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I WAS DEEPLY ROOTED

(continued from previous page)

I couldn't remember either, but I suddenly remembered something else—that there was a very large mathematics section in the Library. And, having "done" Logic 1 last year, I reasoned thus: "I may possibly have lost caste through my display of ignorance. I do not wish to lose caste, especially in the presence of an intellectual female who wears such a cute little bow in her hair. I can regain caste by finding out the solution of this problem. I can find out the solution by looking it up. Therefore——"

"I'll go and look it up for you," I syllogised.

She looked awfully grateful. So I went over to the Mathematics section.

* * *

IT was a pretty grim quarter. There were shelves and shelves of books full of symbols and figures and formulae. I didn't like to ask any of the people reading in the vicinity how to find the square root of a number, or what book they'd recommend me to look up, because I thought that perhaps they mightn't have known, and then they'd have been even more embarrassed than I was because that's the sort of thing you expect people to know if they read mathematical books in a Library. So I collected a large pile of big books that looked like compendia of mathematical knowledge—sort of Will Durant-Van Loon books that tell you everything you want to know—and I took them back to the girl with the bow in her hair. Her hair was slightly auburn, and I like auburn hair.

"We ought to be able to find out from these," I said. It was a big pile.

* * *

SO I started going through them. There was a *History of Mathematics* and an *introduction to the Philosophy of Arithmetic* and a *Principles of Mathematics* and even a *Principles of Relativity* which had got in by mistake, and lots of others. I thought I'd better employ the genetic approach, so I opened the *History of Mathematics* and looked up "square root" in the index.

Well, there was a lot about square roots in this book. I found that Archimedes in his "Mensuration of the Circle" worked out a number of them. Even Omar Khayyam, that worthiest of pagans, besides "elevating to a *method* the solution of algebraic equation by intersecting conics," worked out square roots. And an individual with the intriguing name of Tabit Ibn Korra worked them out in Arabic. But unhappily, this book didn't tell you *how* Archimedes and Omar and Tabit worked out square roots. It told you almost everything else, though.

The *Principles of Relativity* I discarded after a brief browse. For one thing, it hadn't got an index—which I always think is so thoughtless—and for another thing it ended as follows: "These are convariant tensors of the First Order," and I always feel that a book should have a nice comfortable "l'envoi" at the end and not finish up baldly and brutally with "These are convariant tensors of the First Order."

Foundations of Mathematics hadn't got an index either, and *Principles of*

(continued on next page)