to any appreciable extent darts off for the temple to be among the congregation for the last act of worship.

Sikhs affect the jingo spirit. In a Sikh shrine or Gurdwara on this analogy, a trumpet is beaten

every morning before the ardas which is their last act of worship after which sweet pudding is distributed among the congregated people who then pick up their way home.

The police bell tang—tang—tanged the hours of the noon.

Temple gong sounding....., reflected a Sikh, last act of worship.....ardas.....sweet pudding at the end. And he buzzed off in the direction of the Gurdwara to share in the distribution.

* * * * *

‘Lift up your legs, I have to put in my organ’, said the Sikh who had done reading a journal which bore the title, ‘The Fruit, the organ of the Fruit Development Board’, to his wife who was occupying a seat in the train under which was lying his suit case. The half-baked punster hardly knew that he was creating a pun which though well addressed to his wife was hardly seeming in the train. Had it read the Fruit, the journal of the Fruit Development Board, it would have come easy and correct as my journal but organ does not fit in every syntax. Sikhs are educational laggards.

‘O Karmu’, said the sardar to his servant, ‘Go and water the plants’.

‘It is raining outside sir’, said the servant.

‘Then take an umbrella and do it’, he ordered.

Sikhs have scant regard for learning and intellect. The mental side of life they put at a discount. Theirs is they say the church militant. The warrior's ideal of combating the forces of evil and lawlessness soon sinks in unthinking minds without an intellect as the cynosure of conduct and behaviour to a bellicose nature and inflammable temperament. The feeble-minded getting up an inkling of the fever for courageous deeds rapidly grows cantankerous and develops a Don-Quixotic termagantian mental make-up. He quickly transforms into a blatant, bloated creature. The attitude of the contentious, quick-tempered person who revels in pitting himself against any odd and end, possessed with a monomania for bravery, borders on insanity.

The night was dark, coal-tar black. Clouds rumbled, gurgled, roared in the sky. Lightning flashed on the earth. The Sikh flashed his sword. Next day the follower of Gobind Singh the falcon-flier was bragging to his friends, 'Our Guru ji, it is stated, despatched his enemies to heaven. Something of the sort I accomplished last night. Somebody came in the dark flashing his sword. As I wielded my sword in response it had a magic effect. I saw him ascending to heaven with his flashing sword and all that until he disappeared behind the clouds'.

To get the value of anything Sikh in understandable terms, multiply it by 125000. In the kitchen attached to a Sikh shrine if a supplicant wants one loaf of bread, he asks for 125000.

At a Sikh fair a shopkeeper asked a Sikh woman as to where her husband was.

‘ I am a widow ’, she replied.

‘ Have you any child ’, asked the shopkeeper.

‘ None ’, she said.

‘ So you are 125000 ’, said the shop-keeper.

I can’t get at the drive of the shop-keeper’s remark. Does it suggest that 125000 men can be satisfied in her ?

It was probably in some such spirit that a Sikh employer complaining of how his funds had been maimed by providing jobs for so many people mispronounced beggared and said,

‘ I have been buggered by this mighty lot of people who beset upon me to accommodate them into my system ’.

Bogus Companies.

ACT I

SCENE I

‘O my Saigal’, said Sen to Saigal, ‘dear Saigal, let us float a company’.

‘Then we will be floating in it never catching the shore’, said Saigal.

‘I do not get you’.

‘My meaning is plain enough. We are financially embarrassed and down and out. In the last insolvency proceedings we were absolutely cleaned out, not a pice left. How can we embark on a financial venture all by ourselves. We will be drifting from this position to that position, pushed from pillar to post never achieving the object for which we promote a company,’ explained Saigal.

A ‘company is to provide a sop to the shareholders and others concerned and bread and butter to its promoters. If it has done that, it is amply justified’, said Sen with a wink of his eye.

‘We will be in the soup’, said Saigal. A knot gathered in his throat.

‘We will be in clover’, said Sen cheering him up.

The knot grew harder. There was a catch in his voice as he tried to speak.

‘My dear if we try to entrap people, we will get it in the neck. The police hounds will be on our track and we will be in the noose,’ said Saigal as he found his tongue.

‘I am a firm believer in the principle of conservation of energy. If we apply our energies towards starting a company, nobody can say we are frittering our energies. God howsoever omnipotent cannot turn me out of his kingdom. Government howsoever great cannot deprive me of my livelihood. From the moment the police lays its hands on us, it has to arrange for our boarding and lodging. If it substantiates the accusations with which it has charged us, again we are there as the guests of the Government’, he explained.

Saigal missed a beating of his heart at the daredevilry of his friend. He felt unnerved. He could hardly summon up the courage to infringe the law or seek subterfuges for evading it. As the tenseness that had come over him to cover the agitation in his mind relaxed, he nerved himself up at the sweet persuasion of his friend, his heart still strained with anxious fear.

‘If it comes to that, let us have a private limited company’.

‘Why not public’, he banged the table.

'In a private limited company we can enrol fifty share holders. This fairly exceeds the number of audience we can get soused with our investment schemes'.

I can sway a whole lot of people with my investment proposals till when the spell is on them their heads rock, they fling their arms before them catching at the air and lie with half shut eyes in a daze of hope.

'My mind gives way' said Saigal.

SCENE II.

The company is formed. They have rented flats in a palatial building with an imposing facade to locate the office of the company. The rat—a—tat—tat of the type writer is heard. The typist is rattling off letter after letter. The peon is shuffling off with a number of cheques. Now their account with the bank has run low. Cheques pour in to put it in credit. The man at the phone rings to the exchange to connect him with 4523.

The exchange rings back to him. There is a flick and he is cut off. Now the telephone bell trills. The man takes down the receiver, listens and replaces the instrument. Ponderous books of account are handled with a swish of wind. Almirahs open and close with a sneck of the lock. There is an effluence of people in the office. A coir matting

leads to the room of the president and the chairs are drawn near. The hands of the clock are creeping imperceptibly and the minutes are ticking off. The janitor at the door shows a man out. A trickling stream of people with handbills of the company passes on. There is a newspaper ad. Sandwich men with placards create much stir. Wall advertisements add to the effect. Presently an aeroplane zooms up into the sky and traces with a smokeline the name of the company on the sky.

At the phenomenal success of the company. Jariwala is flabbergasted.

SCENE III.

Jariwala :—Dear Sophia, dear me, let us join a company.

Sophia :—I see why you were scrimping all the time. You were piling up money so that when you have a mighty hoard, you may invest it in some financial undertaking and swell it mighty soon.

Jariwala :—There is a company as yet in its infant stages but rocketing its ascent skywards. It moves in a halo of success and blaze of publicity. Its meteoric career of progress snaps records, dazzles the eye, stupefies the imagination, lighting a trail of wondrous achievement. It has built up assets of seven or eight figures. (Gasping for breath.)

Sophia :— Which company is that.

Jariwala :—The Bloomsbury Tea Company.

Sophia :—You beware of these new companies They hold forth bright prospects which are hardly commensurate with the tough realities of the matter. It's a gospel fact that the newly started companies are mostly bogus.

Jariwala :—Bogus. Don't talk to me about bogus companies. I have pretty enough knowledge of their working.

Sophia :—You may not be so well informed as you imagine yourself to be.

Jariwala :—Talk of information? I am an encyclopedia.

Sophia :—With your intellect you can't catch up with them. You will soon discover that you have been diddled.

Jariwala :—Not catch up with them? Me not catch up with them? By gad my life is spent hooking criminals. But I don't see among them any crook. They are all respectable people. Among them, title-holders, men possessing the highest academic qualifications both Indian and foreign. Playing fraud on people can hardly motivate their conduct. I must go in for some shares.

EPILOGUE TO ACT I.

Sadashivam with a copy of the daily National Bugle dated 20th Feb. 1941.

Wanted an accountant on Rs. 150 p. m. for the Bloomsbury Tea Company Ltd Must be a B. Com. A smart hand well up in accounts preferred. Cash security Rs. 5000 essential.

Sadashivam : I must take up this job.

ACT II.

PROLOGUE.

Sen :—I am effecting an agreement with the Darjeeling Teaplanter's Association. This is the draft of the agreement.

Saigal :—Let me see.

Sen hands over the document.

Seen :—Where is the seal of the company ? There you are. Fetch it here. It is stated in the Stamp Act that an agreement unless it is stamped is invalid. Those duffers of the association won't ratify it.

Sen :—Press it on the pad. Stamp it here.. down belong at the bottom. That's right.

SCENE I.

Sadashivam :—I am relinquishing my post in the Bloomsbury Ltd.

Subbamma :—Why darling, what transpired You are not raw to your work. Why did they turn on you.

Sadashivam :—No, I am resigning of my own accord.

Subbamma :—In these days of unemployment you should not think lightly of resigning. You should tenaciously cling to your job.

Sadashivam :—Our employers are hard task-masters and bad paymasters. Their money transactions are tinged with shadier motives. There is much mangling and muddling of accounts in the office. I am afraid I may not be dragged about in some subsequent broil.

SCENE II.

Noise of squabbling, brawl and gabble behind the curtain.

(Curtain Rises).

Alexander Wilson :—You don't mean to liquidate the amount you owe to us.

Sen :—What amount ? We are not due to a you a pice.

Wilson :—Here is your letter dated June 11, 1941 placing with us an order for tea in three consignments to be despatched one after the other with fifteen days rest. In this way we have loaded

tea from our depot 200 lbs on 20th June, 1941, 100 lbs on 5th July 1941 and 300 lbs again on 20th July 1941. This has been duly received by you for which the receipts are in our keeping. All these bills total up to Rs. 761-7-6.

Sen :—You can swell up the total to any extent with your own reckoning. You cannot wring us of a pie.

Wilson :—Unless you get into a suit you will not see the light of the day.

Sen :—Courts go with an even stricter legal formality. Every word of every document is analysed and given its proper weight.

Wilson :—We prepared the finest tea as per your order, the best Darjeeling tea with Nilgiri blend, Orange Pekoe with a delicate aroma and full flavour.

Sen :—Just read out the order.

Wilson :—(reads the letter).

25, The Mall,
Lahore,
June 11, 1941.

Dear Sirs,

As soon as our order is to hand, please send us some fine tea the best in your lot in three consignments successively. Each consignment should

follow the preceding one after 15 days' lapse. You can despatch us 600 lbs. in all. Send some fine stuff, some tea that is true to its name. We don't mind the price of it. But we assure you that if you satisfy us we will leave not a jot in satisfying you.

Remember us,

Ever Yours,

SEN & Co.,

for the Bloomsbury Tea Co.,
Ltd., Lahore.

Sen :—It was definitely settled between us that if the goods are not to the specification given we will not be charged anything for it, (*vide* our agreement executed May 20, 1941). We had asked you to send us tea true to its name. We found after elaborate search that not a leaf in all your packages is T-shaped. Then how is it true to its name Does it coincide with the specification ordered ?

SCENE III.

Hobson :—I think these Bloomsbury people need keeping a watch over. Of late I am having a hornets about my ears with complaints about their tainted nest conduct and tarnished character.

Inspector Roblin :—It has indeed become imperative in public interest to call halt to their lawless activities

Hobson :—But we need some tangible proof before we lay hold of these outlaws.

Roblin :—Proof or no proof. It has become incumbent on us to throttle these people. Proof will come later.

Hobson :—The high road of criminology is to drag the offender to the nearest police station, drug him or I should say booze him with heady wine tipsy turvy and then get the facts out of him.

Roblin :—It will not be a day too late if we use these methods with these people.

Hobson :—Fazal Khan, Fazal Khan.

Enters Fazal Khan.

Hobson :—You take two constables with you, go to the office of the Bloomsbury Tea Co., Ltd. There will be a room outside which is written on a board ‘Managing Director.’ Quietly make your entry, seize hold of the man, put him in handcuffs and escort him here.

Fazal Khan :—Quite so, sir.

Exit Fazal Khan.

Hobson :—We should formulate the questions with which we have to poke him when he is tippling with the effects of liquor. Our first question should be.

Roblin :—Did you not register a company inspite of the best advice of a bosom friend of yours ?

Hobson :—Next should be : Had you as much as even a hundred rupees at the time of commencement of business ?

Roblin :—and the next would be :—

Why did you not pay up the bills of the Darjeeling Tea Planters' Association.

Hobson :—And the next I should suggest

Did you not forge the accounts to appropriate money for your own use ? And the next after that may be have you not been enjoying yourself with the funds of the company ?

The rest we will see by that time.

Curtain falls.

SCENE IV

Sadasivam :—I want my security.

Sen :—What security ?

Sadashivan :—That I gave you.

Sen :—Look here, Mr. to be free and frank, when did you leave service

Sadashivam :—On the fifteenth of the month, only five days back.

Sen :—How long you were in our employ ?

Sadasivam :—For over five months.

Sen :—Did we pinprick you all this while ?

Sadasivam :—No

Sen :—Did we cause you any trouble ?

Sadasivam :—None.

Sen :—Did we turn you out ?

Sadasivam :—No I left of my own accord.

Sen :—You felt quite secure in your job. Then we gave you security as you gave us security. Both sides equal. What more you want ?

SCENE IV

Charing Cross Police Station. Office of Inspector Hobson. Enters Fazal Khan with two constables and Saigal with cuffed hands.

Inspector Hobson :—Take this bottle of whisky and drain it into his stomach.

Roblin :—All haste. Insert this tube into his mouth and push it till its farther end reaches his stomach.

Fazal Khan does this while the two constables take an iron grip of his arms and legs amid his vehement protests.

Hobson :—Now pour the liquor down this. Swill it down his stomach to wash away his consciousness.

Roblin :—Till it drowns his sentient being.

Fazal Khan obeys orders.

Hobson :—Till nothing of his trickery survives.

Roblin :—I think now he is inebriated. Pull out the tube and leave him there.

Hobson :—The liquor has now gone to his head. Now he is tottering, doddering. Paces with infirm step. He is groggy. His legs are giving way under the heavy, oppressive influence of the liquor. The wine has been true narcotic to his senses.

Roblin :—He is feeling dizzy.

Hobson :—Now let us come on with our questions.

Did you not, I say, register a company in spite of the best advice of a friend of yours.

Saigal nods his head.

Roblin :—Jerks his head. Answer in the affirmative.

Hobson :—Had you as much as even a hundred rupees at the time of commencement of business.

Saigal waves his head.

Roblin :—Shakes his head. Says no.

Hobson :—And Mr. Sen, why did you not pay the bills of the Darjeeling Tea Planters Association?

Saigal laughs in intoxication.

Roblin :— Blank laughter of empty-mindedness. He has no reasonable excuse. So this is proved against him

Hobson :—Did you pocket the security amount of Sadasivam?

Saigal again laughs.

Roblin .—He laughs at the mischief of it. So this is another point that will tell against him.

Hobson :—Did you not forge the accounts to appropriate money for your own use ?

Saigal winks with a corner of his eye.

Roblin :—He winks at the mischief of it.

Hobson :—Have you not been enjoying yourself with the funds of the company, going to those girls in the White Lane who had captured you and had such a complete power over you, laying yourself out to them, getting them between your legs. And one of those girls met me this morning. You were with her last night. Had a mad revel in the wealth of her, burying yourself in the depths of her in an inexhaustible exploration.

Saigal rolls his drowsy half-closed eyes.

Roblin :—Enjoyed finely, he says.

Hobson :—All our charges are proved against him from his own confession in the presence of all these persons.

Hobson :—You plead guilty. Saigal touches his chin.

Hobson :—We won't be coaxed like this.

Sahni :—Why have you caught hold of my brother-in-law in place of the Managing Director of the Bloomsbury Tea.

Hobson :—This is the Managing Director of the Bloomsbury, Sen by name. See the 'S' etched on his finger ring.

Sahni :—He is my brother-in-law Mr. Saigal. He is a friend of Sen and occasionally visits him in the office. Sen was at the time in the lavatory and your men ran away with my brother.

Hobson :—Then how has he full knowledge of the company's affairs he has given pertinent answers to all the queries.

Sahni :—What answers?

Hobson :—These were our questions in serial order [(shows him a bit of paper on which the questions are written)]. In reply to these questions he admitted, denied, admitted, admitted, and again admitted in gesture language like this. (Gesticulates and grimaces).

Sahni :—What the hell you are doing? Every drunken person gesticulates like this.

Curtain falls.

ACT IV.

SCENE I.

Jariwala reading a magazine.

Jariwala :—It's the articles on heredity and inequality I am plodding through.

Sophia :—What is the drift of it?

Jariwala :—It says to the effect that there is no such bosh as that all men are born equal. It demolishes the doctrine of liberty, equality and fraternity. Life differentiates as it evolves. The more highly developed a species of life, the more inequality among its individuals. From the simple organic cell of spermatazoa ascending upto man, this principle works. There is hardly any difference between one cell and another but between man and man the greatest inequality is found.

Sound of tapping at the door.

Sophia goes and meets the postman who hands her a cover. Sophia returns.

Sophia :—A letter for you, hubby.

Jariwala opens the letter, reads and pulls up his face.

Golly, that darned Bloomsbury has gone into liquidation, Sophia.

To hell with it.

Sophia :—Its a matter of great concern. What does the liquidator say?

Jariwala :—He wants me to pay up the balance of call money on my shares. But wonder of wonders, he says that you have paid Rs. 300 out of Rs. 1,500 worth of shares and you should pay the balance money by the fifteenth of the next month. If you have to prefer any objection, it goes on, you can do so by the 20th of this month, after which the claim will be taken to be fixed on you. Now the itching spot in this is that I have paid Rs. 800 but I have been credited with Rs. 300 only.

(Scratches his head and eyebrows). Sophia dear, just come and see. My eyesight is becoming bleary day by day.

Sophia reaches near and looks over the shoulder.

Sophia :—Its all right. The figure given is 800. You need not worry and the balance is required to be paid.

Jariwala :—God be thanked. It looks like 800 to me as well. I can't rely on my eyes. They are failing me every day. (Folds up the letter and encloses it in the envelope).

SCENE II.

Inspector Hobson :—We have built up a very strong case against the Bloomsbury Tea Co. Ltd. The promoters of it were all crooks and swindlers. We have drawn a net round them they won't be able to wriggle through.

Sub-Inspector Roblin :—It is only a short time when we will catch them by the nape of the neck and push them in through the jail door.

Hobson:—They have been grabbing people's money, throwing dust into their eyes, blinding them to the real state of affairs and showing them rosy prospects. They have been flaunting forth their directors as title-holders and decree holders I have looked up the lists. There is none such among them. They have been mailing letters to people that their assets have mounted upto millions and trillions while they had hardly more than a few rupees that can be counted on finger tips. One constituent of the Company made a Bank reference and he was told that they have a fat account which is heavily operated. At the same time they could hardly foot the electric bill. They swelled up the share lists by making bogus entries and writing up names of subscribers whose existence cannot be traced on the face of this globe. We have to strangle such activities with a firm hand if crime is to be checked and we want to catch an interval of rest.

Roblin :—Once or twice before such people slipped our hold because of these pettifogging lawyers. I can't stand this verbiage of law and the trickeries of its devotees. We must gird up our loins this time not to take the slip.

Hobson :—We have taken such a fast grip this time that we can't be made to loosen it by any means whatsoever. We are not going to relax it, nay never.

Roblin :—So long as we are cold and inert, they are sweetly at ease. Once we get hot and roused, it is a terrible job for them. Sometimes their lawyers spiral up the judge to such a high pitch that his heart is pierced and he loses his reason and flows with his emotions. Often it has been seen in cases where there was a jury that some members of the jury were so affected with appeal to sentiments that there resulted a hung jury and the accused was acquitted. We are not going to allow anything of this kind now.

SCENE III.

Jariwala :—I think I must clear accounts with you today. This is my day of payment. I must pay off my arrears of call money and have done with you. I am just coming from the Bank after drawing a large cheque.

Banerjee :—Open your purse and settle the accounts.

Jariwala takes out his purse and hands seven currency notes of a hundred rupees each.

Banerjee (crackles the notes, counts them and stretches out his hand) the balance.

Jariwala :—What balance ? This is all that stood in my name.

Banerjee :—I think you are due Rs. 1,200, if my memory does not fail me. (Handles the ledger, turns the folio and looks up the account). Yes, I am right Here you are (Shows the book to him).

Jariwala :—Great calamity. But you wrote to me admitting the payment of Rs 800 as in fact was the case and requiring the balance at a later date than the 20th instant.

Banerjee :—We never wrote in that strain.

Jariwala :—Well, you did. My wife is a witness to the fact See the counterfoil of that cheque.

Banerjee :—We keep copies of every letter that we mail. (Asks the clerk to bring the record and after waddling through the file traces the copy of the letter).

It clearly says that you have paid Rs. 300 and the rest is standing against your name. (Shows him the copy).

Jariwala :—But my copy bore a different figure.

Banerjee :—Couldn't be.

Jariwala :—I will come some time again and bring with me the letter or if I just happen to

have it in my pocket. (Searches his pocket and fishes out the letter. Draws it out of the cover and unfolds it. Goes over it). Gosh, this also has the figure 300 I am done. (Regains his speech after a minute).

Banerjee :—Did I have a pair of glasses that didn't fit me? Ought I to change their number? (Tries his spectacles and reads some figures in the ledger)

Jariwala :—No, no, I and my wife both deciphered it as 800. How was that? Was it some other letter ? (Runs his hands into the envelope, empties the envelope on the table. Comes out a wisp of a hair).

Jariwala :—It was this very letter duly signed by you. Is my memory playing fast and loose with me. No.

Banerjee :—Probably you took the letter from the postman and went from the light into the dark of your room and felt dazed.

Jariwala :—Has this wisp of a hair to do any thing with it? Did it cover up the gap on the left of the figure of 3?

Banerjee :—That was it I suppose.

Jariwala :—What should I do now ?

Banerjee :—Resign to your fate. The date for filing objections is past.

Jariwala :—So this amount is fastened on me.

Comes Sen.

Banerjee :—I say, Mr. Sen, what a mess of the accounts you have created. This poor fellow has paid Rs 800 of his share money while you showed only Rs. 300.

Sen :—To-day I am disclosing you a secret, the secret of business, the secret of success. After all it cannot be proved against me. We intentionally mangle the figures such as here I did not close up the gap on the left of the figure of 8, so that when the company is dissolved, disputes arise and we are summoned to the court as witnesses by the parties to read what we have written and are thus paid diet money for that

ACT V.

Court Room. The case is called.

Public Prosecutor :—These men, as your honour shall see, are hauled up under various counts. Every body has a writhing, impotent hatred of them. It is all hell in my heart for them. My heart contracts with contempt when I think of their rapacious crimes. They have been defrauding the people of their money by veiling themselves as honest business men. They are charged under Section 420, Indian Penal Code.

Magistrate :—You plead guilty or not guilty ?

Sen and others :—Not guilty, Sir.

Public Prosecutor :—Now I come to the specific charges against them. The first charge with which they stand accused is impersonation. They have been posing forth before people as title-holders, and decree holders. One of the directors has been giving himself out as R. B. M. Anand, that is Rai Bahadur Maheshwaranand or something. The police had made a thorough investigation. They have looked up the list. There is no name ending in Anand that was awarded Rai Bahadurship.

Magistrate :—What do you say to it?

Sen :—That is Ram Bheja Mal Anand. Anand is a sub caste in the north-west Punjab

Public Prosecutor :—Another director in the prospectus is written as T. K. Chaudhry M. A. and Sen mentions himself as M. D.

Sen :—Mr. Chaudhry is our Managing Agent while I am the Managing Director of the Company.

Public Prosecutor :—All right. Then come ahead. You have been telling prospective shareholders as if you have been flowing over with money so that they may also follow in the wake of others who have purchased shares and inflated the capital of the company. Here is this letter P. W. 1/1 in which you inform our witness that your subscribed capital has touched the figure of Rs. 500,000. Obviously the addressee felt en-

thused and readily took some shares. Now there is hardly anything in the facts that tallies with your claims

Sen :— I think the ink has spread here a little I had put a decimal point after 500 and then added a triad of zeros.

Magistrate :—Why ? The need for it ?

Sen :—So that nobody may add to the figures.

Magistrate :—Why not write Rs. 500 *only*.

Sen :—Five hundred rupees is not a petty sum. It may be five hundred only for you who are drawing fat salaries, but for us people it means a heap

Magistrate :—So you say that the ink has spread and turned the decimal point into a comma. Crime is in the intention not in the incident. I drop this charge against you.

Public Prosecutor :—A meeting of the shareholders was convened after the company was brought into liquidation. Hardly more than fifty people turned up while invitations were issued to about 400 persons. The meeting had an agenda of vital interest to the shareholders. Nobody could have willingly missed it. Meseems they have entered names in the Share Register corresponding to which nobody ever breathed on earth.

Sen :—Our business is to wheedle money out of shareholders. On them we have to lean upon for our livelihood. They are our gods. God is pleased and propitiated by pronouncing His name in various ways : as Padmanabha, Varadaraja, Srinivasa, Venkateswara, Ranganath, Anantasayana, Saran-gapani. In fact there are a thousand names for each deity. We flatter the vanity of our constituents by addressing them correspondence by various names: as Chaman Lal Puri, C. L. Puri, Chaman L. Puri, L. Chaman, Chaman Lal, etc. and putting down their address variously as opposite Thal Building, Nisbet Road, Lahore, adjacent to Nur Mahal Building, Nisbet Road, Lahore, above Rama Medical Hall, Nisbet Road, Lahore, below Singer Machine Office, No. 15, Nisbet Road, Lahore, etc. just as God is described to be Omnipotent, here, there, everywhere.

Magistrate :—This too is a trumped up charge.

Public Prosecutor :—The acid test for tapping the soundness of a company is Bank Reference. Here too these people have laid a trap. The company hardly transacted any business in its span of life. But if we see their bank account, cheques were pouring in and being drawn out all day. This too savours of some double dealing.

Sen :—I don't think that there is anything in it that can be laid at our door. There is a company

here which wants to show itself off. They had arranged with us, issued shorter cheques and got a cheque from us for the total of them or issued a big cheque and got several cheques totalling upto it. In this way they had built up and established reputation for themselves.

Magistrate (addressing the Public Prosecutor) I think these people are innocent. You get on the track of those people. I acquit the accused.

Reader :—Acquitted.

Sen and others (jubilating outside the court).
Acquitted. Acquitted.

Musa Khan in Newzealand.

English synonyms promise a fascinating study to the diligent who applies his mind to the task. There is a nice shade of meaning that distinguishes one synonym from another and to saddle one into use in place of the other often gives rise to an ironical situation as the drowning man crying out for help said to the men on coast, "I will sink and nobody shall save me." It served as an injunction order to them not to move their little finger for the bobbing, dilating wretch as he was purposely drowning. It is to satirize such half-baked who are indifferent in their use of the treasures of English vocabulary that this article is penned. Musa Khan is one such with a smattering of English education who becomes the author of piquant situations, each holding a puckish little horror and he relates his exploits in his own barbarism. The reader will do well to refer to Crabbe's Synonyms Explained or Fernald's Synonyms. Antonyms and Prepositions to revive his memory for a proper appreciation of the distinctions drawn on which a whole falstaffian situation hinges.

I got the idea of seeing Newzealand as it contains many beauty spots which are a feast for the eyes. Since Auckland is the capital of Newzea-

land and the most important part on its shore, I would have had to get down at Auckland. I wrote to the Information Bureau of my province that I want to make a trip to Auckland and the Bureau should inform me as to how I am to proceed in the matter. I was counting day after day. Many days passed and weeks and months but no answer was received. I sent a reminder which was not answered. Consequently a letter was sent to me by the Bureau that our clerk had ransacked the pages of the whole geography of India and closely scanned the map but could not find this place called Auckland. We were under the impression that as Montgomery is a place to perpetuate the memory of Lord Montgomery and Warburton is a town after the name of a police hound Warburton, Auckland may be a city after Lord Auckland, once the Viceroy of India, and you wanted to make a trip to that place. But since we have not been able to trace it, we are helpless in the matter. I retorted back that Auckland is the capital of Newzealand and I wanted to know if the law of the country did not put an embargo on the importation of foreigners into that country and what was the process for reaching there.

“What the hell,” they wrote, a voyage of 15000 miles oversea and you call it a trip. Your wording kicked up a row. The meaning of the latter part of your sentence we have not been able to make out

clearly. If by 'importation of foreigners' you mean the act of bringing goods from a foreign country as it appears from the use of embargo, we beg to inform you that there is, on the other hand, Imperial Preference due to Ottawa Pact. But judging from your previous record in playing an innocent hoax upon us, you imply ban on the immigration of foreigners, we may state that subject to the conditions annexed herewith, you will not be an unwelcome guest in Newzealand.

I got equipped with my paraphernalia. My passport had been already prepared for me. My mother came to bid me farewell at the station. I reached the Victoria Terminus Station at Bombay from where I scurried for the Alexandra Docks, the place from where the ship was to sail. I bought a first class ticket as I came down from the victoria a label with my name was fixed on every article of my luggage. A coolie accosted me for carrying my luggage. I said that I am a passenger for the British liner Sutherland and told him to put my luggage on deck the ship while I went to purchase a cigarette box. As I returned the coolie met me in the way and charged me.

The while I stepped in the ship cut anchor. As I looked for my luggage, what do I find that all my trunks and trappings are heaped together amidst bleating goats, crowing cocks, cackling hens and snotty spitting deck passengers. My face was

drawn up but the ship had moved and I could not catch hold of the coolie and vent my anger on him. I dragged my heavy burden behind me. It made me rock on my feet. Gaining my balance, again I pulled with all my vigour. My feet slipped and I was on all fours. Again I got up and drawing a breath gave huge pull, but before I had progressed not very far, my tottering feet slipped in opposite directions and I sort of straddled up. I collected myself and after an interval of rest, again determined to carry through the task. I held myself erect. My teeth were set and my eyes beamed. A wave of hope surged through my breast which therefore protruded a little. Then I tugged at it with all my might. My feet went off and I turned a somersault. Somehow I reached the first class cabin which had a card with my name inscribed on it outside. By the time I was fully fatigued and again went over at the dock-step. I placed my luggage inside and spread my body to take rest. My back was paining from top to bottom. The ship went on careening from side to side with its motion forward. This rotatory motion made my stomach queasy. I felt vomitting sensations. I had filled in so much like a camel before I got into the steamer that my stomach had swollen like a bladder. This made the vomittings easy and frequent. Every thing that I gulped in was pumped out. Accounts were squared up. I could not eat anything and

just kept licking my finger dipped in some sauce, every while all day. One day passed after the other but there was no variety of scene. The blue sea and the blue sky made me blue with sickness. The monotony had devoured my heart and I felt like a jail prisoner enclosed within the four walls of my room. After all, our ship landed at Auckland.

I came out of the ship and after some interrogatories I could procure a house where I could reside during my pause in Newzealand. One day, it so chanced that I read an insertion notifying a job under Government with emoluments of Rs. 1000 per month. I perenptorily sent my petition which ran thus :—

Dear Sir,

I have read in your adlet that a vacancy is lying under your jurisdiction. I beg to apply for the vacancy.

As regards my endowments, I am a native, thirty years aged and have studied upto Senior Cambridge and come of a noble family.

I hope that you will find me a suited person for the post in question.

I beg to remain,
Sir,
your most obedient servant,
Musa Khan.

Some days afterwards, I was seated in the verandah of my residence. The policeman approached me with a Warrant of arrest. I questioned to him what was my sin ? He said that there was a charge of perjury against me. I was a new-comer in that country. Nobody could stand surety for me. I was handcuffed and put in lock-up. The other day, I was presented in the court. The judge explained to me the charge brought against me. He told me that under the Anti-Asiatic Bill, the law of Newzealand does not allow foreigners to fill posts under Government or work for profit or exploitation of the country. Your name made it clear that you were neither a Maori nor an Englishman. In order to secure service you had represented yourself as a native in your application, which you are not. You are therefore guilty of telling a lie and making a false representation and hence punishable under the law. I said that by native I meant an Indian. All Indians are called natives by Englishmen in their books on India. I have done nothing offensive therefore. The judge explained to me that Indians are natives as distinguished from Englishmen on the Indian soil but here Maoris only can properly be called natives, because native means born of the soil. The judge in his order wrote that law punished intention. There seems to be no criminal intention on the part of the accused. He is suffering from a faulty knowledge of English. He is therefore acquitted.

I was released, God be thanked.

I now settled peaceably among the people. I had harboured friendly relations with men there. They were habituated to come to my abode whenever they perceived a desire to see me or exchange views with me. They would converse about politics with me, and odds and bits of important matters were pondered over in my presence. To attract friends I used to purchase many papers and put them in my drawing room. My room had become a kind of club where people held learned debates and controversies about flaming topics of politics. Once the news was in the papers that a Maori chieftain had risen in revolt, had driven another Maori chieftain from power and had set himself in his place. He had preferred certain claims to those possessions. This formed the heating topic of the day. The Government was investigating into his claims. There was much indignation among the public at the action of this upstart and meetings were held country wide to condemn this fellow. Some of my friends invited me to deliver a harangue at one such meeting and to denounce his action in protection of right and justice. I granted their invitation and attended the meeting. Public feeling ran high against this Maori chieftain. There was much high temper in the meeting. As I rose to speak, there was a sudden hush. Quiet prevailed from end to end to listen to the eminent speech of a foreigner. Thus I began :—

Gentlemen,

I am asked by my friends to express myself on the matter. Brothers, I have no hesitation in saying that I am unanimous with you in the matter. I must proclaim unequivocally that this man is an intermeddler and nothing more. (Cries of no, no, he is an interloper pure and simple). Well interloper I may say In my opinion, there is no need of the Government investigation into his claim. It is proper for him to abdicate (Cries of sit down, sit down and loud shouts of what the devil you are talking.) Has he any right to the possessions? Sit down, be off and loud clappings to drown my voice.

I had to resume my seat.

One day I was going for a walk in the association of a number of friends of mine. We were in a festial mood and were talking with gaiety. But soon my spirit was cooled. A man met us coming from the opposite side. He was the audience of the meeting at which I had created a storm. He drew near me and called me a positive rogue and characterless and impostor and crook and what not. I expostulated fiercely with him but he would not withdraw his words. My friends were to the scene. Next day I sketched a complaint in full vigour against that man for £3,000 damages for libel. Some of the important clauses of my complaint were as follows:—

In the court of Henry Cotton, Judge, Auckland.

Musa Khan *vs.* Mackintosh.

Suit for £3,000 damages.

The petitioner prayeth as follows :—

The complainant had addressed a meeting which the accused also attended among others.

That the views of the accused did not correspond with those of the complainant, and hence the accused had pre-possession against me

That the accused used such words as rogue, scoundrel etc., about the complainant.

That the accused had injured the reputation of the complainant and has lowered him in the esteem of his friends and acquaintances. There were many signals of this.

That the accused is guilty of libel and the complainant should be awarded £3,000 as damages.

That the value of the suit for court-fee and jurisdiction is £3,000 on which a court-fee of £126 is paid.

It is therefore prayed that a decree be passed against the accused in favour of the complainant for £3,000 together with the costs of the case.

Applicant

Musa Khan.

A date was fixed for hearing and evidence.

I brought all my friends in whose presence the accused had abused me. They on oath gave their evidence and said that when they were going for a walk the defendant came from the opposite direction and violently abused the plaintiff. The plaintiff remonstrated but he did not apologise. The evidence of all of them was one and the same and did not diverge in any particular. I felt delightful that there has been no discrepancy in the evidence and I am sure to succeed. I came out of the court and congratulated my friends as no body could break them in cross-examination.

I came home, took my meals and went to sleep.

In the night I dreamt that I discovered a treasure trove and had become a pot-bellied millionaire with wines and women at every nook and corner of my house in attendance on me. I was rolling in luxury. I had become so ease-loving and indolent that a bed-pan would be brought for me. If I had to make water, a piss pot. While dreaming, I actually made water. My bed and trousers were all soaked. I was roused from my sleep and my vision went out. I washed my clothes and rinsed my bed sheets in water. The dawn had appeared. I prepared to go to the court to hear the judgment, for that day the magistrate had to

We reached the court. As the magistrate entered the court room, we were all ears. My face was lit with hope. The file of my case was brought before the judge for pronouncement of judgment. He announced :—Musa Khan *vs.* Mckintosh. This is dismissed with costs.

It took the colour from my cheeks. I was appalled. The matter was beyond my apprehension. I applied for copy of judgement. It read thus :—

In this Musa Khan has brought an action for damages against the defendant Mckintosh for libel. As I sat down to write my judgment, I turned over the pages of the file of the case but could not find any document filed by the plaintiff bearing a libel against him. I therefore did not think it necessary to go into the other evidence on record, because the essential of the libel is the written word. I therefore dismiss the plaint with costs.

My money had diminished very much. I had suffered many pecuniary losses. The pleasures of my excursion had been marred by these calamities. I was reduced to nothingness. I had much shrunk in corporeal dimensions. My ability of sight and hearing was decaying. My clothes at first loosely fitted me. Now they began to hang loosely on my body. I one day went to the tailor, gave him my

clothes and asked him to tear them open and sew them again so that they should closely fit my body. A few days later, I visited the tailor and asked him to return my clothes. What a sight. He had made a patch work of all my apparel. I said 'What is this havoc you have done to my clothes.' The tailor said 'What else had you ordered me to do. You had asked me to tear them and sew them. I thought you meant that in this way they will become shortened by being partly lost in the seams' I did accordingly. You should have opened the seams, I said, 'But you never asked me to rip them and shorten them,' he said animatedly.

I felt much miserable. The money had already run short. I concluded that I should return to my country. With such cockney English, life is possible in India only and the nominations...

The Ten Commandments.

Madho with deep-set bespectacled eyes, a flat nose, pricked up ears, protruding lips and a receding forehead personified in himself an erudition and an etch for learning, an inquisitive temperament, a tenacious memory but all with a funny tinge of feeble-mindedness. His short stature, his distended paunch, scrawny neck, narrow chest and flabby muscles fitted in well with his intellectual pursuits and constituted enough of an evidentiary for the midnight oil he had burnt and that he had worn himself away in a life of letters. A consuming passion for making short work of the garnered wisdom of the ages in the print sat as an incubus on his mind. A voracious reader was he before whose eyes flitted page after page of a book and the contents got embedded in the recesses of his brain ever ready and handy to be saddled into use as occasion demanded but with less of the grain of salt witnessed in the make-up of a man who off and on strays out into the world from his narrow grove that is carved out for him as his vocation in life. His was a hypomania which spelled a negation of any step to venture out from the canalised course of life into the open which would mean a breather and refresher for redoubled efforts

animated with enhanced vigour and energy in his desired direction. This systole he could not but interpret as the setting in of stagnation and a falling off from the ideal he cherished and all but wished to achieve. He nursed an antipathy to and a violent prejudice against what was alien to his bookish tastes and blinkered view of things. He was getting insular and isolated in his outlook. The dividing line between a normal and a perverted mind makes a different category of what is proportionate from what is disproportionate and distorted application of a rule of practice. His way of life transgressed the borderline and abutted on to the other side.

Madho nourished a profound respect for the Ku Klux Klan men of the time who harp on the glories of the golden past and gloat over the gone grandeur of the olden times. How the modern age is caught in the maelstorm of materialism which whirls the victims at a tremendously furious velocity as to make them dizzy and blind their perspective faculty. The thought held a firm grip over his mind. He idealised over the Gandhian man simple and self-sufficient who stressed the need of moulding one's character to a desired pattern and who shunned the debasing contact of the science-ridden industrial age. He turned his nose at the priggishness of the urban man. The free air and the sylvan surroundings held a seductive

charm for him greater than the reeking air of the stifled atmosphere of the towns. The softies of the citified areas who plume themselves on their opulence repelled his imagination which took them as the spoilt child of nature. The din and bustle of the jarring, loud jangling crowded humanity pushed on in its way sickened him. There was in it not a soul so irrefragable who could hold to his own or pursue his line of thought trilling along defiantly, 'They say, what do they say? Let them say.' A grimace crept over his face as he visualised the plight of the modern civilization. He wrinkled his nose and pouched his lips at the bitter prospect. Then he shrugged his shoulders. Far from the madding crowd he wanted to move.

Far and away there is a jungle. As an approach towards it is made, the bleak sandy plain yields to shrubbery. Heat and cactus plants with mounds and clods of clay are scattered all over the land. Here and there in the midst rested a hummock. Some shrub is putting forth a red blossom. Another one has begun to burgeon. The thorny twigs and branches littered all over the earth debar an intruder and present an insurmountable obstacle to any intimate approach. Some old ruins of a stony structure are lying aside. A corbel has till yet retained its outline. A lizzard creeps up the wall. A stream of ants pursues its prescribed course down below. The hoot of an owl lends a

weirdness to the whole prospect laid out before the eye. As the owl screeches, the dove hides its head. The bats are clinging with their claws to the branches of the trees. As one of them loses its hold, it flaps its wings a short while in the air, then takes hold of another branch and dangles by it. A lizard streams up the bole of a tree, goes off its feet and falls on to the dusty ground—plup. Occasionally a bird in the foliage is preening its feathers. On tree-tops, the eagles and vultures have built their eyries. Below the hares have burrowed holes into the ground. With the advance guard of the scattered trees, the dense forest commences. Through the thick foliage, the sun's rays have weaved different patterns on the ground below. The pigs rootle into the greenery. At occasions, an antelope flashes across into oblivion. A jackal is standing with his mouth half-open and slavering. At times a vulture screams. Another is seen balanced on its wings in the air and moving up and down. As the wind rustles among the trees, there is a stir as some bird has flown to another branch. At times a bird takes to its wings and circles over the trees in the air. The creepers like a cobra have thrown their coils round the trees. On ground the tangled skein of long grass and reeds have prepared a mesh to trap in the unwary intruder into its forbidden recesses. One cannot progress further as though held in a traffic jam. Once plunged into the labyrinth of

the depth of the dense forest, one could hardly find it in his powers to wriggle out of.

Emerging from the thick forest, one stumbles upon the rocky land and here the mountain spurs begin their ascent. First come loose boulders strewn over a wide space. Picking one's way through them one comes upon a trail winding along the heights of forest-wrapped slope of the hill. On all sides are other ranges of hills which lose themselves in the distant horizon. Scattered all along the trail are gravel and chips of stone. Legging this narrow track for a weary distance one comes on top of the hill. The hill top gives a panoramic view of the ambient scenery as one passes his glance on all sides. Perched on this top is a deserted castle which was lately raised by the Government to keep news of the adjoining alien territory on the other side. This has been now left to its fate as the two governments have patched up a liberal agreement.

This castle Madho made his home. Faint breezes sported with him and cooled his thought-weary feverish brain. Gentle gusts of wind hit him and flirted with him. Occasionally a storm raged abroad and howled and roared. The winds shrieked and buffeted against the castle. There was the creaking of beams and rafters. The trees swayed with the wind and the leaves danced. It deepened the impression of awe he held of God

and His mighty force and made him apply his mind more devotedly to the task he had set himself against and the conception of an ideal life. It strengthened his morale and he could steel himself against succumbing to temptations. Here he was far and away from the youthful indiscretions of an unawakened mind. After several days on end, he would visit the town for provisions. Off and on a friend would pay a casual visit to his place. This was like a squall in the placid pool of his existence. He would go downhill to fetch water from the pond which had formed by the corrosion of the earth at the base of the hill. This would constitute his daily drill. The prosecution of his literary efforts and scholastic achievements, he carried on unflinchingly.

Once as he was tracing his descent downhill his eyes chance lit upon a cave on the incline of another hill. He was much mystified by its presence. His curiosity was piqued and he felt intrigued. His prying inquisitiveness and a prurient mind would not let him rest at that. He must probe into its interior, gauge its depth and scan its contents minutely. There may be in it fossils of some geological epoch which may be a fruitful study. The itch spurred him on in that direction.

• Standing at the entrance to the cave, Madho felt much misgiving. He was in the lurch for a

few seconds. What foul gasses may impair his respiratory system or what extinct species may be breeding their kind inside ? With halting steps he came nearer. Then he poked in and stepped further. He saw a yogi in a lotus pose rapt in trance, with his eyes turned on their axes, his chin supported by chin-rest and his face surrounded with a halo that dimly lit the cave. He did not look like pulsating with life. The lids of his eyes dropped half way as to reveal the white only, while the fringe only of the iris was discernible. His corporeal frame was rigid and motionless. With bated breath, he kept his gaze on the unmoving spectacle. He then perceived the eyes of the yogi turn back on their axes, and looking over him blankly into the distant horizon. Then the distant gaze receded and the yogi and the intruder were face to face. The pulse began its rhythmic beat in his veins. Madho felt healing vibrations pouring from the yogi's eyes into his soul. A calm and quietude crept over his soul and pervaded his whole being. An unruffled peace invaded the troubled waters of his soul. He lay prostrate at the yogi's feet and with joined hands beseeched the guidance of his incisive intellect for probing into the dark mysteries of this universe and getting at the seed of success which will sprout forth into a hundred accomplishments when one addresses his efforts in a

vigorous manner. He prayed for a few instructions which will be to him a leading finger and enable him to plough his way through the stormy ocean of existence.

The yogi took pity on the worm of a soul writhing in agony and could not wriggle out of the terrible mess of this wretched existence on the face of earth. He delivered Ten Commandments in a right pontifical manner and biblical strains of a devine messenger to this snippet of a soul towards whom he had felt benign.

Unto thee I teach the tenfold path that leadeth to divine bliss the man who striveth therefor. Thou, forsooth, wilt attain perfection and reach thy goal if thou followeth my advice. Thou shalt be purged of thy sins and thy evil shalt be cast away if thou taketh to heart the message that deliver thee and acteth thereupon

Meseemeth, there is none wiser than an ant. The ant provideth grain in her hole that is enough for her for six cold months of winter. Be thou as foresighted as an ant.

Men of the world are becoming very selfish. My sorrow waxeth great at this painful sight. Need they not for any morals or principles. They rest not content with as few longings, as possible. Everywhere they have their own axe to grind. They have an axe to

grind here. They have an axe to grind there and thus *ad infinitum*. I say unto thee, do not multiply your axes infinitely.

Misguided people make offerings to the rich anticipating some rich reward thereafter. Scant regard bestow they on the needy and miserable. It behoveth them not to be indifferent to the lot of the poor. Do thou henceforth help the poor and give them money who are in need thereof. Do not carry coals to Newcastle.

‘Hero worship is latent heroism’ thus spake Carlyle. Revere thou the men who have made their mark in history and left their impress on the fleeting sands of time. It bringeth out the fine qualities thou hast in thee and thou wilt be perfected. Verily they are the men whom none can look down upon and all them command universal reverence.

I teach unto thee the doctrine of the Superman hitherto taught by Trietschke who was a professor of Germany. The same was taught by Bismarck which was a Prime Minister of Germany, who stated Blood and Iron as the only two ingredients of a powerful nation. The same was held high by Hitler who militarised Germany. The same was brandished abroad by Ching-Kai-Shek who banished the opiate philoso-

phy of pacifism that had taken root in the Chinese mind and armed the Chinese nation. The Superman is he who saith and believeth and followeth the maxim of Nietzsche. They say unto ye, a good cause halloweth every war, I say unto ye a good war halloweth every cause. In no wise can salvation be achieved but by trying to be Superman, by holding constantly before oneself the example of the Superman and his follower. Whereunto shall I resemble them but the swash buckling bewiskered knights of old. Thus shall thine infirmities be loosed from thee.

Learning is a rare thing. Unwise thou art if thou seek for learning in the deafening sounds floating in the atmosphere of stuffy cities rather than in a rarefied atmosphere removed from the habitations of hustling men.

Behold I reveal thee a great secret. It becometh not to aspire to be a great man in the world without making a bid for originality. All the great men of the ages, hitherto, had this in common with each other that they were original in their conception in despite of that they flatly contradicted each other. If thou sheweth any creative genius, thou wilt be thought highly of by the people and bidden of them at dinners and suppers. Thine name shalt be handed down to posterity and thou shalt live for ever.

Thou should therefor part in intellectual games and literary contests so that thou mayest be able to sharpen thine wit and rival the creations of the masters of old.

Be thou of ceaseless activity. Need not thou waste a minute of thy time. Knowest thou not why the High Lama is so worshipped by all the Tibetans For his tireless energy that resteth not a jiffy Nay goes on and stretches into eternity. As soon as the High Lama is dead in this body, he is that very moment reborn in another human shape, and picks up the thread of his activities where he had left it. The child ushered into existence at the time of the death of the High Lama is installed as the High Lama because the High Lama entered into him

Thou mayst thus rise high in the world Howbeit take all men as thine brothers and do not turn up thy nose at them. No racial prejudices shall cling to thee nor any religious ones neither any national ones All men are brothers and belong to offshoots of the same parent stock. The languages of the various nations of the world are closely allied to each other. A word of one language is formed from a word of another language having the same meaning by the process of syncope, ellipsis, change of place of syllables, softening or hardening of consonants, shortening or lengthening

of a vowel, substitution of a single syllable in place of two similar ones, substitution of one vowel in place of another, change of unaspirated *i* to aspirated and *vice versa*, according to the laws of philology. Formerly there was one language only. As the streams of migration diverged in different directions, changes gradually appeared

Thou canst now depart from me. The anchorite tightened his lips and relapsed into meditation

Madho was on his legs, turned about and emerged from the cave. Clambering down the slope and picking his way he repaired to his castle. Henceforth the words of the troglodyte became his auto-suggestion. He mumbled them as the dawn tinged the sky crimson. Some time he would repeat them in a deep nasal tone. Other times he would utter them in a deep guttural voice. Still again he would intone them like a mullah, so that he gets an auditory memory of them. He would see the words gleaming white on the dark background as his eyes were closed in prayer. He would scrawl them with his toe on the dusty ground. He would trace them with his finger in the space so as to impress the words on his visual memory. They to his mind should constitute the article of faith of Man when all the civilisations that the race has

spawned have been rolled together and entrusted to oblivion. These words would lift to exalted heights the man who was sunk in black despair. The light such as would be illumined by these words would dawn within the place of a man's mind when he yields his mind and heart to God. These were ever present before his mind as an obsession and he would not let slip anything by without converting it into an opportunity for a fresh application of these principles

The culinary aspect, next day, was a gala spectacle laid out. There were spiced dishes of every variety to pander to a change of taste, piquant sauces and chapaties upon chapaties piled up. One felt intrigued as to what uncountable numbers he had to play the host. Madho lingered on its taste, ate his fill and laid by the rest. The following day the peppery dishes tasted rancid though yet edible. Madho rammed it down his throat and with a contractile motion despatched it down his alimentary canal without much of an attempt at relishing. Tears welled up in his eyes. At every mouthful, his eyes narrowed down to slits, a shiver ran down his spine, his paunch hollowed in, and the contortion on his face turned his visage to that of the monster of Frankenstein. At every retching, he felt a live ant scratching in

his throat to warn the copy cat not to be so impudent as to try to be bracketted with her.

The day succeeding witnessed the petrification of his salty dishes. A process of fermentation and decomposition had set in. Swarming millions of bacteria, ants by metempsychosis or under a variant colouring of matter, had invaded his preparations to counter and frustrate his design of setting up a rival claim to estimation by a successful emulation of their ideal example.

In the examination, Madho was confronted by the following problem :—

Differentiate and find the value of :—

$$x^n - x^2 \text{ when } x=1 \text{ and } n \text{ extends to infinity.}$$

His ears were pricked up, his eyes popped out. Madho found himself in a bottomless bog. He scratched his head and the solution dawned upon him as Koran upon Mahomet from the high heavens.

$$\frac{d}{dx}(x^n - x^2) = nx^{n-1} - 2x$$

Madho added a fine touch of his principles and substituted the values.

The following answer was staring at the examiner.

—2.

Out of the frying pan into the fire. If on the previous occasion, he was sizzling, now he felt positively roasted. He had emerged out of the impasse unscathed just to find himself lodged in a pit. As he sat next day, for the paper on Climatology and Physical Biology, the poser presenting itself for answer was thus framed ;—

What is paper made of ? Where is the raw material found and why ?

Madho racked his brain over it with the same buoyant hope that had carried him through with streaming banners, the preceding day. He cudgelled his brain, rubbed his Alladin's lamp and the light illumined the distant horizon as much as the darkest recesses of his brain. The link of ratiocination was complete and the answer thus shaped itself.

Paper is manufactured from alfa grass. Alfa grass grows in the vast steppes of Siberia. Learning is not possible of attainment but in the stony solitudes so must be the raw material for paper which is the vehicle of learning. Like cause produces like effect.

He was of good cheer and kept in a whistling mood as he had done gloriously for the degree of

Monster of Arts. He felt jubilant over the thought as to how he had extricated himself out of the labyrinthine situation and bounded across the fence laid out for ensnaring him. The Ten Commandments were his unfailing light and unaberring guide. They were the sovereign remedy for all the ailments afflicting the soul in torment. He was prospective of heading the list of successful candidates and he enthused over the brilliant vistas opening out before him. When the bright prospects so looming large have materialised. He was already known as a giant in the same branch of knowledge. Two years ago he had taken his G. D. A., which would spin itself out as the Giant of the Dominion of Arts. He now aspired to be a monster in the same field.

Madho kept slightly indisposed. His stomach was queasy and he had at odd times a horrible sinking feeling. His mouth oozed juices and he had retchings. At every retching, his neck was all taut and his mouth pointed at a particular angular projection like a gun about to go off. Then Fire—shot forth with explosive sound from the alimentary canal and sprayed over a wide range the charge it had been loaded with and which forced out in the opposite direction in true gun fashion.

Some mischief round the corner. He drank unfiltered rain water which collected in a pond at the base of the hill as he would not because he should not carry coals to New Castle.

His friend surprised him with a visit in his retreat. Warm greetings welcomed him and both regaled each other with gossip. In a relaxing position his friend's eyes were lifted above. He saw the walls studded with colourful portraits of a succession of Japanese Emperors beflowered and garlanded. His friend felt cross with him.

'How do you come to entertain a liking for this cursed Japan and its crowned heads?' He fired.

Madho kept mute and wondered at his friend's annoyance.

The devil of Japan is becoming a thorn in the side of Asia. She is casting covetous eyes on India. She is constantly elbowing China to make further room for her. Jawahar Lal and other Indian nationalists join in a jeremiad against her high-handedness in China. How should you instal her emperors as idols? He harangued.

That the upper stories of houses in Japan were closed to people when the emperor passed in procession, so that nobody could look down on him, was held as a justifying argument.

Madho looked expectantly towards the day when the results would be out. At long last, the

list of successful candidates was published Madho ran down the whole list, scanned it from column to column but his name was missing and his heart was missing. He could not be the Monster of Arts that was the acme of his ambition...he was sunk in black despair and deep despondency. A nerve-racking malaise overtook him His fevered brain could find no rest. He would be tossing in his bed. His mind nearly went out of him This was to be the end of his burning the mid-night oil, straining his eyes over his books, taking in the print, page flitting after page This was to be the outcome of rummaging the contents of books for every hidden meaning or any cryptic message it may reveal, his jaw-breaking and his lying among that litter.

Hope lasts till life. Madho took heart, braced himself up and steeled himself for heightened efforts. With a still vigorous application of the Ten Commandments, he felt not a shadow of doubt about scoring a success next time. All his fears and misgivings will prove to be resting on sandy foundations. All his dismal prognostications will vapour away. He set himself over the same task again.

His chance visit to the town would be as welcome to his friends as the slip of the moon to the Muslims who have been fasting for thirty days

on end. They will stand him a treat, invite him to gratifying luncheons that would do honour to anybody, take him the round of the city or get him into the society of their friends. Once as he was led into contact with some such people that the suggestion passed round that a lecture of his should be arranged for the benefit of the public on some choice subject of his. The suggestion had the approval of Madho who wanted to deliver his message to the world and spread the teachings of his master. This subject dearest to his mind was 'The Superman.'

Never such ringing voice rose forth from the fanes, from the chapels or from the various caucuses as that of Madho from the pulpit.

Brothers and sisters :—

To-day I have stood up to you to declare to you the doctrine of the Superman. This doctrine was taught by Nietzsche who rules the German thought upto the present time. The same was expounded by a German professor Trietschke. Bismark stressed it to no extent in his policy of Blood and Iron. Hitler is the torch-bearer of the idea of Superman. China was roused from the pacifist slumbers of the ages by Chiang-Kai Shek who gave it a practical shape. Superman is he who is indoctrinated with the dictum of Nietzsche They say unto ye a good cause halloweth every war. I say unto

ye a good war halloweth every cause.' He is the man of muscles. Such men are held in high esteem. They are loved by all. That is why the swash-buckling bewhiskered knights of old were so highly thought of by the people. Their countenance reflected their spirit. Face is an index to the mind. That is why Mazzini, the regenerator of Italy loved bewhiskered cats.

Vociferous cheers.

The dash of originality had its effect.

Madho worked at a furious pace day and night like a factory working double shift. This time he must top the list. His single-mindedness bordered on hypomania. Gone to shreds were all the wise sayings about rest and leisure. His eyes were always riveted to his books. His anguish at his failure expressed itself in diverse ways. He raved at his memory. He beat his forehead against the wall, he shrieked aloud. Then he mused at the mighty prospect of his forthcoming success. A radiant smile crept over his face which budded forth into a moment of laughter. He gave out a hearty guffaw as he imagined himself in that position. He girded up his loins, braced his muscles, cocked his chest out and began his daily run.

During one of his stays in the town, he was asked to lunch by one of his friends. As he dropped

into his place at the appointed hour, he found himself in the company of some more friends like him. Talk progressed in a roving manner and conversation rambled on about indifferent matters for some quarters of an hour before the dishes could be served round. Madho's friend put him into contact with other friends of his round the table and paid an eloquent tribute to his deep erudition and voracious reading. He informed the select gathering that his friend was shortly getting himself to be a Monster of Arts. He had at his fingers' ends the essentials of a host of subjects and a variety of languages.

‘ By the way you know anything of Persian, Mr. that treasures in its literature priceless thoughts and that is now passing through its golden age thanks to the efforts of Raza Shah Pehlvi ’, addressed one of them to Madho.

‘ Any language under the sun ’, said the profound pundit, giving himself airs.

‘ Then will you translate for me that motto on the wall which enshrines some noble thought ’, requested the needy one.

It was a couplet that read as under :—

Dil badast avar ki haj-e-akbarast.

Az hazaran kaba yak dil behtarast.

Madho gave not a minute to it and readily answered, meseems it is a prayer rising forth to God from the heart of the devotee which would stand thus in English :

Till bedashed our kin, age hug our breast,

As house nor keep we one till be at rest—
O God.

Plants began to burgeon. The trees began to sprout forth and put out reddish saplings. The icy wind seized to blow. The days lengthened. The sun took on a mild lustre. The birds began to multiply their species. Young urchins on house tops began to fly kites in the sky. Crops began to ripen to golden yellow. Corn put on ears. Broody hens were hatching diminutive chicks from the eggs that were set under them. People were consigning to limbo heavy quilts and were taking to light shawls and blankets at bed-time. They had discarded the use of braziers and hearths to warm themselves. Snow began to melt on gabled roofs and form icicles in the course of dribbling. Rivers swelled. Hours of attendance in courts and colleges were notifying a change. Spring had arrived.

Madho felt the qualms of conscience during his brief holidaying in the town inasmuch as his examination day was striding along. But the

Basant festival as observed in the befitting manner that characterised this place had a hypnotic charm of its own. The Basant day came. It was a festival occasion. He emerged out into the bazar when the day had advanced far into the afternoon. People were trooping to the Basant fair that was progressing on the outskirts of the city. Madho noticed a big poster displayed ostentatiously on the walls all along the route. It advertised a grand symposium to be held in the evening at the Palladium wherein were held forth bristling medals and glittering decorations as the tempting fruits of the labours of those who composed to celebrate the festival.

Cutting his way across the riff-raff and the rabble in a raucous delight, Modho directed his steps the way that led to the Palladium. He dropped in at the appropriate moment and got into a chair and was glued to it till the function had started.

There was much jingling, versifying and nursery rhymes. Amateurs were dabbling in verse and were experimenting with it in a ruthless manner. A lot of pornographic literature was presented to the audience for consumption. A big deal of the amours of Krishna and Radha in the spring season was given to the gathering to swallow. There was a lot of talk about the

estrangement and reconciliation of the lover and the beloved—all in verse of course. There was one particular conceit of a poet, embodied in verse which brought repeated encores from the packed hall. Those words have become classic since then. In a finely drawn imagery, Radha's mate puts in a powerful plea before Krishna for reconciliation with his beloved. Thus it proceeds :—

With the eyelids as the tiger's skin, the eye lashes as the medicant's rags, and their reddishness as the ochre-coloured robe, the eyes of your beloved have turned ascetics. They keep awake standing in water day and night. The eyebrows are the smoke arising from the penitentiary fire. The fire is the fire of separation. The stream of tears is the rosary of beads. The eyes of your beloved have cut anchor with the world, realising its emptiness. Therefore, O Lord, it behoves you to give them the vision of your form and divest them of the attribute of aloofness from society.

The laurels of the day seemed to go to him. It was too much for the envy of Madho to be put on the leash greatly as he plumed himself on his scholarliness. The lure of the prize was not to be cast away summarily. He could not but succumb to the temptation.

He parted from his seat and advanced towards the pulpit with his extempore creation. There was a hush and a silence hanging over the whole gathering as he stood upon the pulpit to acquaint the audience with his gem of thought.

Gentlemen, to my mind this is not a very correct interpretation of the symbolism. I would construe it this way :—

with the eyelid as the uniform and the eye-lashes as the spikes for a close fight and the reddishness as the red badge, the eyes of your beloved estranged from you have taken to arms. Concealing themselves in ditch-water they keep vigilant day and night. The smoke from the fire of practice shooting is seen in the form of eye-lids. The stream of tears is the belt of cartridges. They are lying in ambush all alone to take your life. Beware, O Lord and never go that way.

Copious cheers.....

Thunderous applause.....and a Consolation prize.

The final was drawing near. He must outdo and cast into shade his previous efforts. He yoked himself to his work with fired enthusiasm and tireless energy. He had registered a resolve to work so

diligently that he may be able to shatter records. He particularly addressed his efforts to his thesis paper, because he knew that the Punjab University gave 40 grace marks to an examinee to make up his total to first class as he had executed a mighty lot of earth-digging and disinterring of facts from the hoary past in his thesis, so much was the University carried off its legs by this Sukkur Barrage Project. But the essence of thesis is originality. All else is folderals. He must weave out some startling theory. In his case also the University may lose its balance of mind and go clearly off its head. His thesis must outshine the researches of eminent scholars.

Weber has theorised that the Indra-Vritra myth of the Rigveda is a personification of the natural phenomena of rain. Indra is aided by the Maruts in slaying Vritra and releasing the cows which is the same thing as the god of rain with the aid of winds releasing rain-showers from the dark moisture laden clouds. The thunderbolt of Indra with which he strikes Vritra is the stroke of lightning which precedes rainfall.

Winternitz in his History of Sanskrit literature has trotted out a theory that the episode of the Ramayan is a garbled version of the Indra-Vritra fight. Rama with the aid of Hanuman also called Maruti *i.e.*, son of Marut conquers Ravana who is

also called Asura and brings back Sita. Ramā is Indra. Hanuman is a parallel of the Maruts. Ravan is Vritra who is also styled Asur in the Rigveda and Sita is a close parallel to the cows released by Indra as Sita was born of the furrow of the plough with which the cow is closely linked.

Madho rolled Weber and Winternitz into one in his creativeness. The thesis that he submitted was a long-drawn out theory of which the pith and substance is as under :—

That the Great War is a myth of the preachings of Christ to his disciples John which is but a clothed narrative of the simple act of ploughing the land. England helped by France vanquished Germany and obtained territorial possessions by sword. John with the help of Christ drives off the forces of Satan and attained salvation. The sword here is the Word, with the unnecessary accretions dropped off. This is only a dressed up account of the bull aided in its efforts by the farmer with a push from behind plodding on. The much wanted word is the plough and the net achievement is grass and fodder. Hence the word John Bull for an Englishman with French as a close parallel to farmer because French and Farmer begin with the same letter.

The month of April was well on its way. It passed off and with it the final test. A few weeks later, Madho passed through the bazar. A barber after lathering the face of a customer applied the razor.

‘ Ah, going to cut his throat to keep a bust of his, having finished touching up with your brush, cried he in horror.

Assembly Election Campaign.

Province passing through the travail of elections. The speech of a demagogue who has announced his candidature to the provincial assembly has been trumpeted forth and drummed abroad throughout the populace. At the appointed hour people gather in the fields lined by trees and take their seats on the ground, the more prominent among them on the stubbles in the midst. The demagogue's arrival is heralded forth with hoarsely shouted slogans which pierce the sky and rend the atmosphere. He hears the crowd and takes his stand on a stump to deliver his message to the fidgeting masses and the seething surging crowd that forms the rear. As he shows himself up, a sudden pall hangs over the place. His voice rises from the stump.

Brethren and Sisters,

As is within the compass of knowledge of each and everybody, the old assembly has been dissolved after completing its allotted span of life of three years. We had fastened great hopes on it and expected from it a mighty lot but soon the veil of delusion that obstructed our vision and dulled our understanding was lifted and a clearer perspective was vouchsafed to us. However it is not opportune

to indulge in a carping criticism of the doings of the last assembly.

The new assembly will be constituted on the lines sketched out in the Government of India Act of 1936. In this Act some progress has been registered in the direction of universal suffrage, thanks to our untiring efforts. We strained every nerve, carried on whirlwind propaganda and set a campaign in full blast for the purpose of securing universal franchise. We partially succeeded in the endeavour. Brethren, that we have achieved for you the lowering of franchise and put you into possession of the right of vote is an overmastering consideration for polling your vote on our side. (Cheers of response). Brethren, I have been set up as its nominee by the Mobocratic Swaraj party for election to the provincial assembly. The objective of this party is the establishment of mobocracy in the country, *i.e.*, the rule of the mob. Of late, an imperative need was being felt for calling into being a party with some such target of attack as the qualifications for voters. Casting of vote for the person whom we like to hold the rein of our affairs is our birthright. Our mind should be the Eynosure to guide our destiny. Those who propose qualifications for voters should do so with the

qualification that the laws enacted by the representatives will govern the qualified voters while we should be free to violate them and set them at naught.

Noting the obvious discrepancy, all the sane elements in the country coalesced into shape in the formation of this party. The party has drawn to its folds and has on its rolls mobocrats all over the country as iron filings are attracted to a magnet. The credo of the party is democracy in its deeper and fuller sense and not the sham democracy that is dished up with a first-rate flavour for our swallowing. The democracy that was so glibly talked over with all the volubility of tongue in clubs and cafes has been shown up in its naked aspect as an outlandish institution. Literacy is the foible of India and if suffrage is extended to each and every body, the unlettered mob will be in the ascendant and the rule of the mob is assured. Our party's watchword is universal suffrage, which it has set up as its shibboleth and no sacrifice will be deemed too high to accomplish this end. He will not relax our efforts unless we have achieved this end and have seen the mob come into its own and realise its meaning, the Master of Beings. (Explosion of Applause).

Dear Friends,

I am an aspirant to the service of the people and espouse their cause with all zest and vigour. I am standing from Duffernagar, Doodlepur cum DERA Imbecile Khan Miscellaneous suburban constituency—the constituency that embraces your area in its range. The constituency has filled a glorious role in the agitation for universal franchise. It vehemently agitated for securing everybody a vote. All the methods of the French Revolution were reproduced here. The area from end to end was convulsed with riots. The residences of the opponents of this bit of reform were gutted by fire. Flames leapt on from building to building and arson and incendiarism struck terror into the hearts of the obscurantists. This holocaust achieved the purpose in a certain measure. With this giant stride of progress that has been made, your names, my friends, will go down in history. Your names will be rooted and grounded as firmly for all time to come. Your mob will be mentioned in history in gilded letters. So you have become a hysterical mob, remember my dear, hysterical mob. (Loud clappings of hands).

Let me introduce myself to you with a few words. It will be mock modesty to slur over certain pertinent facts even though they cast a pale dim

light over my doings and activities. This party on account of its activities plunged itself into such deep waters it found it difficult for itself to wade through. It was declared an unlawful body. This was a critical stage in its life while the rival organisations were in elements. It was in dire straits. It was at its time of trial then that I had the honour to be selected as its Dictator. The alleged shady activities of the party and the loot and plunder staged by it were the subject of investigation by the police. I was thought of by all and sundry as the live wire of the party. The police in the first place caught hold of me and asked me to dictate my statement which they took down with meticulous and scrupulous care. Thus I played once the role of Dictator. (Cheers and shouts of long live...). Those days of storm and stress have left a blazing trail behind. The party has now a power and prestige all its own and I am the crutches of the party. (Storm of applause).

My body and nerves are racking with pain taken in furthering the cause of my party. My hair have turned ashen grey. My bones have shaken loose from my spine in the day and night toil which I have consecrated to the party. My teeth have decayed, my muscles have become flabby and wrinkles have furrowed my face. I have worn myself out in these labours and all my energy has

been sucked out of me. What more credentials could be required for supporting my candidature? I have applied myself to the cause of the mob before my birth, during my life and will do so after my death. On the eve of my birth, portentous events encompassed as at the birth of Budhha. Heaven and earth shook with clappings. Lightning struck down buildings and charred and burned down trees. Earthquake tremors were felt far and wide. Torrential showers poured down to form a deluge that swept over the land and denuded the country of all vegetation. Cracks appeared and earth spouted forth fire that consumed habitations. Then I was delivered. Since then I was exhibiting mob instincts in early infancy and boyhood. The lessons of mobocracy have seeped into my being. As I came of age, I was goading mobs to overwhelm the opposing forces by all sorts of means and to move heaven and earth for securing their rights. After my death, men will be possessed by my spirit. They will be impelled to acts of violence and vandalism by an innate instinct as it were. My spirit will be hovering over the land like genie. My genie will obsess the chosen one among you with thoughts to prod on the rest to plunder and devastation. My genie will invade the body of the obscurantists and smite them with disease and lay

them low each in its round. In brief, I will cling fast to your cause and promote it as best as I can in my life here and hereafter. (Thunderous applause).

I will now cite the opinions of a few foreign notabilities on the credentials and the glorious record of the Mobocratic Swaraj Party. Francis Younghusband the great explorer who conquered Mount Abu was a missionary as well and much interested in India. He visited India with his spouse Francis Youngwife. He delved deep into the party politics of India and probed into the causes of India's decline. In a long drawn out speech at the Freemason's Club he diagnosed the ills and maladies that had beset India. In the course of his analysis, he showered encomiums on the Mobocratic Swaraj Party and observed that the urban softies were responsible for India's enslavement. The Mobocratic Swaraj Party was the only body that engendered a spirit among people that made them virile and warlike and thus lead to the country's uplift.

In the posthumous volume brought out by Walt Whitwoman, of the poems of her husband Walt Whitman, the celebrated poet of America, there is a couple of lines hinting in an eloquently suggestive manner to the efficacy of our method of direct action.

Shake off thy slumber and arise

Mopping the evil forces... .

This is obviously a misprint, because b and p are much alike in written hand. The word here is mobbing.

I think it must have now soaked into your understanding as to why you should boost up a candidate of the Mobocratic Party and support his candidature. You should besiege the polling booths in numberless throngs, thin your way through the crowd and cast your vote for me. You will thus be sawing at the throat of democratic opinion in the land and rendering signal service to the cause of mobocracy. In this way only lies any flicker of hope of our betterment. You should keep off from joining the ranks of the laggards in their putting an affront to reform. If you turn blacklegs and rats, it will do great harm to us and our future welfare. Democracy of the limited type so frequently advocated is a worm-eaten institution. Cast your votes on our side and you will drive your lance through the heart of the city, trying so cleverly to keep the depressed from rising.

And what does this softy of the urban areas do once he is elected to the legislature. During his election campaigns he makes big promises but

once he is in the house, he will never redeem them and boggles at the task. He has a smattering of education. He covers his selfish interests under the cloak of pious phrase and platitudes and tall talk. Outside the Assembly he is being consumed with the passion for reform and he is all afire with the zeal to put his tottering, doddering community on its feet and to restore its floatsam, jetsam to its past pristine glory. Once he is inside the house, every thing is cleanly swept from his memory. He is enjoying the cool breeze wafted by the ceiling fans and his bit of learning effectively helps him to coin neat phrases and to fling them at others. He is cracking jokes, poking fun and throwing out gibes. While we are crying for advance and progress in solidest earnest, he is all halt.

He is moreover, always aiming at impressioning without there being the shadow of any substance in him. The polyglot tries to create effects with his slippery tongue. He appears top-notch with his words but behind the screen of words, there is nothing tangible. It's all bawble. His bluff gives you the impression that he has an enormous backing and he can release tremendous forces for the fulfilment of the cause he advocates and to carry off in their mop all the opposition that pits itself against them. But there is nothing

palpable in it. It is all wordy gossamer and bluff. One such bluff I now take the opportunity of nailing to the counter.

My opponent who prefers a claim to membership of the Assembly in that he is widely read and travelled and has seen the constitutions of the world in their working and knows the snags and strong points of each, recently called a meeting in support of his candidature. As he rose to address the gathering, he first informed them that he had invited Sir C. P. Ramaswamy Iyer, the Dewan of Travancore to canvass for him. As had been announced, the Dewan had arrived and was to address the gathering this evening but had gone to Mrs. C. P. at Trivandrum for certain reasons he could not foresee. So I in his place will address the audience. Now ask this dunderhead that Missisipi is a river in America. How do you locate it at Trivandrum (laughter). Its all bluff and boast. Still he plumes himself on having seen the whole world. (Shame, shame).

These 'belongers' to the gentry are besides great tricksters. Never you fall into their snare. They have no scruples of any kind and will readily bamboozle anybody who contacts with them. How I was laid hands on, I recall with a shiver of horror running down my spine. I was introduced to an

inconspicuous old beggar as 'he is the father of E. I. R.' Since then he was firmly seated in my mind. A man who conceived such a colossal project surely deserved a tribute of respect. Much could be expected from him. I would bow down to the ground whenever I met him. I respected him and danced attendance on him. In various ways I played flunkey on him. In fact I was as crazy about him as anything. He dwelt in my mind. I set him up as my ideal and became a sort of a hero-worshipper of him. I had such profound admiration for him that I began to unconsciously acquire his habits and manners. He had developed a particular mannerism of twisting his nose every two or three seconds. I too acquired this habit. Facing each other in conversation, we were repeating this performance as though keeping pace in rivalry. Once as I dashed out of his house, I sailed across an urchin. I asked a person as to who he was. He said he was Ethirajulu Iyer shortly known as E Iyer. The naked truth flashed into my mind. A man so inconspicuous that he was introduced through a mention of the name of his son who was slightly better known than him was being adored and adulated by me all along. Dash it all. These nimble-brained are great scoundrels. Do not be wheedled out of your votes by their sweet lies and misrepresentations. When angling for votes they

overstate their case, while we not being masters of language understate our case. Beat them to a frazzle in the coming elections.

Now a few words about my programme in the Assembly. Dear friends, these are the days of Five Year Plans. Ever since Russia inaugurated its Five Year Plan, the air is humming with Five Year Plans everywhere. I also propose to float a Five Year Plan. It is our imperative need that we should turn our eyes to the reform of education because everything hinges on it. I will promulgate a Five Year Plan of primary education. Primary education should be completed in five years.

Extension of suffrage is the dearest objective of our party. Some of us want the right of ballot to be extended to every child of speaking age. Every prattling child should be taken to the polling booth. He should be taken through the exercise of pronouncing each candidate's name. Say Lakshman Sarup and he says Lachhan soor. Well rejected. He likes not a mention of his name. His vote for the candidate whose name he correctly pronounces. I want, my friends, to improve upon this idea. I will to that end, push through a measure called the Ante-natal Suffrage Bill. This bill when enacted will accord the right of vote to children even in the womb of their mother. Under Hindu Law, a son conceived is as much as a son born and can upset

the alienations of his father which took place after his conception even though before birth. This principle finds another illustration in my bill. There are two basic facts at present. The life of the Assembly is three years. The date when a measure receives the approval of the majority in the Assembly comes into operation is three years after its date of enactment. My bill seeks to give vote to a child conceived. Elections are held and there is an assembly which in its duration passes certain measures. Children conceived at the time of elections can use their tongue as a vehicle for communication of thought two years after their birth at the most. Two years after the birth of the child conceived last, the votes of all the children in conception at the time of elections should be taken about the candidates who stood at those elections. As a result of the addition of these votes to those acquired by the candidate at the elections, there should be a consequent efflux and influx of members of the Assembly. These members will have the majority right to accord their sanction to or abrogate the measures passed by the previous members. The date of sanction to a measure will be taken as its date of enactment. This assembly is dissolved when it has completed three of its life. Then the assembly is newly constituted. There were many children who

were conceived at the time of the bye-elections to the last assembly. When they come of speaking age during the lifetime of the new assembly, their votes should be counted and there should be a reconstruction of the assembly on the model of the last one. This reconstituted assembly will revise the bills legislated by the last assembly after its bye-elections. The date of sanction to a piece of legislation of the last assembly will be regarded as its date of enactment and so on. (Hoarse cheers, meeting disperses).

Co.

A Rai Bahadur or Khan Bahadur the sop one gets for unpopularity is a misnomer. Those flunkys are not exactly so bold as their imposing title, who obsequiously dance attendance on the bureaucrats. Lackey and bahadur are antonyms flatly opposing each other in sense and spirit. Spinster and bachelor of the day is other such. Scratch a spinster and you will find her wedded to none but engaged to all.

With a slight shift from misnomer we come to 'CO', that heads this article. Webster explains co as a prefix meaning together, in company, in-common, jointly, reciprocally, mutually to the mind of the writer, Co, while retaining its dictionary sense has taken on a new meaning in actual and factual application.

In Trigonometry, the side opposing the angle over the side lying by the same angle is called tangent, whereas the reverse *i.e.* the denominator in place of the numerator and the numerator coming down is known as Cotangent. Co here comes in unsettling the situation and making it topsy turvy. This upside down function of co has entered many heads with the same mathematical precision

A woman styles the other wife of her husband as co-wife, although she would hardly admit her to the status of a wife and an equal. Co-wife to her means no wife.

In a Hindu Joint Family under the Mitakshara Law, the manager of the joint family property is designated as Karta. The male members of the family are co-parceners and entitled to equal share in the income and the property. But often times the Karta steps into their shoes and like the Lord God as He had finished with the work of creation pours forth bloated with pride, ' I am the monarch of all I survey '.

Where co-operation among individuals pops up, operation tapers away like the ghost in Hamlet. Everybody's business is nobody's business.

Ultra reformers stress not a little the necessity of co-education. There is such an array of arguments and marshalling of facts and figures to make one gasp Progress striding along is vouchsafed when the gal and the guy sit hand on thigh in school. Philogynists, philanderers get a good grounding. What more of education.

What an awe inspires the board on a business-house, Radhe Lal & Co. This Radhe Lal if he had sons in business would have got it as Radhe Lal & Sons. If his brothers had shared the financial

venture, Radhe Lal & Bros. would have met our sight. If he could fish for some partners or shareholders, he would have it registered as private or public limited. But oh, he had none and then the captivating idea of netting business with a profound name. And here comes to rescue, 'And Co'.

Mein Gamp.

I caught with the reformist's zeal beat my head against the wall. My heart wept bitter tears. All around me crime and corruption ruled the land. People revelled in prestidigitation and in palming off falsehood and injustice as the very essence of truth and justice. How it lashed up my indignation and raked up feelings of hatred would not call for any comment. How I found it desirable that such men should be weeded out from society. People sought subterfuges for evading law and morality and showed off as the juice of rectitude and righteousness what was stinking with tainted motives and turpitude. Surreptitiously they infringed the law but on their face they showed tear-inspiring fidelity to it. Their chestiness in their defence of the wrong and the brazenness in brandishing it forth as right touched my temper and loosened the bowels of my wrath. There was growing a dearth of God-fearing clean-living persons of righteous character and upright thinking in the land. My blood was up against the iniquities of the day

*Mein Gamp in this allegory is the Punjab University. The church priest is Woolner, rakes are the corrupt examiners and diet is the education also called in literature mental pabulum.

Men were losing sense of values. They were becoming slaves of momentary desires and fleeting passions. They were of workable temperament. Any one could spur them on with an appeal to passion or prejudice. More their attention was focussed on the acting than the act behind. If one flies into rage it will take the colour off their cheeks and they will be prostrate before him. If he cooes before them they will give themselves the airs of a King Kong. Not principles but personalities ruled and regulated their conduct. There was hardly any established order of things. Life was a gamble. As the forces arranged themselves on either side, the issue was lost or won. Men who will not let a compatriot use their telephone will be drummed abroad as Grade-A nationalists. Men who will not contribute a penny when an earthquake shakes the land or a mountain slide buries under its debris people's heard and homes will be hailed and waved aloft on people's shoulders and buildings flagged to receive them. They will saunter forth as heroes of the nation and will deliver oratorical periods on patriotism with a voice that would fell a tree. How they would berate others who differed from them though not in practice. Tall talk had become a veneer for tarnished motives and diabolical intentions.

People lacked a clear mental perspective. They mouthed a prodigious amount of insane drivel when they set out justifying their doubtful intentions. A certain muddyheadedness the mischief of it all This unbalancing of the entities of life, the overbalancing of certain factors and the under balancing of others bespoke a beclouded intellect. The mind was unbalanced hence the scales were not evenly held. For the Lord, absolute and infinite, heathens worshipped stock and stone which were hurled about by the tempestuous forces of nature. For the Law absolute and supreme man was raised on to the pedestal or Mammon Here was an addled sense of things, the attribute of the dunderheads and mentally sterile who spread an evil odour all around wherever they may be.

Such men had smuggled into position in the administrative machinery of the land who with their pious professions and proclamations would bring the roof on the heads of the listeners but would prove a rag in action. Among them was Sirfraz Khan, the cop who thought he was a mighty fellow who was given the title of Sir as soon as he was born. When a fit of elation caught him he would begin to spar on the street and would go cleanly off his head There was another who would lie low in the dust before him a great man as he was.

being knighted at his very birth. He was known as the sud of the magistracy. Mr. Sud was the feeble-minded whose decisions conflicting with the canons of law and justice gave rise to an observation made by some body that law is an ass.

The half witted progeny !

And then the low class papers of the day who had in their sensation-mongering nosiness out distanced by far and away the yellow journalism of America. They would give a box or a banner to just some thing that happens to an I. C. S. *candidate* because they had simply learnt to gape at an I. C. S.

If a person gets a scrape in a tonga collision the flaming headline is

‘ Serious Injuries ’

If nobody is hurt, then the sensational heading is

‘ Miraculous Escape ’

Theirs is to make sensation.

They would open their columns full length for the mending of a cowslip on a road but would start a campaign in full blast against a drainage scheme

that would annihilate out of existence all the cow-slips, poodles and sour-smelling spots of the city. They disclosed a morbid mind.

Blast them all !

The whole rot kindled my spirit. I should ferret out the cause of this nastiness that had crept into the fabric of society. I should slay the demon or torpedo it and explode it to atoms which had so damaged the morale of the people and by shaking the faith of many in the triumph of law and jusicet had decimated the law-abiding, Scratch for it. Smell for it. Hunt for it. Fish for it I could not find. Where could after all it be that had sown trouble so broad and wide It was no joke to find it.

It must be a remotely hidden deeply laid cause that had been potent for so much mischief. So I ventured far and out. But the cause was nearer home to have the effect of *dynamising* the forces of evil. It was just two doors away.

There lived a gamp. She was the daughter of a church priest, a pulpit preacher on morality. To her care people entrusted their children, who was charged with bringing them up and breeding them like the real mother from whom they were weaned. So they called her *alma mater*.

This gamp was of lax morals and a dissolute mode of life. She was looked upon as a highly desirable catch by philogynists. They thought of her as extremely likeable and beddable. She was assisted in her man-hunting by her father too who maenouvred positions for her so that she may enthrall the rakes with her charms and ravish with them without any tinge of notoriety attaching to her. Rakes who were well in disrepute for their loose morals and their conquests among women came to her from time to time and carried on with her. She yielded to their violent desires. She fell for them. She *prostituted* herself. *They worked their will on her.* These exploits became the talk of the people far and wide but the father of the gamp would not be put out of countenance and did all to cover them up instead of reforming his girl or casting an evil eye on the rakes. Rather he sought to chastise those who urged him for reform, by offering his daughter to the chastiser.

Then the gamp had a controller of her affairs. He was——singa, the horned beast who would stave off with a show of his horns any daunting factor in the way of the rakes and manipulate matters to give them all encouragement. Thus the whoring went on.

The gamp thus often times conceived The flow of milk in her teats stopped on which she used to feed the infants entrusted to her care. For the human milk which is the ideal nourishment for a child she gave them the milk of animals and other substitutes which had many defects and were open to bacterial contamination and thus fell far short of the standard and proper diet. This told on their mental health and was reflected in the level of mental efficiency attained by them. The following will give the reader idea enough of the resultant future in all such cases.

The food habits of famous men and women in history are intriguing for it is interesting to speculate on the effect of their diet on their characters and dispositions.

L. R. Wolberg's *Psychology of Eating*.

Unfortunately the majority of people do not reach an *emotional maturity*. Innate weaknesses in the basic personality structure errors in upbringing, *faulty food habits* and unfortunate environmental experiences momentarily arrest or permanently retard such development.

Wolberg's *Psychology of Eating*.

And

Weakness, fatigue, lack of endurance irritability, physical and *mental inefficiency* and increased susceptibility to disease are the most common symptoms of an *improper diet*.

Psychology of Eating.

The screen was off the show.

Oh Those Skunks The Papers.

(*The Tribune.*)

I. C. S. CANDIDATE STANDS CHARGED.

STARK STARING MURDER.

RIVAL PLUGGED WITH A BULLET.

Delhi, 19th January, 1942.

Rup Lal an I. C. S. candidate from the Punjab has been put under arrest on the count of wilful murder of another candidate Tirugnanam for whom, it is stated he nursed bitter jealousy for the reason, it is said, of his being a powerful and potential rival of the accused.

The facts, it is alleged, are that on 19th January, 1942, as the candidates poured out of the centre hall of the Metcalfe House where examinations are held daily for the I. C. S. candidates, two candidates who had taken their test in Philosophy Paper A, began to compare notes as to the relative merits of their answers in the lawn outside. Tirugnanam one of the candidates profoundly impressed the other with his capacious knowledge, voracity of reading in his having reaped off a number of books and his grip of facts. The other candidate Rup Lal missed

Note.—This article illustrates the newspapers' methods of news misreporting and develops the theme adumbrated in the preceding article Mein Gamp. Papers not specifically mentioned should also be taken as included.

a beating of his heart. A blinding flash went over his brain. His heart burst into flame. He was more than ever convinced of his flat failure in the teeth of this prodigious rival.

Rup Lal then lured him into conversation about firearms and took out his pistol for demonstration. As he was giving the other the names of the various parts, he pointed his pistol and sent a bullet crashing through the head of Tirugnanam that came out of his neck, leaving a round red mark on both sides. The boy fell lifeless on the ground, lying dead in a soft heap, utterly dead. The sword on the spot was soaked in blood. He was instantly cut down. His body lay inert, the body of death, eyes rolled back, teeth exposed in a last grimace and beside him stood the accused with lips parted, wan eyes and colourless cheeks. He was all unnerved and vacant-minded.

Sir Ross Barker, the Chairman of the Public Service Commission heard the loud report and pricked up his ears thinking that there was something up about which he must move peremptorily. He laid aside his work and descended on the scene. Immediately a dense crowd formed. The members of the Public Service Commission were there and the whole staff lined up. Some one put in a call on the phone to the police.

Two constables arrived and cleaving their path and squeezing their way through the crowd picked up the corpse which was removed to the hospital for post-mortem. The accused was taken under arrest. Enquired as to an explanation, he was mum. When asked whether he denied his guilt, his mouth was sealed and he was casting empty looks on all sides. He could not put forth any thin excuse even. So he was led to the police station with a host of witnesses in the wake.

From investigations it appears that the assault was a cold, calculated cerebral affair. It was premeditated and well-laid out.

It is stated that the accused was heard two days before the incident, saying 'I wish to open his skull'

The incident has caused convulsions of horror throughout the vicinity.

(The Statesman)

I. C. S. CANDIDATE IN TROUBLE.

BOOKS ON PERSON IN EXAMINATION HALL.

A SENSATIONAL STORY.

Delhi, 19th January, 1942.

In the Metcalfe House, Delhi, where examinations are held daily for the I. C. S. candidates, RUP LAL a candidate from the Punjab was made

over to the police for carrying books on his person in the examination hall and answering the question paper with their help.

The facts of the case are alleged as follows. In the examination room A of the Metcalfe House, I. C. S. candidates were to be tested in European History period I from 9 A. M to 12 A. M. The candidates sat there deeply immersed in their task, wrestling with the questions set before them, bringing on record the facts embedded in their memory, disinterring the data stuck in any nook and corner of it. In the room the sound of the screeching of pen prevailed all over with a less frequent crackling of paper broken with an occasional rapping of wall or tapping on the table to call attention to the need of a candidate for a fresh answer book. It was a hot devil-take—the hindmost race of pens with a lesser regard for earning merit in chirography than for marks in knowledge.

A candidate sat much embarrassed and put out. Occasionally he took up his pen to answer the paper. Occasionally he looked at the lining of his coat that had lost its stitches, feeling very much ashamed. Sir Ross Barker, the Chairman of the Public Service Commission was watching his shame-faced expression. The candidate's name was Rup Lal. A blush of shame crept over his

face every time he looked at the pitiable condition of his coat with its lining off its moors except for the few stitches at the top and bottom that held it in place.

Sir Ross Barker was bossing the whole room. An idea came into his head like a flash of inspiration. He perceived the incompatibility between the flush on his face at the inside of his coat and the spic and span outside. The coat of Rup Lal had not a crease or a wrinkle nor any sign of ever having lain rumpled up. It was neat and trim. How could it be torn, thought Sir Ross Barker, on the inside, the side that does not come into friction or get entangled with anything.

Sir Ross Barker went up to the candidate and asked him to show his coat. The candidate Rup Lal at first began snivelling but then had to show the lining of his coat. Sir Ross Barker was overwhelmed with surprise as he saw on the inside of his coat hidden behind the lining pages torn from a book of history and agglutinated to the coat which kept it stiff and smooth on the outside. The pages were the first page of every chapter of the book giving at the top all the sub heads and cross headings in the chapter. In a flash light, the whole mystery revealed itself to Sir Ross Barker. As the candidate cast a glance at the

sub-headings, it touched the springs of his memory and let go.

Immediately the police was summoned and Rup Lal was made over to the police.

There was some scuffle in which a few chairs were tripped over, a man was floored and ink bespattered on the ground.

The accused will take his trial to-morrow.

(Civil Military Gazette.)

**I. C. S. CANDIDATE ON
IMPERSONATION CHARGE.**

REPORTED AGAINST ANOTHER.

GETS IT IN THE NECK.

Delhi, 19th January, 1942.

Rup Lal, a candidate from the Punjab who was sitting for the I. C. S. examination this year was put on trial to-day in the Court of Mr. F. C. Unwin, Additional District Magistrate, Delhi, in a case of impersonation and cheating.

The charges against the accused read as under.

The accused on 18th January, 1942 in the interval between two papers registered a complaint with Sir Ross Barker, the Chairman of the Public Service Commission for summary treatment against another candidate Ghulam Ali on the score that Ghulam Ali made an attempt to knife him.

The occasion for it, as Rup Lal stated was that Ghulam Ali had a piff with a fruit-seller in the Metcalfe House, where the examinations are being held, over the price of some eatables he had consumed, in the course of which Ghulam Ali, according to Rup Lal, said to the fruit-seller, "If you pit up yourself against me, I will lay my two hands on your breast and whiskers this side (pointing to the fruit-seller's left) give a pull and make a Mahadeva of you down here." Rup Lal objected to this, saying 'Don't drag in our gods. Don't insult them.' At this Ghulam Ali, as related by the accused, poked his knife at the accused but missed the point. The meaning hinted in the remarks was said to be that by removing the whiskers and pulling loose the breast the fruit-seller's left half will look like a woman's as is Mahadeva also called Ardha Narishwar, (the god who is half female). Mahadeva is also derogatorily used for phallus.

Ghulam Ali denied the whole story and characterised it as a fabrication of the accused whose heart was contaminated with communal feelings.

Sir Ross Barker referred to the notes he had jotted down during the *viva voce* test about the nature and character of the two candidates from his observation.

A different mystery was unwreathed. Sir Ross Barker was setting down during that test the identifying marks of every candidate interviewed against his name. Sir Ross Barker had taken down against the name of the accused Rup Lal, 'hazel nut eyes, leonine eyebrows, double chin, arch-backed, wearing glasses.' The Rup Lal that now stood before Sir Ross Barker did not answer to this description. The accused as the mystery unfolded itself to Sir Ross Barker, had sent some other man in his place to score top marks for him by creating an impression on the Interview Board with his profundity of General Knowledge. It was some man who had become bow-backed in his sedentary pursuit of book-reading, who had put on flesh thereby and had become obese and who was brownish all-over, eyebrows, eyes and all. It was some squat, heavy-built man and not the spare, delicate form that was now before Sir Ross Barker. It was some flat, massive person and not the sleek, slim Rup Lal that was now under his eyes.

Sir Ross Barker considered it a fit case of impersonation and cheating and summoned the police to whom the accused was made over.

The police are further investigating into the matter as to who impersonated him.

The accused is taking his trial from to-day.

(*Pioneer.*)

**I. C. S. CANDIDATE IN SERIOUS
BROIL.**

WANTED TO TAMPER WITH DOCUMENTS.

**ATTEMPT FOILED BY AUTHORITIES'
VIGILANCE.**

Delhi, 19th January, 1942.

Yesterday a very sensational challan was recorded by the Civil Lines Police Station, Delhi against one Rup Lal an I. C. S. candidate from the Punjab who was caught red-handed in an attempt to force himself into the offices of the Public Service Commission located in the Metcalfe House, with foul motives and criminal intent, at 8 o'clock early in the morning. The attempt was nipped in the bud.

The circumstances of the case as narrated in the police report are that the accused Rup Lal made his way to the Metcalfe House at about 8 o'clock in the day time and made an approach to it from the riverside under cover of tangled bushes and leafy trees, long grass and furze and mounted up the terraced staircase. Coming near he aimed shots at the glass panes in the door. He kept pelting stones for a while. The hammering sound went on steadily for some time. At last he broke one. The

splinters of glass tinkled on the floor and the watchman on the other side of the building caught the sound. At once he pulled himself up and edging behind pillar and post saw from the tail of his eye the accused who dived down as he saw the watchman. The watchman pounced upon him but missed the quarry. The accused ran a few steps closely followed by the watchman who had him under his thumb in no time. The jagged glass pane told its own tale.

Sir Ross Barker, the Chairman of the Public Service Commission arrived in the office a couple of hours later and looked at the shattered glass pane with gaping holes, indented and saw toothed. The watchman who had taken such a tight grip on the wrist of the accused that his veins stood out as though swollen, and would not loosen it in any way, brought the accused to Sir Ross Barker. The sight of the accused in the firm grasp of the watchman completed the whole story for him. The accused, said Sir Ross Barker, had assaulted others' emotions and lacerated nerves to no purpose.

The accused took the opportunity to let off some steam against the watchman who, according to the accused, had roped him in to get a chance of giving himself airs and satisfying his vanity.

The accused was made over to the police.

(*Hindustan Times.*)

**I. C. S. EXAMINATION MARKS
FORGERY CASE.**

**ASTOUNDING ALLEGATIONS AGAINST
A CANDIDATE.**

ALTERS HIS MARKS.

Delhi, 19th January, 1942.

Sir Ross Barker, the Chairman of the Public Service Commission, had this day a spasm of swimming headache as he sat in his office checking and double-checking the *viva-voce* marks of I. C. S. candidates for any discrepancy. The marks were taken down in three distinct copies, one by each member of the Interview Board at the time the candidates were marked down. The copies now came up for comparison.

As the three members sat in the office, the Chairman in the slot of the table and the other two round the edge, Sir Ross Barker, the Chairman spoke round to the others the marks of each candidate. At a later stage when the members were growing stone dead with the fatigue of the day's work, it was noticed that in the copy of Mr. Natesan, two candidates Rup Lal and Abdul Rahman were given top-marks *i. e.* full marks out of a maximum of 200 marks, whereas the other two copies showed

their marks as 20. Mr. Natesan's expression immediately clouded. He strained his eyes closely at the figures. Mr. Natesan's expression cleared up as he observed that it was a zero added after his correct figure of 20 by somebody else. He was dead sure that the last cipher was not in his writing but it was a pale copy of his hand by another person. Sir Ross Barker felt hot and roused. His expression hardened. He wanted to track down the guilty person. All the members groped in their hazy mind for any string that would lead to the identity of the guilty man. Their thoughts were misting with forgetfulness of time. Their hearts were strained with anxiety to find out the real culprit, out of the two. The Chairman was quite on tenterhooks. It was dead easy to see that it was a criminal attempt of one of the two persons whose marks were thus pushed up rather than any mistake or unmindfulness of Mr. Natesan. The remarks about one of them Rup Lal as noted down by Sir Ross Barker at the time of marking were 'Does not understand English, looks low-class and stupid' and about the other Abdul Rahman were 'Haughty, has no firm views on anything, unmoulded character, a punk graduate.'

'I can hardly give best marks to men of such a poor type,' said Sir Ross Barker coldly.

The members felt bitter headache racking their wits for the identity of the man. Sir Ross Barker

flamed with passion and indignation against the criminal and his outrageous act. He must have him go to penal servitude for some years so that the law-abiding society may breathe freely.

Then inspiration flashed through Sir Albert Unwin, another member of the Viva-Voce Board. 'I saw a brat poking his nose through the curtain of my door. His appearance provided an answer to the description that you have recorded of him,' he said decisively to Sir Ross Barker.

'He was a spoof of a man, full of lip, a straight nose and cadaverous cheeks. He was down and out at the heels. The lapels of his coat which had big holes in it, were dog-eared. He was wearing a starched collar frayed at the edges and a necktie which had lost whatever stiffness it had possessed and hung in loose bunches on both sides of the knot.' He ran on.

'He was Rup Lal who, as I have got here, looks low class,' said Sir Ross Barker.

'Yesterday I saw him shoot a glance at me and then say something into the ear of a friend of his. It seemed as if he was giving him a secret that he could not breathe to a soul', said Mr. Natesan.

Feeling rose high in the chairman's breast.

'It was something about this chicanery that he was confiding to him', said Sir Ross. 'He will have to run for his dear life'.

Chairs seemed to spin round and ground heaved up under his feet, as Sir Ross Barker in wonderment emptied out the contents of his box in which those copies were locked and found the bottom of the box knocked out of it. He switched on the light and he saw the same dark void before his eyes in place of the tough, tangible plank at the bottom.

Sir Ross Barker put in a call on the 'phone and there was a buzz, a click and cluck. The phone was engaged.

Meanwhile Mr. Varma, a member of the Public Service Commission who had perchance strayed into the room at this moment, pleaded with slobbering pity for the accused and had a paltry little tiff with the Chairman.

Another call was then put in and the police 'phone rang back in reply. The case was given to the police who arrested and challaned the accused Rup Lal.

(The Bombay Chronicle.)

I. C. S. EXAMINATION PAPER LEAKS OUT.

STARTLING DISCLOSURES ABOUT A CANDI- DATE.

INVESTIGATIONS PROCEEDING.

Delhi, 19th January, 1942.

Sir Ross Barker felt his nerves tattered when the other day he opened the mail in his office at

10 o'clock in the morning. His face sagged as he read in a letter that the I. C. S. Economics Paper (a) had leaked out. The letter was mailed by a candidate Ram Nath who divulged the information that a candidate Rup Lal had a note book in which all the matter that comprised an answer to the paper was marked important. Sir Ross Barker admirably thought that it was just a veneer to keep note of the questions that would hardly remain stamped in memory and that could not be put in writing without putting himself in jeopardy. Sir Ross Barker's nerves were alive and excited.

The matter was given to the police for uncovering the mystery and disinterring further facts in the case.

The police inspected the place where the packet of question papers was deposited prior to its being opened on the date of the examination. From there the police picked up some snippets of paper, a few odd bits of stout cotton and some other seemingly irrelevant junks with the hope of getting some clue from them in the construction of the crime story.

The police energy was on tap to clear away the mist and mystery that wreathed the diabolical act. After some fizzling and sizzling of anger and excitement the police was eventually able to get at the juiceless kernel of truth.

The police executed a thorough search of the person and property of Rup Lal against whom the complaint had been registered and dug out the note book on Economics that formed the main plank of their argument against him. The book contained much matter that was marked important and among it the matter that provided an answer to the question paper on Economics. Acting on the principle that if a man has five bad coins, he should be locked up on the suspicion of uttering counterfeit coins, the police put under arrest Rup Lal.

The accused was drooling with excuses to make the heart of the police melt and body rack with pity but Sub-Inspector Mohd. Shafi glowered at the accused. With his hair greying in the long career of investigation of crime he smothered and curtailed the twaddle of the accused and had the handcuffs snapped on his wrists.

The question that vexed the police was as to how the accused got to get at the paper. The accused lived in a tight little village to which he had drawn six months earlier than the examination in preparation for it. The village was not much open to commerce from outside. Heaped upon this was the fact that his mails had been stopped. He had once posted a bearing letter which

was returned unpaid to the accused. The accused did not pay for it. His mails were consequently cut off. The examiner who set the paper was nominated for the task three months before the examination. The examiner was in England. Subsequent upon the allotment of this task to him indeed immediately after, England was severed from India in communications on account of the war. The first English dak that arrived in India after that was received here ten days before the examination. This shuts out all possibility of the examiner's complicity in the crime.

The packet of paper was examined in the examination hall in the presence of all the examiners five minutes before the time of the test. None of the seals was infringed. They were all intact. The strings around and the packing paper were not tampered with in any way. The covering paper was smooth all over and unrumped. Only a hole had been rubbed into it at the top, just as big as a punch hole. It was not much material. Underneath that hole came exactly a blank space of the examination paper. Not a letter could have been seen through that hole. The hole seemed to have got worn into by friction with some other luggage during the transport. The number of question

papers in the packet tallied with the number stated to have been despatched.

It is stated that the accused rolled up a stretch of paper and inserted the curled up bit through the hole of the packet. Then slightly humping up the covering paper he managed to bring the roll half way across both sides of the hole with a pin. Thereby moving it slightly forward and backward, he unrolled the paper to its dimensions and brought it against a part of the examination paper. At that point he would press it against the question paper and run his hand smoothly and tightly over it a number of times. The part of the question paper underneath the bit of paper would come off on the unrolled slip which had been rubbed over with the printing wax. That chit of paper would then be brought up under the hole, rolled up with a pin and taken out of the hole. In this way a reflex copy of the whole question paper was obtained, which was later put in straight words.

The snippets were dropped by the accused while trimming the paper to insert it through the hole.

(*The A. P. I.*)

STEPS ROUND THE AGE BAR.

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I C. S. CANDIDATE'S SHREWDNESS.

— — —

HEIGHT OF UNSCRUPULOUSNESS.

— — —

“His faith was no object to him. He loved money plain. He gravitated round money. He followed hot on the trail of money. He lived cheaply, ate meanly and was of slattern habits. Never did he keep a tosser with him for pocket expenses,” so spoke the Public Prosecutor Ram Narain in withering contempt while opening the case of the prosecution against one Rup Lal accused in a swell case of cheating.

A flicker of mild interest passed among the audience in the court.

“He conceived a hellish plan and went through it. He cut down his age by three years and was on the verge of cribbing away the rights of others when he was just caught in the nick of time—the perisher,” said he addressing his plea to the court.

The court audience pricked up their ears with hearts strained with curiosity to be in full details of the stinking misdeed of the blighter.

The accused stood in the dock cockbreasted with brazen boldness.

“He changed his faith as well as his father. Both got names after a Muslim son and father Abdul Matin and Abdul Qadir respectively

This Abdul Matin was a Punjab University graduate three years younger than the accused. The accused had overstepped the age limit for I. C. S. He obtained the certificate of the original Abdul Matin from the Punjab University and used them with his application. Thus he got himself listed among I. C. S. candidates,” the Public Prosecutor unwound his arguments.

This magistrate was brimful of indignation.

The accused flamed in protest and said “May heaven smite me to earth if I was ever guilty of such an unthinkable offence.” He struck an attitude.

“The police had to use all its policery in clinching the case against the accused and laying the crime to his door. It is now for the court to settle the accused. Sir Douglas cotton, the head of the C. I. D. a man of capacious talent, with power in every line of him, personally handled the case and busied about his task with feverish energy. His mighty brain revoluted as he was put in hand the following message of Sir Ross Barker, the

Chairman of the Public Service Commission, Delhi to Lahore police.

Information received smells of some foul move on the part of Rup Lal, Soheli Singh Street, Lahore. Investigate. Papers of Rup Lal being forwarded by post.

The police took the accused under custody and obtained a specimen of his handwriting. With plodding investigation, the police got a letter from the post office in which the accused had directed the postal authorities to keep in deposit his correspondence instead of delivering it at his home address. In this letter the accused had described himself as Abdul Matin and given for his address that of the original Abdul Matin. This very address he had given in his application for the I. C. S. examination, the handwriting on which tallied with his handwriting. After that the matter was a stone certainty. He had apostatised to use the name of Abdul Matin to get the benefit of nominations for the minority communities. He had given his address in place of his own so that the verification report required by the Public Service Commission from the police does not go haywire. He had left these instructions with the postal department to intercept all correspondence directed in the name of Abdul Matin and dupe both Abdul Matin and

the Public Service Commission on this point," the Public Prosecutor spread out his case.

There was a flutter of sensation in the Court.

"He instead of filing his own University degrees and certificates alongwith an Apostasy Certificate, produced those of that Abdul Matin and thus cut out three years of his age," he ran on "He in this way wove out a situation in which the possibility of a hostile report of impersonation was precluded and which would enable him to tread on air in life."

The court audience was prostrate with wonderment. None had got the guts for the piece of news.

(The Amrit Bazar Patrika.)

I. C. S. CANDIDATE'S CLEVER MOVE.

KNOTTY PLOT UNRAVELLED.

ENCOMIUMS SHOWERED ON POLICE.

Delhi, 23rd March, 1942.

"A callow youth, with puffy lips, wide flat nostrils and negro-like kinky and frizzy hair faced me as I went to answer the call myself," said Mrs. Blackham, the wife of Mr. T. H. Blackham,

Deputy Commissioner, Delhi. "He looked like a raga muffin, with a pair of trousers several sizes too large for him."

"I want to see the sahib, he said as I gave him a seat in the visitor's room which had a ramshackle appearance then as the house was being white-washed and articles from other rooms were lumped together in that room. Our house was then sited on Irwin Road." She added.

"A few minutes later as I crossed to that room from the scullery I found that the youth had sneaked away while the diary of the sahib had been drawn out of his pocket and was lying on the table," she said shakily. The mystery of the whole thing struck cold into her heart, a woman of thin nerves as she was.

* * * * *

"Anna, my nerves have gone. Every night some puppy gets into the bungalow and starts howling. These ululations have made me frantic. My nerves are breaking. I can't have any sleep. Howsoever I try, sleep does not come. It appears, some bitch with her puppies, nosing about for food, breaks into these bungalows at odd times of the night. As some watchman hurls his stick at her, she scampers away and bounds over any parapet in any direction she finds escape, leaving

some of her young ones behind, who with his howls brings the roof on us," Mr. Blackham said savagely.

"Anna, I think," he continued, "we better shift from this place and rent some premises lined on all sides by a high wall which no bitch or dog can scale over."

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"The place is a bit stuffy with a rather high wall enclosing the bungalow on all sides but I am at least safe here from the yells of dogs and jackals rousing me alert, a heavy sleeper although I am. But I don't get here such cool whiffs of breeze and puffs of wind fanning me in my sleep," said Mr Blackham coldly.

"Such residential places were designed as a matter of fact for us Muslims whose females observe strict purdah and who will never let alien eyes fall on them. Walls so high were raised girdling the dwelling, so that a man on the road outside is a bit dwarf against the wall. Tomorrow is our Id. I hope you will like to have your lunch with us," said Khan Bahadur Abdul Majid warming up to the proposal of toast.

"Tomorrow is Id?" said Mr. Blackham questioningly. "This Id, they tell me, always comes unexpectedly. It can never be marked down

on the calendar. The evening when the crescent shows itself on the dim distant horizon proclaims the following day as Id day. Have you sighted any crescent? It is dusk falling now." Said the Deputy Commissioner quizzically.

"I have not yet seen it but it must be somewhere there faintly visible on the arch of the sky. Yesterday an ill-clad negroid came to me and he also made a passing mention that day after tomorrow is Id day. There it is you see winking with a dull metallic lustre on the distant horizon, there among the leafage, behind that stalk of the tree."

"Oh that, I see," said the Deputy Commissioner, settling down in his chair in an assured manner.

"That youngster was not much misplaced in his reckoning of the Id day although he looked to me a doodle taking on the airs of a wiseman. In speech he was an awful flop. So nervous that he hemmed and hawed and stammered and swallowed before he could say something articulate. He came to me booking orders for furniture and to wheedle money out of me by wanting some advance for the order I placed.

I said one such agent filched away my money by way of advance and never again put in his appearance.

"Then why did you keep quiet about it," he said.

"Why? I did quarrel about it," I said.

"Diqualabout," says he.

"A peculiar fellow. I had a newspaper in hand. I threw it down on the ground where somebody had blown his nose, he picked up the paper and tore it to bits. At the same time kicked against the ground too many times. Then abruptly he went off," said K. B. Abdul Majid with a sneer.

"Some such whimsical negro came to my place also and left off before I could call him in," said Mr. Blackham in recollection.

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This and a mesh of insignificant details was all of a material for the police to work upon for a clue to the culprit who engineered a move so that Mr. Blackham proclaimed a blackout on the day following their own misconceived Id day of the Khan Bahadur and the Deputy Commissioner although he had intended it and had so noted in his diary to be on the day next to the Id day.

The order was in the local papers of that day.

The I. C. S. candidates made a grievance to the Deputy Commissioner that it was the death of their

ambition to promulgate blackout during their examination days. This opened the eyes of the Deputy Commissioner to his mistake.

The police was breathing fire and torture against the man. Never was a criminal able to slip through their fingers. Nor will any now. Once they lay hold of the man and are personally convinced of his crime, they will not scruple to stretch the limits of legal canons of evidence to secure a conviction. They will have him in the hollow of their hand. They will work up such a case that it will get him ten years. The mystery of it all had given them the creeps. •

After a splitting headache thinking it out, they got the thread of it that brought light to their eyes and flutter of hope to their hearts. The man they said, must be the man who put it into the head of Khan Bahadur Abdul Majid that the day after the next will be Id. The Khan Bahadur got it on his mind and was on the lookout for the crescent the following evening. Walking around and about the Deputy Commissioner's bungalow, they observed that there was a metal crescent fixed on the dome of a mosque that just jutted up above, leaving the dome and the lower part of the mosque building under the line of vision, hidden behind the wall. It appeared to have been a clever move of the man who had given

the suggestion of Id to the Khan Bahadur to make the District Magistrate pack up from his old residence.

But the man had got mixed up as a drop in the ocean of humanity. How to string him up? In which quarter to snoop for him?

The police had to do a bit of Freudian psychoanalysis.

The man seemed to have an obsessional neurosis. Why did his anger mount up so high against the paper that was spoiled by falling on the gob of snot? It (paper spoiled) reminded him of his own paper spoiled, his examination paper and he vent himself by tearing the newspaper to chits and kicking against the ground.

Now what sort of examination paper and examinee could they be !

The police discovered a page of the diary of the District Magistrate dog-eared and then smoothed out, but the fold line was visible. It must have been a I. C. S. candidate. The I. C. S. examination was going on those days. His spoiled paper was a recent matter that still envenomed his mind. Then from the characterological view point an I.C.S. candidate is in the melting pot. His habits of student life cling on to him. He aspires to be a civilian and tries to drill those

habits out of him and mould his habits and character like a civilian, otherwise he thinks, he will get put on the mat in the interview test which is meant to see to these things.

In this analysis of an I.C.S. candidate's character, the police thought that it was not far out.

That ill-shod visitor to the D. C.'s bungalow had marked a page in the D. C.'s diary, folding it at the corner and then taking it to be a childish habit, straightened it.

There was an identification parade of all the I. C. S. candidates. The youth of puffy lips, wide, flat nostrils and kinky, frizzy hair was picked out. Rup Lal his name was.

He had figured out a clever way. One of his papers in the examination had been spoiled. In the Deputy Commissioner's diary he noted that on the day next to Id there will be a blackout and all the lights in the city will be put off for the whole night. Deep in the night, he would leave young puppies torn from their mother in the D. C.'s bungalow. The puppies sent such loud wailings to pitying heavens that made the Deputy Commissioner begin his hegira to a place encircled by a high wall from where the metal crescent on the mosque could only be visible leaving the rest of the building hidden from view. He then went to Khan Bahadur Abdul Majid and informed him that a certain day will be

Id, because on the day following the day next to it, he had no paper, while other candidates had to sit in their optional subjects. Blackout having been ordered in the city, their papers too were spoiled.

Now a bit of Alfred Adler at work

The police said that the accused while sitting with K. B. Abdul Matin heard a hallucinatory sound 'diquaabout' although it came from nowhere. Di in inverse order is Id. Iqual is not a jot different from equal and the last four letters bout are for blackout (b. out). The sound came to him from the mixed ideas running in his mind that by the promulgation of *blackout* on a certain day as the day after *Id*, he will be *equal* to others and get them on the same level with him. Thus he will not in any way be left behind in the competition for making pots of money in life.

THE LESSER FRY.

(*The Tej*).

I. C. S. EXAMINATIONS IN DELHI.

AMUSING INCIDENT IN EXAMINATION HALL.

Delhi, 19th January, 1942.

There sat a bloke in the examination hall who jerked his pen at all inopportune times after every

couple of seconds and the ink from the pen traced a design on the floor as if a fly had gone about relieving herself. Repeatedly he would tap it with his fingers for ink as the conjurer gives a few good spansks on the back before he extracts rupees from the mouth of his medium. The damned thing, blast up, had begun to make itself dashed unpleasant. The stinking thing would not yield its contents without emitting some bad odour—bleating goat, you want to milk her and it shoots out droppings. The ink in it had petered out. He laid it down on the table to uncork the inkwell. The blighted thing rolled on to the floor and the nib doubled up. He thumb-straightened and smoothed its hunchback and set it on paper. It had grown musical. It was now in good voice. It went on with its work finely well, humming a gay tune meanwhile as peasant women grind their grist, pouring themselves out in an ecstasy of song. It screeched and skidded along doing two pages of matter. Now it had developed a sharp point. One stroke of line at the end of the answer to question No. 1 and it went erratic and tore the paper half way through. Two pages of written matter undone, the side and the reverse. If he leaves it thus triumphantly hoisting like a flag, the examiner will take it as scored-out stuff. If he pastes up, one page-matter goes to the dust heap while on the other

page, the fractures of words may not so finely set. Better to plod again.

He tickled the nib a bit and only succeeded in giving it another shape.

So he sat taking in the matter of the spoilt pages in short little bits and transferring it to the next blank pages in his answer book. Each time he turned it the tattered page rustled, crackled, flapped in the fan-stirred wind ; bellied up to this side and that and caught the attention of the supervisor who walked up to him.

"I want to know what the game is. Your paper exhibiting its full round curves, at your manipulation." Said the supervisor, vexedly.

"This paper has got a rap on account of my nib being scratchy. I am ploughing it all over again."

"This leper," said the supervisor addressing the superintendent "you note the contrast between his bleating, apologetic face and the devilish shrewdness of his act. Have you got on to his scheme?"

"What that blinking scheme"? The Superintendent gave a start.

"Well I have got it. In a flash it came to me." Said the Supervisor with a face beaming with

satisfaction "The boulder had conceived a dashed colossal idea, an idea—well the idea of a million years. My mind at first a blank but then with a clear, level head I caught his idea. In an inspiration it came and I think I have laid my finger on the hub of the whole thing."

"How is that," said the Superintendent pinpricked with curiosity.

"This lout knowing this to be an important question was expecting it in the examination every moment. If he tries to answer it from memory it is dashed inconvenient. He has to strain his brain. He searches his mind, gropes in his memory. His memory stirs of certain facts. Others have passed from his mind. It is too prickly. He gives much time, then sees his memory of some fact awake while a clean sweep has been made of all others. So away with the total rot. He got some chum to write the answer to this question in his answer-book during the ten minutes that separate the time when the examination hall is opened and when the papers are distributed. Lest the examiner throw any suspicion on the ground of a different handwriting, he is transcribing it with his own hand and has given a tear to the old page. Don't you see it is not the same scrawly hand as you see him writing in."

Manifestly it was not as the nib had been damaged.

"The best thing," said the Superintendent, "I would advise you is to leave this question altogether and try others. The paper gives enough option. Otherwise we will put up a note to the examiner not to consider this answer."

The flow of ink grew intermittent once more. One violent jerk and the nib caught the wall. It forked up serpentwise.

With its two shoots it left a track as if a fly fallen in ink had gone over the page. He brought together the two ends and set it to its task. It would go smooth then off it jumped as fancy demanded, as if the fly breaking a leg had dragged herself along, then started hopping. Now too much ink ran out. The fly had fallen dead. It would be better, he thought, to get a pal to loan him a pen for the two three hours of the examination. But who was the most likely whom he could touch for that.

It started him on a train of thought. He sat in his place thinking it out.

These cronies, if you have to sign receipt of a Prohibitory Order from the court, they will be the first to extend this courtesy. They will be the foremost to offer you their pen. But in such a crisis as the present one for me, an acute sense of competition surges up in them. They are consumed with the passion to outshoot others. They will put up thin excuses with a

neatly-hidden wink and let you down. One clear incident starts up in memory.

It was getting on for half past eleven when the next period began and another class will come to occupy the room. Five minutes yet. The professor left some notes on the board for students to copy out. Others in the habit of being on time had finished up the job but I always behind the schedule and moreover lacking a pen curried favour with a friend for a pen.

“Have I any pen. Can’t you see”. He said tauntingly.

“There it is sticking out of your pocket”, said I.

“Where” ? he asked, with his hand plunging into the pocket and fumbling about.

And presto it was not.

“You have concealed it from view. It must be some where on your person. In the name of every thing infernal I saw it with my eyes. It must be up your sleeve. No, you have despatched it down your trousers. It has got into your shoes. No, you have stamped it under your foot. Oh I see, it is there in your waistcoat pocket. Oh, this is a cigarette. Anything in your hands. But the hands were straight and unclosed holding nothing. Show me your backside. By gad, where have you sneaked it. Where has it burrowed into ? My gosh, Puri, you are a first rate

smuggler. There it is apparently showing on your hips. Into your hip pocket you have smuggled it. But no, it was the hip pocket rolled up.

And presto—there it was on his hand, running along under his finger with the nib caught between the finger-ring and its finger.

Such friends never give good results. They can't snatch you out of soup. They cannot put themselves out to the slightest extent for the benefit of a friend of theirs.

To hell with these blisters.

He had a sort of nightmarish trapped feeling.

I may, he thought, better put it to the superintendent to get me a pen from his table. But he may take offence that I am getting up intimacy with him, coming too near him. There is no end to the snobbery of these people. Any moment they think you are getting insolent, that they can just stand so much and their limit has been exceeded. These cock-breasted big men—hopeless to tackle. He may be extending unsolicited offers of pens to all sorts of lemans, their 'gushing girls' but to a boy of my status and standing they would turn up their stinking nostrils. It is hard to plumb their nature which is the only hope because there is nothing laid down in any book touching this point. I was told that the higher an officer rates himself, the more gently and slowly

he will speak. One who bawls at you from a distance of hundred yards is nothing but a boor. On the other extreme, the highbrow who places himself too far above you, will not like to share with you a word. He will just convey himself in a few meaning shakes and nods. Between them are men of all sorts of shades. The further you go in meeting their point, the more you play them up and exalt the dignity of these swelled heads, the more they get a liking for you. An officer wants to talk to you and you stand at a comfortable distance of your own, he takes it ill and yours is a tough luck. The nearer you get to receive his orders, the better for you and you are in velvet. Nothing like it to butter him up. He is all over you. So I got close to my officer who was known for his bossiness. I leant on his table but he uttered a 'faugh.' He does not consider it enough, I thought. I began to bring my mouth nearer to his and he gave me a sock on the face. I thought it endearing. But soon it began to smart on my cheeks. Thank God, he did not hammer the stuffing out of me.

He wants not to waggle his tongue, was my clear conclusion. Guess at his meaning, gauge his mind. For that the best I could do was to get myself initiated a bit into astrology and thought-reading. In that system they ask their object to select a number from one to ten. On that

basis they work out their calculations. The next time my officer called me and gave me a paper written in his hand.

"What number you like," I asked and he put 4 on the paper.

I made my calculations and they went to the effect that the paper, no longer required, should be destroyed by fire lest it fall into the hands of a fifth columnist as it contained matter of an important and confidential nature. I did accordingly but to my grief I later learnt that four copies of that paper had to be done on the typewriter. And I got the sack on the first day of my employment.

It's a devil's job to get at the logic of these fineries. It beats me. It is thoroughly above my understanding. They want us to stand attention before them. If we hold our hands woven into each other at the back, they hot up. Is there any inkling of sense in it. We want to give the idea that we have probably no hands, only arms minus their claws and so we conceal them from view or our hands are handcuffed or hopelessly entangled with each other and cannot be disengaged. But no, we must tell them that we have got two strong hands. That if the officer exceeds his limit, we can blow out the snot of his nose or give a resounding slap on his cheek turning the face to one side, then another on the other cheek to set it in the same position. So that there is no proof against us.

It is beyond my understanding, this code of etiquette.

He who runs too fast, turns a somersault. Military people, blatant bloated creatures all of them, to a man. Appear before them with hat on and they feel honoured. But hat off and you have sort of spitted in their face. Who runs too fast turns a somersault. Their salute is among us considered a mockery. Who runs too fast turns a somersault.

Probably the superintendent, if his sense of dignity is riding the high horse, may feel elated by my request for a pen. Some somersault. Let me ask.

“May I have a pen. My pen has failed me, sir”. Said he.

The superintendent sent his peon to bring his pen from the other room.

What with the mischief of the pen and the supervisor and these cogitations, when the peon breezed in with the pen, the time was over.

The hero of the achievement bore the name of Rup Lal.

The truth about the matter.

A military guard sat on a night watch over an accused under custody. The strain of the ordeal was on getting their nerves. All waited expectantly for some one to open the topic of the hour.

The darkness being thick and close barred any other object to be the subject of their conversation. At once one of them hit upon the idea of the moment and there was a loose chat starting up among them.

‘Where do you come from, Sardarji,’ said he addressing the incharge of the Guard.

‘I am from Siyapa Singhwala,’ replied the Sardarji with smartness.

‘How far is it from my place Jhirka Baghera, Sardarji.’

‘Where is Jhirka Baghera. In which country is it’?

‘It is in the country of the Punjab.’

‘To the North or south?’

‘To the North’

‘Then it may be a hundred miles, laddie, from my residence or say about two hundred miles,’ says the Sardarji.

‘And how long is your place from my village Nathu Kalan in Muradabad district

‘As much as Muradabad *i.e.* six hundred miles or make it fifteen miles more because you have to go a little deeper into the area of Muradabad district, old boy,’ says the Sardarji with sharpness.

‘And what distance is it from Dronachellam, Sardarji’ another raised a pertinent query.

‘Where is your Dronachellam, brother ? Don’t know.’

‘ It is in the South of India.’

‘Then here we are in the North. Your place therefore is as distant as the length of India. In my fourth class I read in my text book of geography that India is as big as Europe without Russia. So it must be as long as all these countries of Europe lined together and as broad as all them countries and there are about twenty of them. So doing some figure work, my dear son, your native town is not a whit less than at least ten thousand miles from my place. Nothing less, old horse,’ says the Sardarji.

‘ And Sardarji, how distant is it from Dhubri. I remember that name because we looted there a vendor of his stuff and were reported to our Major.’

‘ Ratnu, my boy,’ said the Sardarji giving way under the weight of questions, ‘ it is very difficult to remember all these facts and figures Wahguru alone knows them all, Wahguru alone who sees what you do in the latrine, who is in earth and in heaven, in the depth of the ocean and on tree-tops. Nobody else my son.’ Says the Sardarji

Nine Nincompoops set out from their home, news hounding, to measure others with their own light and learning in the fashion of those military brainies. The Nine Nincompoops each buoying up on, the crest of a surging wave of brave desire of snatching a scoop, effecting a scoop went forth with

their senses confused and commingled. The Nine Nincompoops each a newsferret of his own order and category, loved sensation and had made it his own. The Nine Nincompoops, in their heart, a desire to compose some fine sensational report, to do a column and a half of bright descriptive matter gave fillip to their speed. The Nine Nincompoops each carrying a malady that barred out a proper perspective swooped down on Melcalfe House where the I.C.S. examination was being held.

The first nincompoop, the 'liner' of the Tribune once or twice in his life, got the eye. Thence he started developing symptoms of hypermetropia. Soon he was having 'hypermetropia in a permanent way. What was just a bloomer of a kind was with a little misquoting of facts, soon turned by him into a soul stirring story. Tirugnanam, a weakling of over wrought nerves and disordered faculties hearing the loud report of a mock pistol fell stunned on the ground. An epileptic expression formed on his face in which the eyes turn back, teeth are exposed and the mouth foams as of a man giving up the ghost. Tirugnanam wore the caste marks of a Saivaite which is three horizontal white lines with a red dot between at twelve places on the body, the forehead, the back of the neck, arms, breasts etc. thus called *Dvadasa Pundaram*.

The red dot among the white lines on forehead and back of the neck mirrored as bullet wound

among lines of smoke to the hypermetropic reporter of the Tribune. Unhappily the peon had washed the red inkstand of the chairman on the sward about there. The accused indeed was dumb founded caught in such a situation. He could hardly utter a word for the overwhelming surprise. But that could not have meant that he had no defence and subscribed to the wild thoughts of others. Not a jot of doubt that he expressed a wish to open his skull. But it cannot help to peg out a claim for a sentence of death to be passed on him. He did not wish to lay his skull open with a stick but having grown much of an admirer of Tirugnanam he jestingly wished to open his skull and see his brain contents.

The second nincompoop, the columnist of the 'tatesman,' mentally disordered, suffered from obsession. He had a bit of a scrape with a candidate Rup Lal. Playing pranks he was caught in the act of stuffing waste papers into the pockets of Rup Lal. The papers too were found to be some pages removed from a book of Rup Lal, among them the first pages of chapters. To Rup Lal the loss was grievous. In the subsequent broil, the reporter got the lining of his coat torn and he received the loser's end in the whole tale when the matter was reported to Sir Ross Barker. The fact dominated his mind. It obsessed him. He always went under

a cloud. He was sitting seedy with his note book which was his company everywhere, passing his idle moments. With one of the surest signs of an aberrated mind he started writing odd incoherent sentences in his note book.

Lining of the coat torn by Rup Lal. Papers stuck into his coat First pages of chapters, bearing headings and sub-headings. Sir Ross Barker took notice of the matter. Unhappy life.

The sleuth at the end of the day's inconsequential plodding returned to his office. Leaving his note book at the sub-editor's desk, he accompanied a friend to his house and then he shot for his own den. Being dead tired, he did not stir out till the next day. The Sub-editor wondering what to give in the 'Local News' column, ran over the pages of the reporter's note book. The news of previous days as they went to the press were crossed out by the reporter. But these fresh notes were there. Taking them to be the notes of some news, he gave the sentences coherence and flow and with the necessary intro and sub-headings it emerged in the morning issue as given above.

Sir Ross Barker, was a careerist lord, ruthless in the pursuit of his self-interests. He would not let slip an opportunity to blaze into fame or win the shining approval of his seniors whatever it may

cost others to vindicate themselves in the extreme end by which time general interest in the affair has flagged and died down. The third nincompoop was a gullible fellow aided in his powers by a cringy obsequiousness and sycophantic pandering to the fancies of big men. Sir Ross Barker's spectacles, one day, the day of interview with the accused had got exchanged with some other. With these misfitting glasses he was exploring the faces of candidates and taking down their identifying marks. The glasses that he owned subsequently came back to him, being placed in their socket by the person with whom they had strayed away and all without the knowledge of Ross Barker.

The fourth nincompoop, had from his wandering pursuit got stuck into the habit of mind wandering. He could not pin his attention to anything without his mind wandering into irrelevancies. The news report given here was, barring the intro and the closing line, copied from the police challan. Somewhere in the challan sheet fell the words 'At last he broke one and then the other and then another,' as the correspondent was taking down, his mind buzzed out and 'At last he broke one' came on his paper with the later part of the sentence thrown into empty air. His mind then jumped off to the next sentence. When the sub-editor gave polish, poise and

form to the report, he changed glass panes wherever it occurred into glass pane, to look consistent. It created a pit of difference in which the sub-editor turned volte face. Shattering a good number of panes one after another cannot but be meant for mischief and causing annoyance, a minor offence punishable with warning or imposition of a little fine. In this vein had Sir Ross Barker remarked that the accused had 'assaulted others' emotions and lacerated nerves to no purpose, not that the accused had made a foul attempt which fell through. The fact of the accused having been caught as soon as he had succeeded breaking a pane may lead the Court to imagine a most sinister attempt of the accused to smuggle into the office and tamper with documents and God knows what heaven would have fallen. The thought even sweeps you off your feet.

The fifth non-compoop no doubt had a sense of the dramatic. His eye for theatricalities wins my admiration. The way he relishingly lingers upon the news and gives the grimacings of various members shows him a bit of a psychologist of his readers. But doctors state that feeling amusement in others' troubles is a sign of neurotic mind. Surely his nerves were a little out of the way and his readers must have been in his wake. The para before the last gives an idea how he looks with uplifted nose at men of rectitude, distates their

attitude and eulogises those who provide an occasion for a frontpage news.

The pencil of Natesan had at the other end a rubber piece held in a metallic ring running low round it. Unfortunately the rubber was off. As Natesan rested his pencil at the other end on the paper, it left a round, leaden, zero like mark after the figure of 20 against the accused's name and landed the accused in dire difficulties. First Sir Ross Barker could not see the bottom of the box, because of the darkness then after switching on the light, because of a sudden effulgence attacking his eyes and dazing them. One wonders why Natesan is pronounced Naughty son by North Indians.

The sixth nincompoop used to have sound hallucinations. He received voices from the air. The last two paras are an auditory hallucination. Any wild idea in the mind of the reporter to lend interest to the news and to get the accused in mire and it can be embodied prefixed with 'It is stated,' 'It is reported.' Say 'It is stated.' It makes you safe. And reel off the plot of an Edgar Wallace detective novel.

But the accused was acquitted notwithstanding the blackening report of the A. P. I.

16th August, 1941. Scene:—Abdul Matin's House.

Rup Lal (a friend of Abdul Matin):—‘ You are such a thick-headed fellow You can’t even correctly fill up the I. C. S. application form What a clod of a brain you have got? Give me another form. I will show you how to do it.’ And Rup Lal makes a specimen for n for him to copy. There was a call on him and he left.

Jamal Khan, another friend of Abdul Matin comes to Abdul Matin, sees that specimen form and keeps it in record for future use.

11th November, 1941. Scene Post Office.

Abdul Matin :—Give me your pen I have to write this application for deposit of my correspondence.

Rup Lal :—The nib will get spoiled, you see. There are instructions along with a fountain pen that it should not be lent to any body, to keep the nib in the shape in which it has got used to the owner. At best I can write the application for you.

The application drafted was given to the postal authorities.

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These two episodes constituted the defence of the accused and he profited by that.

Jamal Khan, in alliance with Abdul Matin whose communal passions overruled tame considerations of

friendship and who wanted to wreak those passions on others, sent that specimen application form together with the University certificate of Abdul Matin. In his own hand Abdul Matin did not tender any application. Having not much of a chance, he withdrew from the examination. In the whole thing, none of the two had any stabblings of conscience. Jamal Khan who seriously competed with Ruplal for the I.F.S. in which a single vacancy was announced and for which the age limit was twenty-four, informed Sir Ross Barker as stated in the body of the news and furnished in additional proof that communication to the post office. The project was to drag down Rup Lal in that he will be arrested, kept under custody. His studies will be interrupted and he will be in no position to fare well in the examination. Beware my readers. These are the days of harnessing energy from undreamed of sources, harnessing the energy of the atoms, harnessing the energy of sun rays. You never know in what way your energy may be harnessed. One unconscious slip and you get yourself into such a muddle as you find it difficult for yourself to extricate out of.

The paranoiac seventh nincomproop did not give the latter part of the news-story which was the defence of the accusd. The paranoia of the rapporteur of the A. P. I. generated in him a desire

to lower other people, to trounce other people to straighten them on the ground. By cutting out the piece of news that washes the accused, the paranoiac had sloshed the accused in print.

The eighth nincompoop, about him the less said, the better. He was a blooming illustration of abnormal psychology's phenomenon of automatism. In automatism or automatic writing as vulgarizers call it, the diseased mind when the attack is on him, gets brain waves and starts writing them. These brain waves are daring original concepts, brand new ideas right out of a blue sky. Sometimes he conceives plots with denouements that stagger your imagination. The news of the Patrika is one such duly subbed and head-lined.

I say, you are dead tired with a whole day's legging the way in the hunt for news. Better relax a bit on this chair,' said the sub-editor.

'You see that hole in the roof from which a pencil of light is pouring in on to the floor bathing it in a pool of light. That light is unbearable to the eyes. We ought to cover up that hole. Rain shoots forth through it when the weather breaks.' He added.

Soon the reporter was fixing his gaze in his relaxed pose on the hole which was a little above his line of vision.

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Being not much disposed to move, on account of fatigue he kept his eyes on it in a minute inspection in that relaxed condition. The sleep was on him.

‘I say, you are going to doze, Mehtab, what news you have brought to-day, you hav nt yet told me. What should I give in the paper...all right relax a bit. Spread out your arms and legs from their cramped position.’

And the reporter does in his half conscious state.

‘You are falling asleep, my friend.

The paper is going to the press. There is nothing in the local news columns. You went to Metcalfe House. What news have you brought about the I. C. S. candidates. I will like very much some comic strip.’

My reader you know what happened. What with the relaxed position and fixing the gaze on a bright spot above his line of vision and suggestions of relaxation the ninth nincompoop was hypnotised.

He was now in a state of hypnosis. In a hypnotic state the medium can see and hear what cannot be perceived by the material senses of us mortals. But oftentimes stories come into his

brain out of a clear sky and on the asking of the sub-editor for a comic bit, the ninth nincompoop relates the story that came out in the paper next day. The sub-editor told him to sign the story that he was taking down at the dictation of the hypnotised reporter when he has shaken off his langour. As you know if an order whose execution relates to a time after the trance, is given to a hypnotised person, he obeys it when the trance is past. So when the trance was over, the nincompoop signed the story written by the sub-editor. The next day it was selling hot in the bazar.

They sensation-mengers. Their tastes run to sensation. Theirs is make sensation. Anything for a sensation. Something that trickles down the spine. Something that turns the blood into knots. A slimy bit of crime. A piece of colourful scandal. O you colossal unmitigated asses rolling in the filth of crime, if you want yarns with no respect for veracity, O you snuffling sniffing dogs routing in the garbage of scandal if you are after a concocter of yarns and not a stickler for accuracy, come at my feet.

O Dash them all, damn them all, down with them.

