head, and preach too, how will you manage?"

"You are mistaken doc; I teach with my heart, write from my heart, and live for my heart. I won't even feel the difference!"

"Oho, let me put it in perspective for you. You can't be famous without your head, can you, and don't you wish to be famous?"

Hmmm. Now this was a tricky one. I raced my throbbing head, and jogged my useless memory and rummaged through the pages of history near and distant.

"It is possible doc, it is possible to be headless and famous. While, in my opinion, most famous people lose their heads somewhere in the course of their climb to fame, let me give you a specific example..." I then quoted from ancient Indian history about this famous Kushan dynasty king whose main claim to fame is the sole headless statue of his that is lying in a museum in Peshawar (I could be mistaken here). That is how this ruler is remembered throughout student-dom, memorized by rote, and quoted on answer scripts as such. Hah! The 'headless statue of Kaniska', the master stroke that silenced the doctor!

The doctor nodded his head with ease (it was obvious, his was giving him no cause for complaints) and assuredness (it was also obvious that he had complete control over his head, which made me feel mighty jealous) and said, "Ok then, if that is what you want, and looks like you have made up your mind, there is very little I can do about it. My Hippocratic oath binds me to my commitment to saving lives, not heads, and so I cannot stop you from becoming headless. You decide when, and I shall make provisions for it. But there's a sincere request. Let me prescribe you some medicines afresh, and you try it out one last time. If it doesn't work out, then I am prepared to go by whatever you say."

"Fair enough," I thought to myself, this time using my head. Of course, I was convinced that the improvement would be minimal.

And so it has been! This morning, I woke up to suddenly find my voice completely gone! While The Hubby has been busy lining up warm water with salt for gargling, and soups for some immediate relief, and zero provocation to ensure that I don't start a new verbal fight, I am gleefully making my mental calculations of just how much I will be saving hereafter in my headless avatar: parlour visits, nasal drops, antibiotics, sunscreens, cosmetics, mirrors, basic ear-jewellery, stylish sun shades, swimming goggles, and so on. And overall peace and tranquillity in the house because there will be one party less in the verbal duel! Things had never looked this good.

If only I had managed to convince my doctor earlier...

## Exiled Emperor

*Chess*

CHESS was a favourite pastime of kings and emperors. It attained the stature of a royal game because of its large following among the nobility. Aristocrats were fond of this game of symbolic warfare. Maybe, it gave them the pleasure of winning a war without bloodletting. The game also brings into play the elements of strategic thinking and tactical operations-much the same way these are treated in a real warfare.

The Counts and Barons also promoted chess. Sultan Khan, the Indian chess star, would perhaps have never played in international tournaments had there been no Sir Umer Hayat Khan, the landlord from Punjab, to support him. Sultan Khan went on to become British champion three times.

Now, it won't be irrelevant to ask how strong the noblemen were over the board. It seems most of them were interested only in playing. In Satyajit Ray's Satranj-ki-Khiladi we find how two members of the Oudh royal family play chess almost round the clock. But we don't know anything about their playing strength. Perhaps they were no better than wood pushers.

There were, however, exceptions. French Emperor Napoleon Bonaparte was a pretty strong player. He spent the last six years of his life in the island of St. Helena where he played a lot of chess. What could have been a better companion than chess for an exiled monarch? He had lost the decisive Battle of Waterloo, but still had the consolation of winning some well played games over the chessboard. It was no compensation for losing to the British, but how else could the great General feel happy?

Napoleon played the same brand of chess that the top masters of his times were known for. Their style was simple enough for anyone having an elementary knowledge of the game to grasp. The opening would invariably be some sort of gambit, to be followed by a series of sacrifices aimed it breaking the defensive wall around the enemy king.

The games that Napoleon played in the solitude of St. Helena must have reminded him of the tough battles that he had fought all his life.

White- Napoleon Bonaparte
Black-General Bertrand
[C44]
St. Helena, 1818
1.Nf3 Nc6 2.e4 e5 3.d4 Nxd4 4.Nxd4 4...exd4 5.Bc4 Bc5 6.c3 6...Qe7 7.00 Qe5 8.f4!! dxc3+ 9.Kh1 cxb2 10.Bxf7+! Kd8 11.fxe5 bxa1Q 12.Bxg8 Be7 13.Qb3 a5 14.Rf8+! 14...Bxf8 15.Bg5+ Be7 16.Bxe7+ Kxe7 17.Qf7+ Kd8 18.Qf8# 1-0



*Position after 10.Bxf7+!*

-PATZER