

Want to get rattled?

By MINI

THERE is a class of people who, I am certain, should spend a spell in a psychiatrist's couch. They are for all purposes normal people but seeking an outlet for some suppressed emotions. I refer to the Marauders, who don't believe in leaving alone articles on my office desk.

They, my colleagues in office, come (during busy hours!) and go, after doing what damage they can. I am not one of those who can tell people where to get off and hence destined to suffer in silence.

The poor desk calendar is often their first target, especially if there is a pencil or ball pen around. As they talk, they doddle, on the calendar till there is hardly any white space left. In the process, they efface some important telephone numbers.

If the calendar is kept out of harm's way, they pick up the paper weight. It is a top in their hands and they twirl it till it falls down with a bang or upsets the inkpot. Of course, they are sorry, but in five minutes, they will be back to the same mischief.

Disturbed nap

Or, for a change, they pitch on the pin-cushion which they prick till the saw-dust is all over the table. "I am sorry" comes in handy and to make amends, they try to clean the table upsetting in the bargain the lid on the water glass. Gem clips are often irresistible. One after another they are twisted and turned out of shape and consigned to the waste paper basket. Then there is the calling bell, with which they meddle, oftentimes giving false calls to the peon who wears, as a result, a perpetual scowl on his face. Nobody likes to be disturbed

from his nap and unnecessarily at that

I was at my wit's end and thought that the best way out would be to remove the articles and keep the table clean. This worked, upto a degree. But then, even if one doesn't have work to do, appearances have to be kept up which is not possible with a clean desk. And you can't, everytime you want to call the peon, look for the call bell in the table drawer. Or, for that matter, keep the paper weight inside with papers flying all over. After all the appurtenances serve some purpose and what is more, give a man the appearance of importance.

It works

Then, I happened to meet a friend with whom I fell to talking about my woes. He is one of those chaps bursting with bright ideas; some sort of Jeeves, you may say.

"Simple," he said. "I'll provide you with a solution tomorrow morning. It will rattle those grown-up innocents."

And, next morning, he placed on my table, with great aplomb, of all things, a rattle!

"What is this toy for?" I asked, amazed.

"Calm down, my boy, just keep it on your table."

And I did as I was told. The result has been unbelievable. The marauders still come. They are inevitably drawn to the rattle and play with it. They leave every thing else severely alone. Even the paperweight! One gets used to the whirring noise and the sight of silly adults playing with a rattle. And if they make bold to ask what it is for, I merely smile.

If you don't believe me, try it. It works!