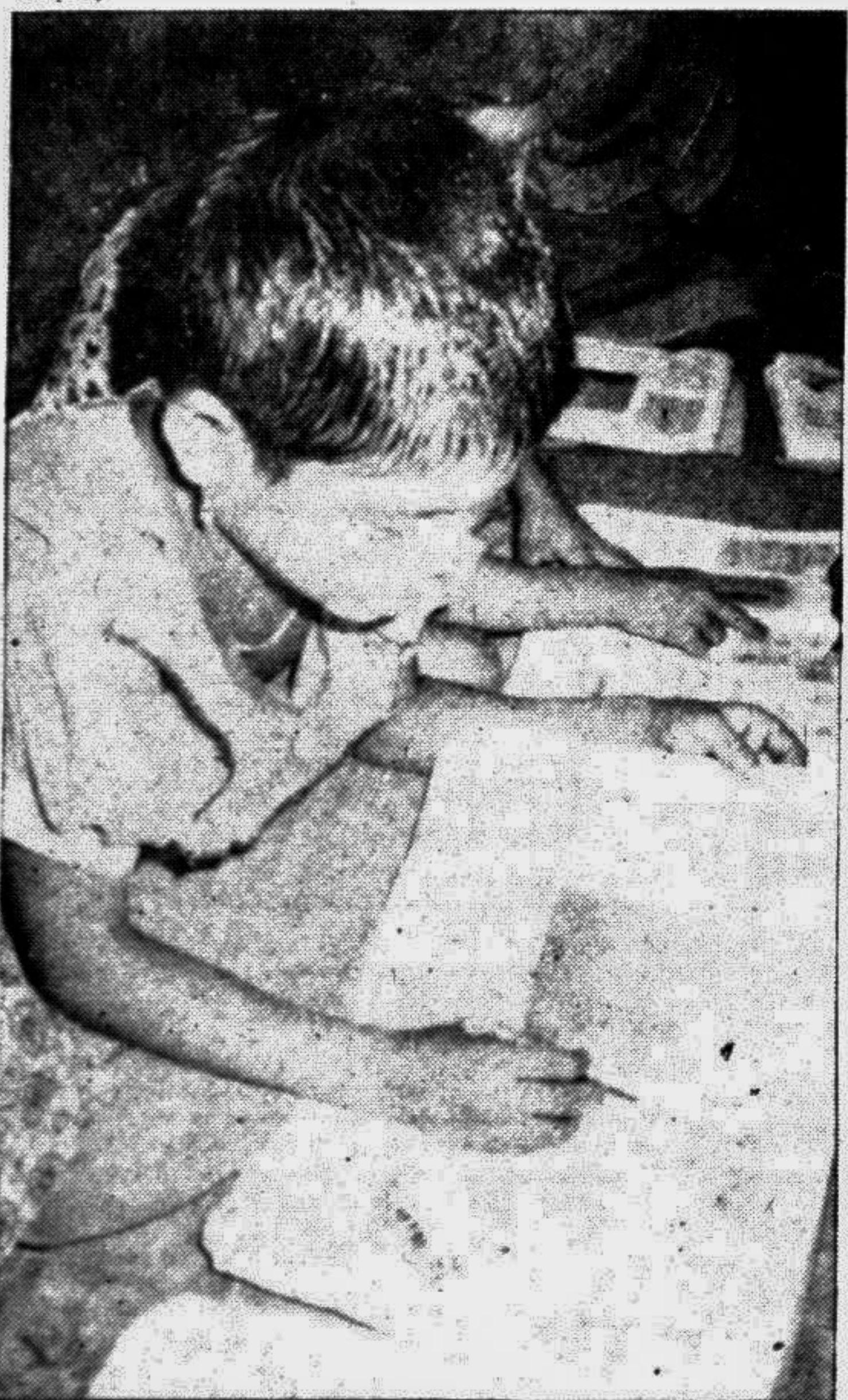


A closer look at Child Labor

by Shenaz Rahim

THE United Nations and all of the major super-powers are strongly against child labor. Some countries have even boycotted the products of factories which employ children. However,

though people complain that these children are being worked in sweatshops with long hours and bad conditions with no thought to their welfare, they may be wrong. They do menial work that adults do



No doubt education is important but it is also prudent for every child to learn some skills: essential for job prospects

these countries should look at the other side of the matter. For they fail to see the immense good child labor does for underdeveloped nations. In a country like Bangladesh, with 80% of the population below the poverty line, holding a job at a young age (this usually means about 11-16 years old) teaches the less fortunate the skills they may find useful to their future. They may even earn promotions as the grow older, securing the means of earning in the highly unstable situation of the country. Idealists argue that these kids should be in school, getting the kind of education that will bring them success later on. Perhaps the parents are forcing them to work, depriving them of their right to learn.

That is a good point, but an impractical one when applied here. So few children actually go to school that it is unrealistic to even consider it. Good schools are limited to those with money, and the government schools are of a poor standard, and do not give vocational education. It would be more beneficial for them to get job skills and technical training along with their education. After all a haphazard education won't do much for their careers.

Besides job experience, many factories are providing after-hours schooling for their young employees. So even not care for, and for this they naturally get a smaller salary, ranging from 500-1500 taka. That is far more than the average domestic service job, and here there are promotions. Admitted, several factories treat them badly, but companies with more insight see a big advantage in hiring and schooling kids. They will be better qualified, loyal, accustomed to the company's ways, and are less expensive to train than adults.

Still the anti-child-laborers insist the employment out in the real world is too much for such young children to handle. In Bangladesh, they face the real world everyday — the streets. At least working teaches them to earn an honest day's bread. It gives them satisfaction, but more importantly, it gives them food. Were it not for their jobs, many of them would turn to begging, stealing, or prostitution. When kids were laid off because of the boycotts by the well-meaning foreigners, hundreds suddenly found themselves without a job, without money, without security, and without protection from the streets, namely gangs, thieves, and pimps.

Child labor is necessary for the future of so many of Bangladesh's poverty-stricken young. The people on the other side of the world must open their eyes and try to understand this.

My Mind

by Aneek Intesar Ahmed

One of the most complex parts, in the being : MAN
No it's not his heart nor his brain,
It's his mind;

The fountain of hope
The kindler of flames : both of passion and of hate.

The birthplace of love, hate and fear.
All emotions; not in the heart, nor the brain

But the Mind : a universe in its own right,
Ever expanding; ever increasing.

A phantasmagoria of different emotions.
Some black holds sucking energy,

Some bright stars at their zenith,
Before becoming white dwarfs.

With gales and tornadoes of violent emotions,
Ravaging everything in sight.

With zephyrs of solace and pity
Healing the toiled world.

With tidal waves of hate,
Despising all Humanity;

With smooth ripples of love,
Healing all that is around.

With mountains of fear
Blockading all but Fear itself.

With inclined hills of courage,
Slowly advancing against all odds.

With the terra firma of love and goodwill,
Surrounded by the black pools of evil.

The tiny patches of Good are the bright tessellated parts
In a dark, bleak pavement of Evil.

With all emotions and feelings—
That's MY MIND

I have always found the smoke from motor vehicles absolutely nauseating. And as I was seated very close to the engine room, I was constantly inhaling plenty of that. The journey had turned out to be rather boring and tedious. So, reluctantly I got up and looked for a cigarette vendor. I had taken up the habit of smoking occasionally a few years back. It was a bad habit, yet terribly hard to get rid of. I was travelling alone, returning from a business tour. And as I failed to get a train ticket that day, I decided to return by a launch.

Lighting my cigarette, I sat down and glanced quickly at the bag I was carrying. It hadn't been stolen till then. I let out a sigh of relief. Actually the environment seemed to me a bit... er... sinister. The crowd was noisy, and the smoke and the non-stop rhythmic swaying of the vessel was gradually inducing a feeling of sickness, deep inside my stomach. And I felt forlorn and miserable.

"Excuse me — but do you happen to have a match?" a deep voice suddenly broke the monotone. "Yeah — here," I growled as I handed the guy my match. And as a looked up to see him, I saw an old man in worn attire. His face, despite being solemn and grave, bore signs of weariness and a tempestuous life. He lit his cigarette and sat down just beside me. Under my keen, sleuth-like observing eyes, his appearance seemed to be giving away recent financial difficulties. The expensive muffler wrapped around his crone-like neck had obviously seen better days. But now he wore worn out rags, and his shoes seemed to have only the soles left. As the man I had been placing under keen scrutiny previously started to speak to me after introducing himself as Md Mohsin Miah, I discovered — in spite of his unimpressive looks, he was a pretty much learned person. As we conversed further, I found out he was also a very pious man. And thus I spoke cautiously from that point. I actually was not very proud of my religious viewpoints, which were somewhat atheistic. But as I listened to him intently, I grew rather interested. As he came to the subject of religions, Mohsin Miah was saying that though there was a notion, amongst the atheists, that religions

Realization

by Adnan R Amin

were man-made and were entirely psychological, they were actually like crutches. Religion can give a person peace of mind. Likewise crutches also give us something to lean on. So if religion really does help people, then that must mean they are leaning on something



that actually does exist. I was absolutely mesmerized by this time.

"You know — there's nothing in this world as evil? It's just love, trust and hope everywhere. Evil is just the absence of the above mentioned things. Evil is prevalent only when God, and the love of God is defied and ignored. Human suffering is not caused by the evil in this world, but by man himself. Most of our sufferings result from human ignorance

and mistakes which God allows us to make in the same way a parent or a good teacher allows us to make mistakes — because personal experimentation, error, observation, trial and results are the best way man can truly experience and discover the things they are

garete. As the launch neared its destination, Md Mohsin Miah got up and in his haste, suddenly dropped a very little bag onto the floor. Instantly a lot of cash, earrings and bangles and a moneybag were scattered on the floor. On seeing the imploring look on his face, I bent down and began to help him pick up the things. The sermon he had earlier given me had left me in a considerable amount of mental turmoil. Thoughts and regrets raged in my head. I had come to realize that skepticism was like a high wall that keeps things from entering the mind, good ideas as well as bad. I had always thought that skepticism was a virtue, a sign of sophistication and intelligence — as it protects people from the superstitions and nonsense in life. But now I felt all that time, perhaps...

I was being... rather... pigheaded, refusing to believe anything which was not proved, even though my instincts sometimes directed me otherwise. Suddenly a voice brought me back from my dazed and tranced state. Mohsin Miah was leaving. After he had gone I gathered my things. I felt like I had gone through a mental metamorphosis. The incident had opened my eyes. I felt wonderful. As I decided to get another pack of cigarettes and reached for my wallet, I froze

on finding it was missing. I searched my breast-pocket, bag, everywhere. But it was nowhere to be found. Suddenly the significance of a previous incident struck me. All that money and ornaments in the bag, the moneybag — were they all... stolen? I was sure my wallet was in my pocket just a few minutes ago. Reasoning thoroughly, I easily came to the conclusion. So Mohsin Miah was just a common pick-pocket? And all he had said to me were premeditated and insincere? The peace of my mind was shattered. And I felt deceived and tricked. But then the realization dawned on me. Why should I relinquish the "thoughts" that the man had evoked? If he wanted the money so badly — let him have it. In return he had left behind something far more precious. Soon peace and contentment settled in my serene mind. I looked out at the sky. The sun shone brightly. It was time to let a drop of sunshine wash over my weary mind.

Quotes From Some Earth Dogs

compiled by : Kazi K. Arafat



Dark Angel

and Motorhead — Anthrax.

Dark Angel

SEPULTURA

Igor Cowalera — We have a thousand more problems (in Brazil) than here (in the United States). I mean, we get here and we see the censorship problem. It doesn't seem like a problem for us, it's just people that don't have and they are trying to destroy music. It's weird, because in Brazil, in my life, I've seen something like five murders happen right in my face. And I've seen police corruption. The police and the people that sell drugs are the same people. They just change their clothes. No, that's a real problem.

Max Cavalera — I really appreciate a band that can do the same thing like they do on their album. It's difficult, because you're working with feeling and emotion and everything and your emotion is never gonna be the same as in the studio. There's just you and two people watching you. It's different than playing for 3,000 people, 5,000 people that are enjoying it.

When we started we were death metal, and through the years, it got kind of boring-being something else doesn't mean forgetting about that, we just decided to use some new influences — some people thought that we were gonna be death metal forever just playing "Bestial Devastation" for the rest of our lives. That's not the way we think we're still young and we have good ideas we can work out. The main thing that made us decide to change was lyrics. Lyrically I was not happy with death metal. We have more to say, mainly from where we come from, you know, from all the stuff we have to live in every day. We have something more to say than just "Satan" on something like that.

Andreas Kissen (on the hardships of living in Brazil) — A student gets out of university with a diploma and can't find a job. There are no jobs they can get for what they have a diploma for. They need money. That's the way things go in Brazil. Nobody really cares to go to university. It's a joke. You have doctors selling hot dogs and popcorn. You don't want to be a student between the ages

of 7 and 25, study hard and then get nothing.

TESTAMENT

Chuck — I don't really get into bands who are into politics. We just sing about normal things like the environment and suicide. At the same time, we're not interested in doing songs about cutting your mother's head off.

Loz — We feed off the audience. If the audience is totally into it, we cap that vibe right away, and we give it right back to them. But if they're not giving us that energy, we just play the show, and we will try to get into it as much as we can. We work hard every night, but it's better when the audience is into it.

Greg — that's what we live for — playing live. Recording is cool, but we've all gained enough experience in a live situation to where I can honestly say that we're at our best when we're on stage playing in front of an audience.

ANTHRAX

Scott Ian: A lot of people think Anthrax is this really, really big band but to me, I still look at this as, we haven't even gotten started yet. I mean, compared to some other bands, yes, we're doing OK, but I don't look at us as being a big band. We certainly couldn't go out and headline arenas yet, we're in no position to do something like that.

Charlie Benante: I never understood the drug thing. In

the 60s, it was one thing, people were experimenting, with it but I think people have to grow up and mature — Are you so addicted that you'd kill yourself, end your life over it? One of my friends got killed over a drug deal. Stuff like that — it sucks. Scott Ian (again) : I just don't understand why MTV has to have this kind of attitude, why radio has to have this kind of attitude. It's really kind of frustrating, cause we've done it for seven-eight years now without this kind of support but when you see these other bands who just come and in a year's time sell millions of albums... Charlie Benante: When I was younger, I was a big kiss fan, and I was totally into the band and whatever they wrote about, whatever they sang about. Maybe it's the same thing with us: if kids really like the band, maybe they'll pick up on some of this stuff and they'll think it's cool... I notice that a lot of bands now are starting to pick up on the same topics that we've been writing about for years. Some of these bands all of a sudden have become interested in the rain forest and other stuff. Like that. We have a laugh about it because the year before that, they were writing about going down to hell and digging up your bones... talk about jumping on the bandwagon!

MOTORHEAD

Lemmy — I've always been into really outrageous stuff, so



Anthrax

Nature Watch

The Endangered Tigers

By Galib Kabir

THE tiger has been the most cherished symbols of Indian wildlife. Over the years, however, as a result of human interference and violent natural changes, the tiger has ended up among the most threatened wildlife species in the country.

More than two decades after the launching of the Project Tiger, one of the most ambitious and successful wildlife conservation projects introduced anywhere in the world, the Indian Tiger continues to fall prey to Poachers guns.

The number of tigers in the country at the moment is around 4,000. Of course, this is an improvement on the number less than 2,000 left in the early seventies. Thanks to our Late Prime Minister of India, Mrs Indira Gandhi, for introducing the Project Tiger.

Even now, hundreds of tigers in Rajshathan (Ranthambore), Uttar Pradesh (Corbett) and Madhya Pradesh (Kanha) are being

hunted down by armed poachers. They specialise in the supply of tiger bones to Hong Kong and Taiwan through the golden triangle, where traditional drugs and wines are prepared from these imports. In addition to this, militants in the trouble torn Northeast, continue to hunt tigers to raise funds from the sale of different parts of the animals.

At present, more than half of the world's tiger population is found in India. A rapid decline in the number has therefore become a matter of global concern. An agreement has recently been signed by several Asian Countries led by India, to save the dwindling tiger population. Another agreement was signed by the Asian delegates attending the Ninth Convention on the ban of the international trade on endangered species.

Wildlife experts feel this agreement will boost the ongoing efforts to save the LORD OF THE JUNGLE.



The Majestic tiger — soon to disappear from the face of Earth?

A Night On the Grave Yard

by Naomi Ahmed

The dry twig crackled under my foot. I stopped with a fluttering heart. My friend Linda and I ducked behind a bush just when the tall man in front of us turned around. He wore a long black cloak and a black hat. We were afraid that he had seen us. As he turned away, the moonlight glinted on something he held. It was a large shovel.

We are detectives who had been instructed to follow a man suspected of being a bank robber. We were on his trail for the whole day but had not seen anything suspicious.

Now, in the dark of midnight he had entered a graveyard and suddenly stopped in front of a grave. He waited for sometime Linda and I hid behind a thick, tall tree. The man could not see us but we could see him. He seemed to wait for someone. All of a sudden two, mysterious men came out of the darkness. They both had rusty shovels in their hands. The men stood in a circle, whispering to each other. Their low voices reached our ears as an indistinct mumble. We could not make out what

climbing the stairs. When we reached the top of it we heard a noise. We ducked behind a bush just when the man in the graveyard slowly took a form. The form was of a man. He looked very awful. He had dry wrinkled skin, large black eyes filled with hatred. A huge boulder came crashing from the mountain beside the graveyard. We saw the misty form ruling the boulder towards the mouth of the big gaping hole which the tall man and the other two men dug. All of a sudden it became dark so we could not see what happened but we heard the sound of the boulder blocking the entrance of the hole. We felt so frightened that we ran all the way home and did not feel safe until we arrived at home and had the main door locked.

Next morning, we woke up late and lay in bed thinking about the incident. Linda thought it was a dream. But I was sure it was not. We thought about it while we had breakfast. Linda went to get the papers. She came back looking pale and very ill. She pointed to



they said. Soon they began to dig beside the grave.

Meanwhile, Linda and I were being feasted on by insects. We felt very tense. We wondered what the men were digging for. They finished digging and suddenly vanished. Just then the whole graveyard became misty. We came out of our hiding place and went near the hole. We saw a very ancient stair case. Linda suggested that we go down but I was very uneasy. Why would there be a staircase in the middle of the graveyard? We started climbing down the stairs. The staircase was steep and broken. It was very dark and we dared not light our torch. I once almost fell but Linda helped me regain my balance.

The stairs ended abruptly. We saw a light ahead. We followed it and came to a room. There we saw the tall man and the other two men bending over a chest. The tall man opened it and we saw that the chest was full of precious gems. We did not know what to do. We just stood there until I thought we might call the police. We started

an article in the newspaper.

I read

Graveyard Ghost.

Yesterday police found out a big boulder block the entrance to an ancient tunnel. The police could not remove the boulder. There was no clue to where the boulder appeared from until one of the officers found a piece of paper. It said that the ancient tunnel was the hide out of four bank robbers. One day they quarreled and the leader of the gang was killed. Before he died he promised to take revenge on his three partners.

Now everything became clear. When we followed the tall man, we followed him to his hide out. The ghost of the gang leader decided to take his revenge by blocking the entrance of the hole.

Even though the news report was very convincing, I still could not believe any of it. As I watched Linda, pale and trembling with fright, I became determined to solve the mystery one day. May be.