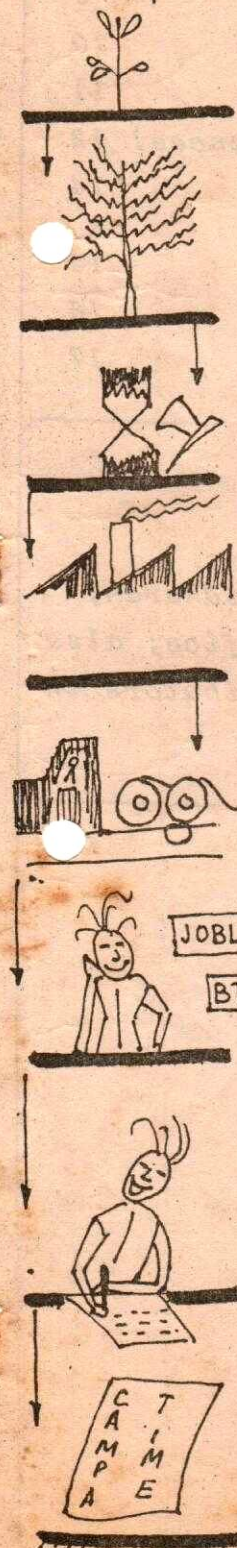


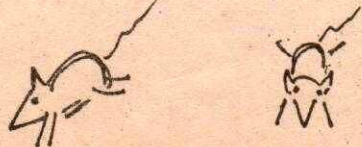
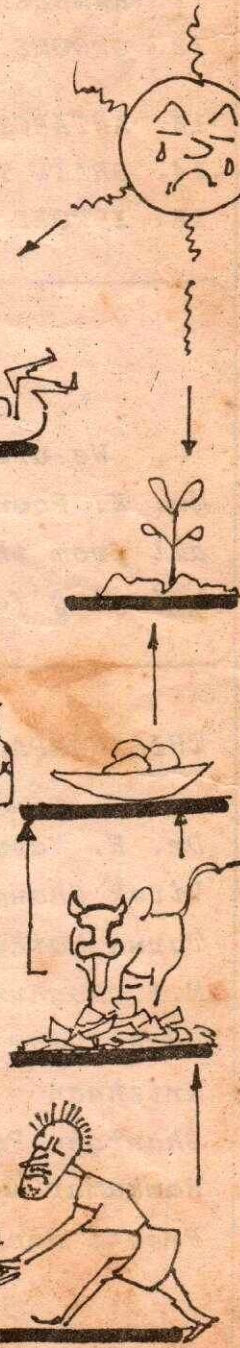
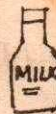
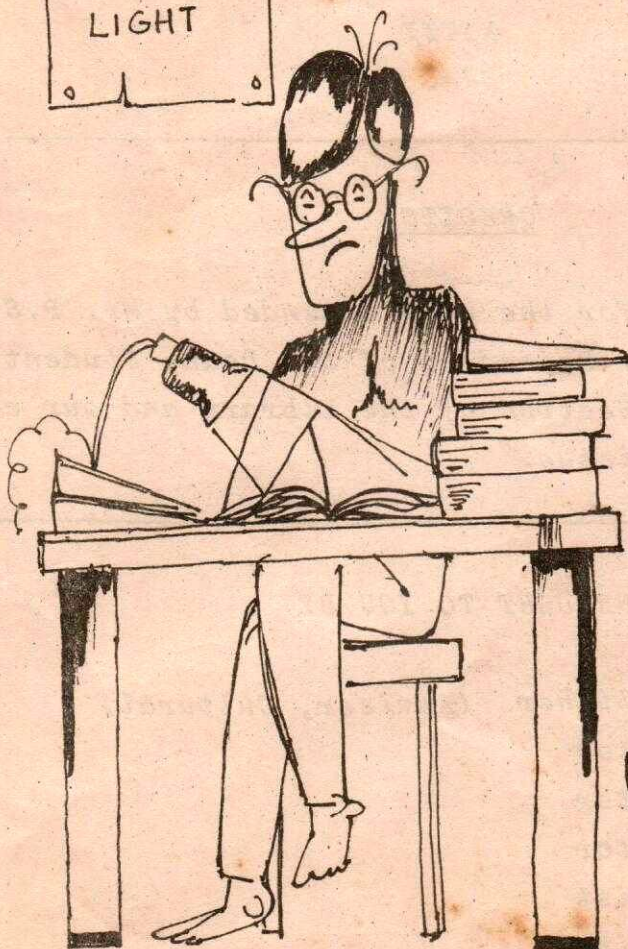
KAMPASTIMES

VOL 9 SEPT '86



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CREDITS

We are very grateful for the help extended by Mr. P.S. Sridharan, Mr. K. Pounraj and Mr. S.S. Rajendran of the Dean, Students Office; also all from the Reprographic Section of the Library and our contributors in bringing forth this first issue.

THIS CAMPASTIMES HAS BEEN BROUGHT TO YOU BY

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EDITORIAL

This issue is the result of our maiden venture into the domain of Editorship, the culmination of a great deal of hard work (it usually is). You may even call it 99% perspiration - nothing much, considering the weather - coupled with that elusive 1% inspiration. Did somebody say, 'Modesty is the best policy?'

Despite most of our contributors being busy, we were lucky that they did make efforts; no IITian apathy from them. The very same phenomenon which had us bogged down for this long - but let's not make an issue out of this.

We are re-introducing the 'Letters to the Editors' column, and in this issue, for starters, we have one from Linus (of Snoopy fame). So Gentle Reader, we welcome cribs, suggestions, appreciations (ahem !), ARTICLES, fiery letters, watered down ones, in short anything but letter bombs.

VIVEK CHAUDHRI
207 Jamuna

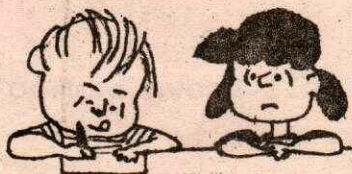
M.T. RAGHUNATH
309 Saras

TARUN MATHUR
206 Jamuna

Advice: Fearlessly go through the issue, only don't make too big a hole in it.

LETTERS TO THE EDITORS

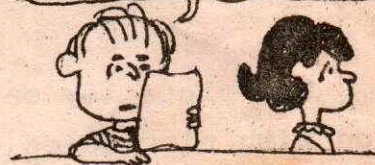
DEAR EDITOR OF
"LETTERS TO THE EDITOR"
HOW HAVE YOU BEEN?



"HOW HAVE YOU BEEN?"
WHAT SORT OF LETTER IS THAT
TO WRITE TO AN EDITOR?



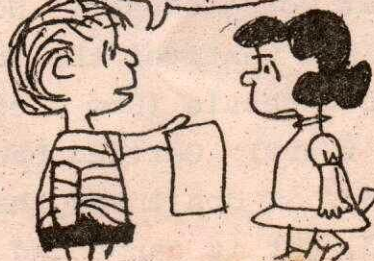
I JUST THOUGHT HE MIGHT
APPRECIATE HAVING SOMEONE INQUIRE
ABOUT THE STATE OF HIS HEALTH



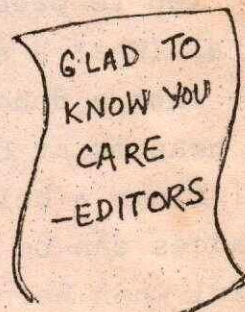
EDITORS ARE SORT OF
HUMAN, TOO, YOU KNOW!



(LOOK WHAT I
GOT



G' LAD TO
KNOW YOU
CARE
-EDITORS



Food for thought

Always wear clean underwear - just in case you get into an accident.

If you lie down with dogs.... you'll get up with fleas.

Some minds are like concrete thoroughly mixed and permanently set.

(Left for the reader as an exercise)

RULES FOR WRITERS

For the budding/blooming writers eager to contribute to Campastimes, here are a few Hints and Tips:

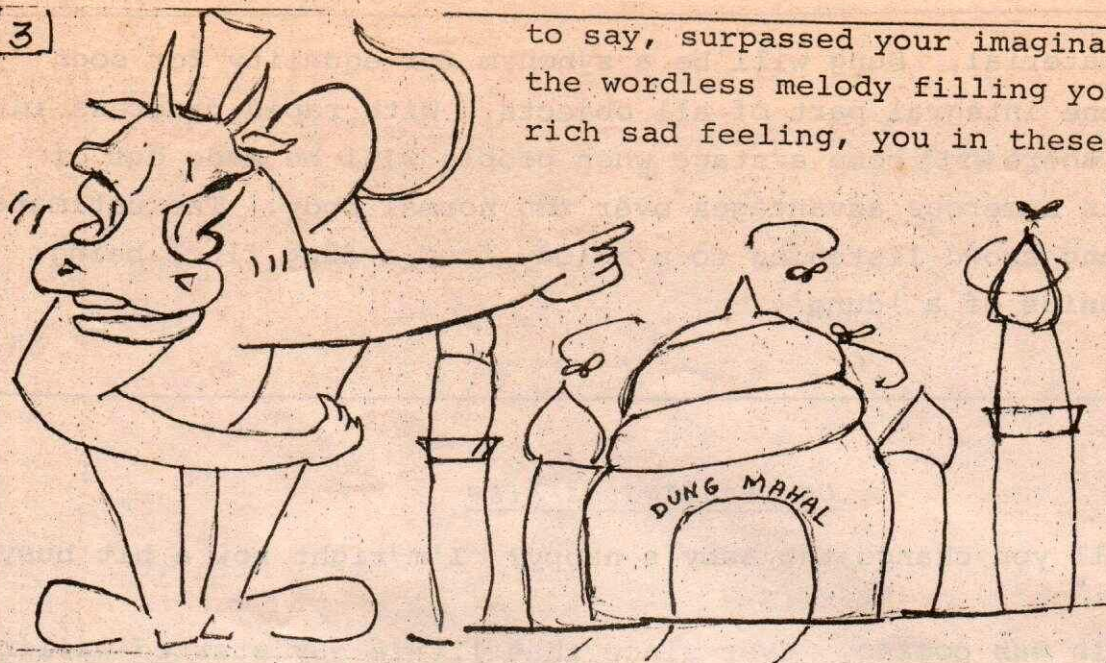
Compiled by Dr. R. Natarajan

1. Shun and avoid the employment of unnecessary, excess extra words.
2. Make certain all sentences are full and complete. If possible.
3. Take pain"s to spell, and, punctuate correctly."
4. At all costs, avoid cliches as you would the plague.
- V. Be consistent.
6. Don't approximate. Always be more or less precise.
7. Sedulously eschew obfuscatory hyperverbosity or prolixity.
8. Avoid pointless repetition, don't repeat yourself unnecessarily.
9. Observe, in all written expressions, that it is of the foremost qualification - if not, certainly not less than - at least definitely secondary then, the importance, or whenever possible trying, so that when, except where it cannot be avoided and/or in further necessary development it becomes imperative to omit, yet, remember without fail (for this must not be underestimated) to be brief and clear. This is vital.
11. Always try to remember the exext ? & § :ß extreme importance of being accurate, neat and careful.
12. Don't abbrev when not reqd.

ÖÄ

OF DECEPTIVE APPEARANCES

The flute lay on the floor. Nothing more than a dull brown bamboo pipe with nine holes drilled into it. A very ordinary, down to earth object seemingly incapable of producing anything euphonious, which can be compared to presupposing that a dung heap cannot be used to make the Taj Mahal (What a stink that would cause). Not that the dung heap cannot be made into a dung castle but whatever the form, it will only be called a dung heap or at best a dung castle (How does that sound anyway, a DUNG castle! rings a bell doesn't it?) Getting back to the flute, well, appearances can be deceiving. I don't say that the flute looks any more beautiful when being played, but it can sound melodious, for the player can create a whole new world with just a few notes. An exotic tune that pierces the air and floats away, a soft downy bed on an air cushion. There comes the genius of the player. Having heard the notes he has played so far, you subconsciously anticipate the following tune, which fits so well, that it is, it has to be perfect. But you are grossly mistaken. The musician knows you and his music well enough to play a delightfully subtle and exotic note, the profoundness of which, needless



to say, surpassed your imagination. A sad tale, the wordless melody filling your heart with a rich sad feeling, you in these moments enjoy-

ing, the fullness and the depth of sadness (not the same as grief!). A gay tune, chirping, lilting down to you sends your mind prancing about like a frisky goat kid.

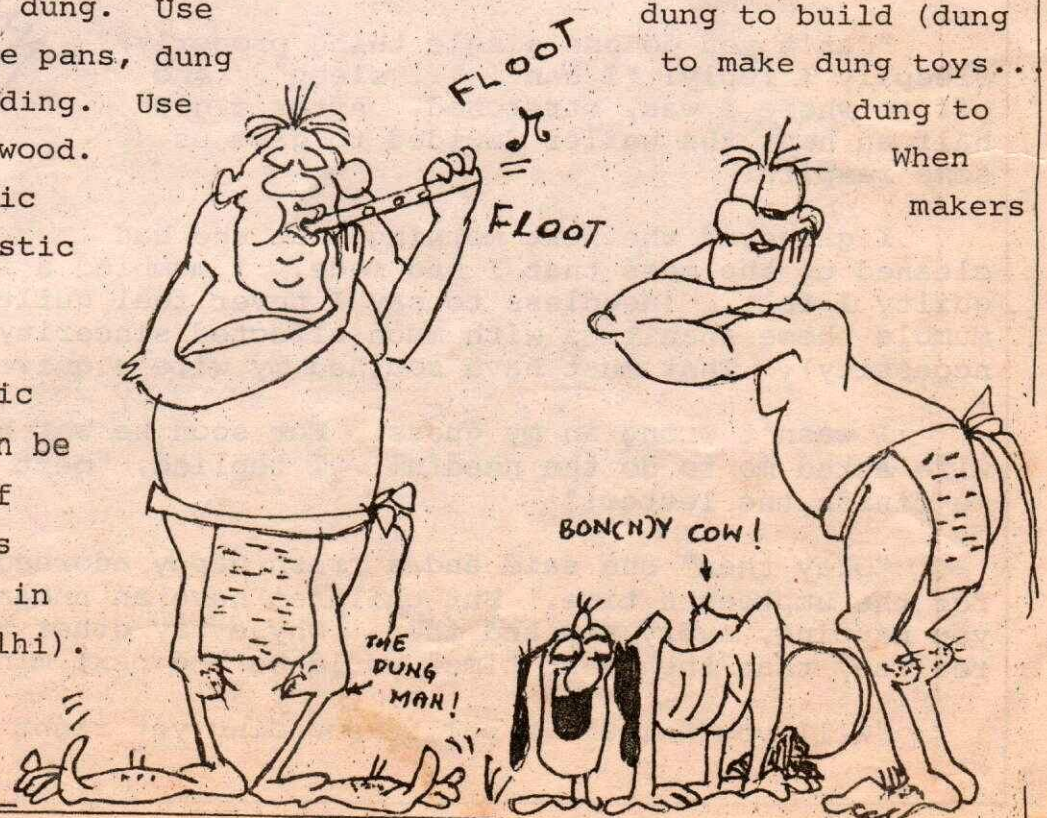
The story of the flute player is endless, with each of us taking part in it adding a new chapter.

But why the odious comparison to a dung heap. Surely a dung heap is useless. But here, it is your upbringing, the way you have been brought up which is doing the talking. Because so would the melodious flute seem useless to a man who has neither heard nor seen a flute earlier. To him it would be good only for firewood, that wonderful piece of art. There lies beauty even in dung. Just as the flute on its own does not impress, neither does dung. But with a lot of usage and a little bit of tolerance we can even make the mildly fulsome dung something to be loved and remembered.

The first step is to collect enough of it. Get to the bottom, the very source of the treasure. Feed the cows and treat them well. Collect the dung and dry the dung. Use bricks), dung to make pans, dung the list is never ending. Use replace plastic and wood. those scheming plastic try to introduce plastic dung you introduce - original dung brand imitation dung plastic dung. Dung will soon be found in all walks of life (from the Tarams road to the corridor in Rajeev's house in Delhi). Dung will become an accepted word for a

dung to build (dung to make dung toys..

dung to When makers



multipurpose material. Dung will be a synonym for equality for soon dung will be the integral part of all objects. With rapid progress in Dung Science, there will come a stage when people will be made out of dung due to its numerous advantages over the normal body. The ultimate reality - a dung crowd listening to a melody from a dung flute being played by a genius of a 'dung'.

ÖA

ON CHANGING NAPPIES

"Bobs, will you change the baby's nappy? I'm right now a bit busy in the kitchen."

I knew this was coming. Ever since that little guy started wailing. He must have wet his nappy. I thought I could finish that overdue letter. Man proposes and his son disposes! Before the wife can scream again, I dutifully do what I'm told to. It's so much safer that way. What with rollerpins and other allied lethal weapons in the kitchen which I'm given to understand is a housewife's own armoury!

From the time, he decided to drop himself out into Terra Firma, I haven't been able to stand firm on my feet. Oh that rumpus at bed-time, the head-ache at waking. He's like a tyrannical sergeant major who insists on his parents marching the "Double-Quick."

Last night, he decided to have another of his interminable feeds. The sucker that his father is, got up, eyes full of disturbed sleep, filled four ounces, two and a half spoons of Raptakos plus hot water and promptly dropped the bottle breaking it along with his wife's sleep.

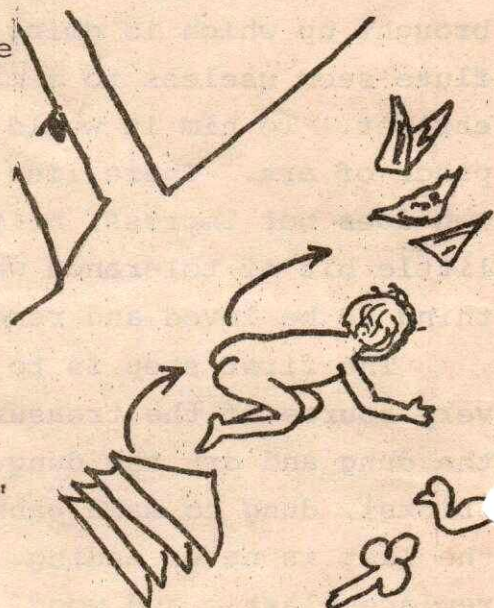
"Can't you do one single thing properly?" Sleepily I reply: "I can! ... sleep". And off to where I was, stretched. After a good half an hour the wailer decided to give us some respite.

I gathered the next morning that she had cleaned up the mess that I had made. I mumbled a few things about how guilty I felt. (needless to say I never feel guilty. Nevertheless, I mumble these inanities with much affected sincerity as a strategic necessity). That must have soothed my wife's quivering ganglions.

I wasn't wrong in my guess. For soon he wet his nappy again and my wife asked me to do the needful. I replied, "next time, darling. Let me finish the letter!"

"Okay then" she said and a fresh nappy adorned the little blighter for the umpteenth time. But children have an uncanny knack of catching you napping, every now and then. Why every other time. Little did I realise, that the "next time" would be the next minute.

"Will you help?" A polite-sounding yet right - asserting question.



In a tone of husbandly irritation, I, for a change, raise my voice.

"Can't both of you leave a man in peace?" Not to be brushed aside so peremptorily, she retorts.

"You said you would, the next time!" Feminine Logic drove me to the end of my tether.

"I meant the next baby, dear!" I shouted and ran out to the post office, banging the door shut behind me.

ØA

IN SEARCH OF HOPE

A typical dawn was breaking into the so called city of hope. The first rays of the morning sun were beginning to glint off the glass panes of the towering skyscrapers, as the aura of tranquility disintegrated slowly, into an envelope of din and bustle. It was an everyday morning, nothing very special to it. As usual it brought new hopes to some and a deep sadness to many others. The sun smiled at all, giving its radiance without any discriminations, very few people returned that greeting but he didn't mind - he never does.

Kasi woke up to the gentle touch of those golden rays as they filtered through a crack in the wall. He looked around, the footpath where he had spent the night was nearly empty - all the regulars having gotten up earlier. In a few hours that deserted footpath would be doing the duty it was designed for, with thousands tramping up and down on it, busy on their self important errands. Kasi found the morning as usual - grey and sullen. He shivered as the nippy early morning breeze began to blow. His head was heavy and there was an ache, a deep tiredness in his body. Kasi knew from many such past experiences that he had fever. It

He shivered as the nippy early morning breeze began to blow. His head was heavy Kasi knew from many such past experiences that he had fever.

just wasn't fair, not when he didn't have a single paisa on him. He knew that he was completely to blame, it had been foolish to buy the new polish the day before with all the money he had saved. But how could he know that this would happen. Kasi gazed at the wooden box and a feeling of pride stole over him as his gaze swept over the neatly lined shoe polishes, creams and brushes.

The early morning chill tempted Kasi to muse about his origins. He didn't remember where he had come from, all that came to him was a faint picture of a man, old and lame, begging along with him. Maybe the old man had been his father, he wasn't sure, but he didn't bother. There were other more important problems to be attended to, other needs to be looked after. His thirteen year old lean and frail frame covered with a shabby jacket shook with fever, as the virus began a fresh attack. There was something different about him, something which set him apart from the other urchins. He had a sweet face with a charming smile and innocent eyes unlike their hard and mischievous faces.

Kasi got up. He had to gather all his will to keep his eyes open. He stumbled aimlessly in his feverish stupor. He didn't know what to do, his brain refused to think - half formed, unconnected thoughts floated in his mind. There was no one in the world whom Kasi could call his own. There were of course his fellow street urchins but he couldn't trust

them - they would steal from their own mother if they got a chance. Kasi walked along aimlessly. He had an overwhelming desire to cry out, to give vent to that mountain of pain pent up in his frail body. But inner strength prevailed and the moment passed. He reached the gates of a hospital. He thought of going in. He knew that it was the place where they treated ill people but, the speedy ambulances, grim faces and the sweet sickly smell repelled him. His thoughts led him to a corner where he fell asleep.

It was afternoon when he woke. The fever seemed to have receded and the familiar pangs of hunger started to gnaw at his empty stomach. He got up, he had to earn something to quench that flame of hunger raging in his stomach and slowly spreading its tentacles all over his body. He went near the bus stop, keeping a sharp eye for people with shoes - shoes that could be polished by his small but eager hands. Wow! there he was, a man with old but sophisticated leather shoes. Kasi knew he had found his source for his next meal. He was right and the man rewarded his fine polishing skill with a silvery one rupee coin. Now all he had to do was to run to the shop round the corner and get a loaf of bread. He could almost taste it in his mouth when his eyes fell on the girl.

Now all he had to do was to run to the shop..... He could almost taste it in his mouth when his eyes fell on the girl.

She was begging down the road and there was an old woman with her - a blind woman. The girl was of about Kasi's age and Kasi knew that she wasn't used to begging for she hesitated to ask for alms. Kasi thought that she must have come from the villages, the blind woman must be her mother. Though what had drawn them into the deadly clutches of the city was beyond him.

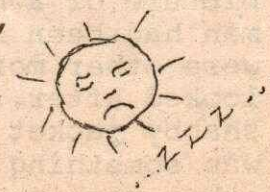
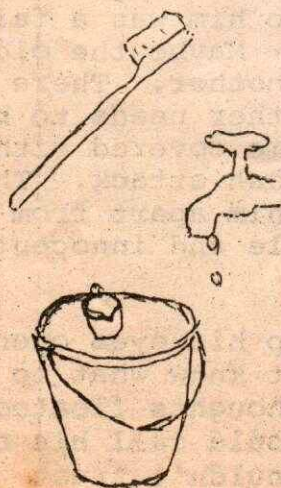
Kasi looked at her once again. Her eyes were beautiful, her innocent face bore marks of anxiety and fear. He felt that she was the most wonderful girl he had ever seen. Her eyes told him that she hadn't eaten for a long time. Kasi went up to her, took her hand, and placed the coin on her palm. She looked at him with wonder and disbelief. He smiled at her and asked her where she stayed. She pointed to a footpath corner where there were a few boxes and utensils, and then she ran off.

Kasi felt happy, immensely happy as he strolled down the road. The sun was setting, fluorescent tubes starting to light up in the showcase of the shops lining the road. Kasi looked around, for he knew he had to come there the next day and he knew she would be there. Kasi was no longer alone in the world.

ÖÄ

WAKE ME UP

The cock will crow at the crack of dawn,
But wake me only later on
When the dew is wet upon the lawn
Right on ! At eight in the morn.
When you're in your bathroom togs
Making a beeline for the bogs
Stop a moment - put a hoot
If there's no response, throw a boot.



- Sanjay Rao

ÖÄ

- a) Beatles ex-drummer Pete Best's mom is from New Delhi, India.
- b) "One after 909" which appeared on the "Let it be" album in 1970 was written by John/Paul in 1956.
- c) The song "Sexy Sadie" (White Album) was about Maharshi Mahesh Yogi.
- d) The song, "The Inner Light" was recorded in E.M.I. Studios, Bombay, in January 1968.
- e) The Grammy for the "Best Engineered Non-classical Recording" award in 1969 went to "Abbey Road".
- f) The guy with a blue uniform on the back cover of "Sgt. Peppers" album with his back turned was not Paul; but the Beatles Road Manager Mal-Evans.



ÖA

WHAT IF.....!

I come from a town in Uttar Pradesh called Dehra Dun. It is located in a quaint little valley in the lesser Himalayas, and, by virtue of its proximity to that great, occult ridden range of mountains, has more than its fair share of roadside quacks, selling herbal remedies from the magical mountains, for maladies as common as the common cold, to as monstrous as the dreaded cander. This is the tale of a sunny afternoon spent by one of my best friends, Sanjay, and myself, observing the antics of one such quack, much to the vexation of our respective parents, since they were ignorant of our obliquation while going to Sanjay's house.

This quack, whom we shall henceforth refer to as Dr. Dr., had chosen an area next to the road in the town Parade Ground (now used by novice cyclists and motorists to practise), and was busy arranging his paraphernalia when we passed that way on our bicycles. Already, a small

crowd had gathered in anticipation of something exciting in the offing. Maybe, if we hadn't stopped, whatever happened subsequently would never occurred and we would have missed an experience without being aware of it.

"It was a dark and stormy night", he started, "Lightning was bouncing from peak to peak.....doomsday had arrived..... and I was desperately hunting for shelter."

Dr. Dr. was a master in the art of vending and proceeded to weave a fascinating tale of his trip through the high reaches of the Himalayas in the age old quest for knowledge and, of course, herbs. He described encounters with wise sages and old retired godmen and then came to the climax of his tale. The audience listened spellbound as the master weaver spun his yarn like a spinning a web around a fly that has ventured into its 'parlour'. I shall endeavour to quote him:

"It was a dark and stormy night", he started, "lightning was bouncing from peak to peak, and it was raining as if doomsday had arrived. Visibility was down to a feet or so and I was desperately hunting for shelter. After what seemed like hours of stumbling on wet, slippery rocks I chanced upon a cave from which a dim, eerie glow seemed to be emanating."

This glow had the mysterious quality of permeating even the pervading gloom and rain. I discovered that the glow was emitted by streaks of some greenish-yellow stone embedded in the walls of the cave, the floor was littered with these stones. In one corner was a rectangular clearing where the rock was worn out and shiny. A depression looking remarkably like one made by a humanoid had been formed in the floor and I had this vague feeling that I was witnessing the lodging of an Abominable Snowman (or the Yeti), for I had heard frequent mention of sightings of a Yeti in this area. Due to unfriendly weather gods, I was

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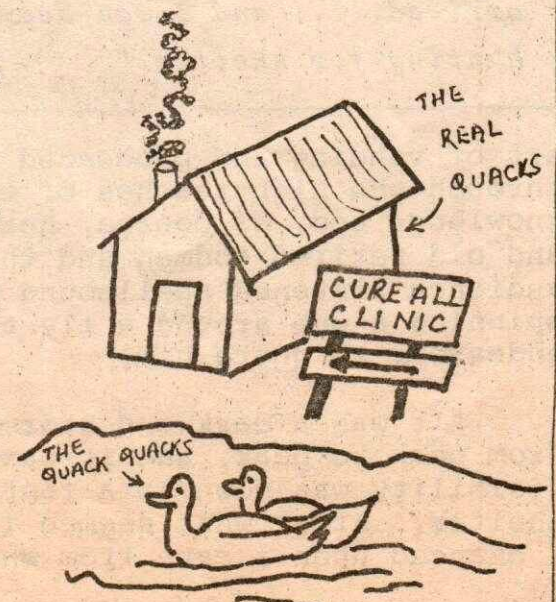
... I WAS WITNESSING THE
LODGING OF AN ABOMINABLE
.....THE FEAR OF THE
IMPENDING ARRIVAL OF THE
YETI DIDN'T HELP ANY.

forced to choose the cave as a shelter for the night. I was extremely restless due to the fear of the impending arrival of the Yeti, and that weird glow didn't help matters in any way. Finally, due to the lack of anything else to do, I picked up one of the stones to examine it more closely. At once, a warmth suffused through me, I felt a great calm descend over me, all

my ill-feelings and anxieties vanished and I knew I had found that elusive peace of mind and soul that drives so many people towards the Himalayas. Soon I was in the arms of Morpheus".

"Next morning, I was woken up by the early morning sun peeping through the mouth of the cave. I came out to discover Apollo shining on an extremely wet, emerald green valley, it was then that I discovered that all the cuts and bruises I had received while stumbling about last night had disappeared completely. I felt like a new man both mentally and physically. Looking at the tranquility of nature, I was seized by an urge to share my discovery with the rest of the world. Shedding as much baggage as I could, I loaded myself with the stones and set off towards the nearest inhabitation. That was three months back, in the meanwhile, I have discovered that the effectiveness of the stone increases with the suffering of the user. Dehra Dun is the first camp of my yatra for propagation of my miraculous discovery".

Then, with a flourish, he opened the dirty cloth bundle he'd been carrying and held aloft a handful of dull, greenish stones as we all watched spellbound. He then proceeded to explain that as much as he would like to share his discovery free of cost, there is this small matter of the subsistence and travel of the troupe of orphans he had taken under his wing so he would request all those wishing to possess one of the stones, to pay Rs.5/- per stone, and just to demonstrate the authenticity of his claims, he would allow any two persons to test the efficacy of the stone. As he said this, he looked directly towards us, and it seemed natural for both of us to step forward. After extolling our courage in volunteering so readily and enquiring about our background to establish our impartiality to the assemblage, he handed each of us a stone. As he did this, I happened to look at his face and was at once captivated by his eyes. They seemed to burn with a fierce internal fire and soon I forgot about everything else. I felt calmness descend over me and my eyelids started growing heavy. Suddenly he broke eye contact and snapped his fingers, I 'woke up' with a start, still retaining a lingering fragment of the sense of eternal peace I had experienced. What I had felt must have reflected on my face for at once, a large number of bystanders came forward to buy a stone each.



Slowly the crowd dispersed, we were the last to leave, left only with that lingering feeling, since, our combined resources fell well short of Rs.5/-.

While exchanging experiences, we were amazed to discover that both of us had undergone exactly the same feelings. But before we could discuss it in any detail, we arrived at Sanjay's house.

The whole household was in a major uproar, with Sanjay's mother on the phone and my mother wearing down the carpet at a very fast rate. Amidst all this confusion, the two of us were discovered slinking in through the front door. Retribution was prompt and severe, for we had been missing for over three hours. It started with a whole torrent of 'What ifs'. What if you had been kidnapped? What if you had met with an accident? etc. etc. Then the punishment grew more physical and soon, all we could do was to wonder, "what if we had Rs.5/-".

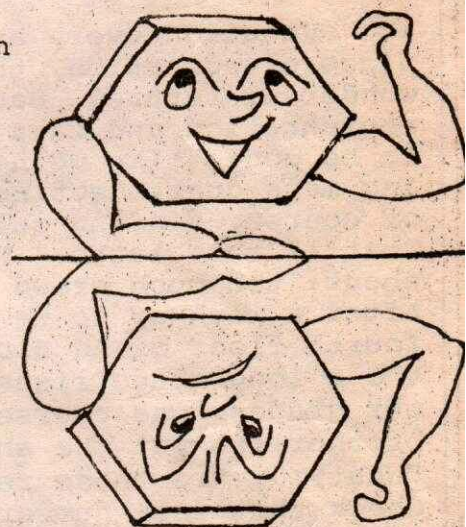
ØA

REFLECTIONS OF A MADMAN

When the past is but over and the future begun
When the shadows draw long with the rays of the Sun
A beautiful light you'll chance to see
A key to success! Oh can it be?

The years of civilization have now borne fruit
a fleeting moment, the joy is mute
The sublime bliss of a journey's reward
but all's not over yet, be on your guard.

The moment is yours, take it and learn
the world is the Garden, you are its fern
To work for a cause, the evolution of man
Too late, it's out of the fire and into the frying pan.



ØA

WHAT WAS THAT AGAIN ?

Here we bring to your eyes an interesting
notice we saw on one of the library notice boards - Eds.

"The Director has suggested that whenever a key for a lock is lost, the person who lost the key should replace it by a new lock with a new set of keys at his cost and that the old lock and key be handed over to the CSO."

ØA

" ' " = Real friends are those who, when you've made a fool of yourself
— don't think you've done a permanent job.

"Grades?! Who cares?" We say, looking with wild astonishment at the bespectacled specimen in front of us. We are on vacation and have run into him (a mere acquaintance, but still an IITian) at a local movie theatre. The conversation somehow turns to academics, and he asks us if we know our grades. They would've been put up on the notice board by now and if you write to a pal in Madras he could very easily oblige you. We look at him rather contemptuously. Imagine, thinking about grades while on vacation! We change the subject and get rid of him. The vacation is meant to be enjoyed.

On our way back home, we discuss the incident. "Good Lord, does the fellow think of nothing else? After all, what do grades matter, really, in an absolute sense? They are not everything in life. One should have a proper perspective on things. If that guy spends all his time worrying about it, he must be in a sad state" etc. etc. Our thoughts run on in this philosophical strain, and then the incident is forgotten.



Vacation over, and we are back in the place of education, the gateway to a wonderful future. Back to room-cleaning, registration and rava dosa. Lots of jobs to be done, like going to the bank, paying mess dues, meeting friends etc. And, of course, finding out our grades.

That'll come later. Nothing to worry about: too much crowd up there at present. After a week or so we stroll up to the fourth floor of Ad Block for a look at those long grade lists. We start noting our grades, one course at a time. And brother, we get the shock of our lives.

"What?!", are those really our grades? Check that roll number again! No mistake there; it is the correct roll number all right. But there's something wrong here.

We COULDN'T have done that badly. Anyway, move on to the next course. Same story. We can't believe our eyes. There must be some mistake here, somewhere. However, there's this little voice inside which keeps saying that there's no mistake - we probably got off lightly, considering our performance. And that doesn't console us at all. As we walk down the stairs we are in a numbed condition. Our emotional barometer has taken a downward plunge to chappal level. Knees shaky, hands and teeth clenched. What are we going to tell all those people when they ask us for our grades, as they are bound to? Why can't they leave us alone? Why are people so damned inquisitive, anyway? More rhetorical questions, accompanied by mental cursing and swearing.

However, we manage - after a fashion. A forced breezy attitude, casual shrug of shoulders - Well, I did badly, but no big deal, right? Cool scene. A strained grin through clenched teeth, and a stiff upper lip see us through these questioning sessions. But inside, things are different. Prospects of aid in the land of milk and honey whither we are all bound, now become increasingly remote. Self-recrimination, that most unpleasant of human occupations is in the forefront.

But time does his part as the great healer; by first quiz time we are back on the rails and chugging along; classes are so boring we have

to bunk; we study a little for quizzes but don't really exert ourselves like all our other desperate classmates. By Mid-Sem time, that old emotional turmoil has subsided almost completely. Except when a distant acquaintance suddenly realises that he hasn't asked us about our grades. Then we feel a slight, twinge of unease, but nothing dramatic.

....they ask us for our grades.....we manage - after a fashion, clenched teeth, and a stiff upper lip see us through these questioning sessions. But inside, things are different. Prospects of 'aid' in the land of milk and honey whither we are all bound.....

End-sem time. 'Despo' mug scene. Despo cogging of notes. 2 AM. Single SP at Tarams. Come back and find out that a lot remains to be done. My God, who would've thought the Maths guy could have done so much in those classes we missed. This is terrible. A visit to the room of the local 'muggo' is called for. His light is reassuringly on at this late-early hour. Must be doing his third revision, we muse. He lets us in, clears our doubts on the chapter we were studying, explains the difficult problem, drops some hints and then swiftly hustles us out of his room. And as we return to our own room we have some of the quiet confidence that true knowledge brings. If THAT problem comes in the exam we are ready and waiting for it - oh, yes! This is one chapter that we know everything about.

End-semes OVER! Whoopee, holidays! Swift packing and we are on the train back home that very night, slight twinges of worry about our end semester performance are swept away by the holiday euphoria. This is the vacation! This is life!

Then at a library in the home town we meet this bespectacled character looking around - in the science section, where else? Naturally we walk over and start a conversation, being full of the IITian camaraderie. Then he asks us whether we know our grades. We hesitate a moment, a feeling of deja vu striking us. But this is swiftly drowned by an overwhelming wave of scorn for the character we are talking to. "Grades?!" we retort in sharp surprise, "Who is bothered?!"

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WHAT ON EARTH...?

Do you know why crude oil prices have plummeted in the last year?

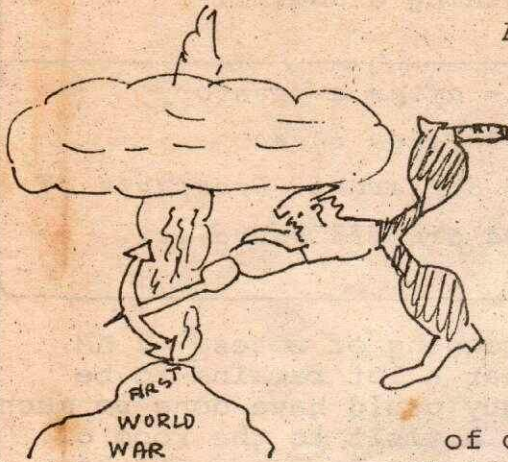
It all started in the summer of 1913 when an Antarctic expedition led by Sir Scott Robertson landed on the shores of Arabia on account of their navigator being slightly squint eyed.



Once there however, they decided with true British pluck to make the best of a bad thing. So they strung the navigator from the yardarm and had a party to condole his demise.

The next day a band of intrepid adventurers led by Sir Scott ventured into the country (that's what adventurers generally do - venture, that is). They climbed a rocky promontory where Sir Scott asked his men to plant a Union Jack (union regulations prohibit companies from employing non-union Jacks for the purpose).

Anyway when one of the men dug his pickaxe into the rock, there burst forth a clear spring of pure, sparkling black mineral oil - organic, natural, unpolluted by additives, flavouring agents, colouring agents, KGB agents, CIA agents and so on.



Astonished by their discovery, our explorers immediately returned to the ship and weighed anchor. It weighed thirteen hundred pounds. This formality of weighing anchor completed, they set sail for Europe.

Meanwhile the First World War had broken out (Did you know it was confined in the first place?) The result was that the price of oil shot up and so Sir Scott's discovery turned out to be a gold mine (Ho! - you thought all this while it was an oil well, didn't you?)

Anyway, the upshot of it all was that Britain won the war. As Sir Scott put it epigrammatically 'Oil's well that ends well'.

You want to know what all this has to do with falling oil prices, do you? Now, did I every say I was going to answer that question?

Moral: Don't jump to conclusions or....

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RAMBLER-I

No, this is not a course title, nor a hit movie. Having said I would attempt instant creation, I find my mind is clean as a new slate in the waking hours. Before I can snatch and pin them down, ideas begin to flutter away. I do what the nonachiever normally does; postpone the damn thing. But then comes night and I am half asleep and tremendous themes and scenarios begin to chase each other. No point in sitting up or bestirring myself to write down these embryonic masterpieces because I know from experience that these mind babies will be stillborn if conceived in the wakeful state, especially in the daylight. Maybe one day I will patent this super-contraceptive.

Talking of contraceptives, rather thinking of them, immediately brings to mind that well worn phrase, association of thoughts. AIDS I am informed, is not a presence in India, yet. Maybe not in its present connotation, but there was definitely something by that name just a few years ago.

Defection is taboo today. It is even illegal. Trust the Governments to knock out all the fun from politics. Years ago, almost soon after independence, maybe even before that time, defection was a popular pastime in India. Hold on, you say, what has defection to do with AIDS? Hold your horses, I reply, everything in good time.

If you know your political history of India you would immediately concede that defection from one party to another was so frequent that children in schools in India were put to a lot of difficulty in answering who was who in what. They called it general knowledge.

Anyway getting back to brass tacks, the art of defection was what

caused the proliferation of political parties. So many, in fact, that there came a time when there were leaders without following and parties without leaders.

I am a tiger when it comes to general knowledge, and I still remember how the AIDS of those days originated. How can I forget it? I was in those days suffering from Amoebiasis. The doctor who treated me was kind enough to enlighten me about the amoeba - that fascinating micro-organism which divides itself whenever it has the urge to procreate. And that reminds me, what absolute geniuses our ancestors were! How else could they have conceived of the Kauravas in Mahabharata, if they didn't know all about the amoeba?



MORAL:
BUMPS ARE BETTER THAN AIDS

The fact is parties began to mutate at a furious pace and what is more natural than forming a society to protect the interests of these mutations? Let me not jump too far ahead. Remember "Aya Ram and Gaya Ram?" Haryana, its birth place is justly popular for Basmati rice but historians can ill afford to ignore this state when it comes to the feats of defection. Incidentally when the phrase "Aya Ram, Gaya Ram" began to gain currency we in the south got terribly worked up. This imposition of Hindi was one thing we would never allow. Down with Hindi chauvinism. So we started agitating for retention of 'English expressions only', to describe the ever unfolding drama of human puerility right across the land we call Bharatavarsha. Just goes to show that this defection phenomenon is in the national mainstream, not an alien aberration.

Am I digressing too much? Well, it is the bane of my life. Anyway the defectors formed their own Association and called it All India Defectors Society, AIDS for short. They were in the news a lot. Even the B.B.C. and the V.O.A. took notice of them. Most gratifying. But, of course, there were those who berated these Broadcasting giants for not giving them enough coverage/misquoting them/misinterpreting them etc. etc.

Who says there is no cure for AIDS? Come to India, the birth place of all phenomena and all knowledge. We have the greatest spoil sports in the Universe. We legislated AIDS arts of existence and now,

*... Has AIDS really disappeared?
....now every one is talking of
AIDS! - must be a conspiracy
hatched abroad to make us feel
left out...*

there is no fun at all in politics. Has AIDS really disappeared? Yes, its virulent strain is no longer there. But now everyone is talking of AIDS! - must be a conspiracy hatched abroad to make us feel left out, now that we are planning to enter

the 21st century. Talking of 21st century did you know that we can now make telephone calls to New York and Sydney and London and many more places without the intervention of the exchange operator? What, you haven't heard of STD?

Now why does that sound familiar? Because we have been belabouring AIDS, why else? Socially Transmitted Disease is what AIDS is all about. No, you are behind times. V.D. is no longer in vogue. I mean the name, not the substance. By calling it STD, we have abolished V.D. Did you know that you can catch infections by using the telephone? Hands touch the instrument, mouths breathe into them, ears are pressed against them. All social acts. So STD will do even if you mean subscriber trunk dialling.

Association of thoughts did I say? Association of facts is more like it. I am wide awake now and the stream of consciousness is no longer flowing. It was turgid even in my sleep. Don't try to make sense out of my rambling. Rambling cannot be reduced to a science. It is Art, in its most modern manifestation. Know any arty types? Consult them. They will show you what real rambling is, I am just a beginner.

What puerile gymnastics with words, you may exclaim. You haven't heard the last of it. You know why you don't need aid to get STD? Because of SITA of course. SITA, which stands for Suppression of Immoral Traffic Act. With that climactic conclusion I cease creation. I ramble no more.

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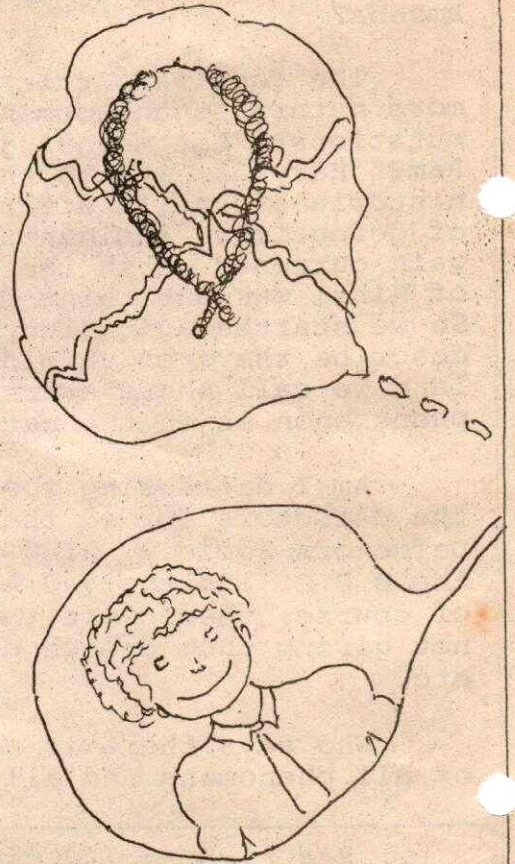
GROOMS - CUSTOM MADE

In a local newspaper
She inserted an ad;
Wanted -
A groom
(Of the bridal variety)
Attractive, durable and cheap.

They sent a guy,
For her to keep.
Complete, with dark curls
Bright merry eyes,
And he had a smile
That stretched a mile.

Everything was right.
But she felt a little dazed,
As at him she gazed -
'Coz he was fixed tight
In a pretty pink pack
With a beady blue border.
Brought by boys,
Straight from Leo toys

On it the certificate read -
'Made as per order'.



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ANTARCTICA - LIVE

AN INTRODUCTION

This article, we felt, needed an introduction. First of all it is not a piece of writing one can get any time. Next, most of us know the writer (she passed out last year) pretty well. Here again she has accomplished something - a trip to Antarctica, something we all dream about doing. What follow then are a few of her experiences on that icy continent.

- Eds.

Since most of you must have a general idea about the nature of the terrain and vegetation and about the work being done at Antarctica, I thought I would just tell you about some of my experiences on the trip.

Our ship broke through the pack ice and entered the polynia on the 23rd of December. The polynia is a stretch of clear water between the pack ice and the shelf. It is studded with hundreds of ice bergs, some of which are quite massive and a collision with any would be quite fatal. The ship has to dodge between the ice bergs to reach the shelf.

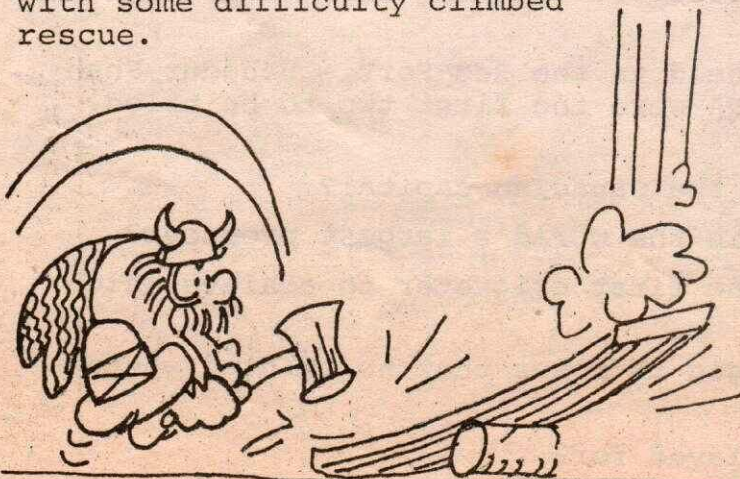
It was late in the afternoon. The person on watch duty on the bridge had dozed off for a while and our ship was headed straight for an ice berg. Luckily the captain noticed it just on time and swerved the ship rather suddenly. For the next five minutes the ship rolled violently while tables, chairs, plates and mugs flew back and forth as the inclination of our ship merrily see-sawed.

A couple of people were quite shaken by the incident and demanded to know why 'the auto pilot could not see ice bergs!' Although the captain was also quite shaken he had to struggle to suppress a smile as he admitted he had never encountered such sophisticated equipment.

Life at Dakshin Gangotri revolves around the main station which is a two-storeyed building buried upto its eaves and in level with the snow. The entrance is through a hatch. This building housed the 13-member winter party. 200 m to the south is a garage and another 200 m further are the temporary toilets for the summer team. 200 m north of the station are the DRDO containers which house about 8 people and the mess for the summer team. Beyond is a row of tents for the rest of the summer team.

The first blizzard that hit us five days after we landed, blew away the tents and we had to shift to the garage, which, though it gave us no protection from the cold did, at least, cut out the wind. It also almost cost the life of a man.

Achaiah had set out on a Pister Bulley (a snow mobile) for some work beyond the DRDO complex when the blizzard broke. He turned round in his tracks and tried to follow them back but with visibility down to a few feet and snow drifting at 60 knots, he was soon quite lost. Then he ran out of fuel. Having started out in an air-conditioned vehicle he was not dressed for blizzard conditions, and now the air-conditioning went kaput. He tried climbing out but sank upto his thighs in drift snow and with some difficulty climbed back into the cabin to await rescue.



Back at the station people were really worried. Three search parties had come back empty handed. The doctor estimated that, another couple of hours and Achaiah would be frozen stiff. They decided to make one last attempt and this time they found him. He was half frozen and quite frightened but when they urged him to get down he was horrified. He said he couldn't possibly leave a government vehicle unattended!

We learned to respect the elements and stayed inside whenever there was bad weather. Yet, in spite of this, towards the end of February, Mr. Nakra got lost. He had gone out to the toilets and got caught in a white-out while returning. Luckily, he spotted some oil barrels and keeping them in view tried circling around in search of some other land marks.

The first rescue party of three came out on foot and as soon as they spotted Mr. Nakra they ran towards him and embraced each other in delight. In the resulting excitement, they not only lost sight of the barrels but also their sense of direction.

The four of them set out in what they assumed was the general direction and some distance away they came across a red and black striped pole. Feeling they were in the right direction they moved on and ten minutes later found a second pole and then a third and a fourth. Since they were still nowhere in sight of the garage or the main station they decided to walk in a direction that they felt was perpendicular to the line of poles. This time they were well and truly lost.

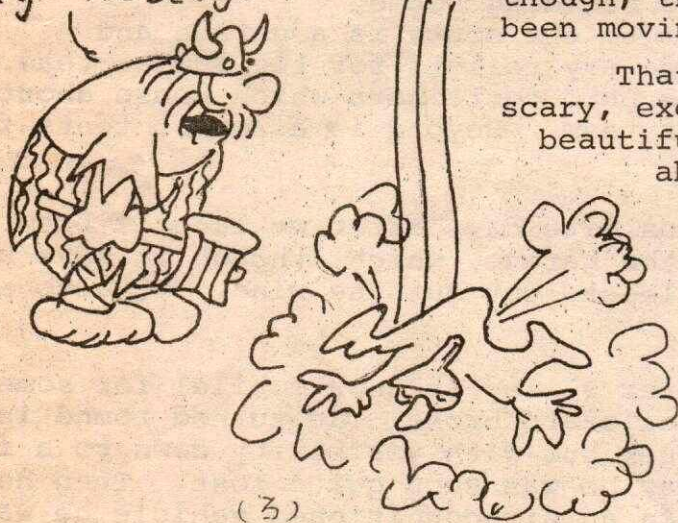
The second rescue party set out in a Pister Bulley and eventually located the lost four playing kabaddi to stay warm. By now it was quite dark, so the station beacon was faintly visible and they managed to reach home without further mishap.

Next morning the weather cleared and curious to see how far they had strayed, they went in search of the four poles. They found though, that there was only one. They had been moving in circles.

That's a part of Antarctica - funny, scary, exciting, bewildering and always beautiful. And if you want to know more about it, I suggest you apply for the next expedition.

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Well? Did you spot any icebergs?



(3)

BRAIN TEASERS

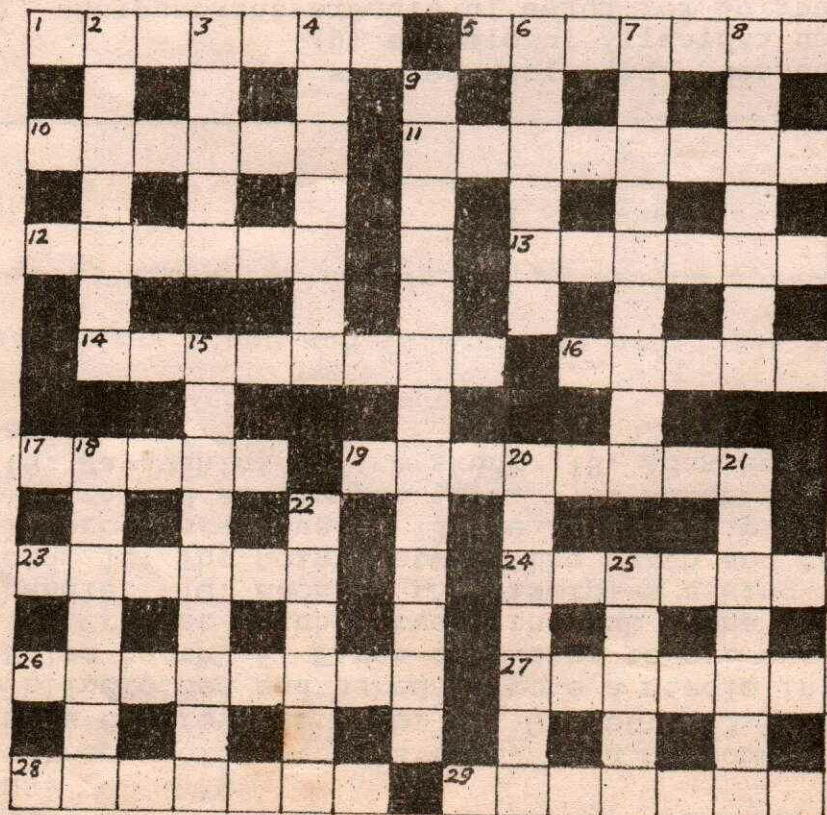
1. The first man to be cured by Pasteur was Joseph Miester. How

did he die?

2. Lucullus of Rome is popularly credited with a gastronomical first in 90 BC. What?
3. Three public trials have been held in the Red Fort. Bahadur Shah Zafar and the leaders of the INA were the first two to be tried. Who was the third?
4. How did Ottawa get selected as the Canadian capital?
5. Of what product is Liechtenstein the world's largest producer?
6. The South African Endean was the first cricketer to achieve which first?
7. Which philosopher was so allergic to roses that he fainted whenever he smelt them?
8. What is the Raghu-Ramesh Cup played for?

9. Which author says, "I never shared the great admiration every one had for Sherlock Holmes". Of Agatha Christie, he says, she cheats and moreover her stories are phoney. Ellery Queen he doesn't like at all and of Raymond Chandler, he says, 'a poor plotter'.
10. What position does Da Vinci's "Last Supper" depict?
11. For what disease did Pliny the elder suggest "Kissing the hairy muzzle of a mouse" as a cure. Herodotus noticed that bleeding was frequently a cure.
12. What is the "Lagrangian Point" in space terminology?
13. What is Philip J Noel Baker's unique achievement?
14. What city did Hieun Tsang call Kin-chi-pu-lo?
15. Who, at the age of 72, created a world record in a water speed event?
16. If N.T.R's propaganda van is Chaitanya Ratham, what is Mr. Hegde's van called?
17. What is a Zorrilla?
18. "On the Antiquity of Microbes" is the shortest poem ever written of 2-3 words. What are they?
19. Which organisation uses the pen name Patrick O' Neill to sign its activities?
20. Whose autobiography is titled "Me, Myself and I"?

X-WORD



CLUES:

ACROSS:

- 1. Rule of the north that fixes your diet (7)
- 5. God and a crazy expert concoct a cure-all (7)
- 10. Fatty substance sounds like it is from Europe (6)
- 11. Left work to support the unbalanced (3-5)
- 12. Right to express emotion is difficult to access (6)
- 13. Chap in charge of bells looks similar (6)
- 14.irate aliens tear up article (8)
- 16. Poet fell into lake at Stratford-on-Avon (5)
- 17. Presently loaded chimney climber is no devil (5)
- 19. Will divides his property (8)
- 23. Aerial fire melts faster (6)
- 24. In certain situations one finds it in its original position (2,4)
- 26. King in fairy tale resists movement (8)
- 27. Alcohol can be found in a man's soul (6)
- 28. To have lived, one should have found ways out of French riots (7)
- 29. Are they friends of the writer? (3,4)

DOWN:

- 2. Serious listener's haunt (7)
- 3. A round I had is a united state (5)
- 4. The tallest sounds like relaxing forever (7)
- 6. To be ambitious, the snake shows anger (6)
- 7. Outbreak of this row may cause lamenting (9)
- 8. Substance used for heating? (7)
- 9. Such frank talk is probably not suitable for summit meetings (5,8)
- 15. Gateways that captivate (9)
- 18. Indomitable Frenchman believes in vital statistics (7)
- 20. Tester I found in Italy (7)
- 21. Fresh court hearing for three in sincere surroundings (7)
- 22. Note lines seen typically in old age (6)
- 25. Pass over a thousand, but pinch pennies (5)

Famous last words (the issue's):

- It doesn't matter if you are on the right track
You'll still get run over if you don't keep moving.

SOLUTION TO CROSSWORD:
ACROSS: 1. Regiment 5. Panacea 10. Grease 11. Top-sided 12. Remote
13. Ringer 14. Treatise 16. Keats 17. Santa 19. Testator 23. Strafe
24. In situ 26. Friction 27. Spirit 28. Existed 29. Pen pals.
DOWN: 2. Earnest 3. Idaho 4. Everest 6. Aspire 7. Alignment
8. Element 9. Plain speaking 15. Entrances 18. Asterix 20. Trieste
21. Retrial 22. Sentle 25. Skimp.
QUIZ SOLUTIONS:
1. He was the keeper of Pasteur's tomb. And he committed suicide rather
than see Germans destroy the tomb. 2. Omelette 3. Godse 4. Queen
Victoria was blindfolded and asked to poke a needle into the map of
Canada. 5. False teeth 6. First cricketer to get out handling the ball
7. Voltaire 8. Cricket match between the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha
9. Raymond Chandler 10. Each of the disciples asking "Is it I?"
11. Common cold 12. The point between the earth and the moon where
gravitational forces are equal. 13. He is the only person to have won
both a Nobel Prize and an Olympic gold. 14. Kanchipuram 15. Alexander
Graham Bell 16. Jayavahini 17. A skunk 18. Adam Had'em 19. IRA
20. George Harrison.