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Life's Many Sides

GETTING STUCK

By TON THAT THIEN

Has it ever occured to you that a columnist is like a motor car? When he runs out of material, he gets stuck, like an automobile out of gaz. When he lives amidst a political mess, he also often gets stuck, because he drives either on a slippery road-and may end in a ditch (which in political terms is jail)-, or if he is not a good driver, he may get stuck in this mess, like a car getting stuck in the mud.

There are people who prefer driving cars with automatic gear shifts on very good and broad highways: there is nothing for the driver to do but let himself be carried along by his powerful vehicle, and nothing is likely to happen to him unless he slumbers off and lands in a dicth or against a tree, or worse, comes a cross the path of some fool driving without any consideration for others or regard for traffic regulations, gets into a lane on which he is not supposed to be and bump into others. Many innocent people who are good citizens having great respect for the law and much consideration for others, have died in this unfortunate way.

The safest course for a man who does not want to get hurt would naturally be not to show his face on the roads and to stay at home. But if he loves the excitement of life, and likes to see what goes on around him, or watch the beautiful landscapes, he cannot suffer to stay at home, and just watch TV or listen to the radio. He would have to go out. The best course open to him would then be to avoid the highways and the powerful cars, chose the little lanes, stop by a lovely stream, or on top of a beautiful hill, lie down, look at the blue sky and muse about life, and what it can offer. Then he will be stuck no more. He can let his imagination run wild, and allow his eyes and mind to be assailed by all sorts of visions of a beautiful future for his country and for the world.

Such a course was often chosen by many wise men about which many of us have read some time or other in our life. But there are not many such men around. Most of mankind lovethe flashing and dashing side of life, the sparkling big cars, the expensive clothes, elaborate food drowned in Champagne or some such stuff, lush villas, pretty women, etc...

Of course, to have all that, a man needs money. He may be someone who believes in working hard to get it. And it would be perfectly legitimate to spend the fruit of his labour on getting the best things out of life. Or he may be lucky, strike gold, or oil, or win the first prize at a lottery. It would be perfectly legitimate also for him to indulge in whatever he may fancy. Or, he may decide on the least line of resistance, and simply steal the money he needs. He may or may not get away with it. But he would be the fool who gives the good driver the ever present feeling of danger when driving on the highways.

Letters to the Editor