

LIVING

The Merits of the "Magic Box"

by Parveen Anam

ITS when your four year-old will inform you, that "you don't know a thing" that you begin to wonder where you went wrong, and promptly begin to hunt around for the source of his knowledge, so you can update yourself. Apparently, your Ph.D. or whatever impressive degree you have up your sleeves, has not managed to impress him in the in any way. So, your one ambition in life from that moment onwards, is to impress him, no matter what. And what better way to begin, than to hunt around for his means of information, which has absolutely convinced the little one that he is of a superior intellect.

However, "ignorance is bliss" or so they say, for soon your system is in for a shock; for you have just managed to discover, at the cost of your mental well-being, that the source of your son's knowledge and scholastic aptitude is none other than the abhorred television. That little, awful, "magic box", often blaring away obnoxious matters has totally

mesmerised your household, while you were engaged in higher and better pursuits, you discover. Since your household often "includes" "junior", you clench your teeth and decide to avail of the jargon being thrown at you from the magic "box".

Homework is completely ignored, while the "weekly drama" is serialised; a drama where you totally fail to understand the moral. Perhaps it is for mortals of superior intellect than yours. The censor board has, of course, never perhaps had the time to take a peck at the "magic box" maybe they were busy with the censoring of the other films, for the better of society. For the choice of adjectives in most exhibits, would put the most staunch viewer to shame.

Meanwhile, music seems to have taken on an entirely different meaning, with the provocative dances, and suggestive body shaking, convincing you the performer is either sick, or in great physical pain. If ever there was a prize given

around for ignoring protests and objections, the "magic box" takes the cake. Hands down. Perhaps you would not mind so furiously, if "junior" had not had the audacity to inform you of your ignorance, for if you cannot use the language dished out by the "magic box" and gyrate to car-jarring music, you apparently belong to the age of the fossils. Try calling the station, which is being so kind to "junior" to lodge the strongest protest, and after an interminable period, during which you bravely hang on, a bored, sleepy voice, which had the decency to answer, will advise you that the producer of the said programme is unavailable, and you would be well advised to either call in the morning, or by implication, to forget about calling at all.

You get a distinct impression, from his tone, that you could always switch off the TV set if you do not like what they have to offer. All very well for him, he does not have to cope with a screaming "junior". So you decide to brave it out, instead.

Better than being accused of child abuse, you decide. For after all, the youngster is convinced you do not know a thing, and he does — thanks to the "magic box". You try to convince yourself that the "zombie-like" state he walks around in, half the time, has nothing to do with the television. You console yourself that the complaints of incomplete homework from school is only because there was a power failure the night before.

Meanwhile, your maid just has a ear for music, while she neglects the housework, and goes around in a trance, humming away the tune of the latest "ad" in "saracs," face cream, etc. Perhaps, it might be a better idea if you join the masses, instead of trying to change the hocus-pocus that is being dished out every evening, in the name of entertainment. If you cannot beat them, join them, was what the wise ones said, was it not? Then at last "junior" might begin to think, you "know" something after all.

septic, and most beneficial for treating ulcers. Use one teaspoonful of peroxide (10 vols) to half a tumbler of warm water. Glycerine of thymol is another pleasant mouth wash and soothing gargle. If the gums are troublesome and show signs of becoming spongy, tincture of myrrh and borax in solution can be used to advantage, but a dentist should be consulted first as to quantities.

Nails. The nails should be carefully tended. Do not cut with scissors; use an emery board and smooth to the shape of the finger-tips. Press back cuticles with an orange stick after washing, and work in cuticle oil or nourishing cream to prevent splitting. A hard nail-brush will help to loosen and remove particles of overgrown cuticle and loose skin. For curling-brittle nails and preventing them breaking, there is nothing better than steeping the nails in warm Olive Oil or medicinal paraffin. Sufficient warm oil should be placed in a small basin, and the finger-tips immersed in the oil for three or four minutes. Afterwards the oil must be wiped off with a soft, clean towel or cloth and the cuticles pushed down well.

If the hair as well as the nails shows signs of being out of condition and brittle, it may be a sign that the system is lacking calcium, in which case a course of calcium tablets will help and the following foods



MAKE-UP. The most important factor in make-up is the foundation. This should be most carefully chosen and experimented with until one is found which not only gives a flattering effect, but is also suitable for the type of skin. For instance, a dry skin needs a foundation with an oily base, and a greasy skin should have one which is non-oily. The cream should be dotted lightly over the face and neck and smoothed in with the finger-tips, blending upwards and outwards. Powdering, too, is most important. Press on generously with a clean puff, starting at chin and working up over nose, cheeks, and forehead in that order. Whisk the puff over the face in a downward direction to remove any surplus powder-grains. Powder rouge comes next, and should be blended along the cheekbones finishing off with a final light application of powder.

Mascara. This should be applied to the upper lashes only using a damp brush. Care must be taken not to have the brush too wet, otherwise it will cause the lashes to matt together. The eyes will look more interesting if mascara is used more

Beauty Tips

heavily on lashes towards the outer corner of the eye. After application a dry brush should be used to separate and even out the lashes and remove any excess mascara.

Massage. Gentle massage carried out regularly will keep the skin smooth, young and supple. It also helps to stave off wrinkles and keeps the complexion clear and refined. Apply cleansing cold cream generously, then "follow" this routine. After the treatment remove the surplus cream with cotton-wool or tissue and leave a thin film to be absorbed during the night if the skin is dry.

Throat. Massage with back of fingers of both hands, starting at the base of the neck and working up to the chin and jawbone with firm, upstrokes. Slap briskly under the chin to preserve, the contour.

Chin to Cheeks. Massage in firm, circular movements from the point of the chin, up and round the mouth and outwards under cheekbones to the temples.

Eye. Be very careful not to stretch the delicate skin under the eyes. Just pat the cream in gently with the finger-tips, working inwards under the eyes towards the nose. Gentle circular massage at the corners of the eyes will help smooth away those crinkly lines.

Nose. Massage firmly, but



Rage of Angels: A two-part drama on a best-selling novel by Sidney Sheldon. Set in a fast-paced world of power and glamour, a beautiful young woman, played by Jaclyn Smith of TV serial *Charlie's Angels*

gently down each side of the nose from between the eyes to the nostrils.

Forehead. Give firm, circular massage with the finger-tips, working up from the bridge of the nose and out across the forehead.

Hands. Stroke firmly from finger-nails to wrist, paying special attention to knuckles and joints which should be massaged with circular movements.

Moles. It is best to leave moles alone, unless they are at the corner of the mouth eye or nose. In these positions they are liable to be rubbed and may become septic. Removal of moles must be carried out only by a doctor or a fully experienced operator in electrolysis.

Mouth Washes. Hydrogen peroxide is an excellent anti-

should be introduced into the diet: plenty of milk, butter, cheese, green vegetables.

Neck. (See Massage; Chin-Double) A discoloured neck is ageing and unsightly. An excellent whitener is a tablespoonful of milk to one dessert-spoonful of lemon juice. Paint all over neck and allow to dry. Use this lotion after thorough cleansing on alternate nights, and apply a bleaching nourishing cream on the nights in between. If the neck is thin and scraggy, a course of cod-liver oil and malt should help.

Nose, Red. Mainly due to poor circulation in the cold weather.

P. E.

(to be continued)

Perils of Being Go-Betweens

by Fayza Haq

THERE is no doubt that both arranged and love matches may flounder and sometimes end "not with a bang but a whimper." When the pair have chosen each other, it does not mean that their life style in future will be smooth sailing, or that they will not hear unending tirades from their families, friends and acquaintances about the lack of smooth flow of their conjugal life.

However, the prospect of being a match-maker, all said and done is not an easy one doing by one's experience. Many female friends of mine looked high and low for a pretty, intellectual and well-to-do bride for a colleague of theirs at the office, and it ended in a divorce within a period of a year. Despite all examinations of the skeletons in the cupboard, the match-makers had been gulled into believing that the young lady was the best match for a handsome, well-to-do executive. Yet they failed to find out that she had mental problems. It was cleverly camouflaged by the family of the young woman. You can well envisage how agonised and repentant the match-makers are today, and how berserk the young man is, despite his recent trip overseas to freshen his mind.

There was another incident when a colleague of mine, hunted high a low for a prospective husband for her friend. She had to hear sharp criticism wherever she went for her friend had a Ph D from USA. "She must be fast, having lived abroad," one and all commented. When the young woman thought that she had found a suitable mate, residing in Europe, the same friends of mine had to undergo a number of interrogations, both at Dhaka and from USA. Her father's colleague warned her that this was a "thankless job," yet she proceeded like a rhinoceros with the task before her.

It so happened that this managed to end in a disaster too within weeks, with the husband hardly writing or calling the wife up from USA. The young woman tried her level best to keep the marriage going with constant correspondence and telephoning. Since



the matter ended in a final cut this colleague of mine who had arranged was loathed and despised by her friend's family of ten, till the woman, the subject, finally changed her city, and married a colleague. Fortunately the second marriage is a bearable one, despite vicious comments and demands for the woman's in laws — My colleague now hangs her head in shame before the family, even though her friend is now blessed with a bonny boy.

There are cases in which acquaintances of mine have arranged the well-to-do, suave and "Kartik" like man who belonged to a "Zamindar" family. No doubt there is a son by this marriage, and the husband and wife live together, putting up a brave front. The wife has two jobs, and worked hard at extending the family property that she got from her husband

with her own head-earned money. She goes to her cousins and friends for a change, but bitter quarrels often ensue, with both the husband and the in-laws, but one must make marriages work in the east to save one's face, find a roof of one's own over the head, and have a social standing, apart from various factors, like harsh comments from own's own family for being single, and living conditions at the woman's hostels in the metropolis being below the standard of an upper middle-class woman. Whenever aged women have been reported to have been raped and killed in reliable leading newspapers, what other choice do the women in distress have? Meanwhile, the match-makers blush with embarrassment, whenever anyone mentions the questionable reputation of their male friend, who how makes "the woman discontented, after marriage."

There are so many examples in the cities, where parents have investigated into the background of the proposals brought by the match-makers, and yet the young women have a difficult time with the change of environment. Some of them resort to packing and leaving with the husband to the parents' home in Dhaka from Chittagong. But all women are not so lucky. Of course the same applies to men. And how tormented the match-makers are to see the plight of their friends, family members, and acquaintances!

One has "aided and abetted" one's male cousins and colleague to leap into what appeared to be cases of a perfect matches. Yet one has "known the men to live in separate rooms, and even separate houses, eventually, after even as little as five years of marriage, and a couple of children to face a "Kramer vs. Kramer" situation.

This is not to come to the conclusion that love marriages, encouraged by friends and colleagues have not led to harmony and bliss. Marriages are said to be made in Heaven.

One cannot refute the fact that God is omnipotent and omniscient, unless one is an incurable aesthetist. Yet when friends guide, help, hide, the courting couple, and when this leads to discontentment, when the wife complains, "He does not touch me for ten years," or "He has been gallivanting since the day I married him," can the sympathetic onlookers, friends, colleagues and family, who once encouraged the courtship be contented, when they themselves have a vital part to play in the final tying of the knots?

With tale-bearers and gossip mongers among the circle of neighbours, acquaintances, family and friends, often the couple have little privacy to get to know each other and adjust to each other's fancies and sensibilities. This is despite the fact that many couples — both in the case of arranged and love matches — are trying their utmost to be compatible and to complement each other's best sides.

"And they lived happily ever after in fairtales is questionable and yet we are fed on this as children," said a bitter wife despite all her devotion and toils over her husband and two children. This was a love match. One can envisage how guilty and tortured the go-betweens felt at this remark of a frustrated housewife cum part-time worker, with a husband from one of the best of families in Dhaka — keeping culture, education, behavioral conduct, and apparent care for his family.

As we have no regular marriage counsellors and only "agony aunts" in newspapers and magazines, both local and imported, one feels that they should be established as a must so that marriages are not a farce or a face-saving matter.

The match-makers would then be able to take a respite, and stop racking their brains every time they get an SOS phone call, a verbal message, or long marathon letters full of complaints, both local and overseas.

Frost, Nature and Man

by Mujibul Haque

IN Tree at My Window by Robert Frost shows the bond between Nature, as represented by the tree, and human beings, as symbolised by the poet. He also depicts their relationship with the weather or environment — to live as is appropriate for a tree or a human being.

In this poem the poet says he thinks of the tree outside his bedroom window almost as if it was a tree existing only in the window and thus forming a "Window tree". At night when he closes the glass partition of the window, he wishes fervently that there must never be a curtain cutting him off from the tree. In other words, he does not want anything to come between himself and the Nature. He wants to be always in touch with it.

The tree, with the branches covered with leaves, seems to the poet vaguely like a head rising out of the ground. He calls it a "dream-head", because when a person with plenty of hair on his head gets up from sleep, the tousled head looks somewhat like the "head" of a tree. Another reason for calling the tree a "dream-head" is that there is the feeling; the leaves dream, when they "sleep". The tree also reminds Frost of a cloud. All the leaves separately or diffused make up a tree. Just as a cloud is made up of scattered or diffused condensed watery vapour, the wind makes the leaves rustle. It is as if many light voices are talking among themselves. If all the leaves could talk with soft voices they could not have greater influence on him than the shadow-like shape of the

tree at the window alone.

Robert Frost has seen the tree, taken and tossed about, during a storm or in a gale. If the tree had seen him when he slept, then it knows how thoughts and feelings can take possession of his mind, making him toss and turn in sleep himself. Sometimes it appears he could be swept away by the thoughts and feelings.

When the poet and the tree (or human beings and trees) were created, Fate or Nature knew what she was doing. Her ideas were proper, she "had her imagination about her." This is because the head of the tree is built to be able to take care of the weather in the outside world, while the human head can tackle the weather of the inner world — the mental world of thoughts and feelings at home and in the community. A tree not only survives in the heat, the cold and the tempest, but it also controls or creates outer weather through such activities as giving off oxygen, absorbing water and preventing soil erosion. Similarly, a human head is designed not only to survive the anger, the irritation, the troubles at home and elsewhere; but also controls or creates the "inner weather" by singing, inventing, coming up with money-making schemes, decorating the house, or doing things that soothes the mind or stimulates it.

The poet and many human beings by keeping in touch with Nature and being concerned with inner weather helps to build up a happy environment in the family as well as the entire world.



Pastel — R Karim



Georges Jakes and Consuelo De Havilland seen in "In Ritiera" — MTV