

(continued from previous page)

Mathematics was a bit soulful—all except an interesting bit about "Zeno's attacks on the continuum," which I read through because I am sentimental and remembered my James Jeans-Auden-Van Gogh adolescence.

But in the *Philosophy of Arithmetic* I got hot on the trail. It told you how to work out the square root analytically. This was good. "By the principles of involution, we see that there will be two figures in the root, hence the number consists of the square of the 10's plus the units of the root, which equals the square of the 10's plus twice the 10's into the units plus the square of the units." The book then told you how to work it out synthetically, but I didn't read any more because we only wanted one method. I put a piece of paper in the book to mark the place.

Then there was a book on Higher Arithmetic, which was even better, because there on page 47 was an illustration of the working out of a square root,



"... It was a pretty grim quarter"

and, sure enough, the figures were divided into pairs from the left (or was it from the right?) just as my learned girl friend had stated. And there was a lot of helpful comment written in tiny type beside it, such as:

"20 has been found, and 20^2 , or f^2 , subtracted, thus 147.56 must contain $2fn$ plus n^2 or $2.20.m$ plus n^2 . Therefore, by dividing by 2.20, or 40, n can be found approximately. Therefore n equals 3. Therefore $2fn$ plus n^2 , or $2.20.3$ plus 3^2 equals 129 equals $2fn$ plus n^2 ."

This was, I felt, the real goods, so I put another piece of paper in the place. There was my lost caste, under the table there. I had only to stretch out my hand to pick it up.


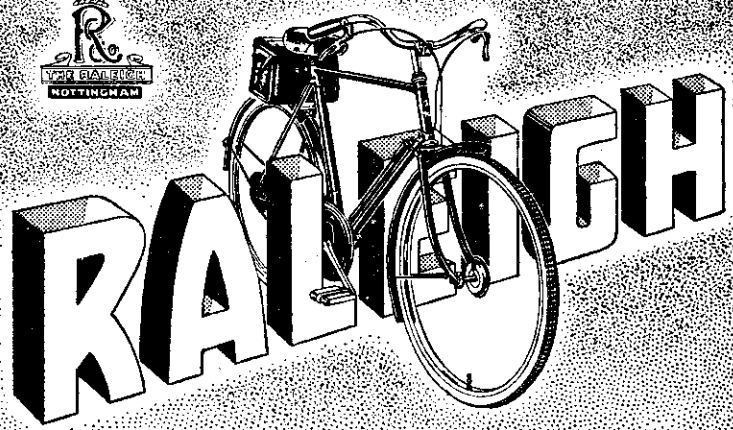
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THEN I took the last book, which was an enormous volume full of figures and tables and cobwebs. It took me a little while to discover what it dealt with. It was, I found, all about the relations of Jupiter and Saturn. There were no illustrations; there was nothing except logarithms and formulae. There were 544 pages. I suddenly felt very humble.

"Here you are," I said, taking up the two books I'd marked. "This'll show you how to do it. It's really quite simple."

My voice seemed to echo in a curious manner. I looked up. The girl with the bow in her hair had gone. So had everyone else except the Librarian, who was waiting to put the lights out and looking at me in a rather unkindly fashion.

These Librarians just don't appreciate the search for Knowledge for its own sake.

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