

THE DANCE OF SHIVA. By Dr. ANANDA KENT COOMARASWAMY.
Sunwise Turn, Inc.

THE plot thickens. There is certainly no one equal to Dr. Coomaraswamy for tangling up situations, perhaps not always too pleasantly. Nor can one be very sure how far Dr. Coomaraswamy is himself responsible, for wherever he is the line between *meum* and *tuum* becomes gossamer of a kind that has seen better days. Consider the first child, Narada, who is a bastard. Was the father the 'worm' after all? We have nothing for it but the unsupported statement of its mother, the "worm's" second wife. This may be doubted. Even the colour tells us nothing, for there were plenty of pigmented people in London at the date of the story.

When the 'worm's' first wife has divorced him, and he is married to the second wife, one might imagine that complications would be less. Not at all. The first time he leaves her alone, he sets up a harem in India, while she, travelling thither to join him under the charge of his best friend, Dr. Paira Mull, immediately begins an intrigue with this fascinating Panjabi. The 'worm' seems rather to have welcomed this domestic tangle, as Paira Mull is very well off.

The second child, Rohini, is the offspring of this liaison. About this time, the 'worm' is getting out a book of Indian folk songs, and he actually tries to include a number of translations made by his wife's lover as his own. However, he is forced by her (after a stormy scene) to make a very inadequate acknowledgment, and we are given to understand that he only does this because the show can be so easily given away, the "worm" not knowing ten words of the language from which he is supposed to be translating. Isn't this complex enough for anybody? Ah, no! Dr. Coomaraswamy is merely flapping his wings icily. He can stage much stronger dramas. So you see the "worm" and his wife in New York--of all places! The first thing that strikes him is the High Cost Of Living, and he

hastens to offer his wife to the first comer. A friendly agreement is reached in conference by which a divorce shall be obtained, and a new marriage contracted with Alice's new lover. I forget the disposition of the children, whether it was odd man out, or the first Jack, who had to look after the business.

But, three months later, the tragedy begins. The 'worm' is struck by the appalling thought that perhaps Alice's new lover may not fall in so simply with the scheme. He manifests reluctance to pay the expenses of the divorce, arguing with some show of good sense that he does not see why he should pay for relieving another man of his rubbish. The situation is complicated by the fact that Alice has again become pregnant.

The 'worm' resolves upon a remarkably ingenious solution of his troubles. Past experience has shown him that his wife, when in a "delicate condition of health," cannot stand a sea voyage. Previous to the birth of the second child, she had nearly miscarried and nearly died. "How then," thinks he to himself, "can I clear myself once and for all? I will make up to my wife. I will pull out the pathetic stop. I will make mischief between her and her lover. I will forge telegrams, and do anything else that may be necessary. But I will get her to go over to England. That will put an end to the child, and very likely to her too, and then perhaps Paira Mull will take at least one of the children—his own—off my hands. Narada, too, is not legally my child at all. He is just a nameless bastard." So thinks the "worm," and so he does. The only detail in which his scheme goes wrong is that his wife manages, against all odds, to survive her miscarriage.

All this time, the 'worm' himself is living with a German prostitute; and, as he finds this expensive, he tries to keep the wolf from the door by getting this unfortunate woman to copy out various items from the works of his wife's lover, which are not very well known in America, and she proceeds to hawk them about New York. The man whose property they are will not be likely to hear of

it, as the inexplicable conduct of Alice has more or less broken his heart, and he has become a sort of hermit.

But the wife turns up again like a bad penny. The 'worm' has by this time got rather tired of the German girl, and he goes off to Chicago after another woman, leaving his wife and his mistress to share a room at the McAlpin. Instead of quarreling, they made Friends, and the wholly icily murderous plot is laid bare. Alice now makes strenuous efforts to get back her lover, but he is one of those people who learn by experience. He merely exposes the "worm's" attempt to pirate his property.

It seems to us that Dr. Coomaraswamy leaves the story at what might have been its most interesting complication. It stops right there. The "worm" gets a job as curator of the Oriental Department of some Art Museum in Boston, and settles down with his wife to live happy ever after. I feel that this may be life, but it is not art.

A MOURNER CLAD IN GREEN.