



**ONCE UPON A TIME
MANY MOONS AGO
(ABOUT 1898)...**

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A pictorial history of
road transport in India :
design, illustration
and text by
DESMOND DOIG

 **DUNLOP INDIA**



Pawan Kumar
Dunlop



*Pawan Kumar Ruia, Chairman
DUNLOP India Ltd*

Dunlop on the Move

When the motorcar celebrated 75 years on the Indian road, it was coincidentally also the 75th anniversary of Dunlop in India. It was therefore but natural that Dunlop India felt that the occasion required something very special to commemorate it. As the Company that had been associated more intimately with cars and on the road vehicles than any other, Dunlop felt that a gesture that went beyond the conventional was called for. Desmond Doig, noted for witty illustrations in The Statesman, was commissioned to outline history of the car in Indian roads in his characteristically witty fashion. The result was a collector's item that rejoiced the hearts of everyone who saw it.

As Dunlop India starts a new chapter in its association with Indian roads and the first tyres of the newly revived Dunlop India Ltd roll out today, I felt it appropriate to reprint this classic little booklet. Bringing readers the style and wit of Desmond Doig and reliving those early days of motoring and adventure.

I have always believed that as we move forward and embrace new technologies and modern practices we need to constantly look at the good things from the past. New knowledge after all comes from old knowledge. It is the intersection and interaction of the old with the new that opens up new systems of thinking. The old world charm which Desmond Doig has been able to capture as he drives us down the motor car's finest moments is a great source of inspiration for me as we start our new chapter at Dunlop.

I hope that this will be a befitting tribute to the Company's successful roll out on the Indian roads, signalling Dunlop to be on the move again. Back in the driving seat of power.

27 August 2006

Once upon a time many moons ago (about 1898)...





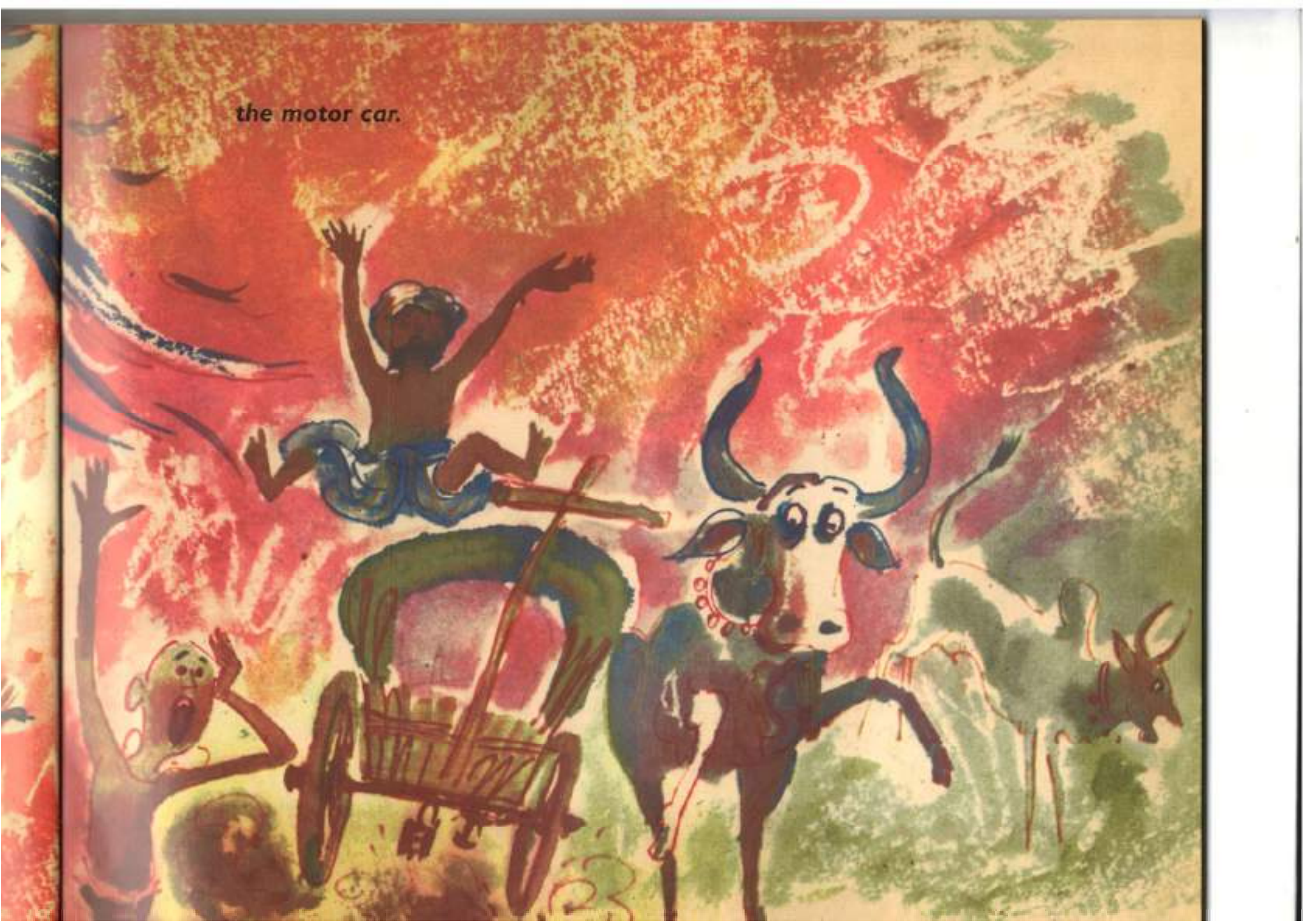
an unsuspecting India was invaded by...







the motor car.



In Calcutta the very first motor car was built to resemble a quacking, flapping swan with devastating results.

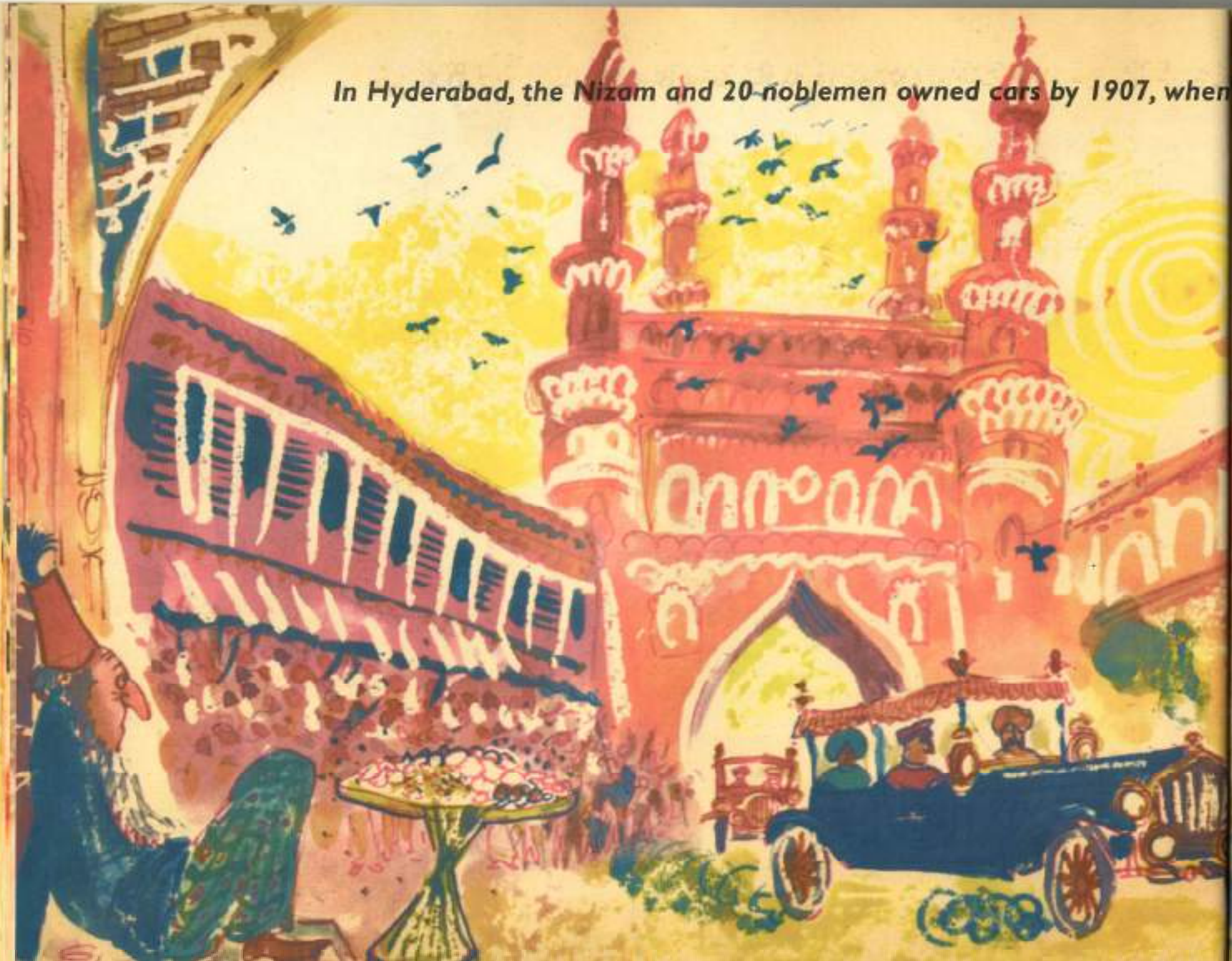


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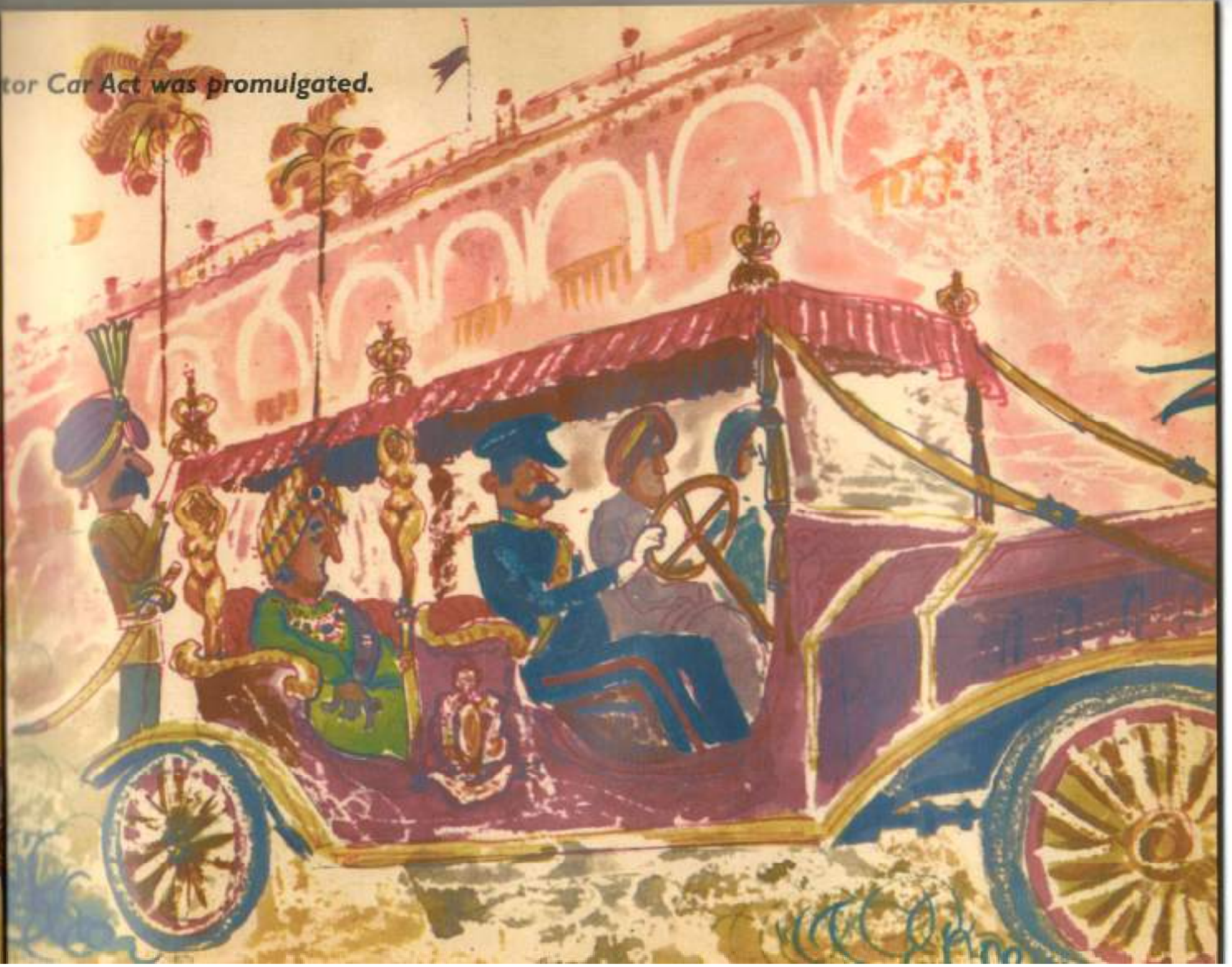
In Bombay in 1897 the first cars were three Oldsmobiles bought by Mr. Jamshedji Tata, Mr. Rustom Cama and Mr. Cavasji Wadia. They revolutionized the city.



In Hyderabad, the Nizam and 20 noblemen owned cars by 1907, when

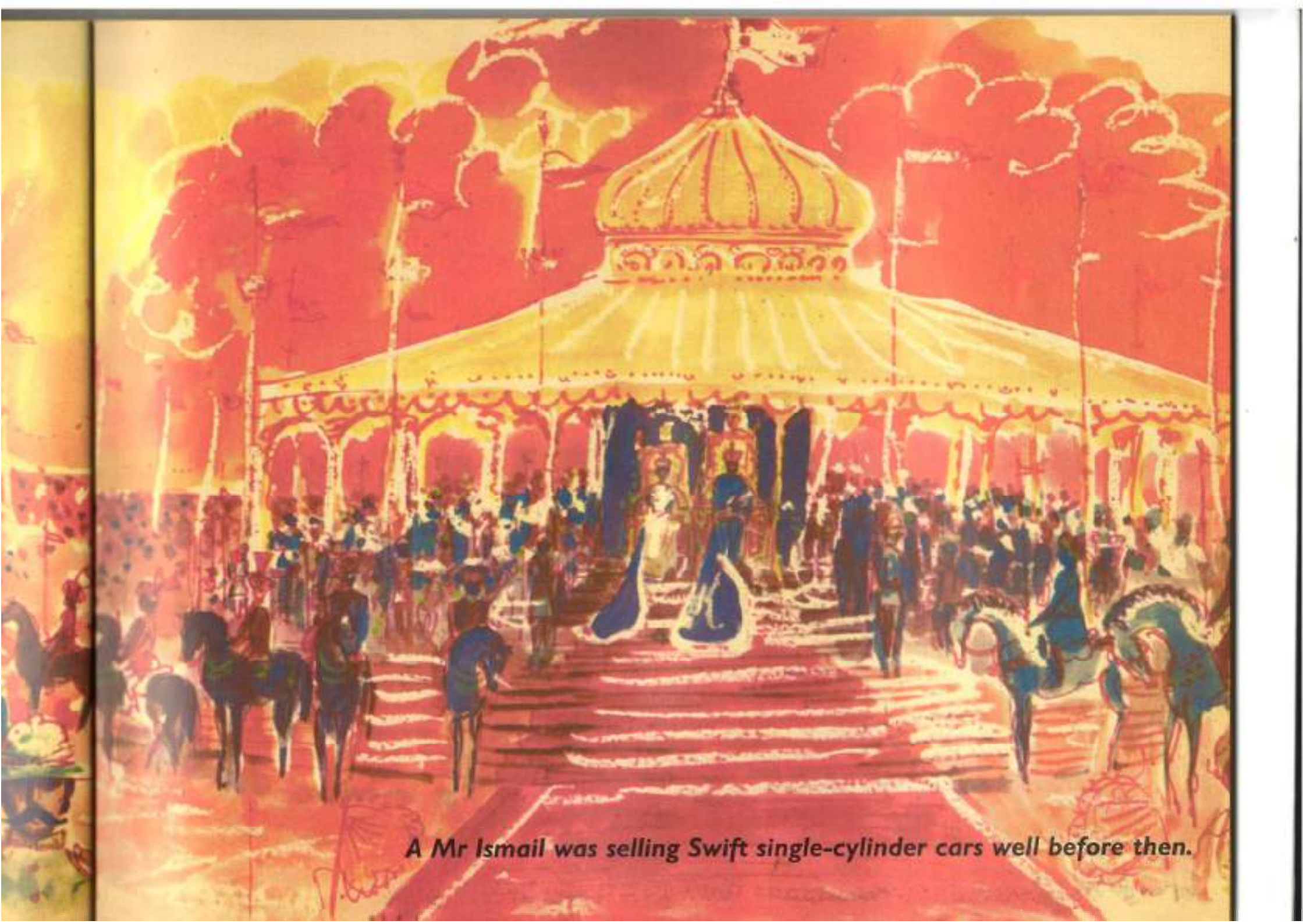


, when the Motor Car Act was promulgated.



There were numerous cars in Delhi before the Great Durbar in 1911.

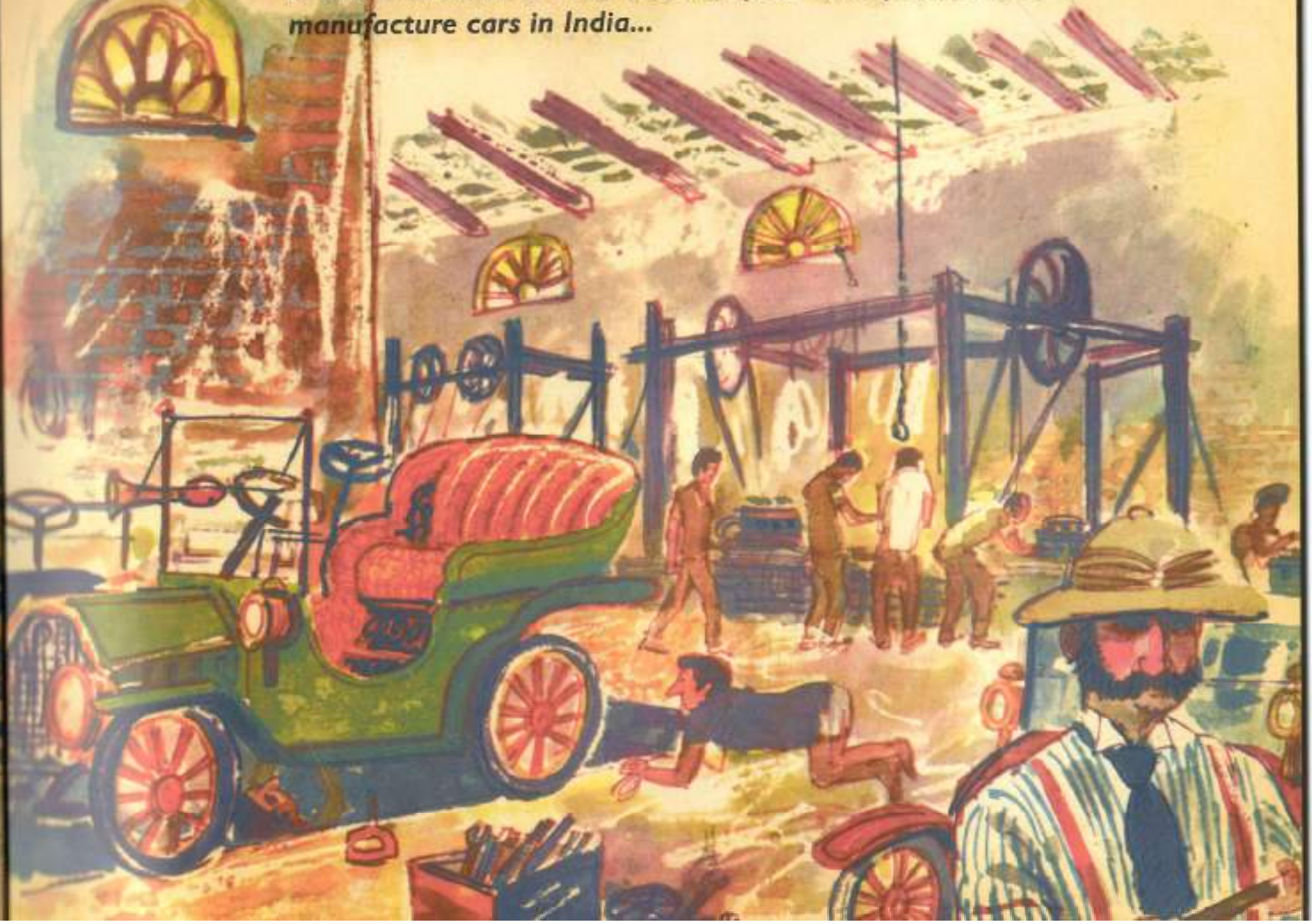




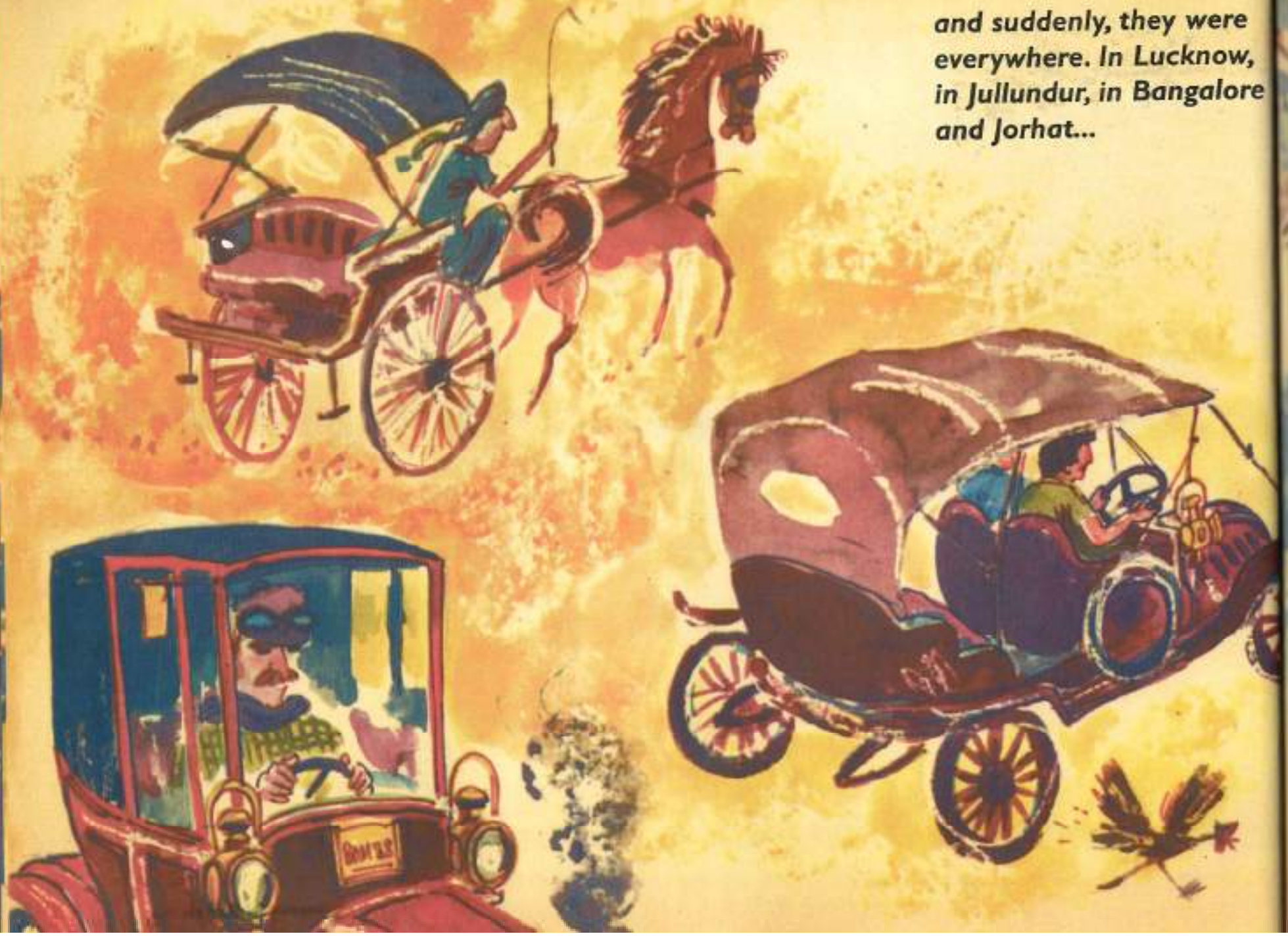
A Mr Ismail was selling Swift single-cylinder cars well before then.



It was in Madras in 1903 that the first attempt was made to manufacture cars in India...



and suddenly, they were everywhere. In Lucknow, in Jullundur, in Bangalore and Jorhat...



ere
ow,
alore



little cars...



medium cars...



big cars !

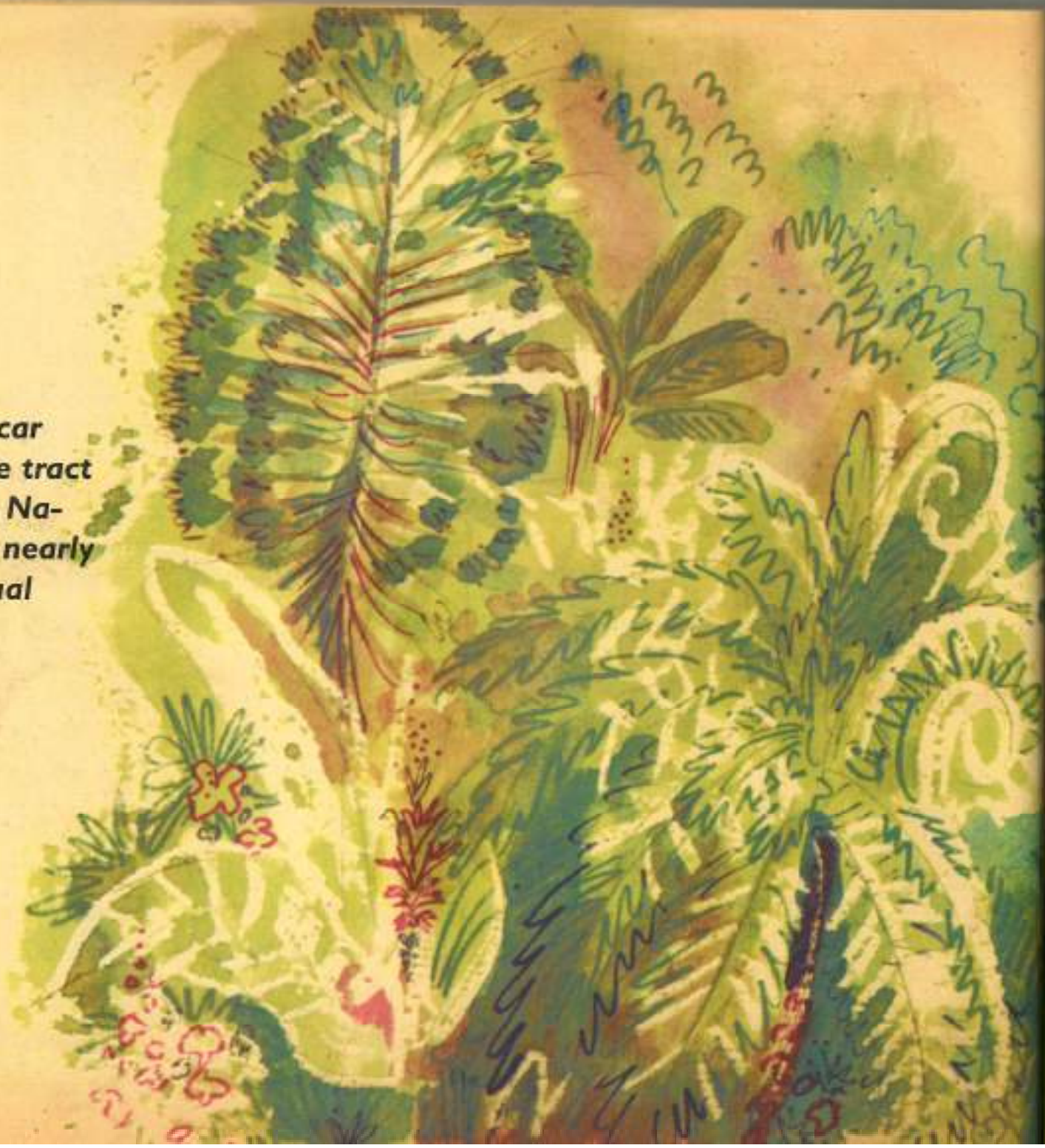
*Some had bicycle bells in lieu of horns.
Most of the early ones had small
wheels in front and big wheels at the
back, like coaches...*

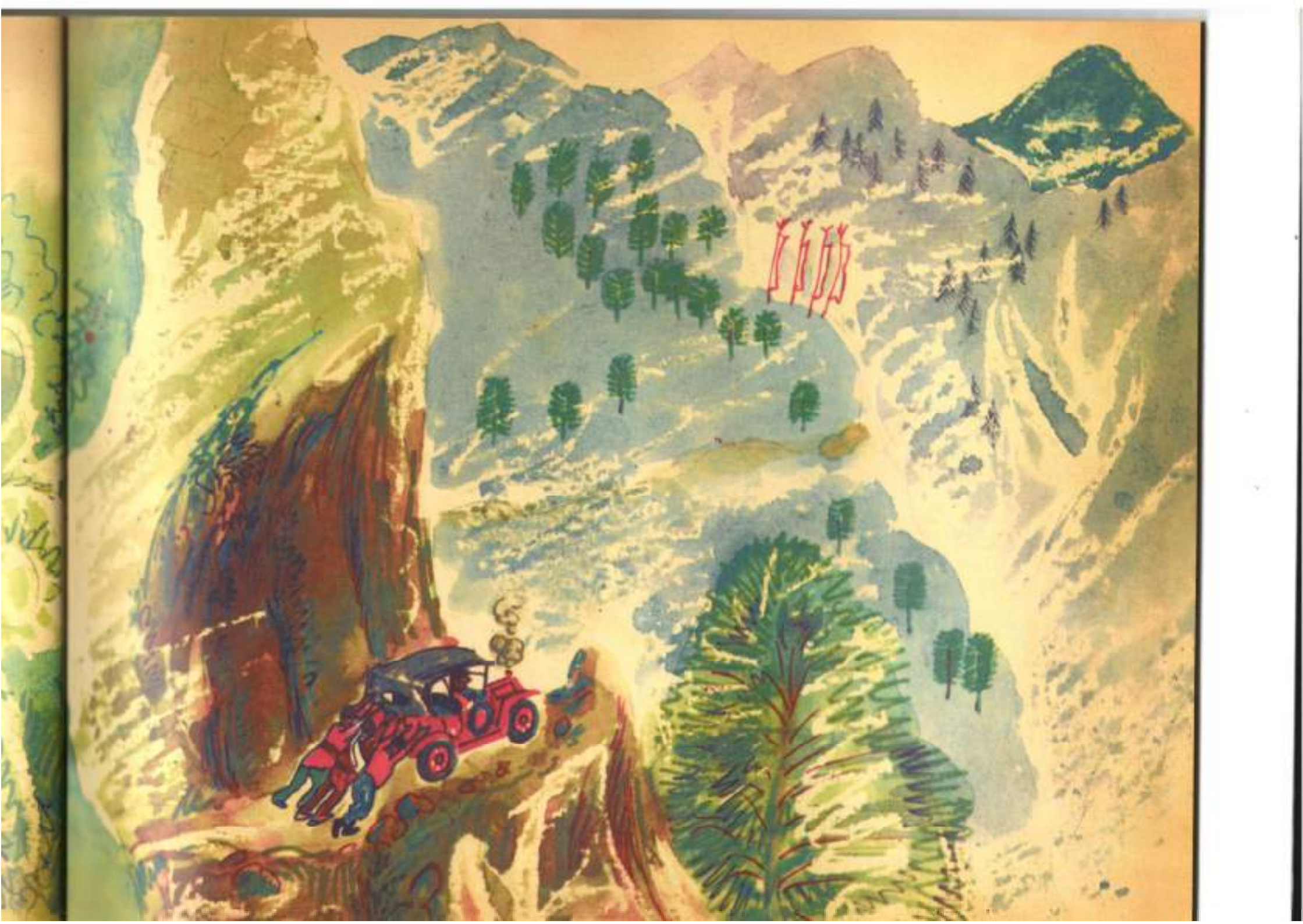


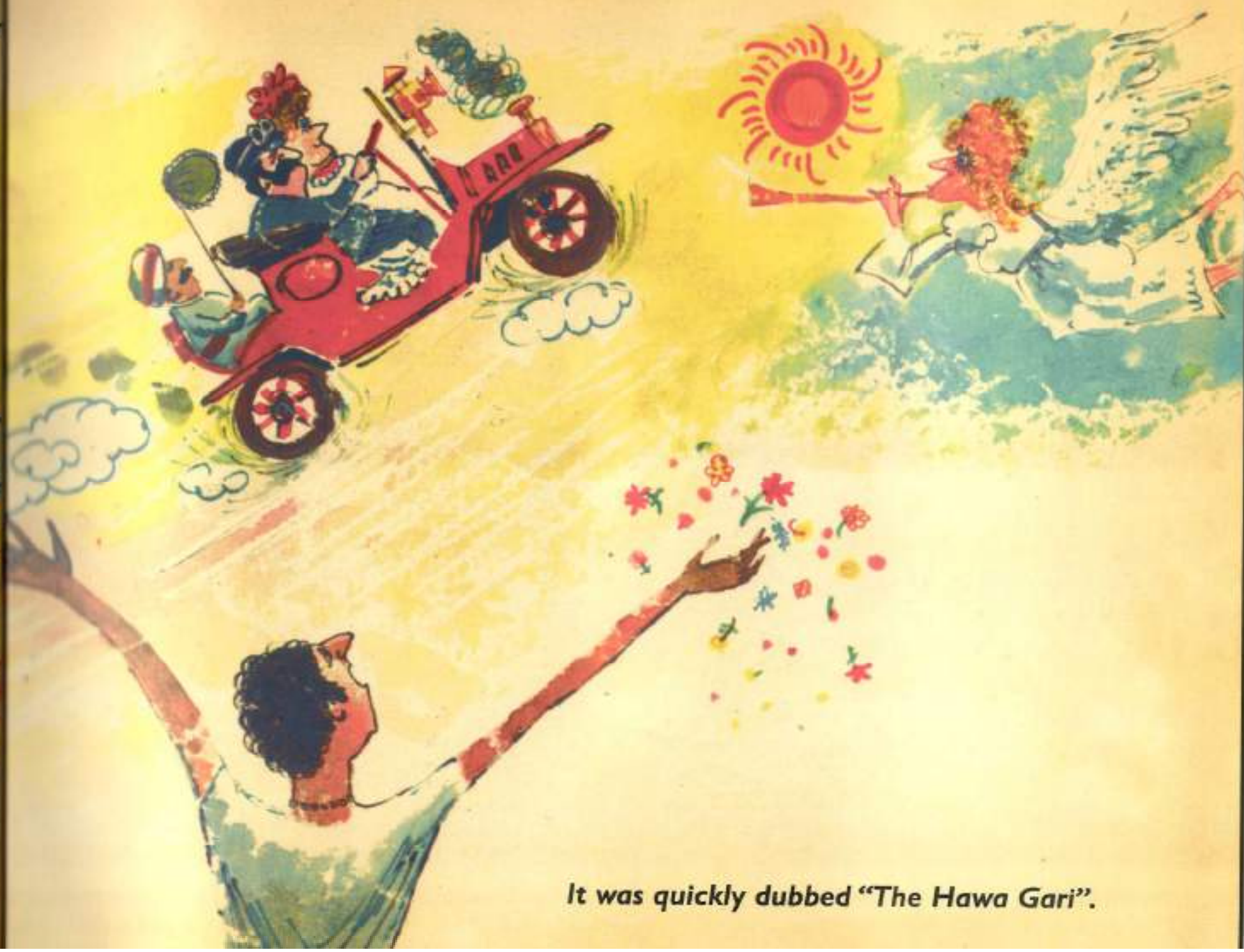
*The tyres used were Dunlop high pressure
tyres with about 60 lb. pressure.*



**As early as 1915, a car
attempted the old mule tract
from Gangtok to the Na-
thu La (16,000 ft.) and nearly
made it, with manual
assistance.**







It was quickly dubbed "The Hawa Gari".

It became a subject of songs...



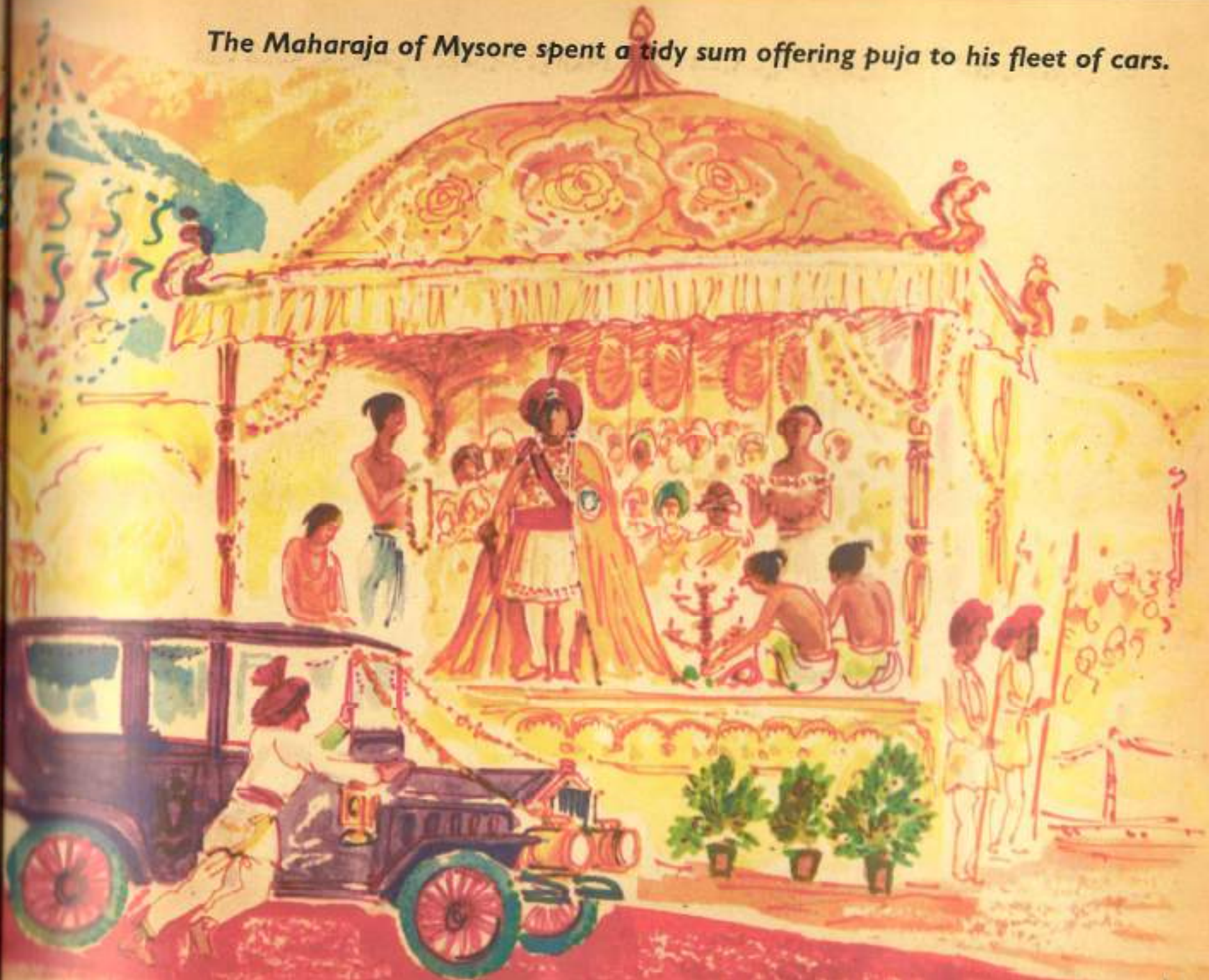
pujas were offered to it not only by the common people...



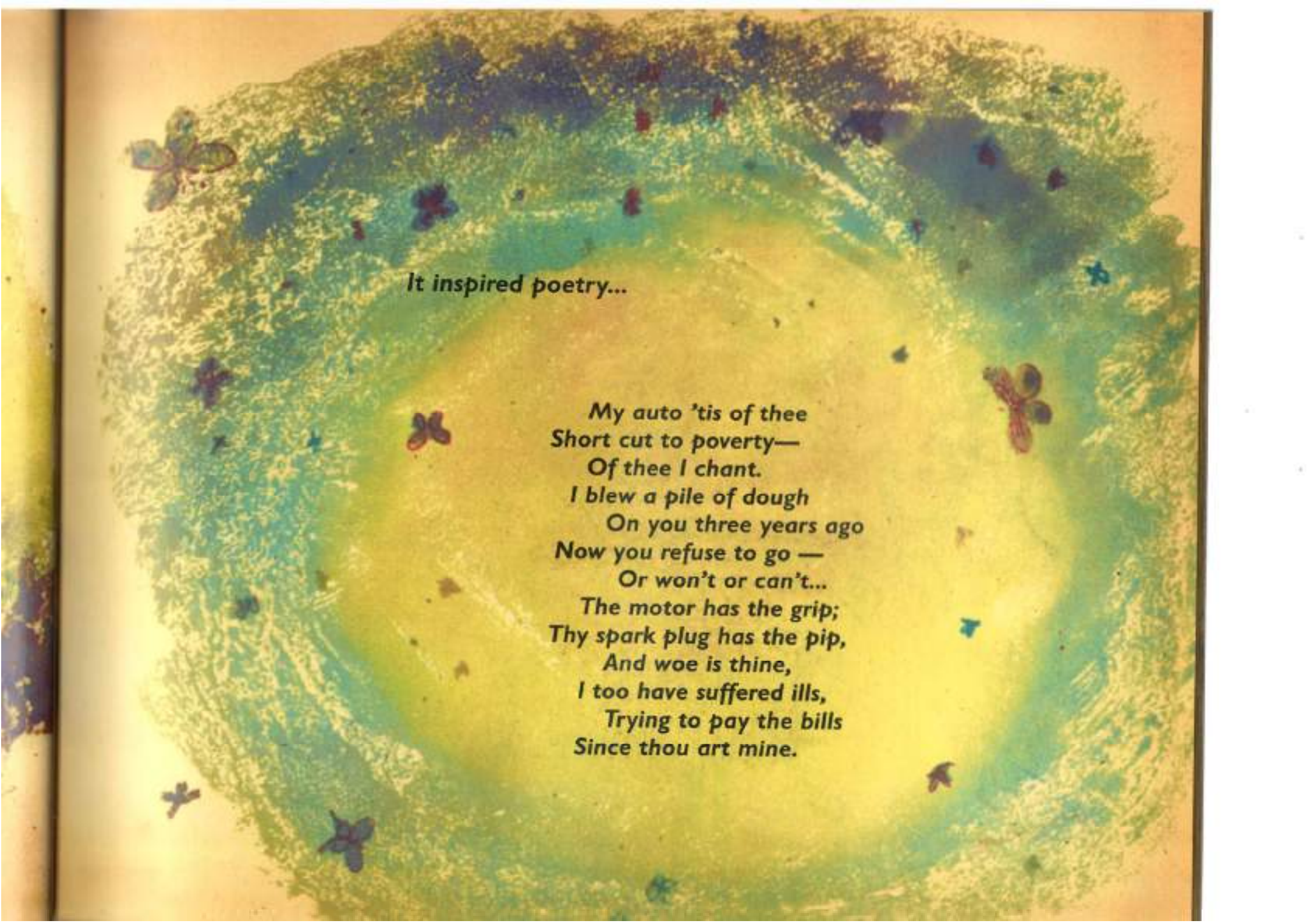
but by the rich and enlightened.



The Maharaja of Mysore spent a tidy sum offering puja to his fleet of cars.







It inspired poetry...

*My auto 'tis of thee
Short cut to poverty—
Of thee I chant.
I blew a pile of dough
On you three years ago
Now you refuse to go —
Or won't or can't...
The motor has the grip;
Thy spark plug has the pip,
And woe is thine,
I too have suffered ills,
Trying to pay the bills
Since thou art mine.*

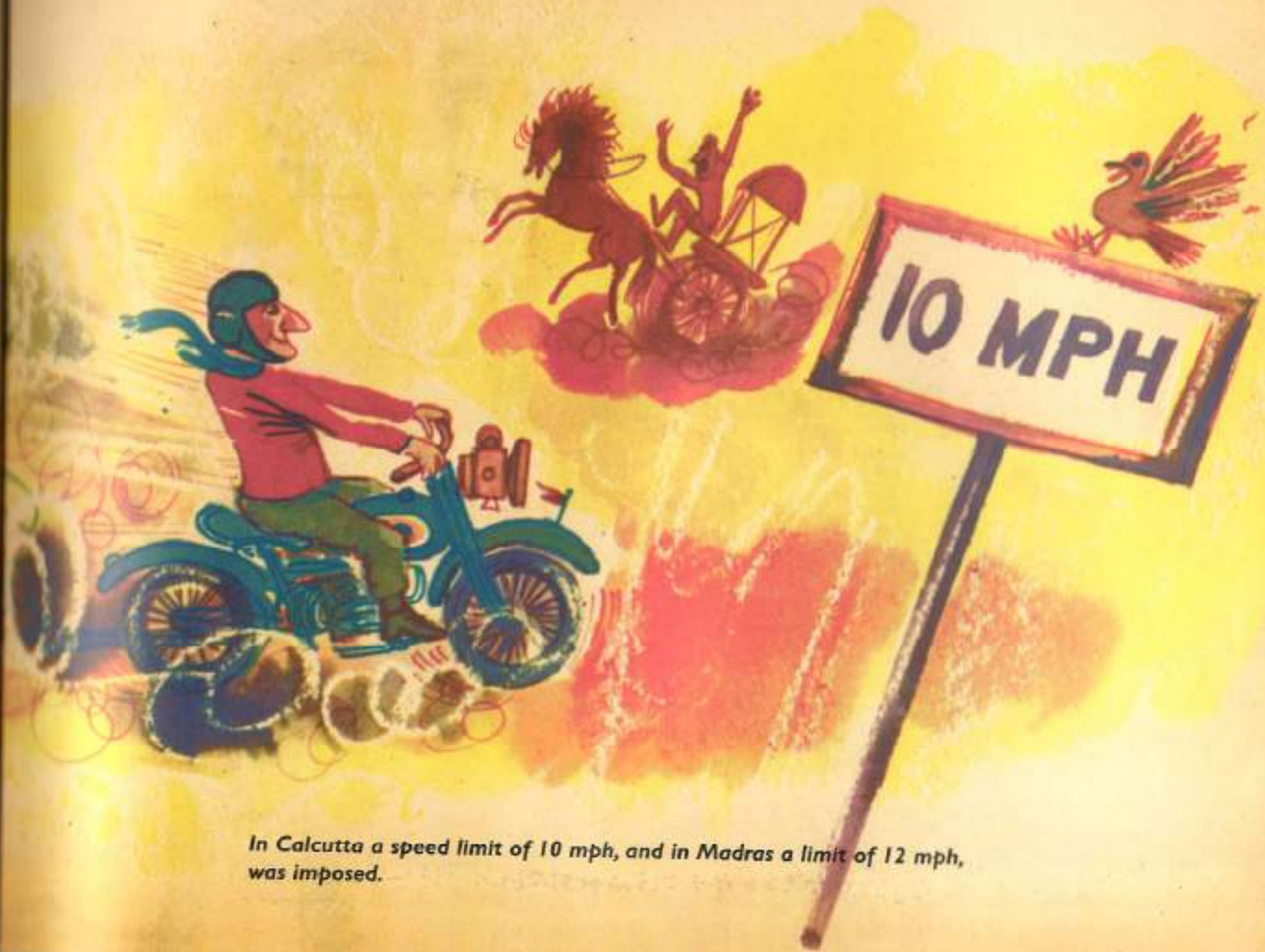
adverse comment...



"Our chauffeurs and motor cyclists are still pursuing their wild career...if police traps were introduced there would be less fatal accidents. But nobody seems to notice at what speed a car is driven."

A Madras newspaper.

legislation...



In Calcutta a speed limit of 10 mph, and in Madras a limit of 12 mph, was imposed.

and fashions.







There was a growing demand for fast and cheap transport...



like the Hawa Gari. But roads were deplorable.

By 1912 public buses were plying.



It was recorded that "it needed as much courage to travel in a bus as In 1926 was needed to run it".



as
t".

In 1926 Walfords introduced double-deckers built in Calcutta. The overhead wires of the tramways were very low and had to be raised to avoid accidents.



TAX
STAI

With the tax
...
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...

When, as early as 1921, it was considered necessary to enact laws to remove bullock carts and other slow-moving vehicles from city roads...



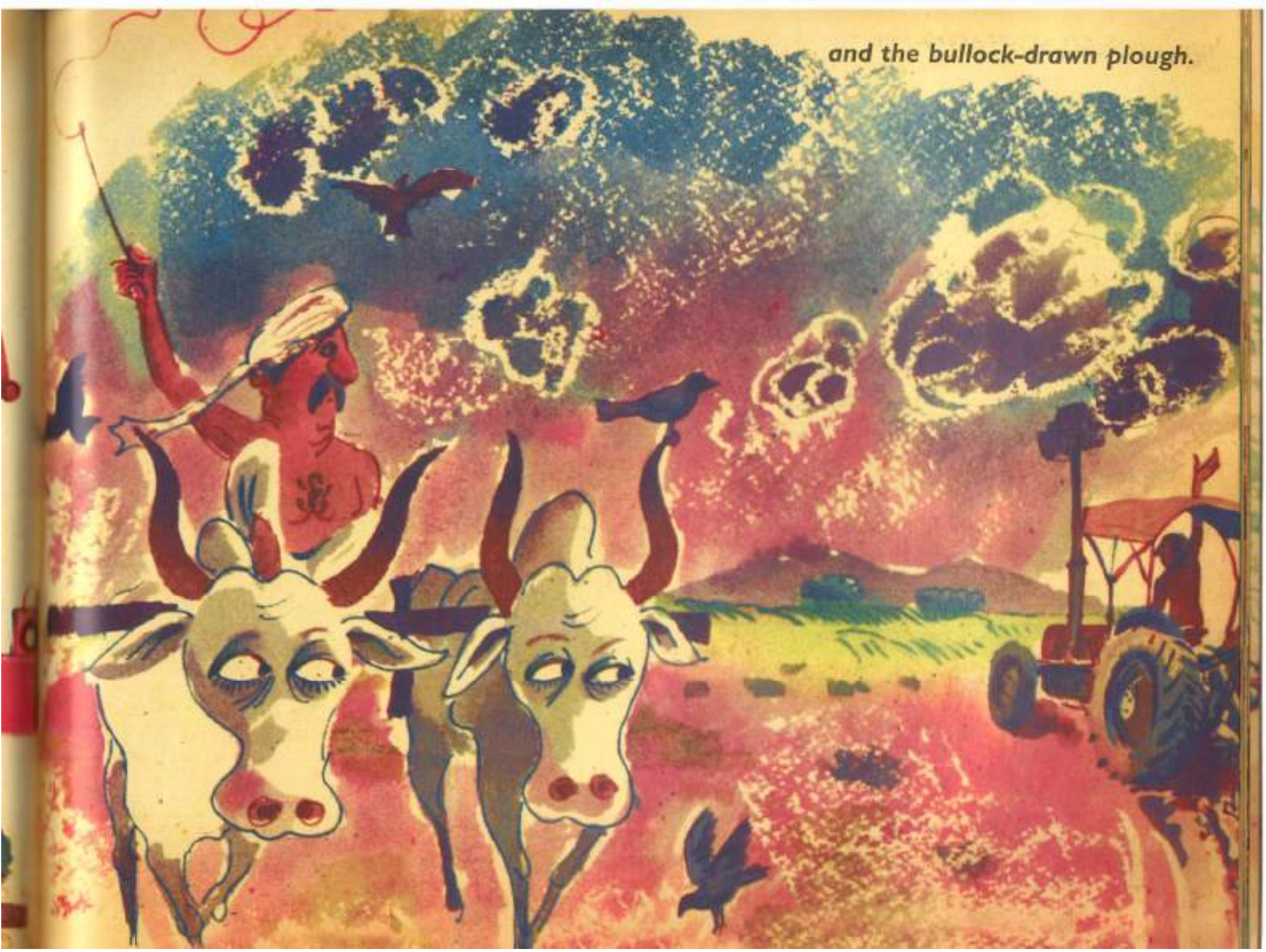
motor transport had come into its own.



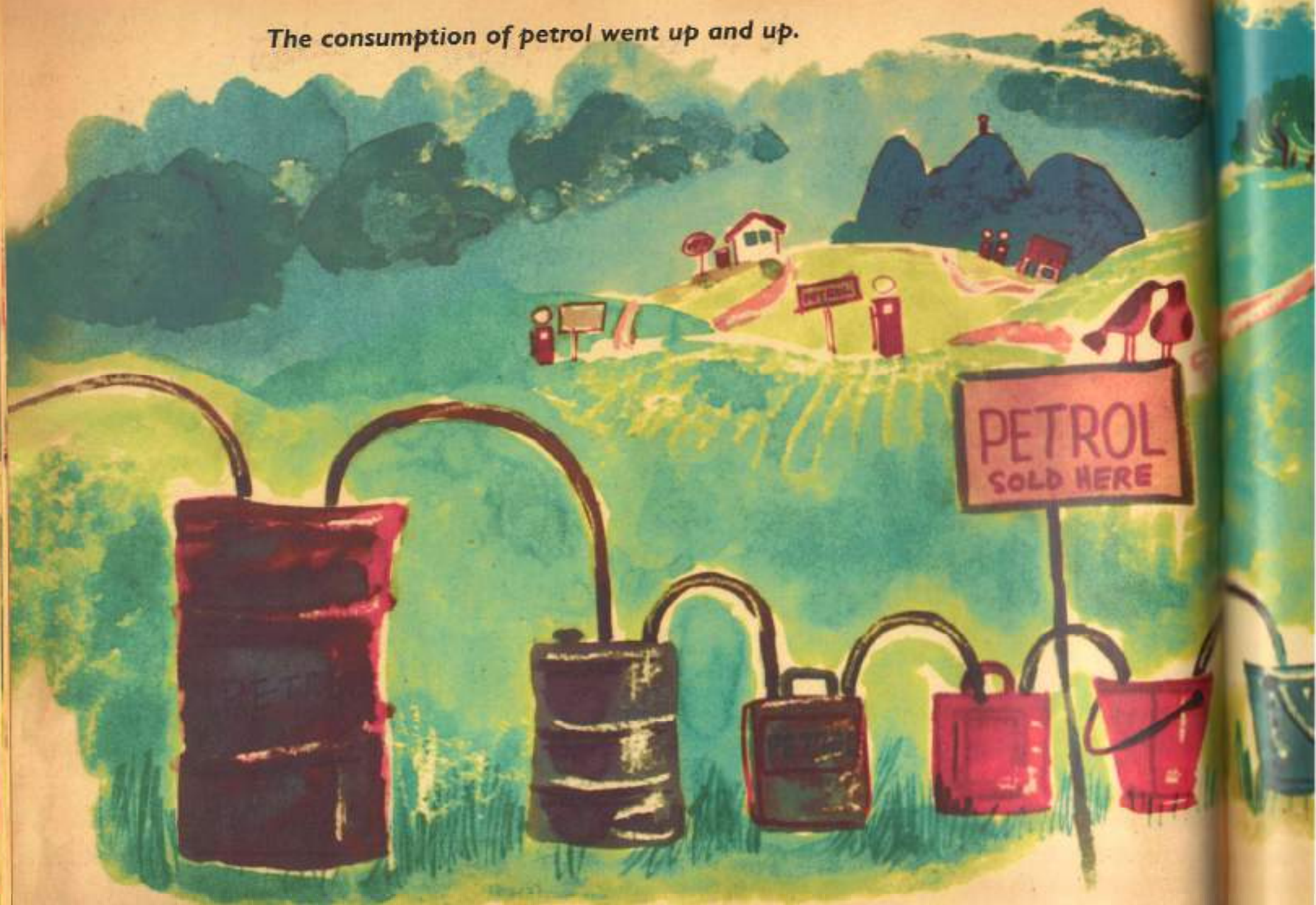
It was soon to compete with the railways...

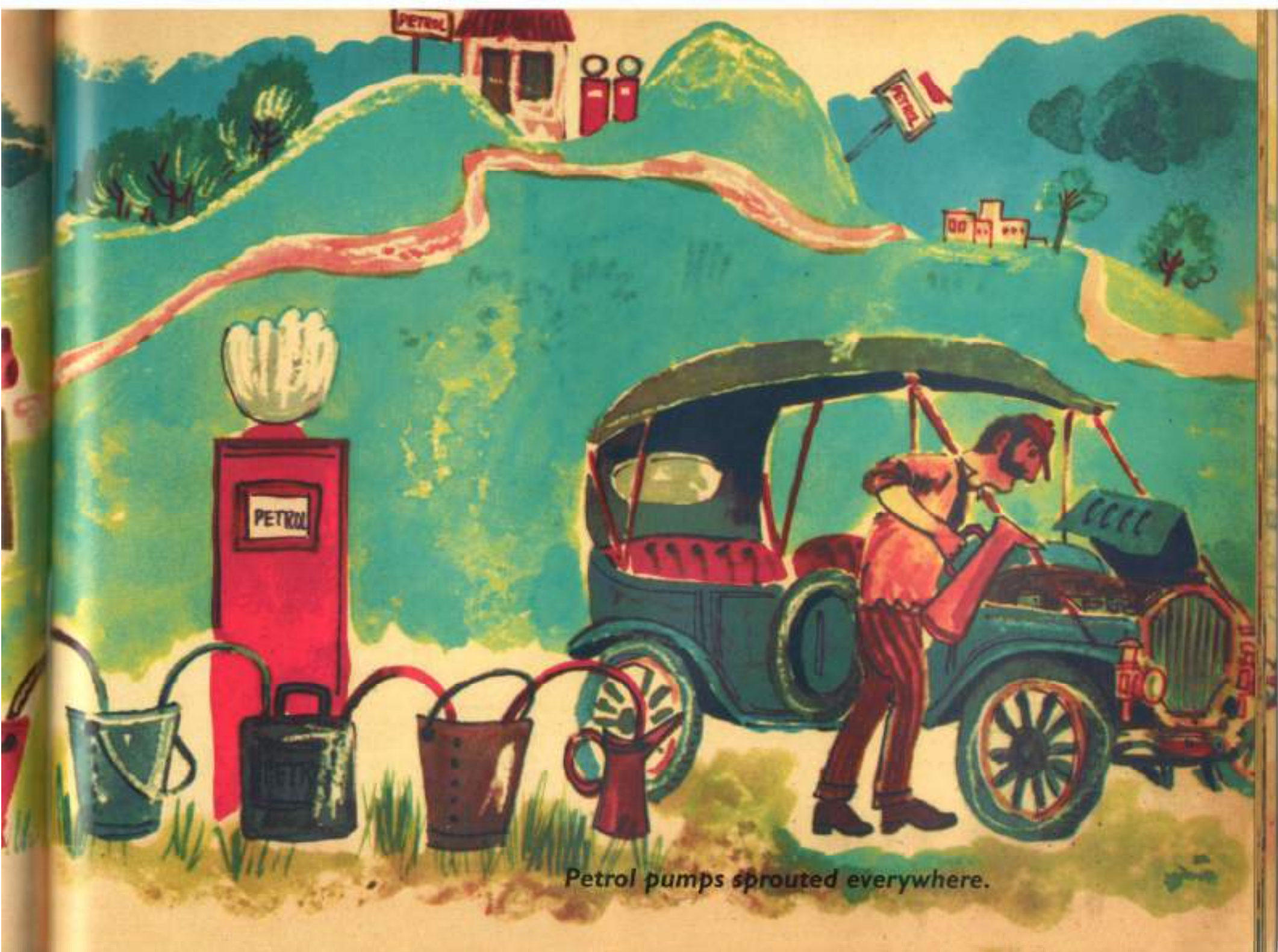


and the bullock-drawn plough.



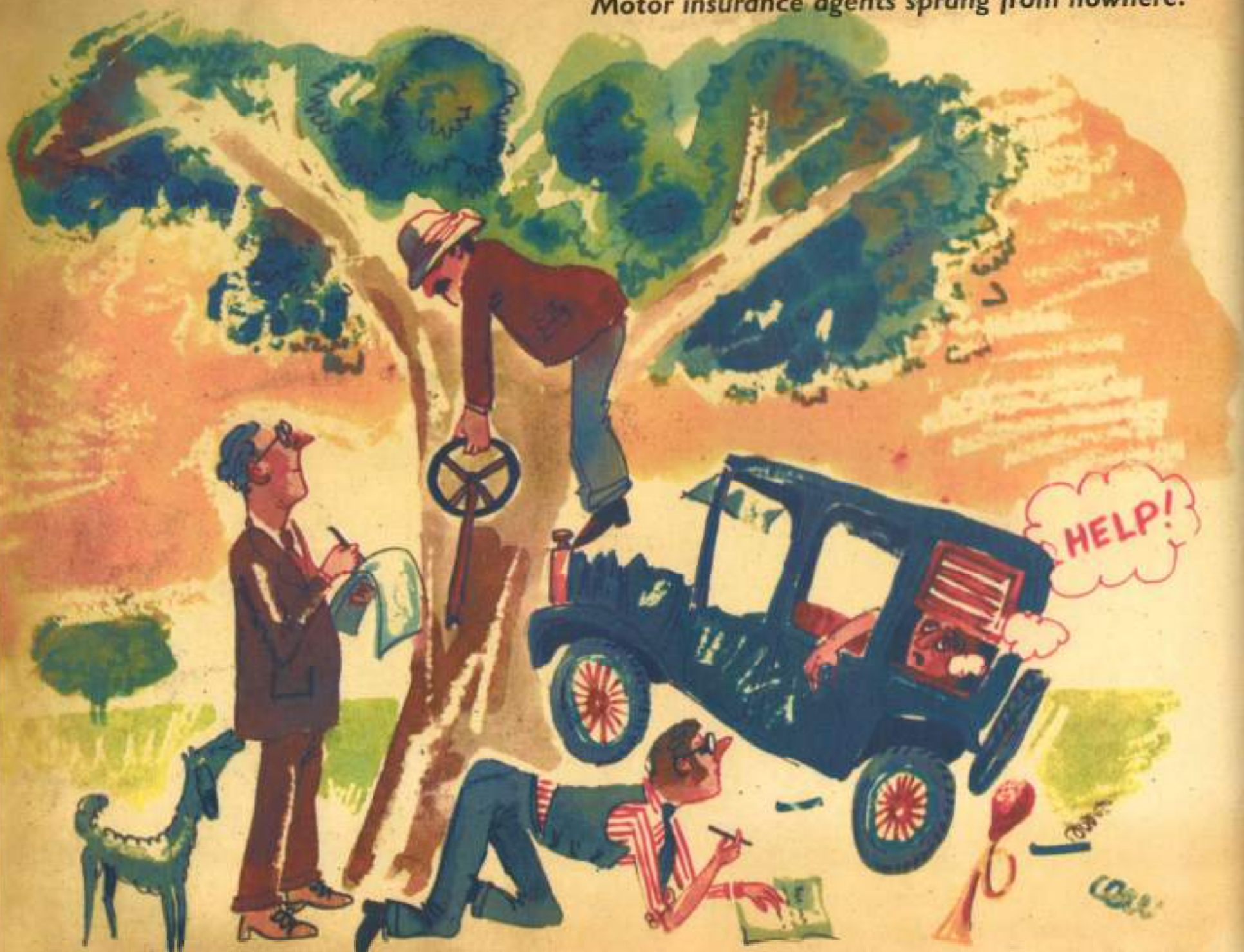
The consumption of petrol went up and up.

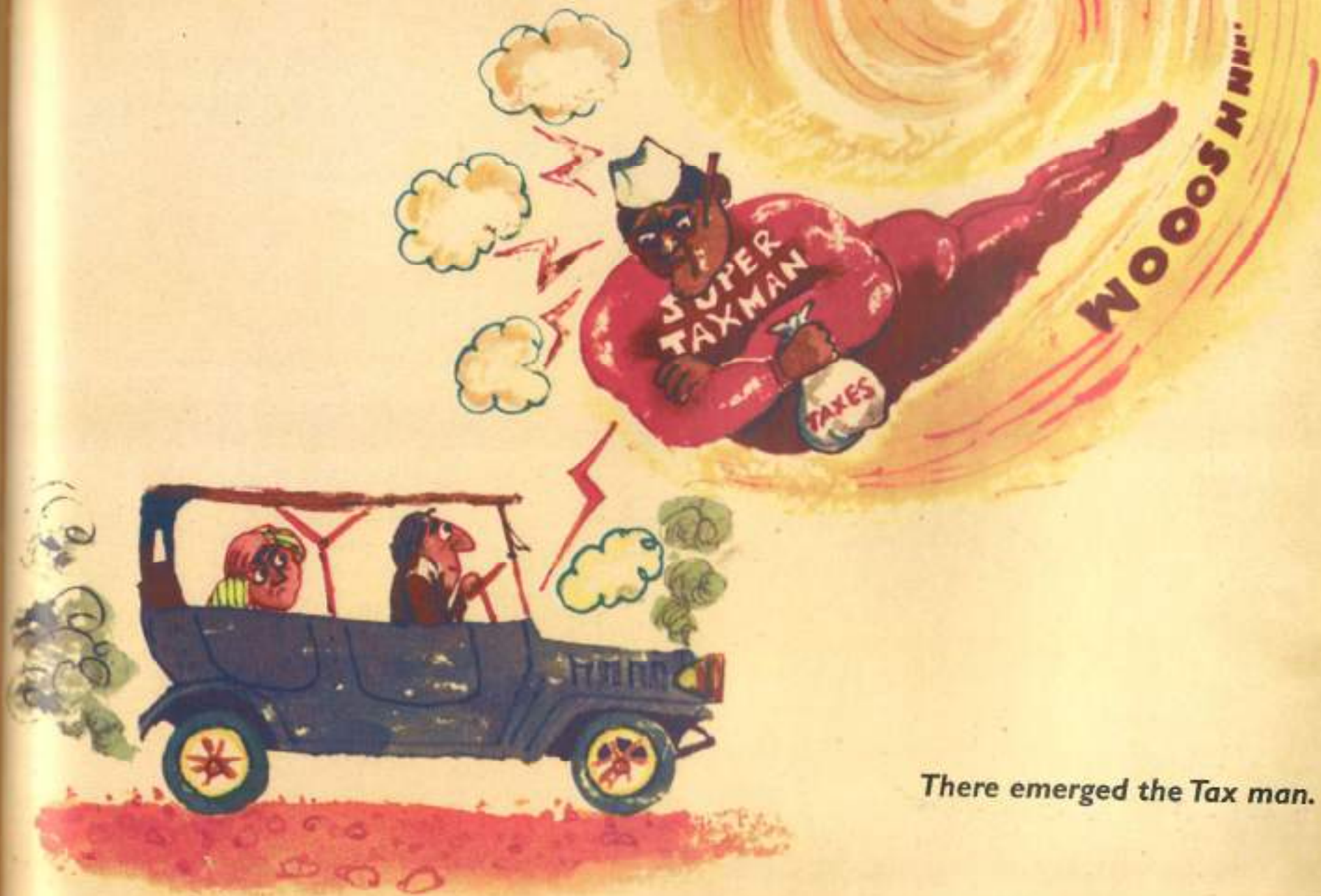




Petrol pumps sprouted everywhere.

Motor insurance agents sprang from nowhere.





There emerged the Tax man.



In 1936, from the small office that had opened in Bombay in 1898...

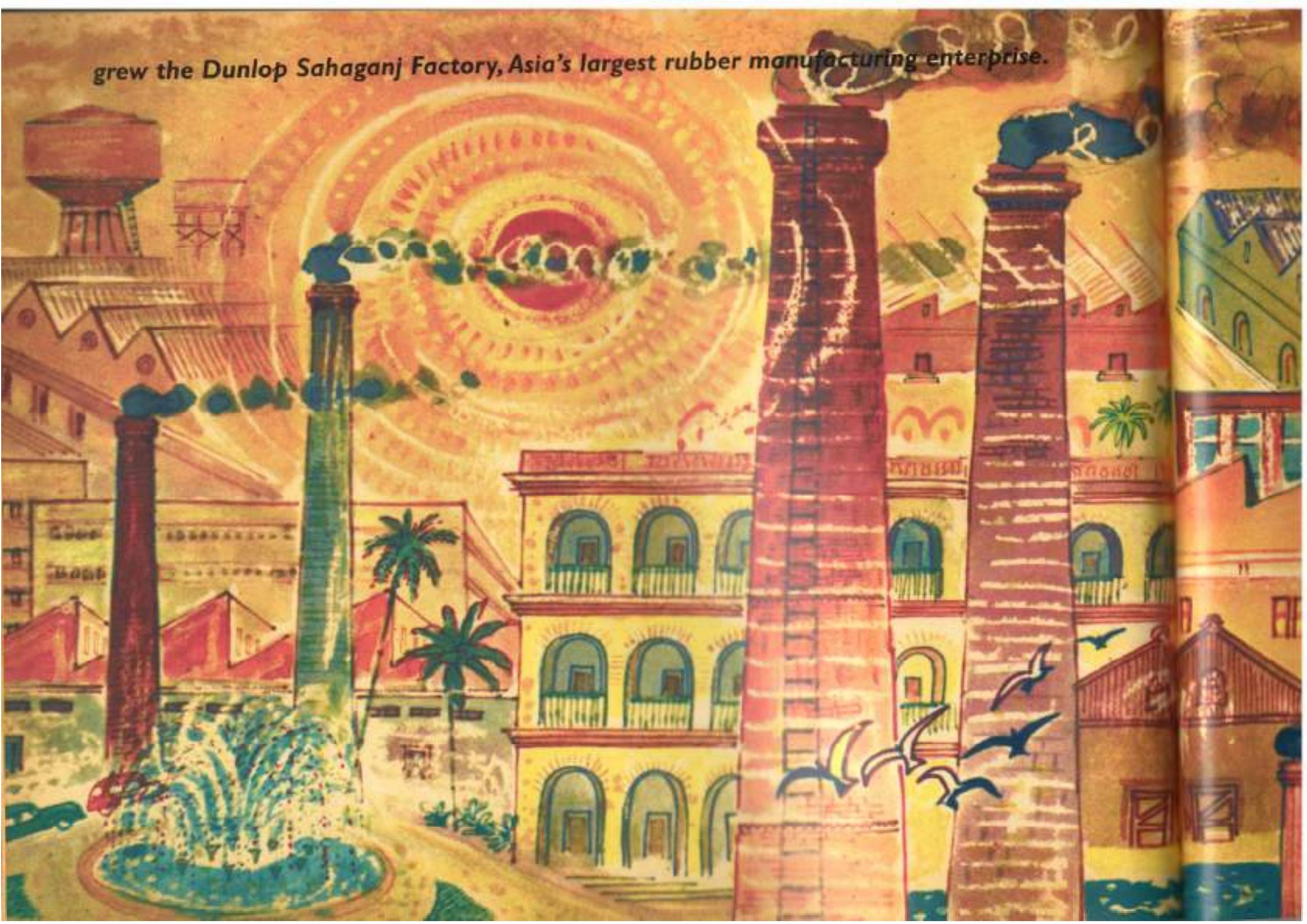


THE DUNLOP PNEUMATIC TYRE CO^o L^o

14, REGENT STREET, LONDON. ASTON, BIRMINGHAM, ENGLAND



grew the Dunlop Sahaganj Factory, Asia's largest rubber manufacturing enterprise.





Which makes everything from small scooter tyres...

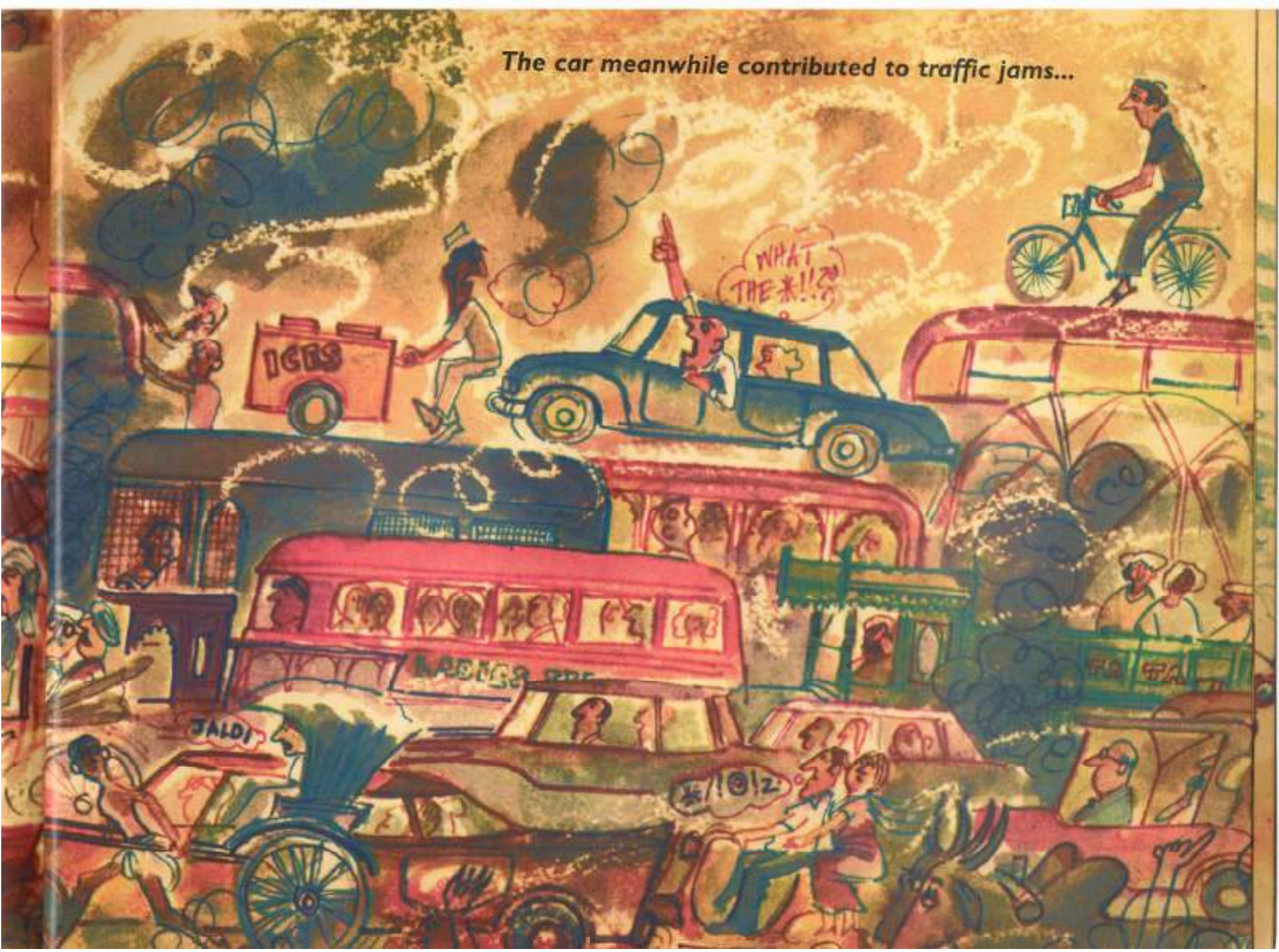




to giant earthmover and aircraft tyres.



The car meanwhile contributed to traffic jams...

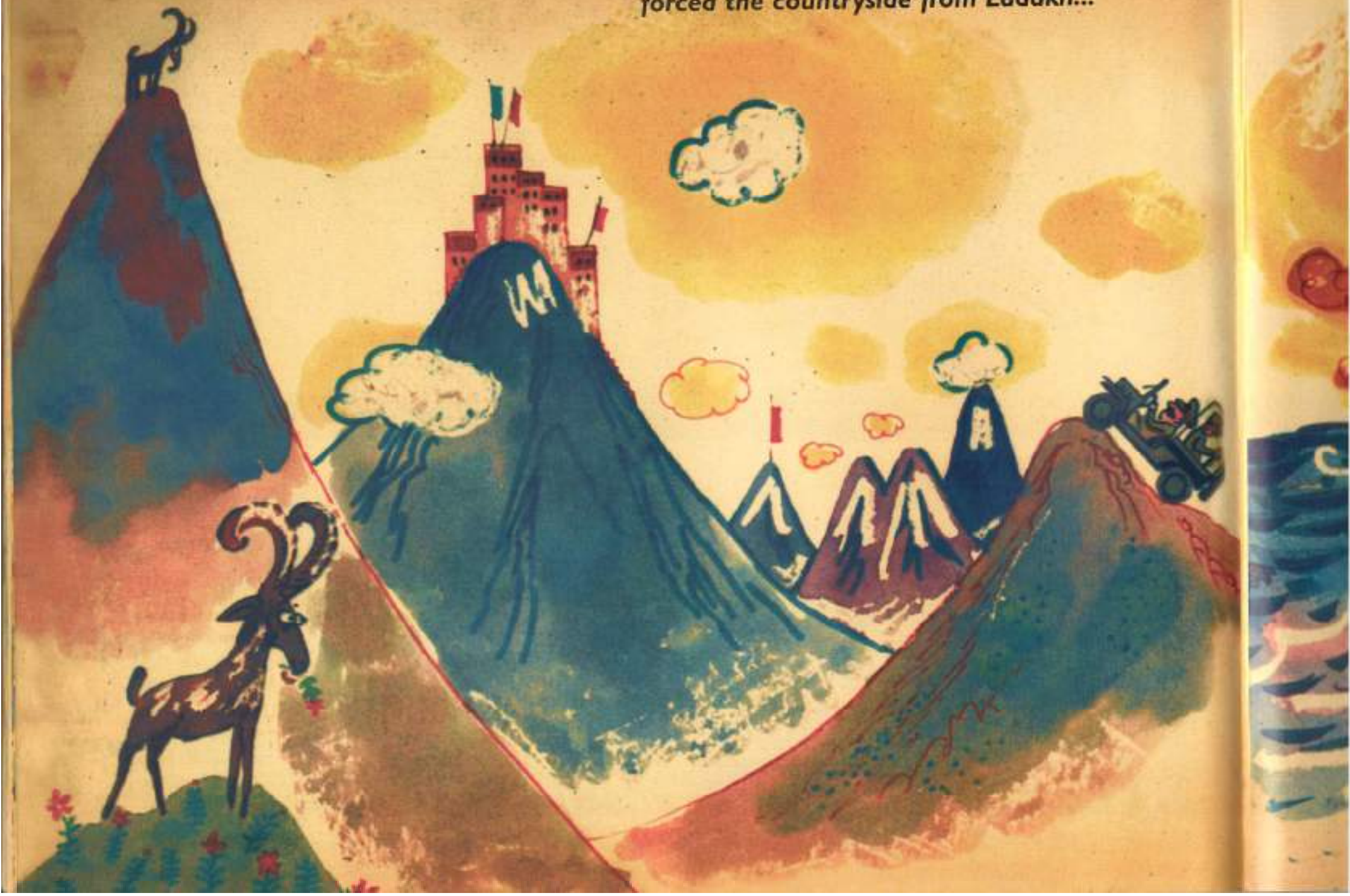


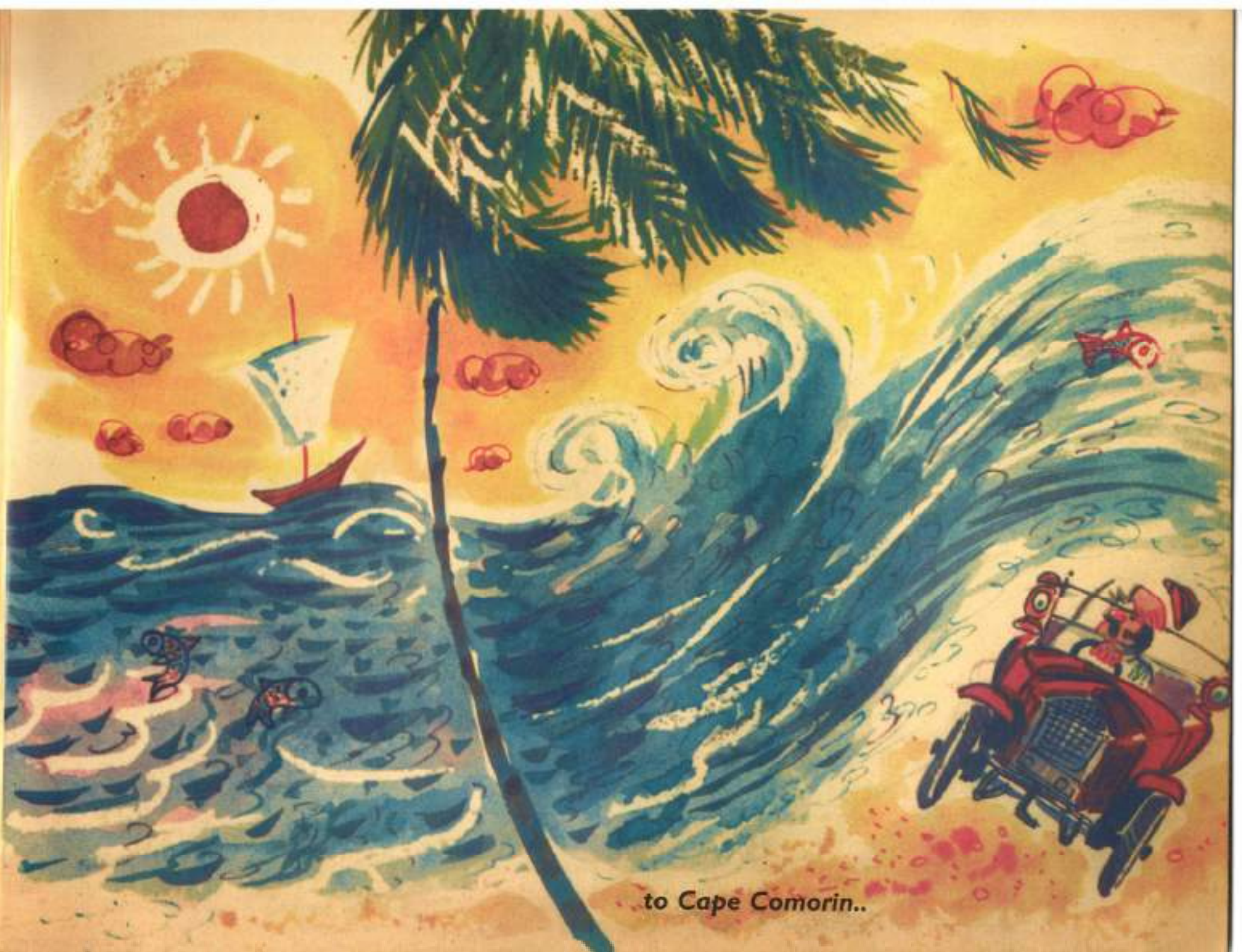


it helped the modern pyramids...



forced the countryside from Ladakh...



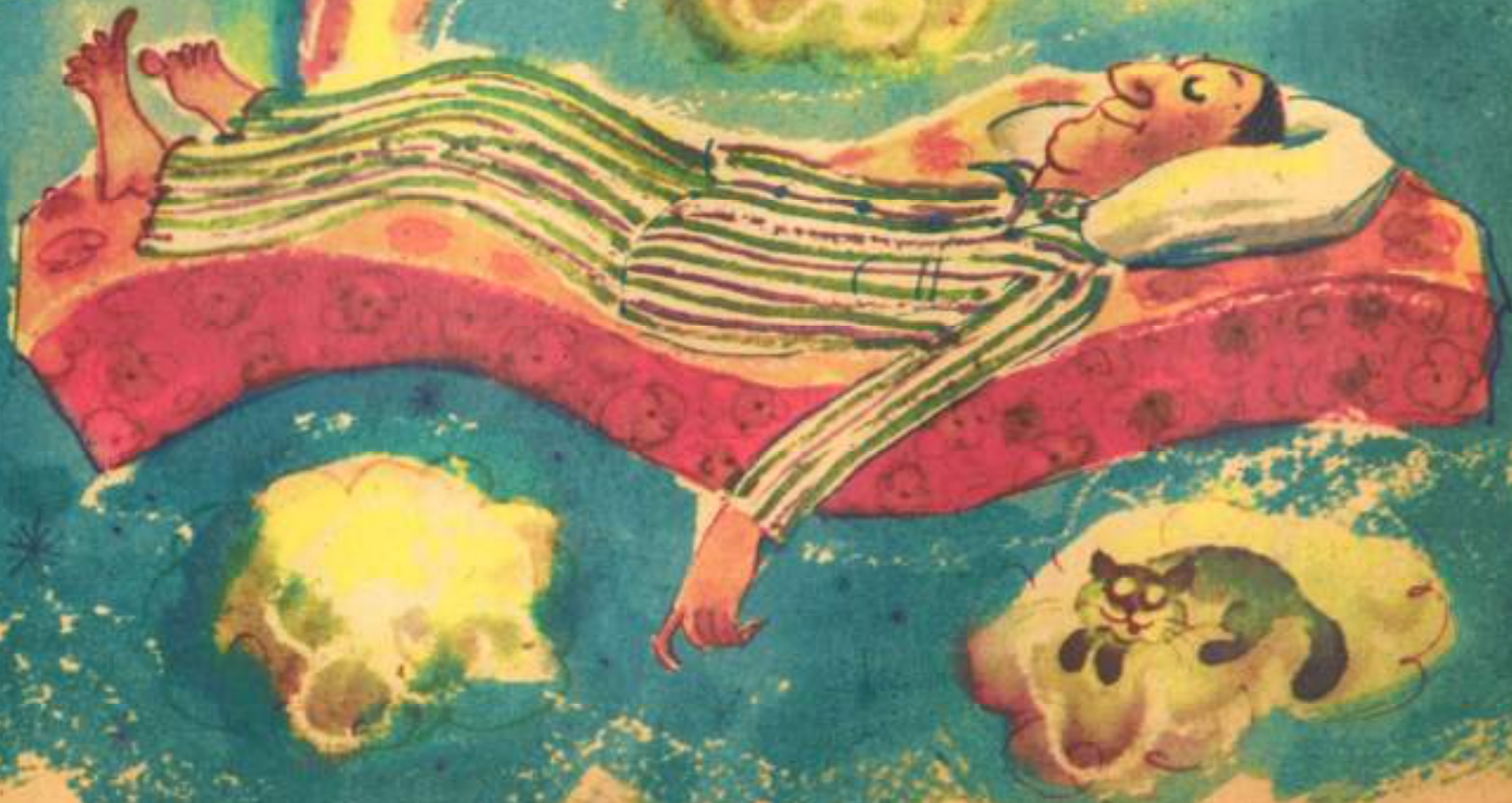


to Cape Comorin..

mechanized the Army



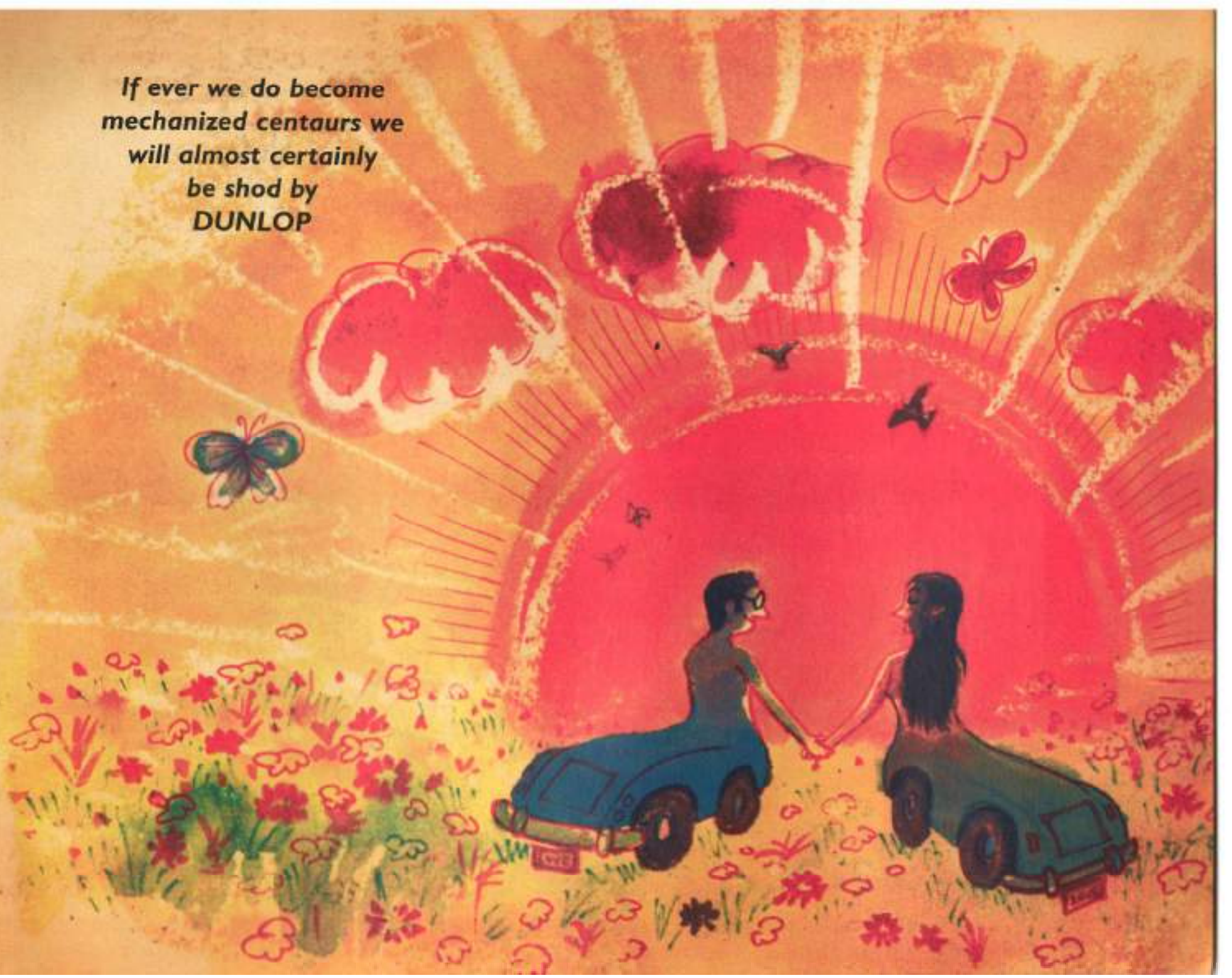
put people comfortably to sleep...



and has become man's best friend !



If ever we do become
mechanized centaurs we
will almost certainly
be shod by
DUNLOP



Once upon a time many moons ago (about 1898)....

Design, illustration and text by Desmond Doig

First published: October 1974 (on the occasion of seventy-fifth anniversary of Dunlop in India: 1898-1973)

Reprinted: August 2006

A cult figure of his time, Desmond Doig (d.1983) did a number of things with élan. Writer, landscape designer, artist, photographer, explorer, raconteur, he was the ultimate renaissance man and a wit. Born in India of an Irish father and an English mother, he studied at Victoria School, Kurseong. After a brief stint as an officer in the Gurkha Regiment during World War II, Doig came to Calcutta and joined *The Statesman* as a 'roving reporter'. He also contributed articles in *National Geographic*, *Life* and *Time*; joined Sir Edmund Hillary in search of the elusive yeti and co-authored 'High in the Thin Cold Air' (1962). He was the first biographer of Mother Teresa ('Mother Teresa: Her people and Her work', 1976) and developed unique albums on Calcutta and Kathmandu in characteristic prose accompanied with vivid sketches. He also designed a couple of the hotels in Kathmandu. But Desmond Doig will perhaps be best remembered as the editor of the now extinct *Junior Statesman*, an immensely popular weekly in 1960s and 70s, which for the first time preached an identity for the Indian youth.

The visual narrative he developed for this commemorating volume meticulously brings out the nuances of Indian traffic history. "All characters including the cars appearing in this book are for real, but any resemblance to people and jalopies, living or dead, is accidental." Desmond Doig wanted readers of this book to note.

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