

their holdings; because instead of cultivating crops to cater to the needs the country, they raised weeds, tended them and harvested them; because, instead of building up for a stable future, they were content with the debris of their broken past: and because, they were madmen by birth, wedded to lunacy and begot in madness.

"But remember, that the most civilised people are as near to barbarism as the most polished steel is to rust; and therefore there is nothing base in being called a set of barbaric, insane, lunatics.

"Let me remind you that it was an asylum maintained by their Government, for the Government, from the coffers of the Government".

With this beautiful ebullition of historical knowledge concerning what once went to form the much-disputed civilisation of Lawley Road, Dr. Muff carved himself a niche in the temple of antiquarians. And what happened to Dr. Bluff after this discovery, little is known about that. Perhaps his name doomed to the oblivion of those who cultivate the mysterious and the sublime.

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THE VEGETABLE TRAGEDY

By

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Final B. Sc., (Ag.) Class

Darkness had fallen now. I could hear Velu's whistle somewhere behind the block. I didn't know why, but I was feeling lonely that day. I was thinking of the lecturer's remark "Even when you are asked while you are half asleep you must be able to tell"; Oh! forgotten. Boring subjects. Let me go to sleep. Avooowh!

Then suddenly, like a prearranged signal for the commencement of some festivity - Bang! Not a sharp, exciting bang, but a dull one, as of a door. Very slowly I turned my face to the right and blinked. Nothing further happened. Near at hand my clock ticked disinterestedly on. I had a feeling that someone was walking in. Suddenly it came to my mind. I had forgotten to lock the door when I last came in.

Now, I jumped from my bed and switched on the light. Oh! what shall I say! Seated on the table, surrounded by all my records, books, notes and all that I was associated with, was a young beautiful Oh! where can I get words, with a mass of blonde hair flowing down over her shoulders. Her attitude was nonchalant, but as she met my gaze with a sort of wistful appeal, I was enthralled. From the moment in which my eyes rested on her face other considerations did not count.

She was a symphony of the country-side. She was an idyll of the bower. She was the rose of summer, full and sweet and beautiful, dominating all the dainty flowers of cultivation, all the exuberant blossoms of nature.

But why that appeal! Oh, cold wind, she must be suffering from something. I couldn't think. Before that she got down from the table and got into my bed and slowly placed her head on the pillow, closing her eyes.

I covered her slowly with my blanket. Suddenly it came to my mind, that the door was not closed. When I turned to close it I saw someone trying to peep inside. I hurriedly closed the door and locked it inside. The man outside shouted, banging the door. Oh! perhaps he might call others also. So, I opened the door and switched off the light. I went out. It was Prabhu.

"What is going on, Raju?" he asked.

"Oh! nothing; but what are you doing here?"

"Oh! nothing? I was just coming behind."

"What! have you any idea of the time? Do you generally make a point of calling me up at midnight?"

"Oh! I didn't mean calling in that sense. I was just following!"

"Oh! say so, following her eh! Do you know her?"

"What! know her! I have seen her face to face hundred and one times, all over the estate."

"Oh! I see. Well, I am feeling sleepy, let me go. Goodnight, Prabhu."

"What! before you say goodnight, just think how selfish you are. I have followed her for such a long time and I know her better than you. So she belongs to me more than to you."

"Oh! hell. That won't do. She came to me, so she is mine."

This started a long quarrel and was about to end in a fight when Gopi came and suggested a way out. It seems Gopi had overheard our quarrel. "Well! Raju, she has come to you. You have to take care of her. The best thing is to inform the man in that house where she lives. Till you come back we shall take care of her. What do you say, Prabhu?"

"All right! Not a bad idea. But with whom is she living?"

"Oh! One Mr. Puty."

"Poots?"

"Yea. P-u-t-y. There, that house, with the ideal fence around it with an iron gate painted green."

So after getting a promise from Prabhu that he would not shut the door, I went to the house where she lived. I halted near the door. I heard someone groaning inside. I just tapped at the door; suddenly came the responsive challenge of a long-drawn and rattling growl from inside. Awed by this, I stopped tapping the door, when suddenly a window above me was flung open. Stumbling over a flower-bed I looked up to see what had gone wrong. I could see a man up in the window looking down at me in a peculiar way for some moments without speaking. He then suddenly disappeared; only to return, adjusting his horn spectacles upon his broad, stubby nose. He then barked: "Who are you?"

"I say, are you Mr. Puty?" I began.

"Who?" repeated Puty. "Speak out!"

"I am a man that's got your....."

Before I could finish, he barked, "I do not care for you."

"All the more reason to come and take her back," said I.

"I have driven her out already" said Mr. Puty.

"Driven her out! in this night!"

"Yes, that is my expression."

"Good God!"

"Yeah! Disobedience of my orders; only Nutts split."

"Nutts split!"

"She is my sister. She informed me about her."

"Oh! I see. But may I ask what she did - the disobedient act?"

"She ate worts".

"Did what?"

"She ate waterberries. A fruit I grow in my garden."

"She ate warts and Nutts split. What a vegetable tragedy! But you don't mean to tell me that you can drive her out for eating warts?"

"What is it to you?" again barked M. Puty,

"Look here, you can't do this sort of thing. Turning females out at night it is never done."

"It is done already now."

"But, dash it, I tell you I am alone in my room; and only one bed to sleep. Now she has come. It's impossible to keep her there."

"Well! If she expresses regret she may come back. If she doesn't, all right. Good night."

"It's you who ought to express sorrow. What's she done to be driven out like this? Simply because she ate some worts -"

Mr. Puty's voice became more obstinate.

"It is not only but she ate worts. It is that she disobeyed."

Just because she ate a few worts when you told her you'd rather she didn't, you're prepared to lose her altogether and to hand her over to the first stray man that happens to be about?"

"Absolutely! Order. To obey. If not, split."

"She will split! if you are not careful, I'll help her."

"Get out."

"I've a good mind to send for the police and have you run in"
I said.

"And I," he cried, "have a good mind to unchain my dog and have you run out."

"All right, if you want me to keep you"

"Before I could finish he barked "Ge outt!"

"In my house..."

"Get out!"

"In my bed!..."

"I'll let loose my dog. It shall run you out, biting strongly."
At this Mr. Puty vanished. Lights shot up within the house. Into the barking of the dog crept the note of high-pitched delight characteristic of wild animals.

Again tripping over a flower bed, I returned to the gate. I could hear the sound of rattling door chains in between the expectant yelps of the dog. I suddenly turned to run with an airy dignity. Faltering footsteps sounded in the rear, like the ghostly march of dead drummers; the dog had ceased to bark; instead, a most delightful and dreadful haunting sound of nasal whistling fell upon the ear. With a sudden bravery which surprised myself, I halted and swung round.

"Look here!" Mr. Puty, a monkish figure in his dressing gown with a cowl, merely jerked the dog by the leader and stopped to release it, muttering, at the same time, some sinister jabber understood only by the dog. "Phorr - putta - putta - phorr - putta - putta - phorr!"

I hesitated no longer. I ran like a fiend till I reached the hostel and fell flat into the ditch, and to my surprise, I didn't see the dog following me. Once more I managed and struggling up, I went to my block.

"Hallo"! called Gopi, "what happened?"

"I think you might have told me about the dog."

"Oh! I am sorry. Did he actually let loose the dog?"

"What! It was following me like hell."

"I am sorry. And what did you do?"

"Well! what do you suppose?"

"I mean about here?"

She? The only thing I've decided about her is that she is not going back to that drone even if she wants to."

Now someone laughed from behind at me. I turned to see. Balu was winking at me. I was feeling uneasy. Understandingly Gopi started.

"Now let's face the facts. Here is Raju, a bachelor in his room all alone. She blows in, a condition which makes it impossible for us to push her out. So let us decide calmly what we're going to do about it."

Then I began "Don't misunderstand me, I am only too willing to help her. Meanwhile if the warden comes to know of this he will send me out of the hostel. But this seems rather like asking for trouble all round.

"Prabhu! directly I get up early morning, I shall go and see the warden and settle the matter.

"Raju, you sound like a perfect darling for her."

"So that is settled. Good night, boys."

With this my friends left my verandah; I opened the door quietly and switched on the light.

Oh! I could hear her soft breathing. I didn't want to disturb her. Too many thoughts passed over my mind. I didn't want to lose her. What else can you do!

I passed that night in the ante-room. I didn't know when I fell a sleep. Next morning I got up and saw the warden coming to my room unwillingly. Gopi seeing me from the bathroom shouted at me "Ou! Raju, where is she!"

"Don't be an idiot. Tell us what happened. Word by word."

We went home. Warden started asking me what happened and all that. But when he looked at her, he said "Oh! marvellous! where did you get her?" I said she was loitering near the verandah early in the morning Sir, and so I brought her here for you, Sir. For that he said "Thanks, Raju, I was looking for a male dog. Even then I wouldn't like to lose this animal."

"Oh!, hell! It is only a dog after all!" shouted all around me.

"DREAM or NOT"

By

K. RAJAGOPALAN

A marriage has been arranged and will shortly take place perhaps it will, but it is not as easy as all that. Even though marriages are sometimes made in Heaven, the details must be filled in by us, poor mortals, on earth. That is why it is important to order the dress, the jewellery, perfumes, flowers, all in good time and of course from the best shops.

In the case of our hero his marriage is celebrated twice in his life with the same girl—once in his dreams and again, if I remember right, in the year 1250, month December, date the 22nd.

Rajan, a young student, a talented actor, an eloquent speaker, the best musician, a gentleman 5 ft. 7½" in height, 140 lbs. in weight, was born in the year 1928 December 22nd, if I remember right, as the heaven-sent son, of Mr. Ramachand, leading advocate of the city.