

RISING STARS

THE other day a friend and I came across a "game" in a magazine which had ancient hieroglyphics supposed to tell us the future. Each symbol indicated a meaning or answer to our queries. "Runes", they were called and were used by pagan tribes to foretell the future. I can't remember the last time we had been so thrilled by something so insignificant.

The desire to foresee the future is certainly not specified to any time or culture. From primitive tribesmen to modern urbanites the desire to know what will happen, before it happens, runs deep in all of us.

All ancient cultures had seers or psychics whose job was to define the future. Some of the most ancient means of divination survive even today. Astrology and palmistry have survived hundreds of years while others have fallen away, such as "Haruspication", in

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lying on astrologers. In our society palmistry and astrology are invariably embedded with age-old traditions. Even to this day marriages, christenings or travel plans are done by consulting some soothsayer.

It is impossible to say which single method of fortunetelling is best; in fact, trying to rank the methods according to reliability and efficiency would take a lifetime and result in bad karma! Psychics use a combination of several different approaches to foresee the future.

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ideas. This are interpreted by consulting the book.

Casting the Runes: This comes from the ancient Nordic alphabets. Even though the runes as an alphabet were never a form of divination but its mystery and antiquity lends it some magic. Each of the 24 letters have a particular significance depending on how it is cast or drawn.

Crystal Gazing: Also known as Scrying, this is a time-honoured method of fortunetelling. Although a ball of crystal or moulded glass has not been used always. In the past, polished black mirrors or bowls of water were used as well.

Cartomancy: Another word for card reading using a regular deck of cards. The inquirer shuffles the cards and thinks of 3 questions. The cards are



Will Time Topple the Tower?

Compiled by Sanjeeda Shaheed
Class X

WHEN asked to say from where one got the best view of the Eiffel Tower, a somewhat cynical Frenchman is reputed to have remarked, "On the Tower itself!" The point of his strange answer was that that was the only place in Paris from which it could not be seen.

Probably one of the world's best landmarks, the Eiffel Tower can be seen by ten million people living within an 80 km radius of it — when the weather is clear. Named after its designer, Gustave Eiffel, the tower was built for the great Paris Exhibition of 1889, to mark the centenary of the French Revolution.

Eiffel was one of the most famous engineers of his day. His design for the tower was chosen from 18 others short-listed out of a total of 700 which had been entered in response to an invitation by the French Government to submit ideas.

Work on the tower began on 26th January, 1887, and it was completed exactly two years, two months and two days later.

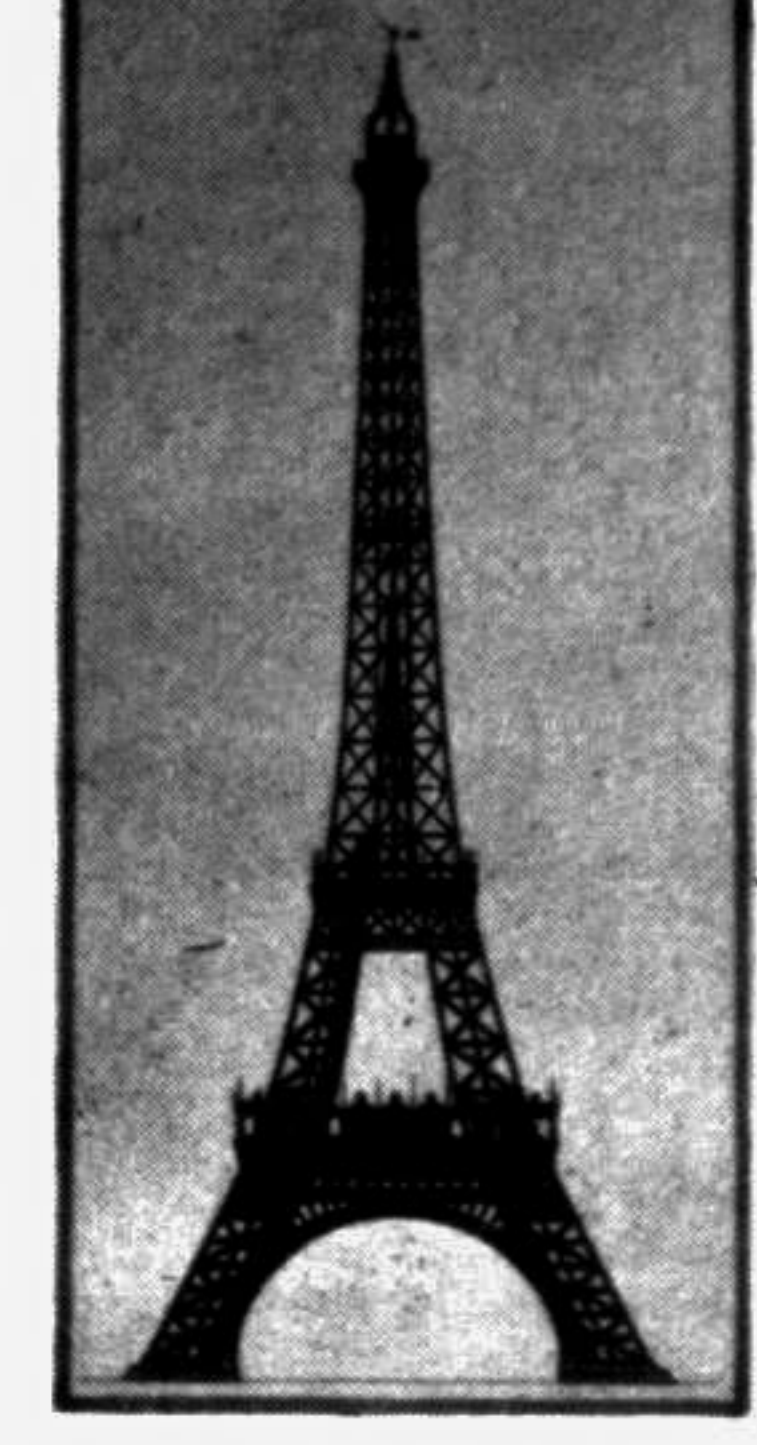
Before giving it the name of its designer, the French called it simply La Tour de Trots Cents Metres — the 300 metre tower. But as soon as it began to rise above the skyline it came in for a god deal of scathing criticism. "Our beautiful city is being bismarched by that ugly pile of iron", they said. Some protesters took to showing their displeasure by making long detours so that they did not have to look at it.

Despite the protests, however, the work went on, and as its graceful shape reached its ultimate height of 300 metres. People began to realise that Gustave Eiffel had produced something which rivalled any of the Seven Wonders of the ancient world. Today, a century later, few Frenchmen would disagree that it has become the symbol of their capital city.

In all, just over 7,500 tons of cast iron went into the construction of the tower, which remained the world's tallest structure until 1929, when the Chrysler Building in

New York topped it at 318 metres.

The actual construction of the tower was a remarkable



achievement for the period; however, despite the obvious dangers of working at heights far greater than anything previously attempted, not a single workman was killed, thanks to stringent safety precautions.

Fifteen thousand iron girders were used, held in place by 7,000,000 threaded rods, and 2,500,000 bolts. The bolts were all hand-made, and as each one had to be fitted in place while white hot, portable furnaces were raised by cranes to enable this to be done. The greatest care was taken during construction. Any section which did not meet the precise measurements worked out by Eiffel was discarded.

Even today the Eiffel Tower does not sway away more than 10 cm at the top, and then only in winds of hurricane force.

Like all iron structures, it needs to be painted to prevent rust, and in every seven years, a small army of workman have to slay on 50 tons of paint — a job which can take up to two months.

Future Perfect

by Naheed Kamal

which the future is divined from sheep's entrails or "Ostomancy", fortunes told by the casting of animal bones.

In ancient Greece, it was the augurs and seers who "consulted" with the gods about future actions—battles or buildings—to find out whether these undertakings would meet with celestial favours. Other questions were entertained at the shrines where the enquirer slept at the foot of the shrine in the hopes of receiving an answer in their dreams.

In the Middle Ages the elite often had their own personal soothsayers. And during the English Renaissance, Queen Elizabeth I regularly consulted with an astrologer and crystal gazer.

More recently we heard of the Kennedys and Reagans re-

inevitably drawn to these and thrive to learn about tomorrow. In fact we do not know anything but we like to think we know because it makes us comfortable!

Even if we do not necessarily believe in these methods of fortunetelling our future we get our cheap thrills out of them and it is FUN!

Here, in no particular order, is a list of what's what in the mystical field of divination.

Palmistry: An ancient art of hand reading that originated either in China or India. Gypsies, a nomadic group who travelled to Europe from Asia around the 15th century made this a popular form of fortunetelling during the Middle

Reading Tea Leaves: A popular form of fortunetelling. It originated in Britain sometime in the mid-1600s when tea was introduced. After an enquirer drinks a cup of tea, the leaves are swirled around at the bottom of the cup to interpret the future — the bottom of the cup represents the future and the rim the present; the pattern of the leaves indicate what's up.

I Ching or the Book of Changes: One of an ancient series of 5 books of Confucianism, and one of the earliest works of Chinese literature. Most likely the oldest existing oracle book. The I Ching's answers to specific queries come in the form of hexagrams which represent

laid out and interpreted. It probably began in the 15-16th century in Europe and evolved from Tarot cards.

Tarot: The original card deck, devised in China or India between the 10th or 7th century BC, and was probably brought to Europe by Marco Polo.

These were used for telling the future by interpreting the symbols, such as, The Fool, Lovers, Justice, etc.

Medicine Cards: A card system based on traditional native Indian symbols. The cards act as a bridge to understanding what it means to "walk in balance on the Earth Mother". Each animal in the system has a concept or idea based on it.

On the Receiving End

by Md Atique Ullah

... Fortunately the lamp-post helps him to find out the inscriptions on the number plate... What if he is unfortunate...

Unfortunately, the address did not match and he felt agitated at the discovery. He wished it was the right ad-

dress; he did not wish to proceed any further. Tiredness began to grip him and thawed into his whole body. He wanted to lie in a bed and sleep. He had been busy the whole day searching for jobs. He had come home only to find his

daughter seriously ill. Back in the rich man's house the two burglars were fretting over the scarcity of time they had left. Now they were almost on the verge of opening the safe and their fear and anxiety grew in accord with the ticking of the grandfather clock.

"Here, it's almost done," the lock-expert announced triumphantly. He heaved a sigh of relief and then raised his chest in pride — pride at the victory.

At last, with a slight twist in the key-hole and a few revolu-

tions of the combination lock, the safe door creaked open and revealed its contents.

The two burglars stood agape as they flashed their torch in the inner chamber of the safe. Never had they seen so much money and jewellery. "We are rich," murmured the dark man whose face lightened up at the sight of the open safe. His face had scars on them which had settled deeply through ages.

"Well, don't just stand there wasting your time. Fill in the sack with the valuables," he urged them as he trembled with excitement. He could feel his heart thump faster and faster both at the glory of opening the safe and the fear of getting caught.

Till Next Week



Imma and Her Shower

by Samia Ishrat Ronce



Mystery at Mandrake...

by Munazah Alam

... Now our heroes are entering a dark room... What awaits there for them... danger...!

Quietly, cautiously, we tiptoed toward the direction of the voices. A door was slammed somewhere ahead of us, quite close, and a key turned. When the sound of footsteps died away we turned into another corridor on our left. Chris tried a few doors. They all opened. Except for the fourth one! It was locked and the key was still in the key hole (although that wouldn't have posed a problem anyway since Chris had her skeleton keys with her).

Slowly Chris turned the key. It turned easily. She opened the door.

It was dark inside. We couldn't see anything but we ourselves could be seen quite clearly against the dim light of the corridor.

"Chris!" cried a familiar voice. "And Susan! You've come! We were beginning to think that you hadn't seen our note!" I switched on my torch and shone it inside the dark room.

"Oh no!" Chris exclaimed suddenly. "Of all the idiotic things to do!"

"What happened?" Jean's voice came out from the dark as we stepped into the room.

"I left my torch in a room on the second floor! How could I be so stupid? I'll go and get it." Chris cursed herself and then muttered under her breath, "I only hope I can find that room."

Only I heard the last sentence. I said, "I'll come with you."

"No, you stay here and untie Diane and Jean. If I'm not back by then wait for me at the bottom of the stairs on the second floor, the one we came up."

I nodded. "Okay."

Chris went off and I swung my flashlight around the room. The beam fell on an unfamiliar face!

"Who on...?"

"Oh, don't worry," Diane

interrupted me. "He's Billy. He's the one we heard screaming the other day."

"Oh?" I said surprised, going over to the three figures sitting on a large double bed. Their hands were tied to the bedposts in such a way that they would be able to wriggle onto their backs with some difficulty but they would not be able to free themselves.

"How...?"

"Shh!" Jean shut me up urgently.

But by then I had heard them too. Footsteps! Jean pointed behind me. "There's a bathroom behind you. Get in there! Hurry!"

I hastened into the bathroom and closed the door softly. A few seconds later the door of the bedroom opened. I heard a man's voice curse someone called Daphne for leaving the door unlocked.

Oh no! I should have locked the door! What if the man went and told this Daphne of her supposed carelessness? We'd be in a fine soup then!

The door was closed and locked. A few minutes later Jean called to me to come out.

As I cut the ropes binding the other three, the twins told me Billy's story. The boy himself remained quiet. He was probably missing his parents. He could not be more than seven or eight years old.

Billy and his parents had gone to picnic at Mandrake, just like us. While they were looking around they had come across five men, one of whom was apparently Blake Carridine. Billy's father had said something about Carridine's face looking familiar and then had recognized him.

Realizing their danger Carridine and his men had grabbed Billy, blackmailing his parents by holding him hostage so that they would not go to the police. And so far their plan seemed to have worked; otherwise surely Chief

Kinnane, would have believed us!

Having told me this Diane and Jean related to me their story. After they had been taken into Mandrake Mansion they had been further questioned. Apparently the kidnappers thought that they had overheard their conversation which no doubt meant that they had been talking about their activities. In the mansion the twins had met Billy.

The next morning their captors had suddenly rushed into the room where they had been locked up, and had bundled all three of them into the secret hiding place behind the cupboard. There they had been tied up and had their mouths gagged. That was when the police had gone to search the house. But, of course, that search had proved unsuccessful.

Till Next Week

Corrigendum
The byline for 'Lion-O's Story' and sketch of 'Lion-O' was mistakenly printed Zaim Gani instead of Jasim Gani. We regret the error.



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BEAUTY
Maissa Karim

Beauty is a mist of pleasure. There are kinds of beauty treasured by us. Beauty can be an exquisite sight to one's eye. But the beauty of a person is most important of all. Love, care, goodwill are all beauty. But beauty is weak and light. Crime, money, greed stops earth's beauty from growing. Not even caring for love, death can't stop them. It's greed. Beauty will die soon.