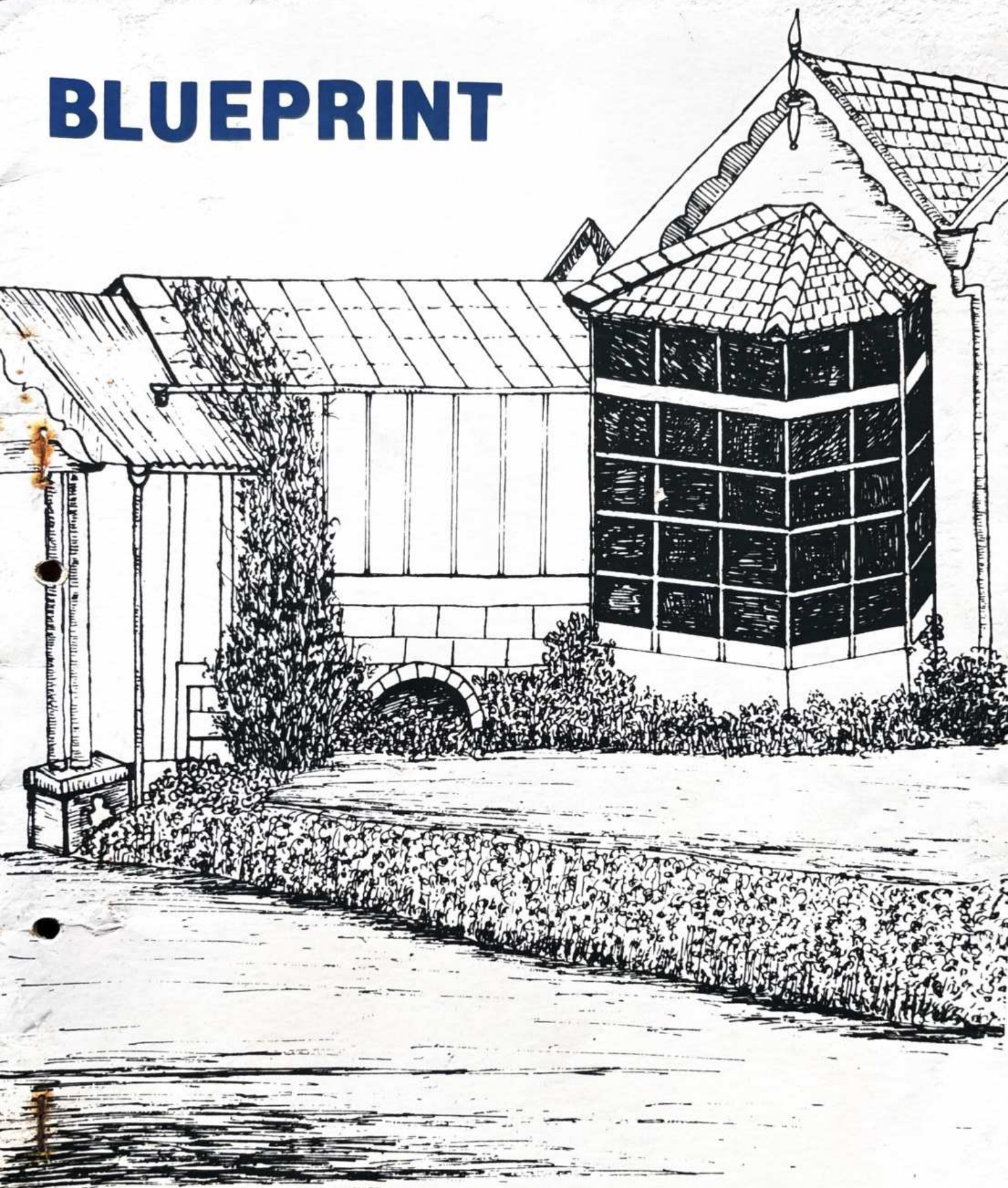


BLUEPRINT



THE BLUE MOUNTAINS SCHOOL
OOTACAMUND

EDITORIALDrama and Real Life

Drama has been a very integral part of our school life: The lower classes (I - VI) were introduced to regular drama lessons as early as eight years ago.

Today we have evolved a more dynamic approach to education. The necessity for this was strongly felt - so to meet the need of the hour, Drama, as well as other activities and projects, has become part of our learning programme and has been incorporated in our curriculum.

Why Drama ? What good will that do ? These are two of many questions that strike people. Also for most people Drama is synonymous with Theatre.

To answer: let me put it this way. All theatre is drama, but all drama is not theatre. Drama may lead to theatre, but never vice versa.

The Readers Digest has run a series "Drama in Real Life" for years. I would go further: Drama is Real Life !

If we want children to be totally educated they must be allowed to blossom in their many ways; talents(capabilities) must have the right conditions for growth.

These talents are all too often hidden and/or suppressed because the child is influenced by adults, at an early age, to believe, I repeat, believe, that his ability or "worth" will be, or is, judged by his performance in academic subjects in School. The higher the rank, the worthier the child. This belief is neither a fact nor an actuality. No thought whatsoever is given to developing any other side of a child.

What happens to a child - a person - who cannot get grade A marks in academics ? What happens to a person who is shy but, given the opportunity, may excel in Music, but not in the sciences, or, may want to build cabinets rather than memorise history ? What of the child who would rather "love his neighbour", instead of trying for a first rank ? The suppression of the deeper feelings in a child may have dire repercussions often leading to a warped personality.

Let us look at this entity called 'Person'. A person has inherently a physical self with its accompanying five senses, intelligence, emotions, imagination and also the power of speech.

If these basic characteristics can be developed, a whole personality emerges from that inner self. In this Drama plays a major role. But how ?

Going back to Real Life and Drama: surely life (the act of living) means awareness and understanding of environment, of situations, of people, of relationships, and an awareness and understanding of self: this last is of utmost importance. How can this be developed ?

Obviously, through the five senses, to begin with. The senses are often dulled by too much regimentation, by too rigid

a structure. The development of the senses is the beginning of awareness, and the beginning of Drama.

I can only briefly state what one can achieve through it. There is scope in Drama for developing all facets of the personality. Children begin to discover their own potentials and enrich them.

Emphasis is laid on all five senses - body language and speech. The collective development of the innate qualities of a child is done through imaginative and innovative games and exercises involving interaction between two or more people. Recorded music is also made use of. Real life situations and problems are presented to them and they are asked to act these out in groups or singly. This leads to problems solving, or at least, looking at problems.

The starting attitudes of the children are diverse: ranging from negative, reticent, shy to bold; but as work progresses and the children are given the opportunity of exploring and extending their potential, of overcoming blocks, they begin to find satisfaction in themselves and in group interaction and develop a positive attitude - towards Life.

When the personality of a child emerges, when awareness sets in, sensitivity and self-understanding must surely follow.

- Mona Rikh.

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THE SOLDIER

As a soldier he marched to war.
His end was never too far.
He'd live a day, perhaps two,
But fear he never knew.

They asked him to fight his foe
For what reason he will never know.
They asked him to kill
Although it was not his will.

So he slung his gun on his back
And followed the enemy's track
Until he came upon their camp
Which was lit by a huge lamp.

He fired and bombed it
While lying in a deep pit.
Soon he was peppered with lead
Making the pit his eternal bad.

His companions found him dead,
Full of little pieces of lead.
Beside him lay a piece of paper that read:
"You too are as good as dead."

Then did they realize the evils of war. - Ramaswamy M.
(13 years)

HERE AND THERE

- ARRIVAL - January 22 - Teachers arrive - to prepare for and to discuss the new Enquiry Approach to Learning and Education, and for environmental study.
- WORKSHOP - January 23 - 26. The teachers went off to Parsons' Valley and to take part in Environmental Study, led by Mr. B. Narayan Deb.
(** More about this inside.)
- ARRIVAL - January 30 - Students arrive, accompanied by the usual paraphernalia, including noise !
- WEDDING - February 15. When Mr. L. Prasad and Miss Esther Daniel decided to get married everyone was quite thrilled.

There was a reception - guests: the whole school. We wish the couple many many years of happiness.
- WELCOME - February 16 and March 15. A warm welcome to Mr. and Mrs. Pillai (Ravi and Joy) who have joined the Blue Mountains School Community - he as administrative assistant and she as the Matron.
- SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION - February 28 - A study programme was organised by the Nilgiri Wild Life & Environment Association at Theetukal and Glenmorgan. Miss Suseela K. and about a dozen students attended it.

(** Read Miss Suseela's article inside.)
- FAREWELL - March 17. The final year students leave us on the 19th.

(** Read more about their farewell entertainment - dinner - dance inside.)
- FOUNDER'S DAY - March 24. This is a holiday we all look forward to. It is the Founder's (the late Mr. F.G. Pearce's) Birthday. The special assembly this year began with the hymn 'Namana Karo', followed by excerpts from Mr. Pearce's writings, read by four senior students. Then Mr. Deb gave a short talk. He dwelt on the fine-ness of Mr. Pearce, and said that all who knew Mr. Pearce had found him a gentle and lovable person. Old and young alike

had loved him.

After Mr. Deb's talk, Mrs. Pearce gave cash gifts to the Support Staff. The assembly ended with the hymn 'Tum Aho Prabhuji' and a minute's silence.

After the Assembly, everyone dashed off to get into their gym clothes for the games on the Top Field. It was quite gay, with the Staff playing various games against the students, and being cheered on by all who had assembled there.

After the games we sat down to a delectable lunch. The Founder's Day had once again come to an end.

EXCURSIONS - March 30 - April 2. Various parties left for various parts of the Nilgiris for camping, trekking and for keeping in Touch With Nature.
(** More about this inside.)

MISS VISHAKA
CHANCHANI - Vishaka Chanchani was with us from the 10th to the 22nd of April, to help set up a Craft Programme for the School. Qualified in Fine Arts from Baroda, she has been involved with various schools and other organizations. Rather than working towards pre-set models, her approach to craft comprises using locally available material in a naturally creative form, integrating craft with other aspects of communal culture. She taught the children various skills she had picked up and the children enjoyed the activities.

(** More about the Craft Programme inside...)

PSYCHOTHERAPY - April 11 - Mr. Mehra (a very interested parent) had a talk/discussion with us (the staff).

The discussion was quite lively as regards undesirable behaviour and emotional consequences triggered off by irrational beliefs.

P.T.A. & FETE - May 6 to 8 - Took place midst a feeling of fellowship. Our grateful thanks to the parents who kept a food-stall. Ofcourse the "Mothers" did all the running about. Their Bhel-puri stall was a roaring success.

(** A detailed account is given inside.)

MR. RAJAN - - May 9 to 11 - His seems to be a one-man
A VISITOR crusade against wanton destruction of Wild
Life.

(** More about this inside.)

THE LAST ASSEMBLY Friday 3 June.

- Ed.-

VIDEO FILMS SHOWN IN SCHOOL

*Rear Window Charlie	*There's a Zebra in The Kitchen
*The Lonesome Cougar	*Now you see him, Now you don't
*A Man for All Seasons	*Pinnochio
*Moon Pilot	*The Diary of Anne Frank
*One Little Indian	*The Shaggy D.A.

Environmental Films

*The Fragile Earth	*This is an Emergency
*The Temples of Time	*Slides and talk by Mr. Rajan

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* Editor's Note: We are starting a new series which will give our readers an insight into our Support Staff. This edition carries an article/interview on Hirudian. Sketch by Mr. Malik.

- Mona Rikh.

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CRAFT WORK SHOP

Towards the end of last term it was felt that academic study was being stressed excessively here. As a result of this, we, who want the children under our care to have a complete education, decided to bring in a change whereby non-academic learning will not be neglected at the expense of academic learning. So, this term started off with non-academic learning programmes being given the same importance as the academic learning programme.

I was made in charge of the craft programme of the School. I found myself inadequate as I felt if I had to do justice to the work I undertook then I should be competent in that field. We discussed our difficulties and decided to get a craft person to establish a craft course in the School. Through Vrinda's endeavour, we were able to get Vishaka, a creative and enthusiastic craft teacher from Bangalore, to help us out.

Our craft work shop began on 12th April with much enthusiasm and continued till the 21st. The craft room which had been deserted for about two months, was dusted and cleaned and everything was set ready by the 11th evening.

Right from F.G.I to the I.C.S.E., everyone was given a chance to learn something from Vishaka. Apart from these regular classes there were special classes for the student craft teachers and interested staff members.

Printing: vegetable, leaf, glass and folded impressions; strip paper mache with balloons; exercises in paper embroidery on paper; relief pictures with paper; masks; toy-making: like tops, jiggling puppets, eye masks and string puzzles; stencil pictures, sand and soil collage, paper batik (burst technique);

exercises in colour, were the activities covered during the workshop. During these activities adults became children playing with paints and doing exercises in paper. Everyone underwent an enjoyable and at the same time a very useful course.

One wondered how Vishaka could bring out the best in every child. Her classes were well organized. She laid emphasis on bringing out the creativity in the children and tirelessly taught them throughout the day. Her enthusiasm caught on to the children and in those ten days, one often found children sitting with her in the craft room during prep-time trying earnestly to finish what they had started. Every day the notice board in the corridor was adorned with some new produce of the children.

Before she left she said that she would come back suddenly to see whether we were carrying on from where she had left off. It is for all of us to see that we do so.

- Suseela Kumaravel

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PTA MEETING AND FETE

It was the children, of course, who were most excited about the long weekend - being with their parents and having a break from the school routine. The teachers had geared themselves up too. Ooty weather was at its most hospitable, the garden bright with flowers and the school spruced up and waiting. Some parents arrived a day or two before. But on Friday morning, the School was a changed place, with groups of parents and children everywhere and an atmosphere both solemn and relaxed.

After the formal inauguration, parents, teachers and participating students broke up into groups for investigative discussions. The theme - 'What are we educating for?' - was approached in different ways by the groups. The question 'What is right education or real education?' came up in one form or another in almost every group. The children's participation added a sparkle to the proceedings while the views of parents from diverse walks of life brought in a spirit of exploration. The discussions were inconclusive - as they probably ought to be. But there appeared to be a more or less general consensus that the School was being run along the right lines.

After lunch came the more mundane meetings - a session on academics (which turned into a debate on competition) and another session with house parents, concerned mainly with physical arrangements, hygiene and social relationships in the dormitories.

Business over, the day ended with an entertainment show. The items were picked from our dorm shows and audience response was varied. The parents put up a few musical items. Non-participating children could not be accommodated in the hall and were shown a video film instead. But their absence among the audience was generally felt.

Saturday began with a business meeting of trustees, parents and teachers. The Secretary of the PTA presented her report and was later re-elected into office. The welfare of the children and a few other school matters were discussed. The last part of the session was spent in filling up the evaluation questionnaire.

Saturday evening passed in a frenzy of fete preparation with decoration, setting up of stalls, vegetable cutting and food packing going on into the night. Of the fete, not much need be said except that 'a good time was had by all'. The

parents contributed by running a food stall which was very popular. Most of the children went off for the night and those of us who were left behind took a long, deep breath.

On the whole, the three days went off smoothly and were fruitfully spent. Of course, there was a little friction and anxiety here and there. But the prevailing mood was one of friendliness and family-feeling of common concerns and good humour. There were a number of new parents and consequently, a number of new relationships formed. Meeting these parents helped in a better understanding of the children in our care. Apart from its undeniable educational value, the PTA meeting and fete was a social occasion which added a dash of colour and variety to our life here in BMS.

- Vrinda Ashoka

FROM THE CHILDREN'S SIDE

On the meeting:

".....All the parents in our group told us why they had put their children in our school. All of them gave different reasons. Then the children gave what their ideas of good parents and teachers were. Some said that a good parent would allow them to take decisions on their own. Others said that a good parent was encouraging, corrected mistakes but was not fault finding....."

- Hari Selvarajan
(11 years)

"Our group started off with the question - "What is education?" One parent said it was respecting elders, having good manners and those kind of things. Then the question came up - "What do you expect of it ?" Someone said - a good job and be able to think and act maturely. I agree with that answer. Then one of the parents asked us, the students, - "What is a happy atmosphere for a child ?" I said it depends on the way I behave. If I am naughty I will all the time irritate other people and they will scold me and then I will be unhappy. Someone else said 'To be able to express myself freely and ask questions and be able to live without fear.....'"

- Ramana M.
(12 years)

On the fete:

".....As I stood behind the counter, I let my eyes wander over the library. What a change had come over it ! Instead of the rows and rows of books, everything was covered with white sheets on which brightly coloured batik and tie-and-dye table cloths were pinned, with a few pretty hankies here and there. Right across was the Nature Club counter and on the right hand side the wood work articles made by the children. Finally I came back to my own counter and started to admire all the pretty needlework done by our girls. On the other side of the table were things which Mrs. Puri had very kindly made for our department.... Then all the children rushed in ! The fete had begun !!

- Anuja M.
(13 years)

I fel happy in the fete. I bought a teddy bear. It was a blue teddy bear. I liked the fete. There were lots of games to play. I ate lots of food.

- Jyothi T.
(7 years)

There were lots of noises. I heard someone say "Come here" and "O.K. leave it" and "I want Marie biscuits." I bought coffee. My father bought coffee.

- Indrajeeth
(8 years)

Mrs. Pearce cut the ribbon and the fete began
In a zigzaggy line the children ran
In they ran to the library stall
Dozens of people rushed into the hall
They got into the spirit at the games stalls,
Throwing up rings and kicking up balls
Nine pins, I must say, was a good deal of fun
Since it was quite easily done:
But no one could beat the canteen treat
Bhel puri, one plateful - isn't that great ?
And how can I forget the fudge ?
"Yum-yum, from this stall I will not budge !"
Egg banjoes, too, how lovely and hot
I'll eat them whether I'm hungry or not,
The fete went smoothly, a smashing funfare
The raffle was great for all who were there.
When the raffle was over the excitement was done
And I can say we had a lot of fun.

- Zia Tayyibji
(14 years)

(The original has undergone minor repairs.)

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DISCOVERY

Dr. Mackenzie rushed down the stairs of his laboratory, and went into his house. He quickly picked up the phone and called his friend Dr. Armstrong. He said into the phone, "Yes, a great discovery, come to my laboratory!" Then he put down the receiver and went back into the laboratory.

Dr. Mackenzie was a middle aged man of about 30. He was quite stockily built and looked very much unlike a scientist. He had married his wife, Elisa, eight years back. He had been trying to find a method to communicate with plants and now he had found a method.

His laboratory was filled with electrical equipment. And at the centre of all this equipment was a small plant. There was a large transmitter at one side.

Dr. Mackenzie paced the floor in anticipation. Then there was a knock. Dr. Mackenzie rushed to the door and opened it. He welcomed Dr. Armstrong and motioned him to a seat. Then he began telling him about his experiments.

He turned on the transmitter and punched a few instructions into the keyboard by it. There was a loud beep and a voice broke out through the receiver in continental Cobol - language which was used by modern scientists and which was known by Dr. Armstrong and Dr. Mackenzie. The voice was smooth and clear. It said, "What do you want, O men?"

After a few questions and answers, the plant began telling Dr. Mackenzie and Armstrong about the history of plants and their origin.

It narrated a long story of the once powerful plants. A few billion years ago, plants had been able to talk and they had had a high level of intelligence. They had attained a level that humans could hope to attain in a thousand years or so. They had used their intelligence for destroying their neighbouring mammals especially the apes. The apes then were a peace-loving race with a low-degree intelligence. For many years the plants continued their atrocities. They ruled land and earth. They, unlike present day plants, could move about. And they built their dwellings beneath the ground as the humans do, above. They devastated the earth's crust with their dwellings underground which ran deep into the crust. The plants had made deadly weapons which when shot at a person, left no trace of him, except a handful of ash.

They used these guns for their evil deeds. The very earth reeked with the ash of their victims.

Then one day a brilliant light descended from the skies. The plants fled in terror for they knew their Maker had come. As the light descended, the plants ran helter skelter but they knew they had nowhere to go. Then the light, which was a saucer-shaped structure, landed. A few creatures came out which everyone knew were the creators of the earth. These creatures came down and in a booming voice, said, "Oh! You plants, you have used the intelligence which we have given you, foolishly and deserve to be punished. From this time onwards you will remain rooted to the spot where you stand and shall lose the intelligence we have given you. You and your descendants shall retain the memory of your evil days, so that you may repent of it. And we shall bestow this intelligence on the apes whom you have wronged and hope they will use the intelligence wisely." With this, they departed.

At this instant, the whole equipment blew up. Dr. Mackenzie and Dr. Armstrong rushed out of the laboratory.

Later after they had gone back into the house and were relaxing in the sofa over coffee, discussing the experiment, Dr. Mackenzie was deep in thought. His friend asked him what he was thinking about.

Mackenzie said, "The plants which had had such intelligence were changed into lower things....., what will happen now to the humans who now are using their intelligence so badly? Will they lose their intelligence?!"

- Vinay T.
(14 years)

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A NATURE CLUB TRIP TO "JUNGLE TRAILS", MASINAGUDI

Twelve of the older set, six boys and six girls, of the school Nature Club bussed down to Jungle Trails, a nature retreat in the midst of jungle and trees, six kilometres from Masinagudi village and skirting the Mudumalai Wildlife Sanctuary, for a four-day nature-orientation camp from 30th March to 2nd April. Jungle Trails is a lodge run by Mark and Vasanthi Davidar, a young naturalist couple who live there. The idea of the trip was not only to enjoy the four-day

mid-term break from School routine, in a jungle environment, but also to get to know that environment. Accordingly, the programme for the four days was filled with several field-trips and hour-long theory sessions twice a day, covering the history and geography of the Nilgiris, ecology, conservation and a trip to the Nehru Ecological Farm. Below are very brief accounts prepared by the participants covering some aspects of their study.

A History of the Nilgiris

NAGARAJ: The original inhabitants of this district were tribals. Some of the tribes that still survive are: Todas - who were the earliest inhabitants and live on the plateau. They are a pastoral tribe; Kotas - who also live on the plateau; Irulas - who live on the Mysore Plateau and were nomadic hunters along with Kurumbas, Panniyas and Chettis. The Badagas came to the plateau from the Mysore Plateau about 400 years ago and are permanent settlers today.

G.SANTHOSH: During the 10th and 17th century A.D., European civilization crept into the Nilgiris. In 1603, Jacome Ferreria, a Christian priest, led an expedition into the Nilgiris, sponsored by the Bishop of Malabar, and in 1799, when Tipu Sultan was defeated, this area was taken over by the East India Company. In 1812, when reports reached the headquarters of East India Company about the weather and conditions in Ooty, the British did not believe it. The first foreign settlers arrived. In 1827, there were only about five houses in Ooty and around seven houses in Wellington and other places. After the British came to Ooty, many people migrated to the Nilgiris and the population steadily increased.

The Geography of the Nilgiris

ZAMEER & SUBIR: The Nilgiris lie on latitude $11^{\circ}25'$ North and longitude $76^{\circ}45'$ East.

The highest peak of the Nilgiris is Dodabetta which is 8640m.

There are three Ecological zones found here a) Tropical lowlands, b) Subtropical middle level lands and c) Montane plateau. The Tropical lowlands lie between 100m and 1500 m. The Subtropical middle level lands lie between 1500m to 1900m, and the Montane Plateau lies between 1900m and 2500m.

Jungle Trails is situated in the Tropical lowland area.

Archaeological finds at Jungle Trails

AURONEVI: Jungle Trails and forest down on the Mysore Plateau is rich in archaeological specimens. The first thing I found was a piece of some clay statuette. We couldn't identify it but Mark had shown similar clay objects earlier, not knowing himself what they were. One could tell though, that they were very old.

The second thing we saw in the forest was a dolmen made up of three granite slabs and the fourth on top. The slab at the back had carvings on it. On our trips through the jungle we came across more dolmens and stones thrown upon a heap which Mark said were also ancient. We also saw Hero Stones, a carved statue of a man and often a woman beside him. Those stones symbolized acts of bravery.

Huge pits and stone foundations of a house were also seen. The pits were places to store grains and the houses may have been troop camps serving as resting places. But the real purpose is not known. It was a strange sight to see the ruins, carvings etc... placed amidst the deep wild

jungles of the Mysore Plateau.

The Biological Environment of the Nilgiris

M. RAMASWAMY: The Nilgiris has a fine ecosystem providing habitat for many different varieties of plants and animals in the different biosphere zones.

Fauna

AUROJINA: Masinagudi lies in the thorn forest zone which extends from the southern slopes onwards towards the northern slopes of the Nilgiris. The animal life is spread out from the Nilgiri district (which includes plateau and plain) down to the Mysore Plateau except for a few species.

Some of the species found in both areas are jackals, otters, and the giant squirrels.

Giant mammals like the elephant, bison, sambur and chital are also present in both areas. The sloth bear - a big dark bear is only found on the Mysore Plateau but panthers can be seen on the plains and on the hills.

Elephants keep migrating from the hills to the plains or the other way round in search of new feeding grounds or to escape the summer's heat or the winter's cold. Water not present in an area will not have many elephants around. Panthers are more rare in the Nilgiris because prey is not plentiful so they prefer the plains where there is a lot of sambur, chital and domestic animals.

The reserve forest down at Masinagudi extends nearly all the way to Bangalore including Mudumalai and Bandipur Wild Life sanctuary and some private properties like 'Jungle Trails' which leave their land to the wild animals.

Flora

RAJINI: As it is very hot in Masinagudi, most of the trees there have adapted themselves to this climatic condition. Some of the trees we saw were bamboo, acacia, sandal wood, rose wood, mango, tamarind, zyziphus etc. There were parasitic plants like the sandal wood which depend on other plants till they can support themselves. There were a lot of Prickly Pear cactus, which reduce their leaves to spines and the stem becomes flattened and carries on the function of a leaf. Its fruit also serves as water for the animals as water is quite scarce in summer.

The Nehru Ecological Park

SHLOKA: The Park is situated 3 or 4 kilometres from Jungle Trails and quite close to the village Mavanahalla.

The Park itself is not big as it is a recent project and was started on 18.5.86.

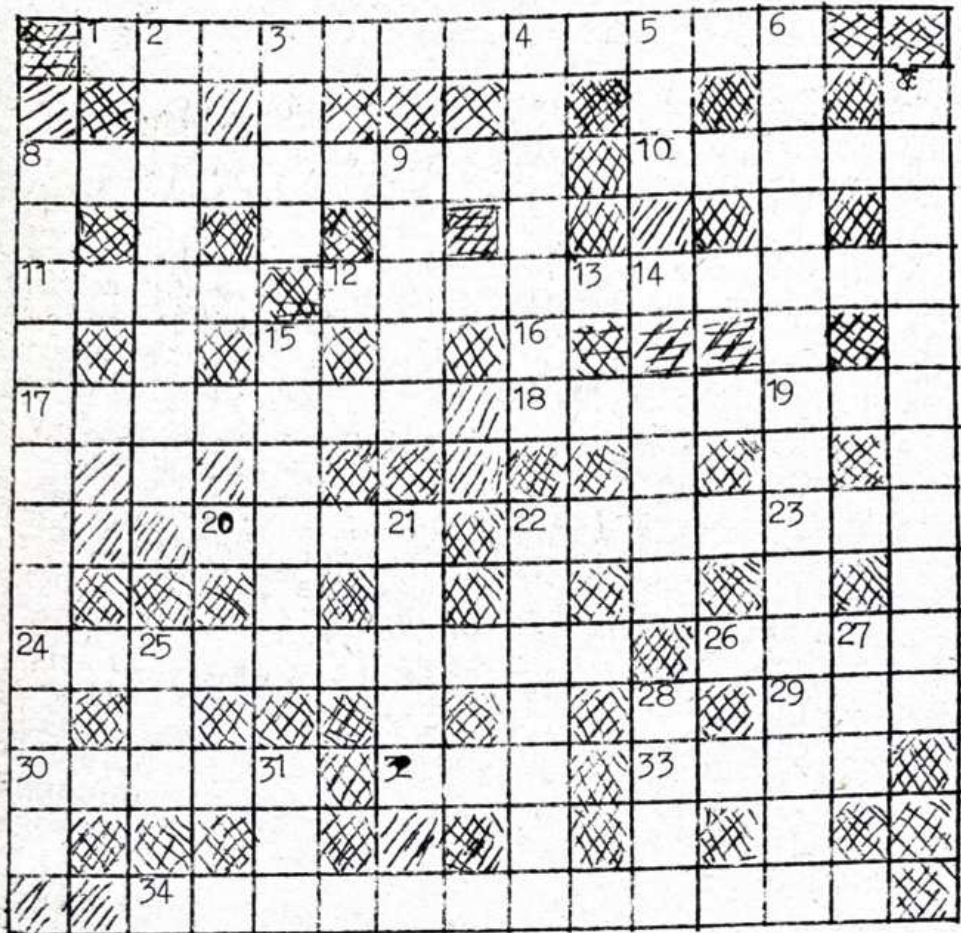
The main aim of this park is to grow local trees to maintain the original sholas. It was interesting to know that branches of trees act as speed breakers to rain drops thus preventing soil disturbance and the roots act as soil binders which increase the soil fertility. Water is continuously available in the Park as there is a dam.

Many varieties of local trees were being reared for distribution amongst the villages as part of the afforestation programme.

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CROSS WORD PUZZLE

Compiled by Shloka & Anuja Mirchandaney (with help)



CLUES ACROSS

1. Letters giving up an office (12)
8. A minor police official (9)
10. Way (skill) of doing something (5)
11. Haze (4)
12. Surprises (10)
16. Edge/border (3)
17. Not lawful (7)
18. Gadget for pinning paper (7)
20. To give timely notice (4)
22. Enemy (3)
23. Unit of electricity (3) (abbreviation)
24. Needling (10)
26. Burn to a cinder (4)
29. Small sister (3)
30. Chilly (5)
32. Large expanse of water (3)
33. Desolate bare hills (4)
34. Replied/confessed (12)

CLUES DOWN

2. Sincerely (in an Oscar Wild-ish way!) (8)
3. Expressing direction towards the inside (4)
4. Mild quakes (7)
5. Large tree bearing acorns (3)
6. Cut down (5)
7. They make up New York's sky line (11)
8. Bringing together (of nations!!) (12)
9. Aromatic herb (5)
13. An egg of a flea (3)
14. Semblance or statue (6)
15. Mildly shocked (6)
19. Repulsive (9)
21. Musical symbols (5)
22. A song bird (7)
25. A small hit or slap (3)
27. A mixture of gases (3)
28. Among (4)
31. A Himalayan wild ox (3)

(Answers on the last page)

FAREWELL TO THE X

For the four girls and three boys who were leaving School the day was one of poignancy...

School gave over at 11.00 a.m. and two teams got busy with decorating the Dining Room and Assembly Hall. There were flowers and streamers everywhere.

The IX Class students looked very smart in their blazers as they played host and received the guests of honour (the X) and other School guests at 6.30 p.m.

The entertainment was enjoyed by all - the dances were very colourful. "The Selfish Giant" (Oscar Wilde's) enacted by the juniors and "The Hut" (a comedy) enacted by the seniors were also well appreciated.

The speeches followed. Natasha spoke for the continuing students, Anupama for the Tenth, and then Mr. Deb spoke:

".....In a couple of days seven amongst us will be leaving for good. The eighth one Anuj, will leave about a month later.

Some of those leaving have been in this School for six or seven years. Many of us have seen them change during the course of those years.

Some came very unsure of themselves, rather timid and frightened. I can see the same persons today ready to leave with much greater confidence in themselves and in their capacity to handle themselves and their problems.

Some came with very frivolous attitudes and behaviour. They leave now with a greater depth and maturity of outlook.

Some came very pampered and self-centred children and were, therefore, a source of trouble and disorder to others and to themselves. Sometimes these troubles were more than the staff could cope with and on more than one occasion the staff almost threw in the sponge. But things changed as self-awareness grew and self-centredness lessened, for the source of disorder, confusion, violence, misery is the self, and self-awareness is the first step towards clarity-within and freedom from violence and stupidity. I think the looking within, the soul-searching, helped. And today all eight of them are ready to leave, changed as they are from what they were when they came.

If there is a single message these School-leavers should carry with them, it is the message of self-awareness. All the talents and aptitudes that you carry with you have no significance if you do not also carry with you the state of self-awareness. Talent and aptitude don't bring maturity, self-awareness does. The ability to cope with life, with its choices and decisions, comes from how deep this self-awareness goes in you."

".....so take that one thing with you as you go and that is all that you will really need as you move through the chapters of your life."

".....no matter where you are or what you are, our concern and our good wishes for your happiness and well-being go with you.

Personally, for me, there are no partings. I don't feel parted from you, even when you are gone. Relationships for me don't break, so clinging to them becomes unnecessary."

There were no fiery speeches, no oratory, no grandiloquence- the speeches were sincere and with these came the moments of truth and moments of sadness. Some wept unashamedly. The School had been the outgoing students' home for six to eight years - and a School like The Blue Mountains is really "home from home" !

Gifts were exchanged and we moved into the Dining Room for dinner. Later there was informal singing, to Mr. Deb's guitar, and coffee in the Staff Room - Back to the Assembly Hall where the younger children joined us for a dance.

Before the evening ended we joined hands to sing the nostalgic number "Auld Lang Syne."

- MR

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I REMEMBER MR. SARDAR

He was a liberal Conservative and a full-fledged Secularist.

One day he told me that he was working for some time in the South Block of Delhi Secretariat, before and after Independence. He left the Service due to political intrigue and communal overtones in service and took up teaching which he loved very much.

As an educationalist he said that he gave the highest importance to academics with due respect to other activities of the child.

I am a commoner and with my sneaking admiration for Communism I used to cross swords with him on politics and other social problems on our 'Mud Road.' But it was always an enlightening experience to hear his views.

He had always a soft corner for the downtrodden. On the whole a fine man to remember always.

- Mr. P.K. Augustine
(School Accountant)

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CIVILITY IS BEAUTY OF BEHAVIOUR - Tagore
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THE U.A.E.

The U.A.E. (United Arab Emirates) consists of 7 emirates. These are Dubai, Sharjah, Ajman, Abu Dhabi, Fujairah, Umm Al Quwain and Ras Al Khaimah. The capital of the emirates is 'Abu Dhabi'.

The Emirates are like states and each is governed by a ruler known as the 'Sheikh'. The U.A.E. officially came into being on December 2, 1971.

The Emirates are mainly desert land and until as recently as 5 years ago they were just vast areas of sand but due to their oil wealth they have converted most of this land into modern cities, lush green parks with beautiful fountains and colourful flowers. The emirates of Abu Dhabi and Dubai are examples of this. The smaller emirates have yet to reach this stage.

One of the advantages of planting trees and parklands is that it has encouraged more rainfall and is a boon to the desert country.

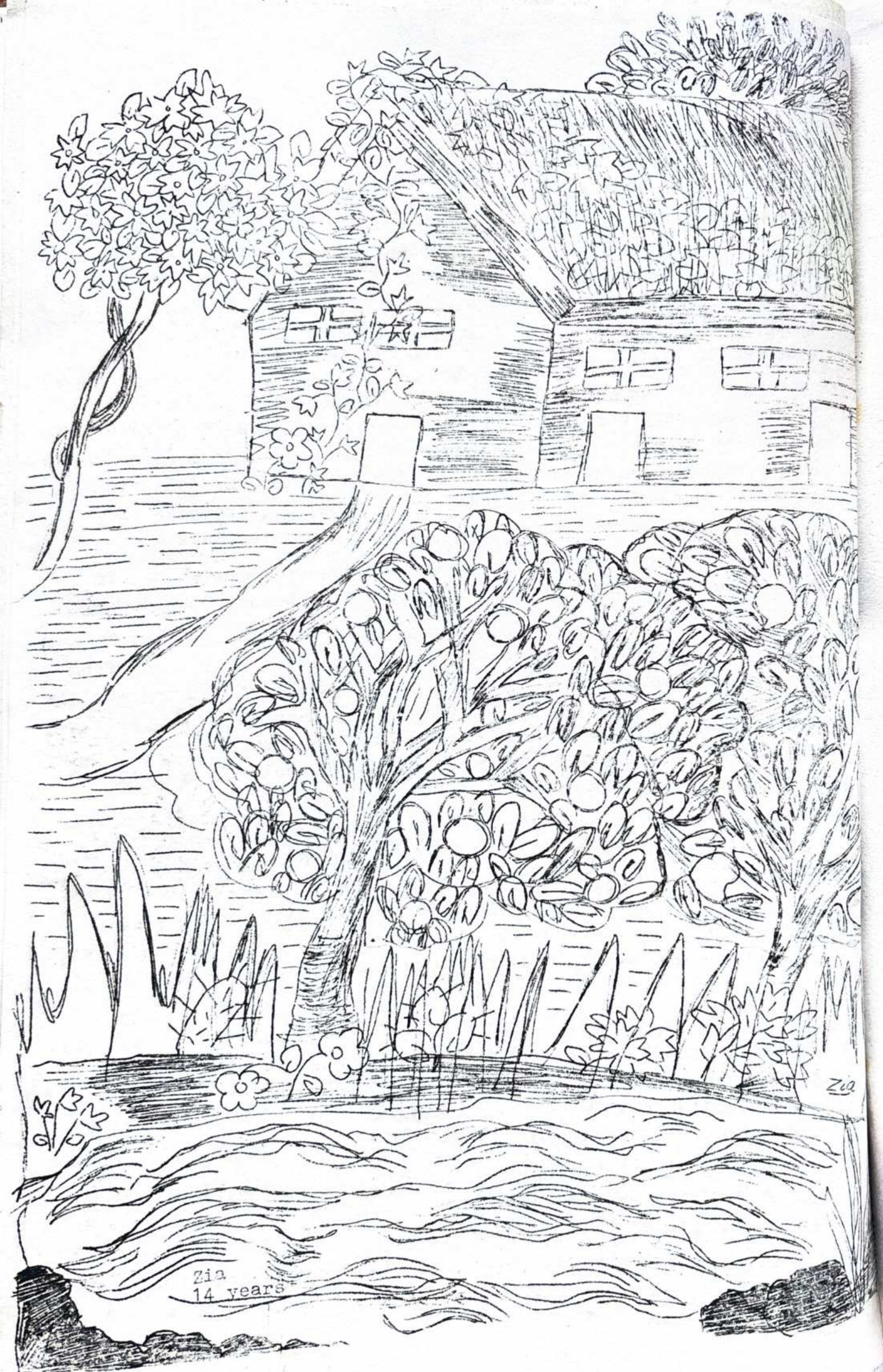
Since the country imports freely the best of everything from foodstuff to electronics is available from all parts of the world; although they are trying to develop the northern emirates agriculturally and have, some of them are successfully exporting their products to Europe during the winter months, besides partially catering to their own needs.

The Industries here are (1) Oil and Gas refineries (2) Dry Docks (3) Aluminium (4) Beverage (5) Cement (6) Hotels and Tourism (6) Building and Construction material and (7) Bank and financing. Dubai has the largest Dry Docks. A Dry Dock is a place where ships are repaired. Abu Dhabi has large oil and gas refineries. The other industries are distributed over all the emirates.

The typical sports of the U.A.E. is camel racing and falconry. Falconry is normally pursued during the temperate winter period. The two types of falcons which are used are called the 'Hurr' and the 'Shahin'. They are trained for about two to four weeks by a person called 'Saqr'.

Camel racing is pursued by the Beduin as well as the city dweller. Most of the camels who race are females since they are said to run faster than males.

In Arab countries women have to wear black garments and cover their faces in public as their status is considered to be lower than that of men.



Zia
14 years

(THE U.A.E. CONTINUED...)

The muslims are a very religious people and they pray five times a day. They are very strict about their religious customs. For example if a person chews or drinks something while fasting for 'Ramadan' he is fined.

I've had the experience of living in Nigeria, a country which also had oil wealth but there, that wealth was wasted. Here in the Emirates it has been utilised in several ways (although the population is much smaller), they have taken remarkable steps towards modernization and towards improvement of living conditions of their people.

By Shloka Mirchandaney
14 years.

BUTTERFLIES

High and low, high and low, they fly
Up and down, up and down,
They skim along with the wind.

You can see them as autumn leaves from a golden tree,
Or as little white streaks
Or in a colour as bright as the sun.

They fly in a wavy zig zag movement,
With their wings flapping very fast
And at last here they land to have a little repast.

They are creatures of joy,
Who fly all day till noon
And then their life ends all too soon.

By M. Ramaswamy
13 years.

THE RIVER

The river comes from a great mountain of melting snow. It rushes down the mountain to become a great current. It is usually called the rapids. There are many rivers: Ganges, Krishna, Yamuna, Godavari and Sindhu. Many men have sailed on the rivers. The river Ganga is considered a holy river. In Banares, people come and take holy dips in the river. But the more the boats sail on the river, the more the people bathe in the river, the more polluted it gets. We should try and keep our rivers clean. The waste chemicals of a factory are thrown into the river. So, please try and not throw anything in a river.

By Pablo
10 years.

ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS WORKSHOP AT PARSONS VALLEY

LINGERING MEMORIES

On looking back at the Environmental Education Workshop, I find memories of three distinct experiences still lingering.

The first experience was during one of those mornings when I clambered out of my warm bed, gratefully drank a cup of hot tea from Narayan, and set off to see the sun come up. It was my first morning there, and as I watched the world come alive, I saw a sight that knocked me right out of time. There, in the distance, was Mukurti Peak, with its strange tip bathed in golden sunlight; while below the tip and all around, the rest of the mountain range still waited in a dark shade to be woken up. That painting, created by the crimsoning sky, the golden peak and the still slumbering range, maintains its lustre in my memory.

The second was while we were studying animal habitats. LP succeeded in disturbing a barking deer, which scampered past me at top speed. Feeling quite excited I tried to follow it through the thick undergrowth. The path it took was such, at one place, I was literally moving on all fours. Then, for some strange reason, the heat of the chase left me completely, and I just sat there, crouched, feeling peaceful and happy. Slowly, it struck me that the eyes of a barking deer and the eyes of a crouching human being would be at the same level, which meant that, as I sat there crouched, I would be seeing the world in the same perspective as that of the barking deer. Suddenly, with this realisation, my entire surroundings took on a whole new meaning, and, for a fleeting moment, I experienced an eerie sense of identity with that barking deer. (In the film 'E.T.', did you notice that in a whole lot of scenes the camera moves at E.T.'s eye level ?)

The third was with the 'tiger' game which we played at night, and I think, needs no elaboration.

P.S.: A beautiful bird flitted across our path and somebody asked, "What bird is that ?" Idly a thought entered my mind, does it really matter whether this lovely thing is a constipated fly catcher or a woodpecker in a bad mood

- A.K.

LEARNING MATERIAL

We had been to Parsons Valley for environmental studies. I had been on this sort of trip some years ago. In this environmental study what I liked was the way they had designed the material.

Real learning material is one which helps the learner to learn unconsciously and effortlessly. Some of the salient features of the material are:

1. Very systematic approach
2. Well-designed goals, objectives and procedures
3. Inter-relationship with other subjects
4. Each material helps you to realise at the end what it wants to teach you
5. Step by step progression
6. The approach is scientific without technical vocabulary
7. All activities are connected with immediate environment
8. It has immediate use and application.

By going through this study again, I was appreciative of their approach. It helps me in making my own learning material for children.

- L.P.

THOUGHTS

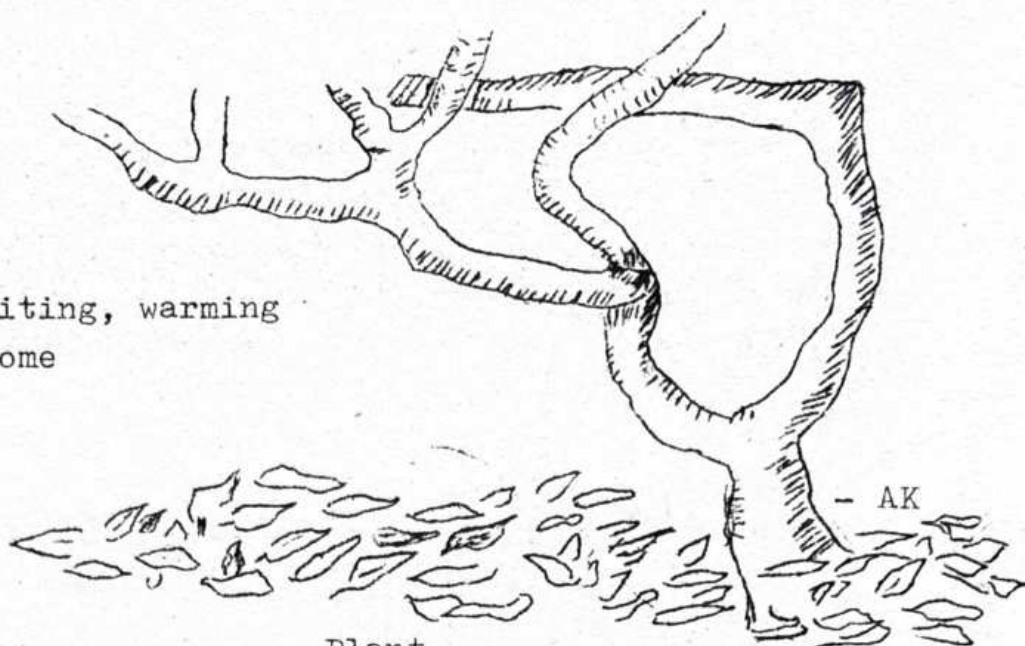
Parsons' Valley - green, green, green -
early morning mist and silver frost,
the scent of pines beside the stream,
long long walks you don't want to end -
dramatic sunsets over faraway hills -
starry skies and cosy nights -
a feeling of forever....

- NG

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*****
*                                     *
*                                     *
*                                     *
*      THERE ARE NO REWARDS          *
*                                     *
*      AND PUNISHMENTS IN NATURE     *
*                                     *
*      ONLY                          *
*                                     *
*      CONSEQUENCES                  *
*                                     *
*****
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COMPOSITIONS:

Fallen - leaves
Soft; Wavy
Whispering, inviting, warming
Reminds me of home
Serenity.



- AK

Plant

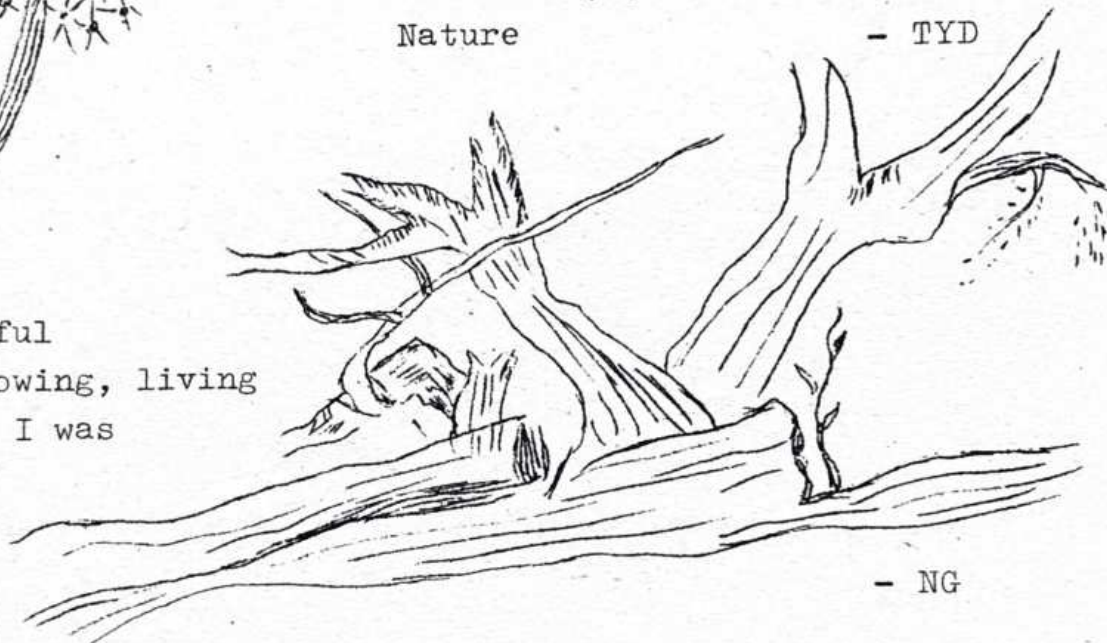
Fluffy, delicate
Swaying, flying, sailing
Beautiful, part of nature
Nature

- TYD

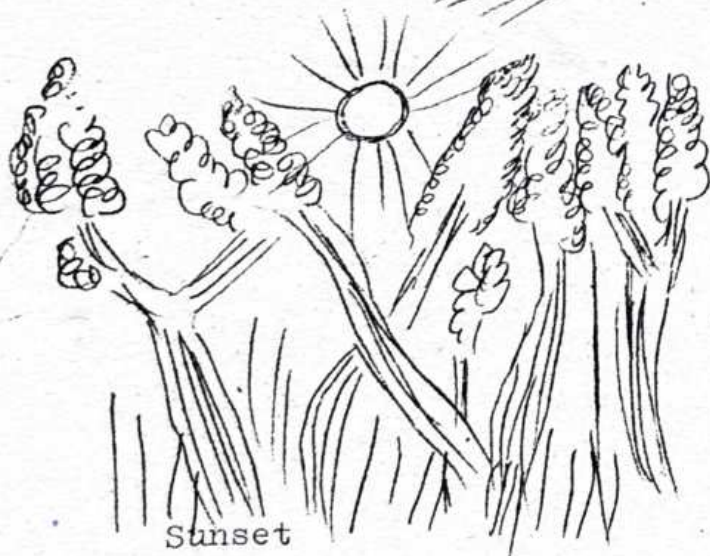


Tree

Old, beautiful
Swaying, growing, living
Born before I was
Life.



- NG



Sunset

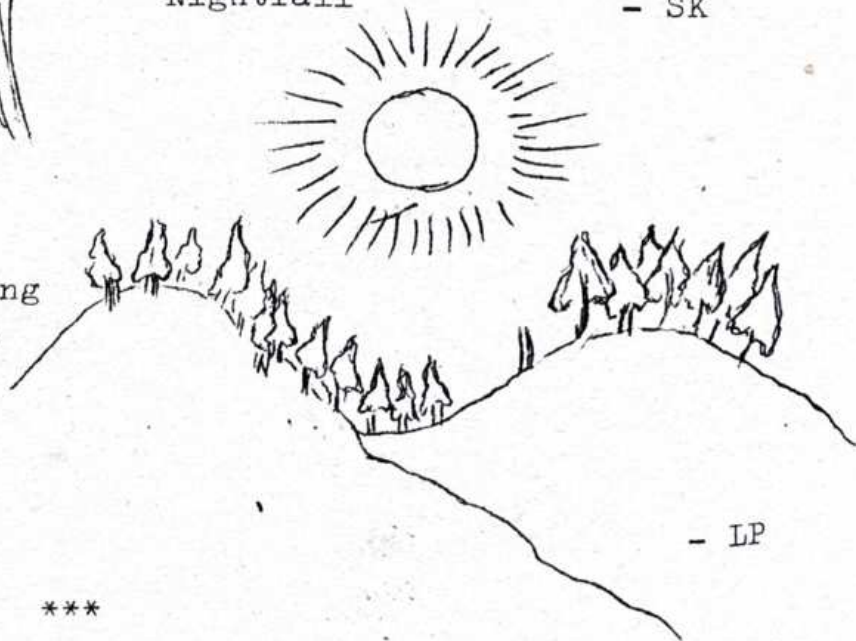
Bright and shiny
Passing, setting, warming
Making the leaves shine
Warmth.

Sun

Sunset

Diminishing, Descending,
Withdrawing
Withdrawing ball of fire
Nightfall

- SK



- LP

H I R U D I A N

Kipling wrote about the British soldier (known as Tommy) "...Tommy, this, and Tommy, that, and Tommy everywhere....."

I recall this poem as I sit writing about the quitous Hirudian - He is tall and well-built, with always a grin to greet you with.

A man of many parts, he is humble, yet has an inborn pride - He is never too proud to put his hand to any, even meanest jobs that have to be done. "The drain is blocked..." "Call Hirudian". "A large cheque has to be cashed," "Send Hirudian." "Mrs. Pearce has to be met at the airport in Coimbatore" - "Send Hirudian." The list is far from complete - One minute he is working in the fields looking scruffy. Next, you see him smartly dressed ready to go to Coimbatore. He is an epitome of the dignity of labour.

Ofcourse it is said that no one is indispensable - but I often wonder what we'd do without Hirudian.

- MR

MRS. ESTHER PRASAD INTERVIEWS HIRUDIAN

EP: Since you have worked in this School for many years we would like to write something about you in the Blue Print. So can I ask you a few questions ?

H : Yes ma.

EP: How long have you worked in this School ?

H : I have worked for 18 years.

EP: What has made you work for such a long period ?

H : Because I have many cows I supply milk to the School I also can't go with cows to other place so I been working here.

EP: What sort of work do you do ?

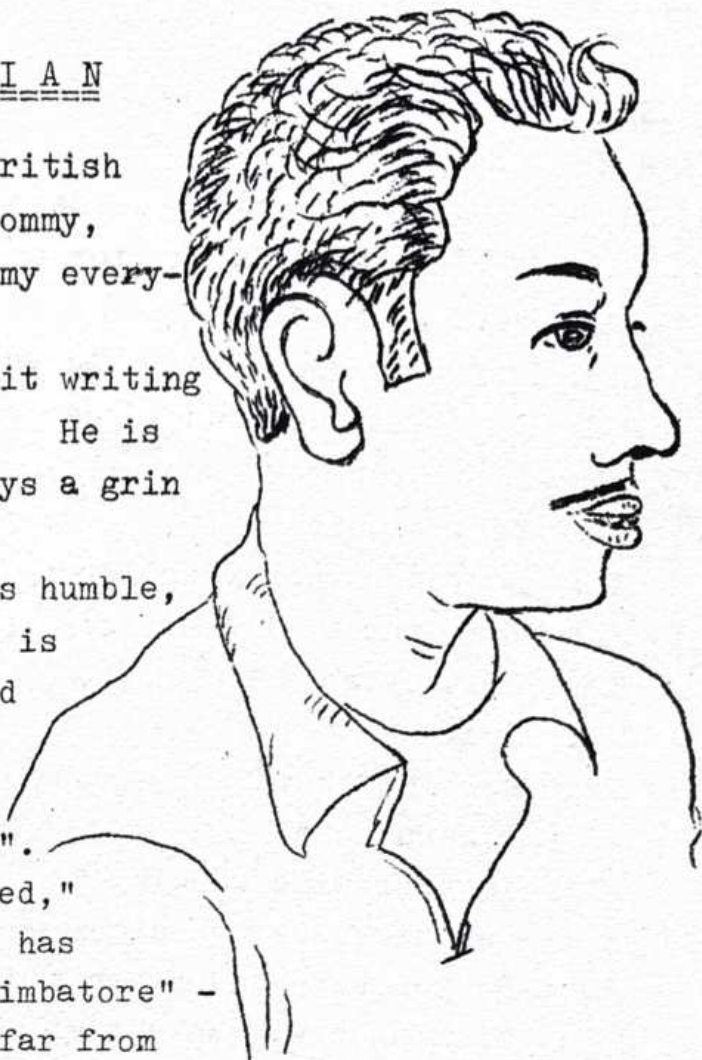
H : Mainly garden help, now all work, estate work, office work, boys' lunch taking, pipe repair, small small little jobs. All the trees in the School boundary I planting.

EP: Are you happy in your place of work ?

H : Happy ma.

EP: Do you have any difficulties ?

H : No, ma.



EP: Who was the principal when you joined ?
H : K.N.P. Nair Sir.
EP: What changes have you seen in the School since you joined ?
H : No change. (Thinks for a while) Playground before very small, now big.
EP: Where do you live ? Is your house close to the School ?
H : Near Gill compound, yes close...
EP: Is it your own house ?
H : Yes, own house.
EP: Do you have any children ?
H : Yes, three girl one boy.
EP: Do they go to school ?
H : Yes.
EP: How long have you lived in Ooty ?
H : I born here.
EP: Is your wife working ?
H : Sometimes doing labour work and helping in garden work.
EP: Do you have any other source of income ?
H : Milking cow. We get milk money and little vegetable cultivation.
EP: Do you get a lot of money ?
H : No, ma.
EP: What do you do during your free time ?
H : Everytime working - no free time. One week I get half day only.
EP: Thank you Hirudian for answering my questions.
H : Thank you, ma. (smiles and walks off).

A VISIT TO THE SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION CENTRE

There is such a hue and cry about water scarcity during the non monsoon season in the Nilgiris. Many people are under the impression that just because we get sufficient rainfall most of the year, there should be enough water right through. A visit to the Soil and Water Conservation Centre will help such people to clear this and many other doubts about soil and water management in the hilly areas.

The Nilgiris Wild Life & Environment Association organized a trip to the above mentioned centre on the 28th of February. Mr. Radcliff, the vice president, along with some other members of the association and about twelve children and we from the Blue Mountains School boarded the Soil and Water Conservation Centre bus around 9.30 a.m. just outside the central bus stand. Dr. Samraj, the officer in charge, gave us all a hearty welcome.

We first visited their museum at Theetukal. Dr. Samraj, assisted by a team of scientists, has been investigating the causes of water scarcity and soil erosion and come up with suggestions to remedy the fast deteriorating situation. Through pictures, charts, facts and figures they explained to us what has been happening in the Nilgiris and what could be done about it. Most of us know how trees help in conserving the water we get as rain. When any area is covered with trees the rain that falls is intercepted at three stages. The

canopy of branches and leaves at the top, leaves that fall and cover the earth and the roots below, form the three stages of interception. If the earth is covered with thick forests in the catchment areas no water will run off on the surface - as it occurs nowadays. Instead all the rain water will be absorbed by the earth and this will help in recharging the water bodies and thus help us in getting perennial streams. Owing to massive deforestation we not only lose the precious water we get, but also lose the fertile soil along with the surface run out. Thus it was brought to the notice that denudation was the main cause of water scarcity and soil erosion. We saw the rainfall statistical data and found that the supply curve was well above the demand curve most of the year. The data about the fertile soil content showed that there was absolutely no measurable quantity of fertile soil in the Nilgiris.

The other main cause for soil erosion is potato and tea cultivation on the slopes. These plants, according to them, have no binding capacity. Their suggestions to overcome water scarcity and soil erosion are: i) Avoid cultivation of any cash crop beyond a certain slope limit - instead sylvi-pasture (trees along with grass) is found to be ideal on these slopes. ii) If cultivation has to be done on slopes, then benched terraces with an inward gradient should be made to prevent soil erosion. iii) If the earth has to remain fertile, then mono-culture should also be avoided. iv) Implement afforestation schemes.

After this lecture we were taken to their ponds, one of which was surrounded by only barren hills and the other - their model pond, was constructed based on their research data. We found that the former was silted very badly and there was no animal life in it, while in the latter there was clear water and a lot of fish were swimming about. Many of the dams in the Nilgiris resemble the silted pond of theirs. The walk down to their model pond was very pleasant, with the Nilgiri Langurs jumping about and the grass covered with everlasting flowers. We also spotted birds like crow-pheasant and grey tit.

After having seen all those we went to Glenmorgan to see their water sheds. On reaching our destination, Dr. Samraj who was very enthusiastic, started off with his explanations. We had to remind him that it was lunch time and the children were hungry. After a sumptuous lunch, Dr. Raghunath, who also came along, explained to us how they had found out that the eucalyptus trees consumed more water. They have a pair of identical water-sheds, one covered with a man-made eucalyptus forest and another by a natural forest. They have a device which records the surface water run out in both the water sheds. According to their data, in the first few years there was no difference but as the eucalyptus trees grew bigger the surface runoff into the watershed covered by these trees, was found to become less and less implying that these trees required more water. Dr. Raghunath has also observed that the fertility is lost from the soil where eucalyptus trees are grown and called it the 'allopathic effect of the eucalyptus trees.' However he needs more proof and would like scientists to undertake this research.

When we were getting ready to go into the shola it started pouring and we had to get back. I was disappointed immensely because Dr. Samraj was going to show us some medicinal herbs. But for this, the trip proved very useful and enjoyable mostly due to the enthusiastic association members who came along. Mr. Radcliff explained to us the role of the scientists there and the role of each one of us. The scientists do research and come out with suggestions but they need people to implement their suggestions. If people are made to understand what they are losing then they will begin to take actions.

When I boarded the bus to get back, the story Dr. Samraj told the children kept coming back to my mind. It was about a boy who inherited a piece of land from his father. The boy ploughed and ploughed and found only stones in the land, so he asked himself, "I've inherited a piece of land alright, but where is the soil?" Are we going to let our future generation inherit land without its precious soil and water?

- Suseela Kumaravel.

OUR SCHOOL
GARDEN

Our School garden is full of flowers. I like watching Belu watering the plants. He is our School gardener. Sometimes when the water can is lying around, I fill it with water and water the plants. There are pansies, roses, lilies, sunflowers and many other flowers. I love our School garden. I suppose you do too !

- Sridevi T.
(10 years)



Etching by Mr. Saibal Malik

CRITIQUES

ON THE YELLOW HOUSE SHOW

When the bell rang everyone crowded into the Assembly Hall with the usual bustle and excitement.

For as long as I can remember, the Yellow Dorm shows have been quite a success and therefore I was looking forward to it with a great deal of excitement and a certain amount of curiosity.

The card on the notice board had read 'An Album of Old Favourites' and so they were, as we were about to see...

Instead of starting their dorm show in the way they usually did by ringing a silence bell and welcoming us all to their dorm show and then going on to announcing the first item, the Yellow dormers trooped in through the Assembly Hall door and through the audience singing "We all live in the Yellow Dormitory.....!" (to the tune of Yellow Submarine) a song which had been sung earlier on and had become quite popular with the children. After they had finished, it was Indu's turn ! She did a hilarious little mono-act in Hindi. Her exaggerated accent brought on a lot of laughs. Next Mrs. Rikh came onto the stage and announced that a 'Stone Age' Beauty Contest was going to begin. This item was an imaginary contest which was supposed to have been held in the Stone Ages. It showed how ridiculous beauty contests really are. This they showed by making the characters of some of the girls really stupid, in the process it became quite funny. On the whole the item was very well-acted with the cast chosen well. After this the girls sang two songs. The first, called 'Heaven is a place on earth,' was very nice and the Yellow Dorm girls as usual kept in perfect harmony. The second, called 'Cotton Fields' sounded like an Early American song and was also quite nice.

Their last item was a play called 'Spying High' and had been acted sometime before; it had been enjoyed so much that they were specially requested to do it again. It was done only by the four I.C.S.E. girls. One of the other reasons why they did the play was because the girls did not have enough time to practice since they had to study for their exams and therefore this play was convenient to do. Like its name the play was all about spying and proved to be quite humorous. They did it very well inspite of the amount of practice they had had.

They ended their dorm show singing 'Swing low sweet chariot' and 'Good Night, sweet dreams, tomorrow is another day.....' followed by a big hand of applause.

On the whole, the Yellow Dorm Show proved to be another

success though maybe a bit of the fun had gone out of watching the dorm show for some of those who already had seen all the items, but all the same I'm sure it was enjoyed by everybody including me.

- Anuja M.
(13 years)

YELLOW HOUSE SHOW

The Yellow House Show was held on 20 February 1988. It began with the girls singing 'We all live in the Yellow Dormitory.' Indu, our School-leaver, had everybody rolling with laughter with her mono-act of 'Cricket' in South-Indian Hindi. It even had an encore ! It was so good. Next was 'Stone Age Beauty Contest.' You could see the girls parading about rustling loudly in various primitive costumes of Eucalyptus leaves sown together, leopard skin dresses and fir tree leaves! I would say that 'Spying High' was really superb. It made me laugh so much but I also couldn't help feeling sentimental to think "Oh, I won't be seeing these four School leaving girls Debbie, Kanchan, Indu and Anupama in School again...." I liked the way Kanchan had her walkie-talkie in her black high heeled shoe, Debbie in her wrist-watch and the way Anupama pulled out hers from underneath her skirt !! I also liked their sinister laughs of "Ha! Ha! I'm a spy." All were watching breathlessly, I bet, to see which spy would get hold of the secret document. It was a very thrilling and mysterious skit.

All the three songs rendered by the girls were melodious and good, although I wish they had been accompanied by their own guitars! The show was really great and one worth remembering.

- Hannah Gunasingh

ON THE BLUE HOUSE, TOP HOUSES I AND II SHOW

Sridevi introduced the show by reading out the sequence of the items.

The show began with a classical song sung by Pihu and Anjali. It was a very good start to a good show. Their song filled the hall with melodious and moving music.

The next item was a candle dance performed by two little girls - Mihika and Parul. They were graceful in their own childish movements and were highly applauded.

The Hindi play called 'Patti' (meaning bandage) was quite good. Alyosha the hero of the play, carried off his part rather well. The audience burst into peals of laughter on seeing Mohanraj appear, clad in a saree!

Rani did a classical dance and did it very gracefully and well. The audience was held spellbound by her performance.

"10 Minutes on the Street" was an innovation on the earlier favourite - '30 Minutes on the Street'. This play shook the hall with roars of laughter which left us with stitches in our sides!.

An English play 'Sardines' was done by some of the Blue House girls*. It was very well done. The costumes were nice and colourful. I won't mention each person individually but on the whole, the play was well acted.

- Atreyee Borooah
(15 years)

* It was a mixed cast with a top House boy in the play too. - Ed.

ON JACK HIGGINS' "CONFESSIONAL"

Name of book : Confessional
Author : Jack Higgins
Copyright : 1985
Publisher : Pan
Type of book : General Fiction

PLOT: A Russian trained assassin called Cuchulian is sent to Ireland to keep the violence up. British Intelligence and the Provisional IRA come together in one last desperate bid to stop Cuchulian before he goes in for the final kill, the Pope.

CHARACTERS:

Liam Develin: The ex-IRA hitman who now lives a peaceful life as an English professor at Trinity College. Develin is brought back into the game as the only one trusted by the IRA and the British Intelligence.

Tanya Voroinova: Daughter of a man Cuchulian shot while in training. She was adopted by the then KGB Colonel Maslovsky, but now Maslovsky is a General and incharge of the all important Department V (Assassination Deptt.)

Cuchulian: The assassin who can be cold and deadly at one moment and warm at the next. Cuchulian has a very complex character and is never totally deadly. He has a talent for acting and is not sure who he really is: Father Harry Cussane the kind priest, Cuchulian the deadly assassin or Mikkhail Kelly the man who is used by the KGB. During the

whole book the reader feels that Cuchulian's mind is in turmoil.

CRITIQUE: Jack Higgins has written a superb book full of suspense and thrill. I feel that the author has created real characters like normal humans who are torn within themselves by emotions like loyalty and love. The author creates humans not supermen. The book is full of suspense, deception, drama, emotions and is racy. As the book races to a climax, the reader feels the breathtaking suspense so much that he can't put down the book. I would recommend this book to anyone who can understand it.

- Thomas Sebastian
(12 years)

ON JULES VERNE'S 'TWENTY THOUSAND LEAGUES UNDER THE SEA'

Jules Verne was a great author. He usually wrote stories on adventures and interesting and exciting books. 'Around the World in Eighty Days', 'The Journey to the Centre of the Earth,' and 'Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea,' are a few of his well-known books. I have read all of them.

I liked 'Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea' very much.

The story is about a submarine (Nautilus) which strikes all those who cross over the ocean.

The Captain of the Nautilus was an extremely helpful, intelligent, brave and calm man called Captain Nemo.

Captain Nemo didn't like his life on the land or some people who lived on Earth. That is why he collected some good and brave sailors and some intelligent engineers to build a strong submarine to live underwater in the Nautilus.

The main reason why I enjoyed reading this book was because it was full of adventures.

I have seen the movie also. It was beautifully made. The book is worth reading a second time.

- Alyosha W.
(14 years)

THE HILLS

There are hills in India.
On the hills there are old trees and young trees. The old leaves fall down on the ground when the sun sets. It sets behind the hills. The rain comes down and the trees on the hills grow fast. The hills may be wet when the rain comes.

- Mallikarjuna
(9 years)

ABOUT EXCURSIONS

SILENT VALLEY

A bright, sunny morning
Unveiling the Nilgiri hills,
So full of life,
Hidden among the sholas, growing in perfection.

As I stood in the valley below,
Sensing an invitation to climb them,
The temptation to see beyond
Came over me.

Slowly and steadily I began to climb.
There was curiosity mingled with hope in my heart.
And with every step,
The feeling grew.

One more step and I could see beyond.
Just another hill, waiting to be climbed.
I climbed that and the next,
With the glow of curiosity ever so bright,
And sweat on my brows.

I climbed yet another hill to see the mysteries
that lay beyond.
Down below lay Silent Valley,
A priceless gift of nature.

Greedy to get a better view,
I mounted the next hill,
Scarcely knowing it might be the last.

Once again I saw the paradise below.
A breath-taking sight it was,
The silhouette of Silent Valley through the mist.
Looking down at the virgin land,
I took a deep breath of satisfaction.

As the sun climbed higher in the sky,
I retreated, the sight still fresh in my mind,
And wondered if I should ever
See it in my life.

By Natasha W.
(16 years)

BANGITAPPAL

A couple of days ago, we were in a beautiful place tucked away in the huge mountains. This beautiful place is called Bangitappal.

Bangitappal is a place covered with greenery. The "sholas" were full of trees of various shades of green and brown. Some trees were of that fresh, bright green colour and some were of a dozen darker shades.

The stream which flowed by had clear and cold water which shimmered when the sun rays fell on it. The floor of the stream was studded with rocks and stones. Occasionally a tadpole or two could be seen swimming about.

The meandering stream is joined by the mountain streams flowing through the "sholas", at intervals. It would be wide

and deep in some places and narrow and shallow in some places. A tree or two would hang low, a little above the stream, forming a shady and beautiful area for the trouts to lie at rest.

After flowing through a certain distance, this stream fell over some high rocks forming a waterfall of breathtaking beauty and grace.

The hills surrounding this area are covered with tussocks of green grass and "sholas" which are found only along the spurs. If we were lucky, we could see now and then, standing on the mountain and looking at us - atleast it seemed as though it was looking down at us.

There were various types of birds there which were rather unusual and beautiful. They were not bothered by our unwanted presence and carried on with their singing or whatever they were doing.

Sometimes we went out for walks up the green mountain and through the sholas. On such occasions, the mist sailed past us producing a cool and fresh sensation in me. It was an enchanting experience.

Leaving this exhilarating place was sad and I will always look forward to going back there.

By Atreyee Borooah
(15 years)

MUDUMALAI

Passing through the thick green brown forest, trying to sight animals, I could feel the heat, and the drops of sweat running down my scalp after the cool Ooty weather.

Getting out of the bus, puffing

We had trouble about our cottages; we were separated in three groups. It was really tough walking from place to place but it was good exercise.

It was a beautiful sight to see the huge elephants. Watching the baby elephant, who had lost his mother in the jungle was quite a sad thing. The mother had died by eating an explosive (left carelessly in a bush) which had burst.

On the safari ride we tried seeing a panther, but were able to see only a few animals: monkeys, deer, wild boar, wild elephants, peacocks, mongoose and different type of birds.

By Ishita G.L.
(13 years)

A VIEW FROM 'MUKURTI PEAK'

In silence I admired,
The beautiful scenery below,
Lazily the hills were stretched out,
Covered in velvety carpet of green.

Up and down the mountains,
Ran little trickling streams,
And patches of dense green sholas,
In different shades of green.

Now and then a wild bird would twitter
And a jungle fowl would be heard.
On a hill a sambur grazes
But nothing else stirs.

Then slowly
I shift my gaze
And the mountains slowly fade away
The mists making them a bluish haze.

By Anuja M.
(13 years)

THE FULL MOON

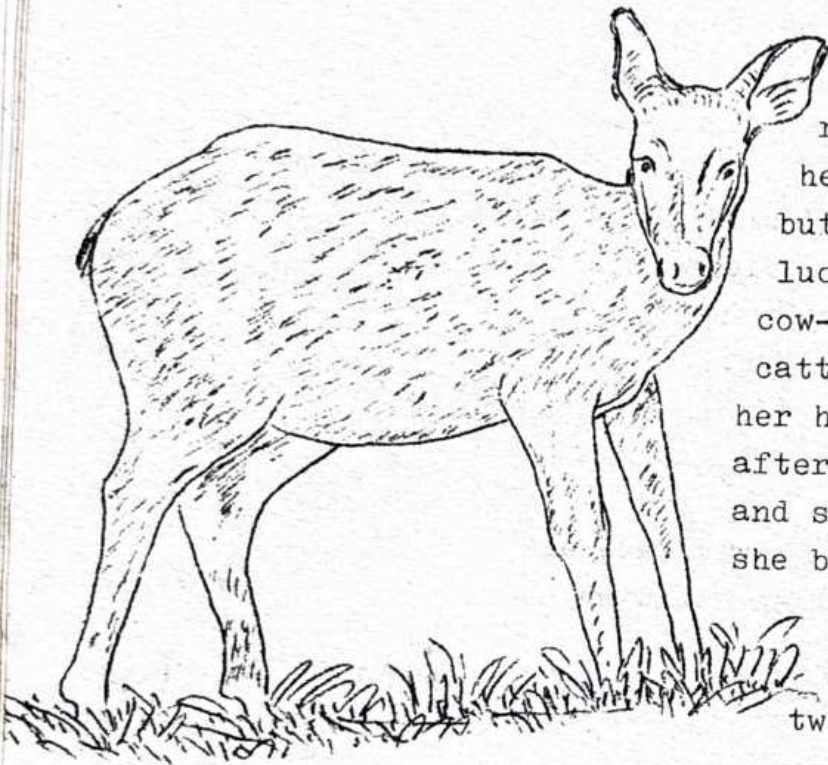
As I was travelling in the bus,
I looked out of the window,
There in front of me I saw,
A glorious scene...
The moon was peering through the trees,
And what a moon !
A big, beautiful, pale, full moon.
It had cast its silver light upon the earth
Making it seem warm and bright
As the night went on, the moon lost its pale glow
And became a bright white.
Then when dawn came,
The moon was not the same
It was fading away,
In the bright light of the morning sun.

By Vinay T.
(14 years)

LIFE STORY OF A DOE CALLED SITA.

This is the story of a doe called Sita.

Her life began about five years ago on a cold stormy night when her mother gave birth to her. At that time she was feeble and was dependent on her mother. But unfortunately soon after her birth, her mother died. Though it was cold and she was hungry, she somehow managed to survive until morning.



She was almost half dead as the morning rolled in. She cried for help in her feeble voice but help did not come. But luck came her way when a cow-herd who was grazing the cattle found her and took her home. There he looked after her with loving care and soon as the years rolled by, she became a beautiful doe.

She is now, as far as I know, a proud mother of two fawns !

- Anjali Prabhu
(13 years)

AN INCREDIBLE SIGHT

Once my friends, Nikhil, Atish and myself went with my father in our jeep to the Sundarban jungles for a safari. We were planning to stay for three days. But when we reached the



rented bungalow, the man there said that they were expecting another couple, so we could stay only for two days. Anyway, we thought we should make the best of our short stay, so we went to our room and unpacked. It was a very hot day, and there was a small pool nearby. My father suggested that we should go for a swim and then explore a bit. So we all changed into our trunks, took our towels and extra clothes and set off for a refreshing swim. When we got in the pool, we saw that it was about four feet deep. We had great fun playing in the water. While we were swimming, we heard a strange rustling sound. It was as if something was slithering in the dry leaves. Out of curiosity, we got out of the pool and dried ourselves. Then we ventured a little further and saw the most incredible sight we had ever seen. We saw a huge python which had almost swallowed a full deer! The reptile's stomach was bulging out like a big barrel. When it saw us, it got angry and opened its mouth. It wanted to attack, but it was so full that it could not budge an inch. At first we were too fascinated to move or say anything. But then my father took out his camera and started taking pictures of the snake. After he had taken about seven photographs, he said we should leave the python alone. We went back to the bungalow.

When we returned to Calcutta, we had the pictures published in the newspaper. Everyone said it was a very good set of photographs.

- Pablo Chatterji

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(10 years)

A VISITOR

We had an interesting guest from Madras, who stayed with us a few days - Mr. V.J. Rajan, Honorary Secretary of the Madras Naturalists' Society. He held a slide show-cum-talk on wildlife and environment, which we appreciated and enjoyed.

Mr. Rajan, an active person in his sixties, developed an interest in the field at an early age. He has always been fond of travelling. On one of his excursions as a child, a wildlife warden introduced him to the joys of birdwatching. This grew into a wider interest in animals and plants, a hobby he pursued while working with the P & T Department. After his retirement, he made it a full-time commitment.

During the controversial Silent Valey issue, he came up against the shortsightedness of some politicians with regard to conservation. It was then that he decided to visit schools to impress upon children the importance of our natural environment. As he says, some of them may become politicians or big officials one day and this kind of exposure might help them to

make sensible decisions. He has visited over seventy schools and has found children everywhere keenly interested and responsive.

- Vrinda Ashoka

THE TREES

Mr. Rajan told us about wild life, trees and animals. He told us that many trees were being cut down. And many of these beautiful places are being destroyed because people are cutting down the trees. People don't have any kindness for the trees. They only think of themselves. Only some people have kindness for the trees. Mr. Rajan said, "When you grow big you should not let people cut trees and you yourself should not cut down trees."

- Mihika T.R.
(9 years)

THE SNAKE

Mr. Rajan told us about wild life. He told us about animals and trees. You shouldn't buy snake skin articles, like bags and belts because it's bad to kill snakes. Just because the snake's skin is so beautiful people kill snakes. People kill snakes for making belts.

- Parul Dube
(9 years)

THE CHEETAH

Mr. Rajan showed us a slide show yesterday. He told us about wild life. There is not a single cheetah left in India. The African jungle has cheetahs. The cheetahs we see on T.V. are not Indian cheetahs. They take skins of cheetahs from the African jungle. Just for the skin of the cheetah, they kill the cheetah. They use the cheetah's skin for prayers and also for many other things. You should not kill any animals.

- Anita Kotwal
(10 years)

IVORY

Mr. Rajan showed us a slide-show about nature on the 10th of May. He showed us animals, mountains, snakes, trees etc. He showed us slides of two huge elephants from Mudumalai. We could see their lovely long tusks. So, as soon as we saw it, he told us never to buy things made out of ivory. On someone's birthday someone gave a brooch made of ivory. And from now I just hope no one buys things made of ivory.

- Sridevi T.
(10 years)

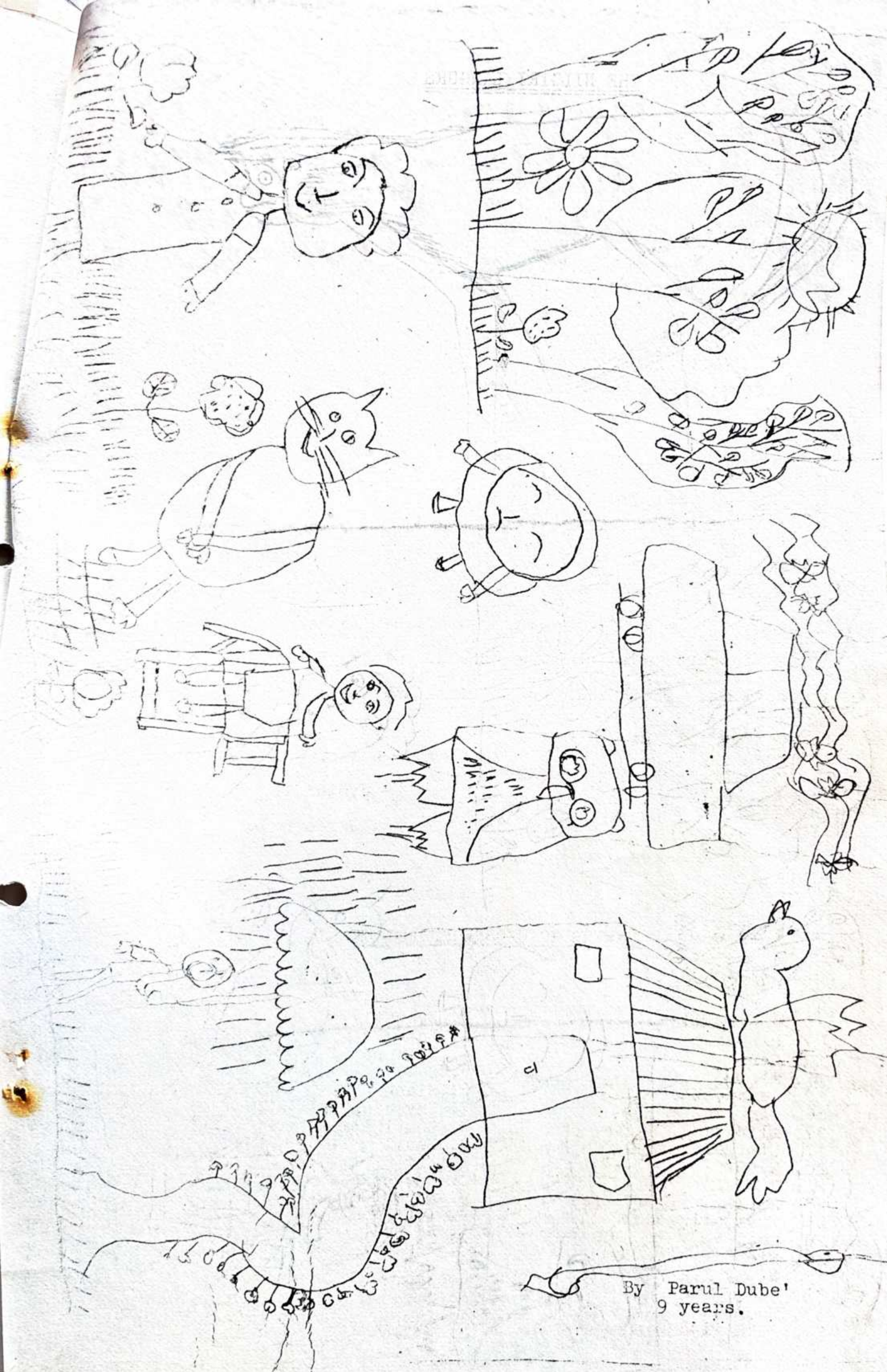
IVORY AND SNAKE SKIN

Mr. Rajan told us that you should not buy ivory. He said that poachers do this work nearly every day.

Whoever sees a man killing an animal please stop him and one more thing, don't buy anything made of snake skin. They use snake skin to make many many things. Don't kill snakes. They help farmers and human beings.

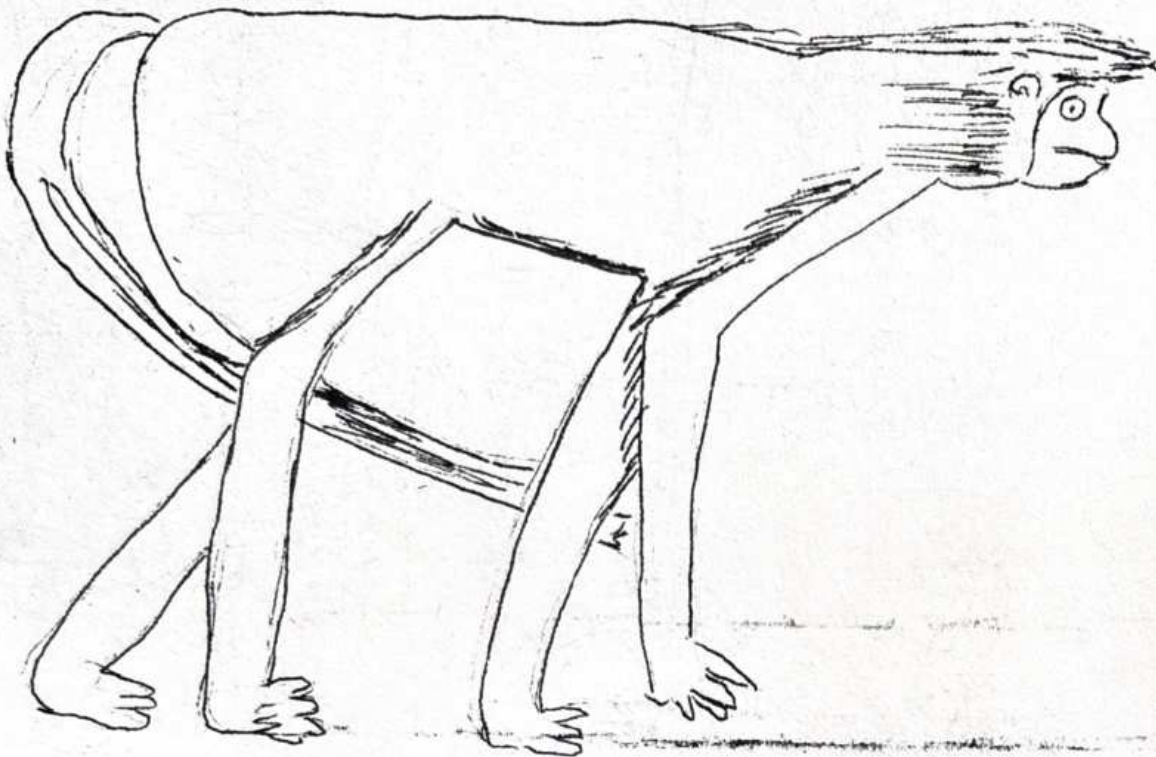
We should not kill any elephants for their beautiful ivory tusks.

- Kartik D.
(9 years)



By Parul Dube'
9 years.

THE NILGIRI LANGURS



The Langurs were swinging from tree to tree.
The baby Langur was jumping to the mother one.
The Langurs were in the shola. Their tails
were long. Their bodies were black and their hair
was light brown.

- Jyothi T.

(7 years)

ANSWERS TO CROSSWORD PUZZLE

ACROSS

1. Resignations
8. Constable
10. Knack
11. Mist
12. Astonishes
16. Rim
17. Illegal
18. Stapler
20. Warn
22. Foe
23. Amp.
24. Irritating
26. Char
29. Sis
30. Nippy
32. Sea
33. Moor
34. Acknowledged

DOWN

2. Earnestly
3. Into
4. Tremors
5. Oak
6. Slash
7. Skyscrapers
8. Combinations
9. Basil
13. Nit
14. Images
15. Aghast
19. Loathsome
21. Notes
22. Fantail
25. Rap
27. Air
28. Amid
31. Yak

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