

FROM THE EDITOR

Will the people welcome a magazine that does not titillate, does not fill its pages with delectable insinuations and smart exposures on politics and films?

This was the question that worried a number of our well wishers.

The question has been answered. THE HERITAGE has received far warmer reception than we had anticipated. Numerous voices have unreservedly said that the publication has filled up a deplorable vacuum — that this has given them a new confidence in the role of magazines in the society today.

As one reader put it: "Looking at the world of glossy magazines I used to say that all that glitters is not gold — with emphasis on all. Now I must say that gold too glitters and what is more, it lasts. If the first issue of THE HERITAGE is a genuine sample of its future issues, I cannot think of dispensing with a single copy of this magazine, however old it might become."

There is nothing wrong with the institution that is politics. The problem is, like the proverbial Procrustes who cut down or stretched his guests to fit into his bed of hospitality — inevitably killing them- we had started interpreting every human problem in terms of politics, thereby killing the truth. We have forgotten that life is larger than politics.

There is nothing wrong with the institution that is the cinema. But we have forgotten that art is larger than cinema, that cinema is ordinary commerce when devoid of art, that all the gleeful reflections on the artistes at their personal and private level is nothing but vulgarity.

Such vulgarities might have been promoted by a few, but they have been sought after or supported by many. Thus have they thrived.

The irony is, even when we support a thing, it might sicken us. The reason is this: while only a superficial part of our being is amused by such interests, the essential part revolts against the propensity. Mere amusements cannot make us even reasonably happy. Our intellect, our instinctive aesthetic thirst and our inner spirit will not excuse us unless we satisfy their demands. They will revolt. That will leave us sick.

Although we are already in such a sorry situation, let us hope that we can save ourselves from a total plunge into its abysmal depth.

Life has many secrets that can inspire us, there are adventures and explorations, both physical and psychological, that can stimulate us in a creative way. THE HERITAGE will bear their imprint and justify the trust and goodwill already showered on it.

ON THE TIDES OF TIME

The latest news from the Himalayas is amusing, but the comment on it is not.

The news is: a set of footprints found atop Mount Everest is inexplicable. It cannot be linked to any explorer. It could be of an Abominable Snowman or the Yeti.

The comment is, the Yeti has been driven to that remoteness by the pollution of the lower atmosphere.

Even if the comment is a mere surmise or even if the Yeti is nothing but a bubble of our imagination, the proposition indicates the state of affairs in the Himalayas.

Svetoslav Roerich, the finest lyricist of the Himalayas in painting, reflects on the Devatama Himalaya in this issue.

The savant is 80. I met him on the eve of his birthday at Bangalore, before he left for the U.S.S.R., the land of his celebrated father, Nicholas Roerich, where a tumultuous ovation awaited him. He was sad, for an idol in one of the Himalayan temples he had photographed and written about had been stolen.

Man is polluting Nature's bounty; he is also maiming the heritage created by his own ancestors. The only possible corrective to this unfortunate trend is a wide public awareness. It is not that we must have more organizations for this purpose. But the social, cultural and educational organizations already existing can add spreading this awareness as another item—the most urgent one—to their programmes.

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Way back in 1949 when a young Indian businessman visited Japan, little did he know that he was going to do something infinitely greater than his business: he was to inspire in the tender hearts of the children of Japan—stunned by the War—the faith that they had not been rendered friendless. Himansu Niyogi discovered to them a dear uncle—in Pundit Jawaharlal Nehru.

The brief account of the incident given to the THE HERITAGE, at our request, by Shri Niyogi (see The Other 'Indira') is a specimen of a genre of episodes that are generally pushed to the background by the usual kind of news to which we are addicted. Himansu-da, as Shri Niyogi is popularly known, is also a rare sort of man. A bachelor, he has devoted his time and resources to one of those serene areas of life at the frontiers of which all the world's hullabaloo appears infantile. He is the man behind Sri Aurobindo Bhavan in Calcutta.

Himansu-da's recollection brings out a lovely aspect of Nehru's character. As a leading daily in its editorial said, "The War is now over but children of Tokyo have not yet had the good luck of seeing the city's zoo replenished with this most imposing creature. They have, therefore, appealed to the Indian Prime Minister whose broadmindedness and love of children have crossed the seas and reached their ears. Japan's love and regard for India in the post-war years have been much in evidence and Dr. Radhabinod Pal's dissenting judgement in the Tokyo Trial has considerably enhanced this feeling. The children of Tokyo have therefore appealed to the Indian Prime Minister in the sincere hope that their appeal will be lovingly responded to. We hope that Punditji will delight the cheerless children of Tokyo by making a present of dusky Indian tusker to them". (A.B. Patrika, 13-6-49).

Nehru fondly christened the baby elephant that was shipped to Japan 'Indira'. Himansu-da recalls the episode nostalgically.