

## **FROM THE EDITOR**

### **MAKING OF THE MONSTER**

Sometimes one wishes that one never read a certain news! Alas, such wistful thinking is of no avail. The news is there, in the front page of a national daily: *At least 50 patients have died and many are dying as the strike by Government doctors in eight medical colleges of Bihar, following a clash with the police, entered the fifth day today. Four patients, including 25-year-old Irshad, who was admitted to the Patna Medical College Hospital with a crushed foot following a train accident, died on Tuesday. While Irshad bled to death, a woman patient died after junior doctors, enraged by police beating, pulled the oxygen mask from her. Another patient who was being given blood transfusion died when doctors removed the blood transfusion equipment, and the fourth patient, who was being operated upon, died when the surgeon left without completing the operation....*

*One of the seven nurses who reported for duty at the Patna Medical College Hospital today told THE HINDU, "We did not want to join the strike but the striking doctors threatened us with dire consequences if we reported for duty." —THE HINDU 20.7.'86.*

Next, one wishes that the report was exaggerated. Alas, there is nothing to suggest that it was so.

How was this ghoulish action possible—by some of our best educated boys, to train up whom the country had spent lakhs of rupees, who are under a sacred oath to be uncompromisingly faithful to their vocation, who are nurtured better and respected much more than millions of other children of the motherland?

Unlike their fellow-physicians, they were an unusually inhuman lot, true. But the truth in this respect cannot be limited to this conclusion. There was something terribly wrong in their upbringing and education. They were of course inferior to the average man; they were no doubt less evolved in their sense of humanity and conscience, but a normal healthy upbringing and normal healthy education could have compensated for their congenital lacking, at least to the extent to stop them from clearly, coolly and consciously murdering helpless patients lying prostrate under their knives or the oxygen masks.

The danger with such sub-human human beings, who are distributed in all the vocations, is, they become easily possessed by forces of arrogance, particularly when such forces act under the banner of a collective interest. By affiliating their inferior persons to the collective ego, they feel inflated. They become almost demoniac at such moments.

But this is not to say that only such sub-human human beings run amuck under the impetus of collective ego; the average human being too, unless vigilant and conscious, can play into the hands of the forces of collective ego. Once given in, he is undone, despite the pricks of his conscience. And there is an upsurge of collective ego today. It is the same primitive flexing of muscles, but muscles wearing colourful legends of ideology, vocational union, so on and so forth. Of all the sections of the society, the one to have become the most tragic victim of this wave is perhaps the students—in the higher stages in particular. They are generally pampered at that stage—and some of them habitually expect to be pampered at a later stage when they are no longer students.

There is a world of difference between standing up for a cause and bursting into anarchy under the pretext of a cause. The first demands dignity and humility; the second makes casualty of these qualities. These few doctors are the example. The doctors are spontaneously respected because they save life. What a pathetic state of affairs it is for some of them to take revenge on their patients because that respect was not forthcoming!

They alone are not to blame for it. This is a fit occasion when their parents, their relatives, their teachers should hang their heads in shame and try to evaluate their share in this degradation of their wards. The society as a whole too must have made some contribution to the making of the monster.

### **AN EXPLANATION TO CONTRIBUTORS**

THE HERITAGE gets a large number of stories, poems and essays every month. Many of them deserve publication. But THE HERITAGE could publish them only if it were a weekly publication. THE HERITAGE provides a solid reading fare, for it carries few selective advertisements. Even then it has to adhere to a plan. If it has gained a distinct and steady readership, it is because of this planned presentation of items. Each section in the

magazine has a special appeal to some while all the sections in general are appreciated by all. The format can change, sections can be re-arranged, some eliminated and new ones inaugurated, only at long intervals.

We carry four or five short stories a month, including a story with accent on humour. While some of the stories are by well-known writers, be they translated or originally in English, some are by new writers. Poetry is an occasional feature. So far as general essays are concerned, we carry only one each for the sections *Reflections* and *Today's Topic*. As the sections suggest, the first has to be thought-provoking articles on issues with deeper import and the second has to be topical, concerning a problem that is in the air. Besides, we have special articles, occasionally, to focus on a current celebration or event which too is topical in a sense. Articles appearing under *Roots* and *Little-Known India* are on places—the first covering such places which can be said to have nurtured the roots of India's culture and life-style and the second are places which are interesting for historical, cultural or other reasons but are not known widely. (Both these features must be supported by good pictures.)

Features like *Fables and Parables for Adults*, *The Other Experience* and *A Memorable Episode* are of special nature and are arranged from the Editorial office. However, there is scope for free lance for *A Memorable Episode*. Then, there are features on Festivals, Arts and Crafts. They have to be written with knowledge on these subjects and supported by pictures of good quality.

While we request the contributors to keep these needs of the magazine in mind before proposing their ideas, we apologise for our inability to publish many good submissions/When we return them, we do so with anguish. Many send articles that are highly academic in nature, suitable for university or college magazines. We request them to study THE HERITAGE before sending their articles.

We are always looking forward to new themes marked by creative zeal and a spirit of adventure in ideas. We can carry such pieces in our section *New Leaf*, meant for budding writers or even under a new head if the articles so require.

THE HERITAGE is a serious mission to create a tradition of healthy, intelligent and creative reading. It is a battle against formidable odds. Your goodwill is our great support. Hence this explanation.