

FROM THE EDITOR

TILL WE MEET AGAIN...

Time has come for us, the editor and the publisher of THE HERITAGE, to share with the readers a state of mixed emotions in which we find ourselves. On one hand we feel beholden to the well-wishers of THE HERITAGE who have been its fond readers either from the beginning or from the day they came across it and on the other hand we feel sad to inform them as well as tens of thousands of readers who have read the magazine irregularly, but have appreciated it, that the magazine will no longer be available to them after the next (December '89) issue, completing five years of uninterrupted publication.

THE HERITAGE was launched out of a kind of anguish. During the last two decades, we have witnessed a dazzling crop of magazines in India. Many of them deserve accolades for their production, layout and intelligent coverage of men and matters. Intelligent, but hardly anything more; stimulating, but not elevating. They carried articles in plenty in the name of culture, but somehow one felt that the soul of culture was absent in them.

THE HERITAGE proposed to fill up a vacuum. It was not designed to be an alternative reading prospect, but an essential complement to what was available.

Within its limitations THE HERITAGE tried to present a vision of life that was broader than politics and easy entertainments. It planned its content carefully so that each issue was a harmonious blend of significant fiction and informative as well as thought-provoking features. No doubt, it had articles on places, known and little-known, festivals, traditions, tribals, etc. which other magazines also carry, but it covered many more areas of interest which are ignored by others. Through regular features like "The Other Experience", "An Episode to Remember", "Fables and Parables for Adults" and "The World of Dreams" it emphasised the fact that there were more to life than meets the eye. It covered aspects of Indian culture (dance, art, music, literature) and timeless topics under "Reflections" or "Indian Genius", but it did not leave out cardinal problems of the day which it covered under "Today's Topic". Sound knowledge of psychology and mysticism met in the articles in "Body and Mind". It explained mythological issues and interpreted legends and practices. It presented creative writing of our time— through stories and poems—selected from different Indian languages apart from those by Indo-Anglian writers. The last section of the magazine was a "Book-Feature" devoted either to a fiction of quality or to some purposeful narration, often exclusively prepared for THE HERITAGE. (For example, The Andaman Story contained hitherto unknown account of the Japanese occupation days, based on first-hand interview with surviving prisoners and unpublished documents; Dr. Sisirkumar Bose let us publish his absorbing narration of his secret drive—carrying his uncle Netaji Subas Chandra Bose to the frontier, in "The Great Escape", we made the leader of the Fourth Antarctic Expedition, Dr. B.B. Bhattacharya, write his story, Phani Majumdar told his unforgettable experiences among the headhunters of Borneo, the forgotten literature on Jallianwala Bagh Massacre too were reproduced in this section and Swami Rama's analysis of the spectre of AIDS was here too, among many other memorable works.)

The total editorial design was to remind ourselves that man had infinite possibilities in him; he cannot be taken for a ride by clever caterers to the demands of his superficial pleasure-seeking self.

But there were formidable hurdles before it.

Gone are the days when a magazine like *The Modern Review* could sustain itself through its sale-revenue, advertisement or no advertisement. The cost of production of a copy of THE HERITAGE is higher than its price. Hence, advertisements are a must. But the character of the magazine would not let us accept advertisements of dubious nature. THE HERITAGE could not be a party to the bizarre

tradition of inducing the people to consume a certain product while giving them a statutory warning that it was poisonous! THE HERITAGE could not accept insertions which, it felt, banked more on its methods of enticing the readers, by trying to arouse envy, lust, etc. in them, than on the quality of the thing it wished to push. No wonder that our reservations would put off the advertising agencies.

Advertisements issued by the Governments are more or less clean. There are magazines with much less circulation than what THE HERITAGE commands, but they are lucky with such advertisements. How? I do not know. But if it is a question of showing inflated circulation figures, THE HERITAGE would not do that.

Of course, there was an alternative scope. If THE HERITAGE would have become a much more widely circulated magazine than it is, the advertisers would have been obliged to seek the hospitality of its pages—and THE HERITAGE would have been in a position to dictate which ones it would accept. But that was not the case. THE HERITAGE could not reach its potential buyers whose number would have easily reached a million, spread over the vast country. In a small town the stall-owner would be understandably reluctant to allocate space to THE HERITAGE which, he knows, will sell ten copies whereas if he used that much space to display a pot-pourri of politics and cinema, it will sell a hundred copies.

The situation would be different had all those who liked THE HERITAGE and could afford to buy it or to subscribe to it, insisted on getting their copies of it. I beg your pardon—but I must say that they have failed in their duty, or maybe, they never considered it their duty to promote a magazine of this nature. I have known members of intelligentsia speaking effusively of THE HERITAGE, but a look at their drawing room has revealed that they have a glittering display of a newsmagazine, a cinema magazine, a sports magazine, but there is no copy of THE HERITAGE. It is a sad fact that the reading habit of the intelligentsia—of a great part of it—has been infected by the sensation-titillation virus. Who is to blame? So far as the average educated man is concerned, the blame may lie with the makers of such stuff. But so far as the intelligentsia is concerned, the blame sits squarely on the intelligentsia!

Through formation of a trust, or even otherwise, the publishers of THE HERITAGE were willing to go on subsidising it. But that is not a situation to be relished. Either the intelligentsia should sustain a good magazine, or it should go without it. A period of five years, I suppose, has been an adequate time for them to choose. Now, I have suggested to our publishers to call it a day. They have reluctantly concurred with my observations.

Those who have been the devoted readers of THE HERITAGE are the hope of tomorrow's India. And it is a great hope. In the fields of taste and culture, the leadership and the initiative always remain in the hands of a few. The spirit which THE HERITAGE represented will surface in one form or another, for that is an undying spirit. Despite all appearances to the contrary, man's march in the direction of light and truth is a spiritual fact of existence. No amount of cynicism or corruption of culture can belie this fact.

As the Editor of THE HERITAGE I was blessed in our patron, Shri B. Nagi Reddi and in our Publisher-cum-Managing Editor and our Executive Advisors. I do not know how much freedom other editors enjoy, but the freedom given to me was total, under an enlightened supervision and an assurance of loving support, in the genial atmosphere of the house of Chandamama. The time and attention our Publisher-cum-Managing Editor gave to it should be an example to others in the publishing world who care for values.

The call of THE HERITAGE had found warm response from so many gifted writers, both eminent and new. We are grateful to them. We are particularly grateful to those who complied with our specific needs, keeping to deadlines. They include savants like K.R. Srinivasa Iyengar and M.P. Pandit, historians like M.N. Das and Stanley Wolpert, Scientist J.V. Narlikar, scholars Karan Singh, K.D. Sethna, Malcolm Adiseshiah, Prema Nandakumar, S. Ambirajan, M.V. Nadkarni, David Davidar, R.Y.

Deshpande, Vasundhara Filliozat, D.P. Pattanayak, A. Ranganathan, Jiwan Pani, Varsha Das, Richard Pearson, M. Krishnan, K.H. Krishnamurthy and writers like Mulk Raj Anand, K.S. Duggal, Ruskin Bond, Edith Pargeter, Maggi Lidchi, Jai Ratan, Pradip Bhattacharya, Champak Chatterji, A.S. Raman, P.S. Sundaram, Anand R. Kundaji, Shrawan Kumar, Kalyani Davidar, Pratibha Nath, Sunita Jain, D. Anjaneyulu, K. Sreenivasan, Shreekumar Varma, Sunjoy Bhatt and Anup K. Das, specialists in different fields like Pranab Kumar Bhattacharya (Exercises) N.C. Surya, A.S. Dalai and Prema Shastri (Psychology). THE HERITAGE had moments of pleasure and pride when a person like the Dalai Lama would keep aside some important engagements to give it an interview or when a celebrity like the Prince Philip, the Duke of Edinburgh would choose THE HERITAGE to carry his article on conservation exclusive to this part of the world. Also, I take this opportunity to convey our deep sense of appreciation for the support at the initial stage we received from friends like Himansu Niyogi (Calcutta), Madhukar Munim (Bombay), Ramesh Vardya (Bangalore) and Abhay Singh (Bhubaneswar). We are also most thankful to institutions such as Sri Aurobindo Ashram Trust, Pondicherry, and Visva Bharati, Santiniketan for permitting us to use copyright literature and pictures.

Once again THE HERITAGE conveys its farewell greetings to all its readers.