

To the Editor

A story and a poem

Sri Lanka Journal of Dermatology, 1999 - 2000, 4, 46-47

Having read your editorial in the latest issue of the Journal I thought the following story and the poem by Walter Foss would help to set your mind at rest about the doubts you are having about launching of the new programme.

I hope you will enjoy reading the story set out below.

"Once upon a time there was a calf. One evening he walked home through a thick jungle. The distance to his home was only one kilometer but he walked three kilometers since, like all calves, he wandered here and there, left and right, up and down.

The next morning a shepherd's dog passed that way and saw the calf's hoof marks and followed the path of this calf through the woods. Shortly after, the first sheep of a flock followed the path and behind him all other sheep. Thus a path through the woods was made.

Men began to use that path, coursing its twists and turns as they did, but doing nothing about it.

The path gradually became a lane, the lane became a road and horses and bullock carts followed it - followed the steps of the wandering calf.

A century later the road became a street, and then a city's crowded thoroughfare with thousands following in the footsteps of the wobbly calf.

Three centuries later the road became the main street of a very large city. Buses, lorries, trams and cars followed the zig-zag path of the calf"

"A hundred thousand men were led
By one calf near three centuries dead
They followed still his crooked way
And lost one hundred years a day..."

For men are prone to go it blind
Along the calf-path of the mind
And work away from sun to sun
To do what other men have done
They follow in the beaten track,
And out and in and forth and back,
And still their twisting course pursue
To keep path that others do,
They keep the path a sacred groove,
Along which all their lives they move".

From a story and poem by Walter Foss (1895)

Antoinette Perera, Senior Lecturer, University of Sri Jayawardenepura.