

And Now a Gun-toting British Bobby

Ken Hyder writes from London

After years of being without arms, some police in Britain are to carry guns in public. Critics see it as an undesirable style of policing modelled after American cops. Gemini News Service reports on the changing image of the British bobby.

where LA cops were filmed savagely beating a suspect with long batons.

He warns that the British police are now copying LA police tactics — tactics that he believes led to riots in Los Angeles — at a time when, ironically, the US force is changing to a more British style of policing.

Says Marnoch: "Arming the police in a routine way, would

have two other effects — it would distance them from the public, whom they need to give them information and support, and it would encourage more violence to arm themselves."

The public's relationship with the police has been steadily eroded over the past few years. In London, damages being paid out to people beaten up and abused by the police continues to rise — but

only around one per cent of officers complained against are ever punished.

And as for protecting lives, Marnoch says police who know they are going to face armed criminals are already prepared and armed. Those who bump into armed criminals accidentally may still be surprised and shot.

A related consequence which concerns Marnoch is the likelihood of civilians, and suspects, being shot accidentally.

He said that in Australia, patrolling police started to be armed in the mid-1980s. This led to a number of accidental police shootings, and now there is a move away from the routine carrying of firearms.

Marnoch also expressed concern with another imported Americanism in commissioner Paul Condon's Policing Charter, an emphasis on swift police action.

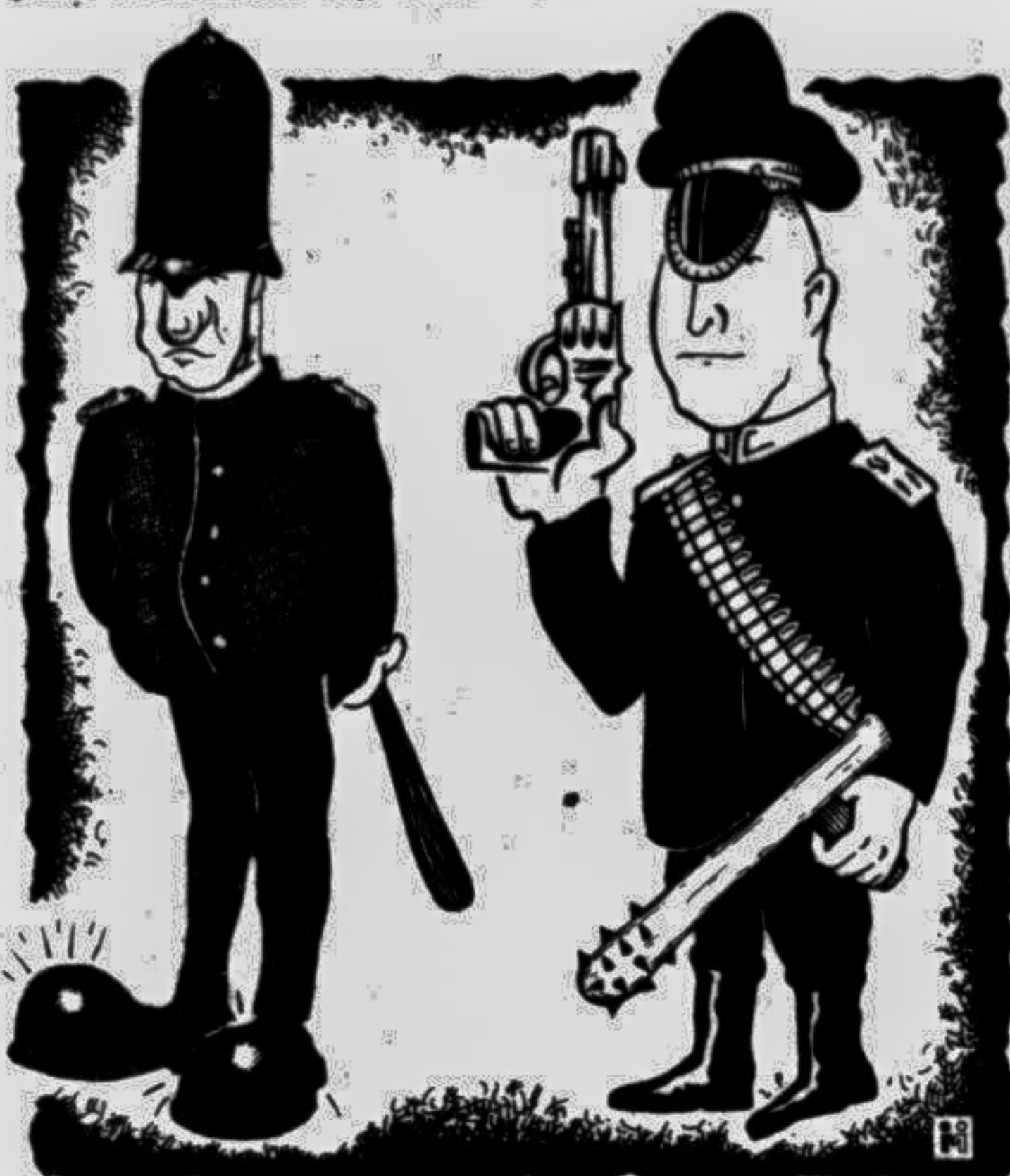
"The public's impression that fast response times will lead to more crooks being caught is false. The likelihood of police being at the scene of an incident within a minute in a big city is very small."

"By the time the police get there is most cases, the villain is already off in the other direction. What is important is the quality of the police response when they get to the scene," said Marnoch. "Unfortunately, it's when police adrenalin has been pumped up by a siren-blazing car chase that things start to go wrong." Currently five out of six crimes in London go unsolved.

But Marnoch's greatest concern is the arming of police officers in Britain. As countries throughout the world know, guns are dangerous objects and accidents with guns are often fatal.

And in the US, ten per cent of cops who are shot — are shot with their own guns.

KEN HYDER is a British freelance journalist.



LA Law?

One Cheer for the Boss

hind, like the sound of thunder from the dark clouds, accompanied by lightning. In the tropics, where most of the developing countries are bossy tends to be concentrated, the boss tends to have a flooding effect in the office. Oral saline was not discovered in those days. There were many slips while carrying out his commands, but it was impossible to slip away from any of his assignments, as the slips were

oned to be greatly in public interest.

Bosses come in all colours, except that these colours never reminded one of the rainbow. Some bosses are colour-blind (depends on the observer). Take my case, for example. Things happened rather late in my life, sometimes to my disadvantage. During the first half of my career most of my bosses carried unflattering opinion about 'your

memory, and whom I admired most, was, paradoxically, also the chap whom I detested most. I was fascinated by his negative qualities. He could turn his liabilities into assets, and was cunning enough to get himself kicked up at every turn. His administrative finesse concealed his weaknesses, and he was a past master in drafting 'notes' for the files which went to the higher ups. Slippery as an eel, and as chippy (an eel can generate voltages of around 400 volts), he was a tower of strength to those in his good sight.

Contacts with him left a corrosive effect. It was most unwise to fight him — the 100-year wars are only read about in the history books. He preferred to stay in a cottage at an ex-British Club (formerly barred to the natives and dogs), and later settled in a Commonwealth country of high latitude, spanning from the Atlantic to the Pacific. He paid me a rare compliment which I cherish: he kept up a correspondence with me after his retirement. Perhaps he considered me one of his 'boys' who had made it to the top, and beyond.

The boss etched in my

TAKE IT EASY by "CHUCKLES"

duly noted down in the personal file.

The ACRs (annual confidential report) made or unmade one's career. One colleague collected a lexicographic citation: "tendency towards fustianous dissipation"; which made the incumbent none the wiser towards corrective therapy (rabbled rouser, ring leader, with legalistic approach). Another colleague was able to focus on his career goal with an unexpected Memorandum for having "acted beyond the call of duty" handling some emergency which was reck-

on to be greatly in public interest. One wise soul drafted an adverse report for my ACR after watching me for three years. Luckily he took a second glance at the earlier reports, and changed his mind.

I was never boss-friendly, to use a modern jargon. Perhaps too formal, and not too keen to attend the *darbar* too often. Astrology, palmistry and numerology can analyze such nature pretty accurately (the prediction of future events is a separate issue).

The boss etched in my

NOSTRADAMUS

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Nostradamus kissed the young man's robes, explaining afterwards that he was merely paying proper homage to the Pope. This was not a case of mistaken identity, his biographers assert, but of predictive power, since Peretti later became Pope Sixtus V — in 1585, nineteen years after Nostradamus died.

Another oft-told tale recalls Nostradamus's visit to Paris at queen Catherine's request in 1556, when he was awakened in the night by a young page knocking loudly at his door. The youth, frantic at the loss of one of his master's favorite hunting dogs, hoped the famous seer could help him.

Nostradamus is said to have barked his answer through the closed door, without getting out of bed and even waiting for the page to identify himself or pose the question. He told the page to set out at once on the road to Orleans, where he would find the missing dog being led on a leash. Indeed, so the story goes, the page journeyed only an hour before the prophecy came true.

In 1550, following two decades of medical practice, Nostradamus published the first of his annual almanacs. This book, and 15 more like it, combined readily predictable information, such as the timing of the phases of the moon, with insights about coming events that rested on extensive knowledge of astrology.

Having launched a second successful career as a published author, Nostradamus also wrote a practical book about home remedies and

cosmetics and later translated Galen's classical texts on anatomy. But he is best remembered and most revered for a series of prophetic poems called Centuries, published between 1555 and 1558. These thousand obscure verses, each consisting of a quatrain, read like a cross between liturgy and riddle.

The tendency of these predictions to dark back and forth in time — often, attached to events that have not yet occurred.

The first dozen quatrains of Century I alone predict events scattered over several centuries and several countries from the eighteenth-century Region of Terror during the French Revolution to the Russian Revolution of 1917 to the rise of Benito Mussolini in Italy in the prelude to World War II. In a sense, the Centuries behave like a time-release capsule, full of tiny quatrains grains set to go off at different epochs in time.

A lot of scholars have worked to find out the real interpretation of Nostradamus's verses. V J Hewitt, is the most recent worker on Nostradamus. She has devised a system of substituting letters in the words of each quatrain to yield actual dates for specific events to occur through the year 2001. Her practice of methodological and repeated letter substitution suggests that Nostradamus had foreknowledge of many twentieth-century personalities, including Saddam Hussein, Nelson Mandela, Margaret Thatcher, Boris Yeltsin, Richard Gere, Jane Fonda, and Ted Turner.

According to Hewitt some of the Nostradamus's predictions

are—
A California Earthquake:
"After the earthquake, the United States is cracking within a radius with stretches from coast to coast. Everything will reddens. Under a hot sun,

heat grows. A quartered virus plucks a page of history."
Reversal of the Aging Process: "How medical treatments for the disease of aging: the old, grown young with smooth skin. The senile lose

Some Future Predictions from Nostradamus

1994: A Russian spacecraft will crash in America on August 04, killing two people.

1996-1997: The ozone hole over Antarctica to cause concern.

Between 1993 and 1997, we see a second hole over the Arctic Ocean. It threatens to ruin the world, which cannot by itself avoid the crackling scythe, the crackling pits.

1998: On August 05, someone will at last capture good film footage of extraterrestrials encountered somewhere on Earth. The creatures then flee to their home world. The cinema televised on August 06, will overturn skepticism about alien life.

1999: Between November 23 and December 21, the War of Wars will begin.

2000: The dead, casualties of the great war will rise up.

2055: The predictions of Nostradamus will all have been shown "to bear fruit".

2150: The world will see a complete revision of the religious concepts and perhaps a new world order leading to one religion for all people.

[According to V J Hewitt and Henry C. Robert's interpretations of Nostradamus's predictions based on the new coding system.]

crops are on fire, flocks and herds die. Grain is scarce.

Upheavals in Africa: "South Africa: President Nelson Mandela himself, a dying man, manages the register of multiplying Black voices. The dry

their confusion. Robotic luxury. A pure rhythm kicks at lumps.

Whether or not Nostradamus saw the future remains a matter of conjecture. But the human need to believe he did, is a matter of record.

It was not indicative of boast of heraldry or the pomp of power. But my wife, herself having none, considered a pointed nose as the criterion for choosing our daughter-in-law. I was heavily briefed by the knowledgeable about the horizontal and vertical size of what constituted a pointed nose. I referred to Monalisa's nose as an example, but was dismissed on the ground of Leonardo de Vinci's ignorance about oriental nose. Venus or Aphrodite as example was summarily turned down because they had flat nose. To have a pedigree nose I was asked to look for a pointed nose in the girl's mother if the bride cannot be reached visually. The reason was that mother's features were often repeated in the child. But no body told me about my course of action if mother's features were reversed in the daughter.

But it was inexplicable why the emphasis was on the pointed nose. To begin charity at home, I do not have a pointed nose. It is a Mongolian-Australoid type. In spite of this, except that my selectors in their GIR (General Information Report) as a bridegroom branded me as an uninspiring dull youth lying between the cucumber and water melon. I do not know whether the cucumber-melon has since registered any improvement in taste or in size. My sister-in-law who, in tune with tradition, exercised extra-territorial rights over me without reciprocity, ridiculed me mildly for my flat and floppy nose. I do not defend my nose as I was not consulted at its design or construction stage. It was unilateral and arbitrary and at that stage democracy slogan was not that loud.

I failed to evaluate the role nose played in women's or for that matter, in man's physical beauty. The ingredients in woman's beauty lie perhaps somewhere else. So long man admired the almond colour of the skin, apple-red lips and cheeks, sharp-chiselled facial contours, long neck, the deep blue or black eyes, thick eyebrows, shaped busts and buttocks and above all, the tinkling golden voice. Hair was another element. Nose did not enter bard's fancy and no poet ever spoilt his ink on woman's nose.

Nose has entered the linguistic lexicon in a bigger way. In certain time of history a man perhaps with an ugly face cut his own nose to make his ugliness complete and worse. This event went down the pages of English lexicon to give birth to the phrase to cut off one's nose to spite one's face. Nose has elsewhere been used as the symbol of hard-work. The phrase to keep one's nose to the grindstone

Distant Drum

M N Mustafa

It is the Aryans in general and Persians in particular who, God knows why, raised the status of nose as an element-matter in beauty. Like the monkey with split tail advocating the efficacy of two tails, the Aryans too looked at the nose with lurking love. Alexander the Great who instantly fell in love with Persian girl, Roxana, reportedly admired her nose. Since royal likings do not go by grammar rules, none dug deep to find the roots or reasons for nasal love. Persian poets, particularly romantic Hafiz and Khayyam, admired the territories at two flanks of the nose — the cheeks. They just ignored the nose.

In ancient and medieval Persia, rubbing of each other's nose was considered a greeting. When two Persians met, they rubbed their noses in the same manner as one shakes hands. The elders prayed for a pointed nose for the young or unborn. The Arabs borrowed Persian rubbing style but spared the nose for a better zone and preferred the cheeks. Kissing on the cheek is the substitute of western handshake.

But nose has its social humiliation also. Rubbing of the nose on the soil has long been a traditional minor punishment for the offender in rural Bangladesh. The Bengali phrase, *nakey khat deya*, means to submit in humiliation. To bring the nose down to the earth level and to rub it on soil was considered an insult. In the countryside, a line used to be drawn on the soil and the offender was asked to rub his nose along the line. This atoned for the offence, minor but enough to take the mud.

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means to work non-stop or incessantly. Nose has also played a role in providing leadership either for good or bad. The phrase 'led by the nose' alludes to bulls and bears which are led by a strap or rope coming from a ring through their noses. In Shakespearean drama 'Othello', Iago says of Othello that he could be 'led by the nose as asses are'. Horses and asses are also led by a strap or rope attached to a bit in the mouth encircling the nose. Finally, there was perhaps one Mr Parker who used to poke his nose into other persons' affairs. He earned the sobriquet *nosey Parker*, which carries the same meaning as 'to poke one's nose'. There are many more phrases emerged from the nose. No human limb other than nose has contributed so lavishly to the enrichment of the language. These phrases apart, three words are distinctly related to the nose — sniff, snore and sneeze.

In perpetrating acts of vengeance, human beings always targeted the nose. Because it is exposed and easily reached. Let us cite examples from mythological events. In Ramayana, the sister of Ravana (Sreemati Surpanakha) committed no offence in falling in love with Lakshmana. In love or war nothing is said to be wrong. It might be a one-sided, double-sided or even multi-pronged. Lakshmana could have easily rejected the overture. But he exceeded the lover's permissible limit and chopped off Surpanakha's nose in disgust. This is perhaps the first nose ever axed down by the woo-ed. When Surpanakha reported the matter to Ravana, the Lankan King groaned and grieved at the sight of the severed nose of his dear sister: 'My unlucky sister, You had seen the poisonous snake

In an hour not auspicious At the Panchabati forest.'

And the severed nose of the love-laden sister of Ravana led to a protracted battle in which Lanka was burnt. Sita was abducted, her chastity was questioned and house of Rama was destroyed. Nose suffered assault and

humiliation elsewhere also. Sir John Coventry, after whom London's Covent Gardens has been named, lost his nose due to his critical remark about King Charles II. Sir John, overstepping bounds asked in open Parliament 'whether the king's pleasure lay among men or the women'. Charles bade his guardsmen to 'leave a mark' upon him; they waylaid Sir John and slit his nose to the bone. British Parliament had a noseless MP.

King Frederick the Great of Prussia, then engaged in a seven years war, used to mock at Lady Pompadour, a mistress of Louis IV. Exercising great influence on the French King Lady Pompadour offered to mediate on behalf of France to reach a settlement on war issues. Frederick had no taste for womanly charms and reacted at the offer of mediation by a lady who was no better than a whore in Frederick's estimation. Frederick threatened to cut off lady Pompadour's nose if such offer was repeated.

Louis XIV of France in a proclamation in 1674 decreed that prostitutes found with soldiers within five miles of Versailles should have their noses cut off. To preserve their noses, no prostitute ever went near the boundary of Versailles.

But the greatest feat was shown by a determined and vindictive Bangladeshi woman while avenging the wrong. She acted according to the spirit of idiomatic expression. It was one Apela Khatun of Bangladesh (we do not like to identify her district) who resisted tooth and nail her mother-in-law's interference in her conjugal life. But mother-in-law was incorrigible. To put a stop to undesirable interference she just chopped off her mother-in-law's nose which poked into her affairs. Apela Khatun in a hysteric feat of vengeance reportedly danced with the severed nose.

With all these disasters befalling the nose, it is almost senseless to make nose-the only criterion for our bride's beauty. I have asked inmates to reconsider and shift the measurement of beauty elsewhere. I wish our daughter-in-law live long with her pointed nose inherited, expectantly, from her mother.

Torn Flowers

by Seema Ahmad

Break my heart for I have a million hearts
But please, don't break my Adam's heart
I have given him one heart
But pride broke my Eve's heart
Prejudice, Adam's heart
They were no longer humans
But pigmies
Blacks
Muslims
And Jews
And separated for thousands of years
Cried Adam, cried Eve
What sin committed we
To look the way God made us
No right to laugh and be happy
Across the line
Laughs the tall white man
The beautiful man
The perfect man...
And we, said God, were the best of His creations!
The war was over

But prejudice knew not
And pride would not
Generations of Adam
Races of Eve
Walk shattered souls
Dust under feet
For pride and prejudice.

Nightmare

by Gazi Abdulla-hel-Baqi

When the moon was purple,
The ass pulled the strength of horse.
The science of glowworm burnt
In the heart of butterfly.
The petty trader felt the news of merchant ship.

Surely I was born
And still confined to the poor prison of large design
I am none but a mason.

The writer is Assistant Registrar and part-time teacher of English, Khulna University. His poem has been selected for publication in the American anthology 'Tears of Fire'.

ENMESHED

A Short Story by John Arun Sarkar

A humble evening breeze greeted and filled her with renewed vigour as she stepped out of office premises after 5:30 pm. There was still enough light outside. She felt good. She was enjoying the blend. Instead of hiring a rickshaw, she kept strolling along the sidewalk. A red sedan pulled up a few yards ahead of her. She saw the car. The front door of the car swung open as she approached it. A few years back, she would shudder in fear if a car would stop near her. After a few rides, too, she felt shy and uncomfortable. With time, she coped with it and became used to. While settling in the seat, she exchanged some usual words like "How are you?", "I was just thinking of you. Happy to see you, etc." She closed the door and the car rolled away.

She was Taslima who had done her master's degree in Social Science from the University and presently an officer in a commercial financial institute. Eight years ago, after completing her studies, she had joined the institute as a cashier. While many failed, she managed to rise to this position by virtue of hard work and by dint of tact.

"Where are we going," she asked.
"Wherever you suggest," replied Titumir.
She said, "I am very tired, would like to go back to hostel early. My hostel mates also watch my movements suspiciously. I do not want them dislike me."

"Well, I shall not hold you long. What if I drop you around eight?", enquired Titumir.
"That will be fine," Taslima agreed.
Titumir was a potential client of her office. He was very helpful. He had employed her brother in his import export company. His detractors slandered him as a drunkard and a womanizer. He was a successful businessman and it was usual for the rivals to stigmatize him.

Upto HSC, Taslima did her studies at the village. She was talented and her parents took pride in her successes. Despite their poor educational background, unlike others they had high regards for education. They had the means and sent their daughter to study in a university. She resided in a university hall. Her brother Kutub also followed her footsteps. Three years later, he too came to read in the same university. Their parents were very

happy. While studying in the university, through her interaction with other students, she nurtured a wish to become a professional lady. After doing her master's degree, she realised that it was not an easy task to get a job.

On one of her rounds for seeking jobs, an official advised her to get recommendation from a higher-up relative on acquaintance. She didn't have to put in much for that. A highly placed civil servant from her village, happily recommended her for a job. With that, after fulfilling other formalities, she was appointed as a cashier.

All were going nicely. Her colleagues were well-mannered and co-operative. One day, she made an excess payment of Tk 40,000. She gave a bundle of Tk. 500 instead of Tk.100. While closing at the evening, the shortage made her mad. The manager hearing the event, allayed her fears by assuring to manage. She didn't know how but it was managed and she was not penalised anyway. This developed her high respect for the manager.

The rest of the story was simple and common. One day the manager asked her out to a Chinese restaurant. She had to gratify him. She was indebted. One led to another and more. He introduced her to big businessmen. She gradually became a commodity of the commercial world.

It was 9:00 pm when she was dropped near the Kakral Market. She took a rickshaw to her hostel. On the 2nd floor, after taking a bath, she opened the window overlooking the road. The road down there was still busy.

A crowd was looking for transports; presumably, had come out from a play at the nearby auditorium. Some young couples, with and without children were among them. A pensive mood overtaken her.

There had always been an urge inside her to settle down, get married, have children, family etc. She always wished to be different from the conventional women but these feelings were unbeatable. They surfaced from within, her all self-created controls broke down.

A gentle breeze was flowing through the window. It was a comfort after bath but she new that it wouldn't get her sleep. The inherent female in her had surfaced and it would continue to bother her.

She lifted the purse from the nearby table and opened to fumble out some sedatives. She swallowed a few and stood watching the movements outside on the road until she felt drowsy. While on bed, as she drifted into sleep, she new that it was not over.