THE EDUCATION OF INDIA

History and Problems

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To

My Mother

PREFACE TO THE FOURTH EDITION

THOUGH a book of this kind cannot hope to be a best-seller or even a book-of-the-month, there is comfort in the demand for a fourth edition. It shows that education is a live subject in India today and that the citizens of Independent India are interested in the 'history and problems' of education even in their own country! This is all the more consoling as some of our Universities even five years after Independence have not yet made this a subject of study and examination for training colleges while education in far-off England and America is still eagerly studied.

But this is not just a new edition of an old book. It has been thoroughly revised and brought up to date, which is not as easy as it looks when so many names and divisions and classifications have changed in young-old India. Since the third edition of 1948 the greatest 'event' in this unsensational subject has been the Report of the University Education Commission of 1948-9 of which Sir S. Radhakrishnan was chairman and which has been quoted by Sir Richard Livingstone in his latest book, *Education and the Spirit of the Age*. A whole chapter comments on this Report.

T.N.S.

Trichinopoly, 1952

PREFACE TO THE THIRD EDITION

FIVE years of war and peace have passed since the second edition of this book appeared, and another has become necessary. Not the least hopeful symptom of a healthy young independent India is the interest it takes in its own education; and a book that is at once short and easy and fairly complete is still in demand.

I have therefore revised the second edition in the light of recent events, and especially of the greatest event in our history which took place on 15 August 1947. The history part had, of course, to be left untouched, for it had been written without respect for persons or parties and governments and needed no changing to suit changed circumstances. But the attempts to solve our problems made since 1943 by Government and private bodies, and in particular the Report of the Central Advisory Board of Education on the entire field and all aspects of it, deserved to be fully treated. For detailed reports of work done in various Provinces and States I have had to rely on their own publications; but every one who has some acquaintance with how official Reports are prepared knows that not too much must be drawn from them. I have therefore abstained from showing as much enthusiasm over their triumphs as they themselves understandably felt. My purpose has rather been to put my finger on those tendencies which in the light of our new-found independence may be of greatest value (or danger) in the years ahead.

Trichinopoly, 1948 T.N.S.

PREFACE

THIS little book is not meant to be a treatise on Indian Education or even a history of Indian education. The object of the Oxford University Press in asking me to write it was to offer students a short and handy textbook which would survey the vast ground as from an aeroplane, picking out the outstanding events in the long past of Indian education and drawing attention to the main problems of today. I therefore lay no claim to originality or completeness: to examine the original documents for the whole period or to give a detailed history of each grade of education would have been equally beside the mark. There already exist excellent studies of the different periods which I have gratefully used in this book: F. E. Keay's *Ancient Indian Education* (now enlarged into *Indian Education in Ancient and Later Times*[1]), Narendra Nath Law's volumes on *Promotion of Learning in India* under Muslim[2] and early British rule,[3] and F. W. Thomas's *British Education in India.*[4] J. M. Sen's *History of Elementary Education in India*[5] contains all that is worth knowing on this subject. For the last fifty years, the Government of India's quinquennial Reports of Education contain all the available data for detailed study.

In the second part of this book I have tried to

[1] Oxford, 1938.
[2] Longmans, 1916.
[3] Longmans, 1915.
[4] Bell, 1891.
[5] The Book Company, Calcutta, 1933.

discuss some of the many and complex aspects of the educational problems of today. In this discussion it has been my aim not so much to exhaust a subject as to arouse interest and thought on it. For the reader I have in view is already acquainted with these problems and able to make independent suggestions on how they may best be solved. If I shall have invited criticism and discussion which will lead to the true educational progress of India —on which her social, economic, and political progress depends—my object in writing this little book will have been attained.

I have refrained from providing the customary graphs and tables showing the progress of education in India, because it is impossible to give accurate figures for any period for a vast and heterogeneous country like this without at once having to make several corrections and qualifications. Neither have I repeated the usual tale of books, because with the exception of the few I have mentioned they are of unequal and often doubtful value, and the embarrassment of choosing from among them is invincible.

Calcutta, 1939 T.N.S.

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INTRODUCTION

NOTHING is more characteristic of India today than the prominence given to education in her public thought. Political discontent and social unrest are less symptomatic of change than the general dissatisfaction felt with the present system of education and the general wonder how it is to be reformed. It is a sign of progress that the Indian public wants to reform education first, for it is the key to social and political reform.

But not any reform will attain the desired object. What has been wanting in Indian educational policy for at least a century (and before that there was no policy on any wide scale) is a *policy*—which presupposes a clear conception of the goal to be reached or at least tended towards, and a steadfast adoption of the necessary and sufficient steps towards that goal. It is true that when the East India Company first gave any thought to its responsibility for 'the peoples entrusted to our care', it gave the first place to education as the best measure to adopt 'with a view to the better instruction of the people, the introduction among them of useful knowledge, and the improvement of their moral character.'[1] But as the Company's sway extended to larger portions of India, it felt the difficulty of educating its subjects more and more keenly. Various interests also interfered with its at

[1] Government Resolution, 17 July 1823.

first clearly conceived policy, till within recent memory provincial and local bodies took over the administration of education and led it along various if not contrary channels.

The result is that today, in spite of a start of several centuries over Europe, India has a smaller percentage of literacy and a lower average standard of education than any country of Europe, and that, though she has a large number of students in her universities, their level of education is out of all proportion to the money and labour spent on them. The thinking Indian is therefore right in insisting on a thorough overhauling of the system. This overhauling will depend on its present condition and the goal to be aimed at. The first can only be judged from a history of education in India—which is the subject of this book. The second needs to be discussed at some length in this chapter as well as *passim* in those which follow.

Education is the drawing out of a child's latent potentialities by providing them with suitable opportunities for their exercise and, through exercise, their development and perfection. Every human being, from the first moment of life, is a person, i.e. an individual possessing human nature (body *plus* soul) in its own distinctive and unique way. The child, therefore, is not a *tabula rasa*, a clean slate on which parents or teachers may write whatever they please; it has its own faculties—physical, intellectual, and moral—as yet unable to produce *acts* for want of unfolding and exercise, but with clear character-

istics and tendencies, good or bad, determined by heredity, constitution, and surroundings. The work of education therefore consists in providing the child with *suitable opportunities* for the exercise and development of its latent powers. The subjects taught, the homework, the instruments for work and play, the companions, the teachers, the very furniture and surroundings and 'atmosphere' of the home and the school (for these are, in order of importance, the two places of education)—all are to be chosen if and in so far as they are suitable as *occasions* (not causes) of the child's own activity. The cause of education, or the educator, is the child himself, for education is an immanent action, while instruction, a transient action, is given by the teacher. The only true education is self-education, for no outsider can act for the pupil. The utmost that others can do is to stimulate the pupil—through emulation, ambition, fear, love—to exert and exercise his own faculties of body and soul. The teacher is like a parent who provides the bodily substance: the child's soul, which gives life and personality, is created by God and once created is self-determining and unique.

Hence though the same human nature is found in every man, it is not individuated in the same *way* in every man. Each individual of the species is different from every other (past, present, and future). Therefore, though the same specific faculties are found in every normal child (we hereby exclude defective children), no two children (even twins or quins) have them in

the same *way*, i.e. with the same sum-total of tendencies and orientation, strength and weakness. It follows from this that, strictly speaking, each child must be educated alone and separately. Group education, and still more crowd education, is at best a concession to financial and spatial poverty. This however, does not concern us here.

It follows also, and this is important for our present purpose, that the education of each nation or race, like that of each individual, should be different from that of any other. For though an Indian is in the abstract a man as truly as a German or a Swede, in the concrete he is the product of quite a different culture—which comprehensive word includes language, customs, religion, natural surroundings, climate, food, ways of thinking—from theirs, and therefore needs quite different opportunities or occasions to draw out his latent powers. Both may receive the same *knowledge*; but both cannot be *educated* in the same way, i.e. both cannot react to that knowledge in the same way.[1]

This brings us to an important question: What kind of education does India require? And what is wrong with her past education?

It is a commonplace of educational politics that the education of a country should be adapted to its history and traditions. To speak more accurately, a nation is an individual writ large; and as an individual is a person distinct from

[1] It must be clearly remembered that we are here speaking of *education*, and not of mere instruction such as already educated men and women may acquire in post-graduate or technical or professional courses.

every other and becomes more and more distinct with every new thought, word and act (or experience) of which he is the subject, so too, though evidently in a less strict sense, a nation or country has a *personality* distinct from every other, and the more different from others the longer its history and the more complex its life. An old, large, and many-sided country like India therefore has a rich and complex personality. Its education must take this into account and aim at developing and perfecting this personality in its own distinctive line. It must try not to superimpose a stereotyped or even objectively perfect foreign system on an already long-existing country, but to graft what is best in modern education on to the indigenous tree in order to make that tree grow and produce its distinctive fruit: it must aim at making Indians better Indians—which is the same as better men *and something more*.

What is this *something more* which distinguishes the educated Indian from the educated Englishman or the educated Japanese? It is certainly not *what* he knows, for that is, with accidental differences, the same for all; but *how* he is taught and knows what he is taught. In other words, it is the method or the means through which his faculties are given opportunities of exercise and development. The content of knowledge which every educated man in a certain stage of civilization is expected to know is indeed more or less the same; the nature to be educated is also substantially the same; but the way of

acquiring that knowledge and perfecting that nature is different.

It is because this principle has been forgotten in the education of Indians that the results of a century's efforts are so disappointing. Western *learning* was useful and even necessary if India was to come into line with the rest of the world; but her *education* should have been Indian. Instead of assimilating European art and science into her own system by an immanent organic process of intussusception, she has piled it up on her back externally, fatiguing and impoverishing herself into the bargain. The Indian has acquired new ideas through the medium, not of images and words and associations which he knew before, but of a language, an imagery, and a way of thinking altogether foreign and unknown. Here again, be it remembered, I do not speak of professional or technical instruction, but of *education* in all its stages—primary, middle, and high. The phenomenon that Indian students know more about snow which they have never seen than about dew which they have, that they can reel off more lines about the thrush or the nightingale (about which they have read in European books) than about the *koel* or the paddy-bird (which they see and hear), cannot be explained by the mere instinct of playing the sedulous ape. The cause is much deeper down: it is the want of real education behind the superficial acquisition of words and phrases. This information is conceptual or verbal; it is not real and therefore not educative.

The education which Indians need is not, as is too often lightly said, a purely Indian education, as if there is such a thing as an Indian, as distinct from an African or an American education. Education is always and everywhere the same; but the *way* of educating children or, more correctly, giving children suitable opportunities to educate themselves, differs with their mother-tongue, their racial and religious and social history, their present surroundings and future prospects. Indians should be educated through the medium of their own language and traditions—i.e. they should acquire a sound judgement which may later on be used on new things by exercising their thinking and judging powers on *familiar* things. And this can only be done through words and associations (which includes images, proverbs, figures of speech—in a word, language) which are natural and instinctive to the student. The test of education is, after all, the capacity to adapt oneself to future circumstances through the balance of judgement acquired by frequent exercise on past and present situations. The past and the present are common to all men: the whole world supplies us with the raw material of education—information. But the *use* of this material will depend on the temperament and culture of each nation. As Dr Fan, a leader of educated youth in China, said to a university gathering some years ago:

> Only as you form a sound judgement and develop a sense of what is true and fitting can you hope naturally

and without mistake to select from the common culture of the world those things which will make you truly great. The future of our China may depend on the choice we make.[1]

India's problem is the same as China's, and the solution is the same. But to understand the problem and the solution, we must understand the history of education in this country. The following chapters, while they describe the kind of education India has so far been given, will implicitly show its merits and defects and suggest means to improve it.

[1] *China through a College Window*, 120.

Part I

HISTORY

CHAPTER I

ANCIENT AND MEDIEVAL EDUCATION

IT is difficult to speak of ancient Indian education with certainty, for our information is based on documents of unequal value and unequal date. That there was a certain conception of education from the time when the Aryans began to settle down in north-west and north India and even before their coming (according to a probable theory) when the Dravidians possessed most of the Deccan and the south of the peninsula, seems fairly certain, even apart from any direct evidence, when we consider the *general* level of culture mirrored in the literature, art, and social and religious customs of the times. Every artist is a product no less than a leader of his society and age. He is better in degree than his fellows, but not different in kind from those for whom he works. This is especially true of the writer of an epic of tradition (as opposed to an epic of art) which is the collective work of a people, the actual author (like Homer or Valmiki) being only a spokesman or symbol (often shadowy enough) of his tribe or race. The intellectual and social background of the *Mahabharata* and *Ramayana*, not to speak of the much earlier *Rigveda*, points to a certain standard of education in the society which listened to or read them and whose life is depicted (through the very idealization of art) in them. The syntax of the Sanskrit and Prakrit,

the abstract words, the proverbs, the *ideas*—all show a degree of physical and spiritual well-being which is not accounted for except by some education.

But when we look for proofs of systematic education in the sense of a consecutive course of several years during which the child is entrusted to a teacher exclusively for this purpose, we do not find them. This is what we should have expected in a society which, though not primitive, was not organized in anything like the modern sense. But a period seems to have been set apart in every child's life for education, if we may rely on the Vedas and Upanishads. The late *Vaikhanasa Dharmasutra* mentions one of the four categories of householder (*yayavara*, i.e. wanderer) as studying and teaching pupils. Weber also holds that the profession of teaching was carried on by many householders as well as by those who had passed this stage.[1] In the early Vedic period there seem to have been a number of such teachers who set up as *gurus* and attracted by their reputation a small number of pupils who came and lived in their houses (*antevasin*). This number, according to the *Mahabharata*,[2] was not more than five. There was therefore a very personal contact between teacher and pupils.

The Brahman child began his education at the age of 8, the Kshatriya at 11, the Vaisya at 12; this limit could for serious reasons be extended to 16, 22, and 24 years respectively; but after that a youth lost his right to recite the Savitri

[1] *Religionssoziologie*, II, 157 ff. [2] XII, 328, 41.

verse and could not be accepted by any teacher as his pupil or by any householder as his son-in-law, for he could not offer sacrifice.

The primary object of ancient education appears from these regulations. Education was meant to be a religious initiation: the teacher had to teach the pupil how to pray, to offer sacrifice, to perform his duties according to his stage of life. This, of course, implied a certain general education, grammar, texts, simple mathematics, mythology, perhaps astrology. What is most to be noted in view of modern Indian needs is that early Indian education was essentially religious and personal.

To imprint these two characteristics on the mind of the young pupil, the beginning and the end of his studentship (*brahmacharya*) was marked by solemn religious ceremonies. The Sutras give minute details about the direction in which master and pupil must face, the kind and colour of clothes they must wear, the rite they have to perform. The teacher takes the pupil by the shoulders, grasps his right hand, and says: 'On the instigation of Savitri, be the pupil of Brhaspati: taste water, lay wood on the fire, do thy work, sleep not by day.' The pupil then sits opposite the teacher, takes his right foot or both feet in his right hand, and begs him to teach him the Savitri verse; and his teacher repeats it first by quarter verses, then by half verses, and finally the whole.[1]

The pupil's first duty was to bring wood from

[1] Different verses, however, were prescribed for the different *varnas*.

the forest and tend his teacher's fire morning and night (for the two meals of the day); his second, to beg food for his teacher and himself; the third, to sleep on the ground, eat no spiced food, sit on a low seat; and his fourth duty was to be obedient to his teacher, to rise when spoken to, and answer at once.

Teacher and pupil sat north of the fire, the teacher facing east and the pupil west. The teacher recited a verse from one of the Vedas, explained its meaning, authorship, and metre. When the whole *Rigveda* was thus gone through, the pupil's memory and other faculties must have been fairly exercised. And some pupils studied all the four Vedas in this laborious way. A mistake on the pupil's part required an atonement of at least twenty-four hours' fast.

The term began in Sravana (roughly, the rainy season when no work could be done in the fields) with offering grains and ghee and milk and repeating the whole *Rigveda.* The Sutras[1] mention many reasons for interrupting study—full and new moon, deaths, Sraddhas, sight of unholy things, thunder, rain, prodigies of any kind. Holidays therefore seem to have been plentiful. The term lasted from 4 to 6½ months and ended in Magha or Taisa with the Utsarga, or dismissal —a festival which included offerings, a bath, change of clothes, and other symbolical ceremonies.

This system of education must have been in vogue (with differences according to caste and

[1] cf., for example, the *Sankhayana Srauta Sutra*, IV, 7.

station) from the Rigvedic period down to the Buddhist and Jaina reforms. These reforms introduced the monastic system, which spread even in the original Brahmanical religion, and produced *maths*, where large bodies of teachers and pupils (at first some kind of monks forming a community as at Nalanda, but later also including lay pupils) lived together in a kind of community. Those institutions which imparted elementary education to boys soon came to be called *tols* and distinguished from higher centres of Buddhist learning which grew up, as in Europe, in monasteries and resembled universities. The Buddhist viharas and sangharamas developed through internal cohesion into the kind of educational city of which the recently excavated Nalanda[1] is an example. Hiuen-Tsiang and I-Tsing lived here in the seventh century A.D. and describe its life.

What is of most interest to the student of Indian education in the history of Nalanda is its resemblance to a university in the medieval European sense of the word. From a sangharama (monastic school) founded by Sakraditya (Kumaragupta I) where Buddhist *bhikkus* congregated, it gradually grew through the fame of its philosopher-teachers to attract even non-Buddhists (*brahmacharins*) not only from northern India but even from the south and from Ceylon and China. It was thus a *universitas personarum*, since it contained teachers and pupils from different parts at least of the East who lived a common

[1] For fuller details, see *The University of Nalanda*, by H. D. Sankalia (1934).

residential life in its spacious buildings. Hiuen-Tsiang and I-Tsing say that when they visited Nalanda it had about 4,000 students in residence. Other universities, like Vikramasila, Odantapuri, Jagaddala, and Takshasila, were smaller but had a similar personnel.

The studies, too, were fairly comprehensive, though a complete *universitas rerum* was not realized either in Europe or in India during the Middle Ages. Nalanda, like Paris and Oxford, specialized in religion and philosophy, though there is evidence that logic, grammar, and mathematics were also taught there and that its students took part in debating, chariot-racing, boxing, wrestling, archery, acting ('mimicking other people's acts') and dancing. The standard of studies must have been fairly high, for the Entrance Examination (conducted by professors who kept the gate!) was so stiff that eight out of every ten 'external' candidates failed in it.

These details about what I-Tsing calls 'the most magnificent Temple of Learning in Jambudvipa', are not of much importance except as showing the flourishing state of higher education in medieval India, and the still religious associations of its curricula and life.

While Hindu and Buddhist education was in this comparatively flourishing condition, the Muslim conquest of India took place. In modern India the connexion between Islam and education is not very striking; but the early followers of a Prophet who is reported to have said that 'it is better to educate one's child than

to give gold in charity' do not seem to have been indifferent to education. Under the first four Caliphs and especially in the early Ummayud period, elementary education was established in newly converted countries like Iraq, Syria, and Persia. It is well known that one of the first universities of Europe was started at Cordova by the Andalusian Ummayud dynasty, and that Muslim scholars did much to prepare the way for the Renaissance just as they had done for the rediscovery by Europe of Greek science and philosophy.[1]

But the Muslim conquest of India coincided with a dark age in Islamic education when the schools had lost their wider ideals of culture in a narrow preoccupation with sectarian controversies among themselves. Small village schools grew up near the mosques, but these taught little more than prayers and maxims from the *Quran*. It was not till the Mughals came into power that any systematic attempt was made to educate on a large scale. Babar complained that India when he came contained no colleges, no mosques, and no polite society, and he himself was unable to remedy this defect in the brief four years he ruled over India.

This, however, does not imply that between the eighth and the sixteenth century the Muslim kings did nothing for education. Muhammad of Ghazni is said to have founded a magnificent

[1] In spite of certain 'corruptions' in them, it was the Latin translations of Aristotle made by Al Farabi and Al Beruni that led the Catholic philosophers of the Middle Ages to assimilate Greek philosophy into a new system since known as Scholasticism.

university, with a library of 'curious books in various languages' and a museum of natural curiosities, near a mosque at Ghazni. The next great conqueror, Muhammad of Ghor, settled down at Delhi in 1192 and replaced temples with mosques and *pathsalas* with *maktabs* (primary schools) and *madrasas* (high schools). His slave, Kutb-ud-din, who succeeded him on the throne in 1206, also built mosques and *maktabs*; it was during Kutb-ud-din's reign that the great Buddhist monastery-university of Vikramasila (in Bihar) was raided and its professors and students were evacuated. Kutb-ud-din's successors—Altamash, Sultana Raziya, Nazirud-din and Balban—encouraged *maktabs* and *madrasas* attached to mosques.

The Khilji kings, unlike the Slave sultans, did not further learning. Indeed, Ala-ud-din confiscated and appropriated to other uses almost all the *inams* (gifts) and religious endowments (*wakfs*) made by his predecessors for educational purposes. Fortunately his successor, Mubarak Khan, restored these grants. And the Tughlak kings who ruled from 1325 to 1413 continued the good tradition. Among these special mention must be made of one—Firoz Tughlak, who is said to have spent 136 lakhs of *tankas* (equal to as many rupees) in pensions and gifts, 36 of which were given for educational purposes.[1] He is also credited by the historian Ferishta with having built thirty colleges attached to mosques, and at Delhi he founded a residential university where

[1] cf. *Promotion of Learning in India by Muhammadans*, by N. N. Law, 51.

students and professors alike were maintained on Government scholarships and endowments.

Another period of neglect followed under the successors of Firoz Tughlak. In 1398, Timur sacked all the schools he could find along with religious and charitable institutions. The Sayyid and Lodi kings who ruled from 1414 to 1526 did little for education, except that Sikandar Lodi popularized the study of Persian even among his Hindu subjects and thus paved the way for that lusty hybrid, Urdu.

While the Delhi kings were thus alternately helping and hindering education, the rulers of small independent States like Ahmednagar, Malwa, Golkonda, Sindh, and Bijapur were starting village schools where religion and learning grew side by side. Captain Taylor and Mr J. Ferguson have left an enthusiastic account of the inconspicuous kingdom of Bahmani in the Deccan which may be taken to be a fair representative of the others.[1]

But there cannot be said to have been any systematic and consistent educational policy among the Muslim kings before the Mughal emperors, so that Babar had reason to complain of the decay of learning when he ascended the throne.

His son Humayun built a *madrasa* at Delhi, and over his own tomb. Sher Shah, too, who banished Humayun, built one at Narnaul. But it was left to Akbar, the almost exact contemporary of Elizabeth of England, to inaugurate a

[1] *Architecture at Bijapur* (1866), 12 ff.

determined policy of educational encouragement.

Though probably himself unable to read and write (in spite of his general intelligence and interest in listening to reading and discussion), he ordered the *Mahabharata*, the *Ramayana*, the *Atharva Veda*, the *Lilavati*, the *Tajak* (a treatise on astronomy), the History of Kashmir (probably not the *Rajatarangini*), and other works to be translated into Persian for the benefit of Muslim students. He collected many rare books which he divided into two classes, Science and History, and entrusted to a full-time librarian, Mulla Pir Muhammad. He encouraged painting, music, and calligraphy. But, above all, he imparted a systematic education to his sons and subjects. Hindus and Muslims studied in the same schools and colleges and went through the same curriculum. They first learned the Persian alphabet, with accents and marks of punctuation; then they read easy passages of prose or verse which emphasized some moral or religious truth. Every day they had to do four exercises: the alphabet, the combinations of letters, a new hemistich or distich, and a repetition of the previous lesson. More advanced students were taught the sciences (as they were then known) in the following order: ethics, arithmetic, accountancy, agriculture, geometry, astronomy, economics, physics, logic, natural philosophy, and history. While Muslims learnt the *Quran*, Hindu pupils studied *Vyakarana*, *Vedanta* and Patanjali's commentary on Yoga.

Blochmann mentions a large college founded by Akbar on the hill at Fatehpur Sikri, 'the like of which few travellers can name'.[1] Besides this there were several other *madrasas* in Fatehpur Sikri, Agra, and Gujarat. These colleges were mostly residential, though the well-known one at Delhi, which Shaikh 'Abdul Haqq used to walk two miles each way to attend, was a day school. Besides State institutions, there were also private-owned schools for what we may call post-graduate work in music, painting, philosophy, and mathematics: such, for instance. was Mir Ali Beg's academy at Agra where 'Abdul Qadir, the author of the *Tarikhi-Bada'uni*, studied, and the *madrasa* built at Delhi in 1561 by Akbar's nurse, Maham Anaga.

The chief achievements of Akbar's reign, therefore, in the field of education were the admission of Hindus and Muslims into the same schools, the encouragement of Hindu and Muslim art and literature, the translation of Hindu and Muslim classics, the patronage of learned men of various countries and religions, and the starting of a comparatively large number of educational institutions.

Akbar's son, Jahangir, had been given a good education and knew not only Persian but even Turkish. The *Tarikhi-Jan-Jahan* narrates that he 'repaired even those *madrasas* which had for thirty years been the dwelling-place of birds and beasts and filled them with students and professors'. For this purpose he used the property of

[1] *Ain-i-Akbari* (Jarrett), II, 180.

those of his subjects who died without heirs. Professors of various religions (even Jesuits) taught in Agra. The king himself was a passionate collector of books and paintings (and encouraged such masters as Farrukh Beg, Hasan, and Mansur) and patronized musicians like Chatar Khan, mathematicians like Mirza Ghiyas Beg, historians like Ni'matullah, and poets like Baba Talip Ispahani.

As Jahangir was less systematic in his educational policy than his father Akbar, his son Shah Jahan was even less so than Jahangir. But neither of them was retrogressive, and each progressed in some way. Shah Jahan is chiefly known for the Imperial College he founded in Delhi not far from the Jami' Masjid in 1650.[1] He also repaired the Dar-ul-Baqa college and appointed the learned Maulana Muhammad Sadruddin as Director (we should now say Principal).

Prince Dara gave promise not only of brilliant personal attainments (he knew Arabic, Persian, and Sanskrit, and wrote several books on Hinduism and Sufism) but also of an enlightened educational policy. But as Lt-Col Sleeman wrote after visiting his tomb,[2] 'infirmity of temper' prevented him from changing the destinies of India by changing the character of education.

Aurangzib followed a different policy from Akbar with regard to the education of his Hindu

[1] This college was destroyed after the Mutiny of 1857: cf. C. Stephens, *Archæology of Delhi*, 255.

[2] *Rambles and Recollections*, II, 270-1.

subjects. In April 1669, for instance, he ordered the provincial governors to destroy the Hindu schools and temples within their jurisdiction.[1] But he spent lavishly on Muslim education. H. G. Keene says that he 'founded numberless colleges and schools'.[2] He confiscated a Dutch building in Lucknow and turned it into a *madrasa*. He ordered the Diwans to help poor students with stipends in proportion to their merit, and had the number of professors and students in Ahmedabad, Patna, and Surat increased. He took steps to educate the rather backward Bohras of Gujarat by appointing teachers and ordering monthly examinations and making attendance at school compulsory —at their own expense, when they gave trouble to his lieutenants.

Besides State schools, there were *madrasas* built and run by private individuals, sometimes with Aurangzib's help. Akramuddin Khan Sadr built a college at Ahmedabad in 1697 at a cost of Rs. 1,24,000. Qazi Rafi'uddin Muhammad started a college at Bianah in 1670. Siyalkut (modern Sialkot) was famous for a *madrasa* founded and taught by Maulawi Abdul Hakim and his son Maulawi 'Abdullah.

Aurangzib's high idea of the education necessary for a prince is shown in the rebuke he administered to his own teacher, Mulla Salih:[3]

> Was it not incumbent on my preceptor to make me acquainted with the distinguishing features of every nation

[1] cf. J. Sarkar, *Anecdotes of Aurangzib and Historical Essays*, 11.
[2] *The Fall of the Mughal Empire*, 23.
[3] Quoted in *Bernier's Travels*, 156.

of the earth, its resources and strength, its mode of warfare, its manners, religions, form of government, and wherein its interests principally consist; and by a regular course of historical reading, to render me familiar with the origin of States, their progress and decline, the events, accidents or errors owing to which such great changes and mighty revolutions have been effected ?

Badahur Shah (1707-12) who succeeded Aurangzib was less fond of education than his predecessor; but during his reign two new colleges were started in Delhi: one by Ghaziuddin, an Amir whose son founded the Nizam dynasty in the Deccan, and the other by Khan Firuz Jang. Both these colleges were attached to mosques, the first also to a mausoleum for the founder himself. These colleges were unfortunately closed for want of money and are now little more than ruins.

Muhammad Shah's reign (1719–48) was marked by the rivalries of the Sayyid brothers which ended in Nadir Shah's invasion. But it was also marked by the impetus given to astronomical education by the founding of the Jantar Mantar in Delhi by Jai Singh, Raja of Amber (Jaipur). This was an observatory containing a large equatorial dial with degrees for determining altitudes and azimuths. Though this observatory was not finished, it provided data for the well-known Astronomical Tables called *Muhammad Shahi.*

It was while Muhammad Shah was emperor that Nadir Shah invaded Delhi and returned to Persia with the precious imperial library so laboriously collected by successive Mughals. Shah 'Alum II (1759–1806) again got together a decent

library, only to be again robbed by Ghulam Qadir.

From this necessarily short and sketchy account of ancient and medieval, or Hindu and Muslim, education in India, two conclusions will force themselves on the reader: from the earliest times, Indian parents and rulers were aware of their duty and right to give their children at least an elementary education; but neither parents nor rulers seem to have discharged this duty on a systematic or universal scale. One king or prince opened schools and another closed (if he did not destroy) them; one parent entrusted his children to a *guru*, and ten others (especially of the lower castes or poorer classes) did not.

But one feature of Indian education was maintained throughout this long and dark period: it was personal and based on the family system. However uneven and haphazard each successive ruler's policy might be, it took into account the characteristic Indian spirit of education—that it is a personal discipleship of the pupil to the teacher and that religion is inseparable from this discipleship. The ancient Hindu teacher had no difficulty about diversity of religion among his pupils: they were all of his own religion, and his primary purpose was to make them good Hindus. The Muslim kings had to choose between neglecting the education of their Hindu subjects and giving them separate schools: the majority of them chose the first alternative (though they generally tolerated the Hindu schools which

already existed even when they did not help them with money or build new ones), and a few like Akbar chose the second. But none of them denied the principle that every child should be educated in his own religion if he is educated at all. None of them advocated a religionless or neutral education to cut the Gordian knot of multiplicity of religions.

Neither did the unit of teaching change from the individual or the group to the crowd: among the higher classes, and the nobility in particular, each pupil had a teacher all to himself; and even other teachers had small groups of ten or twelve at most to teach and live with. Education was still considered as a personal and family-like process: the teacher had to live with his pupils, talking and listening to them, observing them and being observed by them, encouraging and praising, scolding and punishing them. And since earning a living had not yet become the principal goal of education, this possibly less businesslike but certainly more scientific attitude was followed unmolested. In the light of what has happened since, we shall have occasion to regret the loss of this aspect of Indian education, much as we may rejoice over its progress (in step with the rest of the world) from the instructional and utilitarian point of view.

CHAPTER II

EDUCATION UNDER EARLY BRITISH RULE

WHILE the Muslim power was weakening to its death, traders from the West were settling down in the most accessible ports and acquiring, first merely commercial, and little by little also proprietary and military, rights from the local magnates. Contrary to the modern axiom, it was the flag that followed trade. And with the flag came education.

Within its ' settlement ' each trading company had the right (and perhaps the duty) to start schools for the children of its employees. These were at first Europeans and soon also the result of local unions. The language problem obviously arose pretty early in the history of this education. Portuguese, French, English, and after a time a mongrel speech which the Indians dubbed *Feringhi* became the medium of instruction in Company schools. As business grew, the number of persons within the settlements also grew, and with it came the need of schools for the children of pure Indian servants and workmen.

What part the religious motive played in this educational activity of European trading companies in India, it is not always easy to assess. The Portuguese came to India not merely for trade in spices, coconuts, and cardamoms, but also as missionaries with the express commission

of making Christ known to the peoples with whom they would trade. They started schools at Goa, Diu, Damaun, Cochin, Hooghly and other places almost as soon as they settled down in India, with the primary intention of educating their new converts to Christianity. These schools taught reading and writing in Portuguese as well as in the local language, and the principles of the Catholic religion. The French had similar elementary schools in their settlements at Pondicherry, Mahe, Chandernagore, and Yanam; the peculiarity of these schools being that the teaching was done in the mother-tongue by Indian teachers, French being taught only in the secondary school at Pondicherry, where the children of French settlers and soldiers were educated along with a few of the more advanced among the Indian children of the employees of the French East India Company. Contemporary and apparently impartial witnesses record that these schools were fairly efficient and admitted children of every religion and of at least the higher castes.

In both the Portuguese and the French Company's schools the missionaries played an important part. Coming to India as they did as chaplains to the Catholic servants of these Companies, they taught Christian doctrine in their schools and often guided their educational policy. They also extended the scope of the Company's schools far beyond the limits of the settlements. Sometimes, too, with monetary help from their Company they started schools

for non-Christian children, gathering these children from the neighbouring villages and not only educating them but often even feeding and clothing them and supplying them with books and slates.

The British East India Company also followed the same educational principles as the Portuguese and the French. Narendra Nath Law says that

> the first efforts of the Company to diffuse education were prompted by a religious motive, viz. the evangelization of Indians and the removal of apprehended trouble owing to the preponderance of Roman Catholics among the inhabitants of the places where they had settled.[1]

How far this is true is not clear from the available documents; but it is certain that religion was considered as one of the chief responsibilities of Directors and local Governors. The national antagonism of English Protestants towards the Catholic Portuguese and French and their Indian converts also accounts for something of their zeal for the propagation of Protestant Christianity. In any case, the missionaries followed the traders (who later became rulers), established schools for the instruction of Christians and the conversion ('civilization') of non-Christians, mostly on their own private account but with the permission and monetary help of the Company or Government.

We need not dwell at length in this book on the earlier stages of European education in India, because they have little importance in the evolution of the present system. But it is worth

[1] *Promotion of Learning in India by Early European Settlers* (1915), 5.

remarking that they continued the twofold tradition of ancient Indian education—they gave religion an essential place, and they followed the small-group system.

A short account must, however, be given of European efforts before 1835. After the Portuguese Catholic missionaries at Goa, Calicut, and other parts of south India in the sixteenth century[1] (led by St Francis Xavier, the Superior of the Jesuit mission to India) and the Dutch Protestant missionaries in Ceylon in the seventeenth century, the Protestant Danes arrived at Tranquebar on the south-east coast in 1706, led by two German missionaries who are still remembered, Ziegenbalg and Plütschau. They immediately began to study Portuguese and Tamil and opened schools for Indian children. The Tranquebar translation of the New Testament into Tamil made by Ziegenbalg and Schulze is still used in southern India.

These missionaries started 17 schools in 1725 for 'Heathen and Muhammadan' children and four 'missionary' schools, i.e. for Christians. In the former schools they were unable to teach religion (except natural religion) owing to opposition from the parents and children as well as from the lay (non-Christian) teachers whom they were forced to employ. They therefore lost interest in these schools and concentrated their activity on the missionary schools and on direct missionary work.

[1] For the subsequent educational work of Jesuit missionaries, cf. *The Jesuits and the Great Mogul*, by Sir Edward Maclagan (1932), 133 ff.

The question of religious education therefore presented the same difficulty then as it does now. The problem of the medium of instruction was no less real. Tranquebar contained a number of Portuguese speakers; the rest spoke Tamil. The Danish missionaries learnt Tamil and taught everything in that language, reserving English (which soon became popular on account of the British East India Company's progress) for teachers' training schools and seminaries. Besides this, they produced a Tamil dictionary and a Tamil and a Telugu Bible.

In this the Protestant Danish missionaries followed the same policy as the Portuguese and French Catholic missionaries before them. The first printing press in India was set up at Ambalacat near Cochin by a Jesuit missionary in 1577; and the earliest Christian poem in an Indian language was composed by Fr Ernst Hanxleden, S.J., in 1724.

The first Protestant English mission came to Madras in 1727 and soon 'adopted' the work of the Danes. Schulze and Schwartz were employed by the Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge and started schools at Madras, Tanjore, Cuddalore, Palamcottah, and Triehinopoly. The Baptists came to Bengal in 1793 and settled down at Serampore where they brought about 10,000 children under their influence. In 1804 the London Missionary Society opened schools in Ceylon and south India and finally in Bengal. The Church Missionary Society and the Wesleyan Mission had settlements at such

distant but well-chosen places as Surat, Agra, Meerut, Calcutta, Tranquebar, and Colombo.

These missionary agencies in Indian education are important, not for their achievement—though this was considerable in the circumstances—but for the impetus, in fact, for the *start*, they gave to Government enterprise. Missionaries, especially if they belonged to other nations or religious denominations than the ruling British East India Company, were at first suspected by the Government, and naturally also by the Indians. But they soon won the people over by the free education they imparted and the general raising of the standard of literacy and morals they effected, especially in centres like Serampore in the north and Goa and Tranquebar in the south. The East India Company soon felt a desire to emulate the missionaries, through self-interest if not from the pure love of Indians. In 1784 the Resident at Tanjore, A. Sullivan, laid before the Company a plan for the establishment of English schools for the education of the children of the upper castes. The missionary Schwartz was instrumental in getting this scheme through till the Court of Directors took charge of it in 1787. They sanctioned £100 as an annual endowment to each school and ordered that English, arithmetic, Tamil, Hindi (or Hindustani) and Christian Instruction should be taught. The last subject was added at the suggestion, and almost at the insistence, of the missionaries, but soon dwindled into the most superficial study of the Bible in English (more for its literary than

its religious value) owing to the opposition of the Company.

Once the Company saw the influence it would acquire over the country through schools, its leaders went forward with the policy of starting and financing more schools. Since English schools were not yet popular except with the few Brahmans who wished their sons to be employed by the Company as clerks, Warren Hastings, the then Governor-General, started a madrasa (which still exists) at Calcutta in 1784 at the Company's expense for the education of Muslim boys through the medium of Arabic. Here a few boys were attracted by a monthly stipend to undergo a course of natural philosophy, Quranic theology, law, geometry, arithmetic, logic, and grammar. In 1819 the Company allotted Rs. 30,000 annually to its maintenance, and in 1823 a new building was built at a cost of Rs. 1,40,537. In 1829 this madrasa had 99 stipendiary students.

The same principle of promoting 'Orientalism' prompted Warren Hastings to open a Sanskrit College at Benares in 1791. The British Resident, Jonathan Duncan, who built it said that the Company's intention was to secure competent interpreters of Hindu law, which was so constantly involved in the administration of justice. The education given in the college was in accordance with the *Manava Dharma*, or Institutes of Manu. Like the madrasa of Calcutta, it was put under a supervising committee in 1811, and in 1828 it contained 277 students (249 Brahmans and the

rest of the other higher castes) and received an annual Government subsidy of Rs. 20,000.

Warren Hastings' successor, Lord Wellesley, started a college of another kind at Fort William (Calcutta) in 1800. It was meant for Civil Servants of the Company and provided for their training in the languages of India, in Hindu and Muslim law, and in the history of India. Being limited to a special object, it has little importance in the history of Indian education, though it is of great interest in the evolution of the Civil Service examinations.

Before entering the modern period of Indian education, since 1835, a few words should be said about charitable schools started and maintained by European missionary bodies (often with financial help from the Company) before that date. Several of these seem to have existed at some time and for some time, mostly for the orphan or abandoned children of European soldiers or other settlers. Three of them were in Calcutta, then the centre of India and always the most European populated town in India. The Calcutta Charitable School, founded by the Anglican missionaries in 1729 from subscriptions raised in England, tottered along till 1787, spending much money on a few unkempt children; it was then placed under a Board and has existed ever since, catering for Anglo-Indian boys and girls. It now consists of two schools, the Calcutta Boys' School and the Calcutta Girls' School. The Free School, so called because it was started by the Free School Society in 1789,

has given its name to a street in Calcutta, though its own name has been changed into St Thomas's; it still educates poor Anglo-Indian boys. The 'Benevolent Institution' was started by the Baptist missionaries of Serampore for Indian as well as Anglo-Indian children of both sexes.

CHAPTER III

EDUCATION 1835-54

To understand the significance of 1835 as a turning-point in the history of Indian education it is necessary to pause a while on its threshold. Three kinds of schools were in existence at the time: vernacular schools, missionary schools (teaching in English), and Government (Company) schools teaching either in English or in the vernacular. With the growth of the East India Company's trade and power and its determination to settle down and transform itself from a trader into a ruler, the question of its responsibility for the education of Indians as a whole again came before the Directors. Charles Grant and Robert Wilberforce had proposed to introduce a clause in the renewed Charter of 1793 expressly laying on the Company the duty of educating the children of India. In a tract on the Condition of the People of India, Grant wrote:

> By planting our language, our knowledge, our opinions, and our religion in our Asiatic territories, we shall put a great work beyond the reach of contingencies. We shall probably have wedded the inhabitants of these territories to this country;[1] but at any rate we shall have done an act of strict duty to them and a lasting service to mankind.

But the Company's Directors did not admit the principle that education was their *duty* until

[1] i.e. England.

the Charter was again renewed in 1813. This Charter contained the provision

that a sum of not less than one lac of rupees in each year shall be set apart and applied to the founding and maintaining of colleges, schools, public libraries and other institutions for the revival and improvement of literature, and encouragement of the learned natives of India, and for the introduction and promotion of a knowledge of the sciences among the inhabitants of the British territories in India.

Accordingly, the Governor-General in India, on instructions from the Directors in England, set about spending the £10,000 which had been annually earmarked for this purpose. This purpose, the Directors thought, would be better served by encouraging oriental studies than by introducing European education, for as they wrote:

We are informed that there are in the Sanskrit language many excellent systems of Ethics, with codes of laws and compendiums of the duties of every class of the people, the study of which might be useful to those natives who may be destined for the judicial department of Government. There are also many tracts of merit, we are told, on the virtues of drugs and plants, and on the application of them in medicine, the knowledge of which might prove desirable to European practitioners; and there are treatises on astronomy, mathematics (including geometry and algebra) which, though they may not add new lights to European science, might be made to form links of communication between the natives and the gentlemen in our service. . . .

Nothing serious, however, was done to carry out these noble but guarded sentiments towards Indian culture till 1823 when a Committee of Public Instruction was appointed to dispose of

the annual grant of Rs. 1,00,000 for the benefit of all the educational institutions maintained by the Government in India, the chief of which were the Calcutta Madrasa, the Benares Sanskrit College, the Calcutta Sanskrit College, the Calcutta Vidyalaya, the Murshidabad Madrasa, and elementary schools in various parts of the country. The Calcutta Vidyalaya deserves special mention because, though founded in 1816 with Hindu money, on the proposal of David Hare, a watchmaker, and the advice of R. Harrington, a Government official, it became in 1819 the first Government College in India, imparting higher instruction to Indians through the medium of English.

Another educational activity entrusted to the Company in India by the Charter of 1813 was the publication of books in Indian languages. A Government press was opened in 1824 with a monthly allowance of £70. By 1835 it had spent a lac of rupees and published only 15 Sanskrit, 3 Hindi, 2 Arabic, and 4 Persian books, while a private School-book Society had in less time published 38 books, including a Sanskrit grammar, an Arabic reader, a book on astronomy, one on cholera, and one on natural philosophy, and in four years (1817-21) circulated 126,446 copies of books—making a profit of 20 per cent on the capital invested.

The only important feature of education between 1823 and 1833 is the increasing popularity of English as a medium of higher (*i.e.* secondary and university—though no university was yet

founded) education in preference to Arabic or Sanskrit. The strength of the Benares College rose from 163 to 279 students in a single year as soon as English was introduced. The Calcutta Vidyalaya or Hindu College had 70 pupils in 1819: it had 421 in 1829. And the Directors of the Company remarked in a letter of 24 October 1832 that in this college

> to an extensive command of the English language the pupils add a complete conversancy with English literature, with ancient and modern history, with geography, and the rudiments of astronomy, natural philosophy, chemistry and mathematics.

The Scottish Churches School, started by Dr Alexander Duff in 1830, is important not only for the success of its 'anglicizing' policy but even more for the success of its system of compulsory Scripture and Religion classes (which were perhaps counterbalanced by the attraction of the absence of school fees).

The renewal of the Charter in 1833 was the occasion for a general revision of the Company's educational policy in India. Parliament voted £100,000 a year for education instead of the previous allowance of £10,000. The ten members of the Committee were equally divided on the question which now assumed urgency: whether they should go on encouraging oriental education or substitute western in its place. But in 1834 Macaulay came to India and became President of the Committee and Legislative Member of the Supreme Council. It was in this capacity that he wrote the Minute of 2 February

1835, which was endorsed in Lord William Bentinck's Dispatch of 7 March inaugurating a policy which has guided Indian education ever since.

The reasons for the direction given to Indian education by this important decision deserve to be closely studied by those who wish to be fair to both sides of the controversy which preceded and followed it.

The English had to choose one of three kinds of education for official encouragement: elementary vernacular, higher Arabic or Sanskrit, and higher English. To think of translating European literature and science into Arabic or Sanskrit and thus placing it within the reach of oriental colleges, is even now, and was much more then, out of the question. Elementary education is now considered more important for the general well-being of a nation than higher education. But a century ago the small private village schools were thought to be enough for the teaching of the three R's; indeed, the Directors of the Company were persuaded that literacy was widespread among the people of India. In a letter to the Governor-General in 1833 they wrote: 'With respect to the elementary schools which were established in various parts of India previous to the appointment of the General Committee[1] we consider them of subordinate importance, instruction in reading and writing being already diffused among the inhabitants of most of the territories under your presidency.'

There was also another reason for this attitude

[1] i.e. of Public Instruction.

towards elementary education on the part of the Education Committee. It had officially a grant of only £10,000 to dispose of towards education. With this sum it could hardly provide adequately for the elementary instruction of several millions of people. It therefore decided in favour of what is known as the theory of 'infiltration', which believes that it is better to educate a few hundreds thoroughly than millions superficially, for the education given to these hundreds will necessarily filter down to the millions and thus (to change the metaphor) leaven the whole lump without much cost.

But the Committee of Public Instruction were personally inclined to encourage oriental rather than western education. For one thing they were mostly orientalists themselves and members of the Asiatic Society of Bengal. Besides, the Act of 1813 had ordered the 'encouragement of the learned natives of India,' and the Directors had in 1814 ordered the promotion of Sanskrit studies and the publication of Sanskrit books. As to 'learned natives', the only ones the Committee could think of were learned in Sanskrit or Arabic, and the only way to 'encourage' them seemed to be to foster *their* oriental learning. From the financial point of view, too, this seemed the only feasible policy to adopt, for European education through the medium of English would require highly paid and probably incompetent English teachers (taken from among the half-educated Army men or other servants of the Company) and the result was at best doubtful, while able

Sanskrit and Arabic pundits could be had for a few rupees' pay a month and the success of their teaching was assured. The Committee also believed that it was bad policy and bad pedagogy to force Indians to learn the language and literature of a foreign country when they had an old and splendid culture of their own, with associations dear to them in their daily lives and with a language in syntactical and ideological resources immeasurably superior to English.

The Committee therefore cannot be accused of prejudice against 'oriental' education: indeed, they had a distinct prepossession in its favour. What tipped the balance in favour of the 'Anglicists' were the following arguments used by Macaulay in his 'Minute':

(1) that the Act of 1813 had spoken of 'learned natives', and they could be as learned through an English as through a Sanskrit or Arabic education;

(2) that the same Act spoke of science—of which there was none in the Indian languages;

(3) that the Indians themselves (barring a few old-fashioned and 'orthodox' Brahmans) preferred an English education to their own—as the crowding of the Hindu College and the Scottish Church College in Calcutta, and the comparative desertion of the Sanskrit College in the same city in spite of its stipends, showed;

(4) that English was a much easier language to master than Sanskrit or Arabic and would give the Indians the key to all the riches of western science and literature;

(5) that even patriotic and enlightened Indians, like Raja Rammohun Roy, admitted that their own languages possessed little that was worth knowing and asked for western education.

These arguments in favour of English education were expressed in Macaulay's Minute with all the

rhetoric he knew how to wield, and their effect was immediate and overpowering. Who could persist in encouraging the 'false history, false astronomy, false medicine, false metaphysics which attended their [*i.e.* the Indians'] false religion', or resist a peroration like this?

The question before us is simply whether, when it is in our power to teach this language [i.e. English], we shall teach languages in which, by universal experience, there are no books on any subject which deserve to be compared to our own; whether, when we can teach European science, we shall teach systems which, by universal confession, wherever they differ from those of Europe, differ for the worse; and whether, when we can patronize sound philosophy and true history, we shall countenance, at the public expense, medical doctrines which would disgrace an English farrier, astronomy which would move laughter in girls at an English boarding house, history abounding in kings thirty feet high and reigns thirty thousand years long, and geography made of seas of treacle and seas of butter.

Weak as the premisses were, sweeping as were the generalizations, patent as was the ignorance and prejudice behind the judgements, the conclusion carried conviction; and on 7 March 1835 Lord William Bentinck issued a Proclamation, from which the following quotations may be of interest:

His Lordship in Council is of opinion that the great object of the British Government ought to be the promotion of European literature and science amongst the natives of India, and that all the funds appropriated for the purposes of Education would be best employed on English education alone.

But it is not the intention of His Lordship in Council to abolish any college or school of native learning while the native population shall appear to be inclined to avail themselves of the advantages it affords.

It has come to the knowledge of the Governor-General in Council that a large sum has been expended by the Committee in the printing of Oriental works. His Lordship in Council directs that no portion of the funds shall hereafter be so employed.

His Lordship in Council directs that all the funds which these reforms will leave at the disposal of the Committee be henceforth employed in imparting to the native population a knowledge of English literature and science, through the medium of the English language. . . .

This Proclamation marks a turning-point in the history of education in India. It was the first official statement of a definite policy with regard to the direction which Government wanted to give to public education.

Its effect was immediate. Six new schools teaching European literature and science through the medium of English were opened almost at once, and another six early in 1836. Thus in 1835-6, there were 23 Government schools with 3,390 pupils, of whom 1,818 were studying through the medium of English, 218 of Arabic, and 473 of Sanskrit. Six years later there were 51 schools with 8,203 students, of whom more than 5,000 were in English-teaching schools. The same tendency was even more strikingly shown by the fact that instead of the old oriental colleges having to be filled with poor children who had to be enticed with stipends, the new English-teaching colleges could not admit all the well-to-do students who offered to pay for their education. The Hooghly College, which was started in August 1836 on the new lines, had 1,200 paying students in three days. And in these English-teaching colleges, to quote Sir C. E.

Trevelyan,[1] 'Christian, Muhammadan and Hindu boys of every shade of colour and variety of descent might have been seen standing side by side in the same class, under the common inspiration of English learning'.

There is some exaggeration in this claim to 'inspiration'; for the change in the outlook of Indians which coincided with the change in the Government's policy in India was at least as powerful a cause as 'English learning'. The rise of the Arya Samaj and still more of the Brahmo Samaj was certainly due to Christian influence quite as much as to the new education.

What is generally omitted in histories of this change of system is the part played by the Indian students, without whose enthusiasm and adaptability the new education would never have been a success. In spite of the teaching being given in a foreign language in pronunciation and syntax so different from Sanskrit or Arabic or any of their modern vernaculars, they mastered European literature and even science, and shone in them. The English surgeon who examined the first-year students of the newly started Medical College of Calcutta in 1836 wrote this flattering report:

> I may remark generally that all the essays are extremely creditable—and I do not think that any class of chemical pupils would be found capable of passing a better examination for the time they have attended lectures.

It has often been said in recent times, in the light of the political development of India since 1835, that the new Western education has been the

[1] *Education in India* (1836), 20.

cause of Indian nationalism, and that by prescribing it for India Lord William Bentinck (and Macaulay) signed the death-sentence of British rule in India. It is therefore interesting to inquire how far they were aware of this consequence of their step and whether there is such a causal connexion between an English education and Indian nationalism.

While scholars like William Jones, Wilkins, and Burke appreciated the culture of a people 'cultivated by all the arts of polished life while we were yet in the woods', those who governed the East India Company's policy in 1835 sincerely believed in 'the vast moral and material blessings which India may, under Providence, derive from her connexion with England'. Macaulay also wrote in 1836: 'No Hindu who has received an English education ever remains sincerely attached to his religion'. These ideas may or may not have been correct. But the political development of India was foreseen by all the Englishmen who advocated the new education. Even in 1824 Sir Thomas Munro hoped that 'the character of our Indian subjects' would so far improve (by western education) as to 'enable them to govern and protect themselves'. And Macaulay deserves credit for shrewdly anticipating that these subjects 'having become instructed in European knowledge may in some future age demand European institutions', magnanimously adding:

> Whether such a day will ever come I know not. But never will I attempt to avert or retard it. Whenever it comes, it will be the proudest day in English history.

These were the objects the English had in view when they introduced western education into India in 1835. Side by side with English schools, however, the old classical schools were allowed to go on. In a Minute of 1839, Lord Auckland restored the grant of Rs. 25,000 to oriental education and instituted scholarships—to be obtained through an annual competitive examination—which would educate one-fourth the whole number of students and half of which were to go to the Sanskrit and Arabic colleges. Thus the Old Education was preserved from being extinguished by the New.

But with the introduction of English as the medium of instruction, another rival arose—the modern vernaculars of India. These were championed chiefly by the missionaries, who had from the start themselves learnt the spoken languages of the people and taught them in their schools, and by certain local Governments, especially Bombay, which had themselves opened vernacular schools and which therefore understood Sir William Bentinck's Dispatch to mean that English would henceforth take the place of Sanskrit and Arabic, not of living Indian languages, and said in their Report for 1835-6: 'We conceive the formation of a vernacular literature to be the ultimate object to which all our efforts must be directed.'

This policy was recommended by J. Hodgson in 1843 as the best way of putting an end to the tyranny of the learned caste and bringing modern European knowledge within the reach of Indians as

a whole. Before him the well-known W. Adam, in his Report on Indigenous Education (1838), had said the same thing very strongly and lengthily:

> It is impossible to express the confirmed conviction I have acquired of the utter impracticability of the views of those who think that the English language should be the sole or chief means of conveying knowledge to the natives.

Eminent educationists like the Rev. C. Thomason (1814), Mountstuart Elphinstone (1822), and the Rev. D. Bryce (1828) had advocated the improvement of village vernacular schools as the only way to educate India: by giving higher pay to teachers, by preparing suitable textbooks in the vernaculars, by subjecting teachers to certificate examinations in teaching, they would raise these village schools and through them the whole country.

Against this theory of the Vernacularists was that of the Anglicists led by Lord Auckland and Sir Charles Trevelyan. This school thought that since the Committee of Public Instruction had not enough money at its disposal to educate the masses, the only practical plan would be to educate the classes, i.e. to produce a small class of highly educated people (through English studies, of course) who would hand the torch of education down to the rest. This filtration theory prevailed in the councils of the East India Company, with what result the subsequent history of Indian education will show.

Under the new system started in 1835, education rapidly expanded. English schools and

colleges grew up everywhere, while the vernacular schools also multiplied, mostly under private patronage. To cope with this expansion, the Committees of Public Instruction were replaced by Councils of Education which had wider powers and smaller presidencies to look after (in 1843, for example, Calcutta was deprived of jurisdiction over what are now the United Provinces by the creation of the Presidency of Agra). Vernacular schools, however, suffered badly in the race with English schools. Teachers were appointed in them, but pupils could not be induced to come. In 1844 Lord Hardinge started 101 vernacular schools in Bengal alone, and got them to teach a fairly high curriculum through the medium of Bengali. But half of them had to be closed for want of boys, so that in 1850 only about 2,000 boys studied in those that remained.

The popularity of English schools was still further promoted by Lord Hardinge's Proclamation of 1844. After an elaborate introduction, in which he says that 'a preference shall be given to those who have been educated in the institutions thus established (i.e. either by the Government or by private individuals or societies), he goes on to order that the Council of Education and other bodies in charge of public instruction shall submit to the Government an annual list of students fit for public offices. Those who have studied in private are also entitled to the same competitive rewards of Government employment, for the list of the best

students in Government as well as private schools is to be kept by 'the heads of all Government offices both in and out of Calcutta, with instructions to omit no opportunity of providing for and advancing the candidates thus presented to their notice'; and a sufficient explanation has to be given to the controlling officers of every appointment of a candidate who has not been recommended in the prescribed way.

This Proclamation marks the beginning of a long history of Government employment of Indians in India. In the period before the foundation of universities it provided an annual competitive examination which gave successful candidates a ticket to public employment, thus for the first time establishing an official connexion between education and employment in the Company's service. It thus started that tradition of considering such employment as the end and goal of education, which has inflated higher education beyond all bounds and produced so much unemployment among the educated today. Lord Hardinge's good intention cannot for a moment be doubted. He wanted to put the official seal on the English education so recently started and so popular, and to encourage private (mostly missionary) schools, which relieved the Government of much of its burden, by giving their pupils the same rewards as those of Government schools. He also thus secured the best subordinate servants for the Company's administration, which daily grew in size and importance, at a much cheaper cost than Englishmen could be

obtained. But he did not anticipate that what he intended to be an encouragement would in the eyes of the people become the exclusive purpose of education; that in a caste-ridden country with exaggerated notions of the indignity of manual labour, clerical employment would become the monopoly of the highest castes; that the hope of such safe and dignified employment would lure more and more boys into a literary education, to the neglect of agriculture, trade, and industry; and that after nearly a century this system would produce a volume of educated unemployment which is probably unequalled by any other country in the world.

The immediate effect of the Proclamation, however, was different from what its author had intended. There was a general complaint before the Lords' Committee in 1853 (and not without much truth, as it would seem) that though in theory students from all schools were equally eligible for selection for Government appointments, in practice only those who studied in Government schools had any chance of success, for the textbooks were so chosen and the examinations so conducted as to render open competition impossible to the pupils from private (missionary or oriental) schools. Dr Duff represented the missionary schools and Professor Wilson the oriental before this Committee. But there was not much to complain about after all, for from 1844 to 1853 only ten students had been appointed to offices—and very subordinate ones too—under the Proclamation.

Meanwhile vernacular education was not without its European patrons. The problem was to convey European learning (and especially science) through the medium of the vernaculars. On the answer to this problem, however, opinion was clearly divided. Some, like Dr A. Ballantyne of the Benares College, held that Sanskrit terms should be used in vernacular books on science; others, like the Rev. K. M. Banerjee, a Bengali who wrote the *Encyclopædia Bengalensis*, thought that, though Sanskrit was rich in mathematical terms, one had to borrow English words for scientific ideas. At any rate, the experiment of teaching European science through the vernaculars did not succeed, and Government had to discontinue the Benares College because, as the Report of 1876 said:

> The results of a prolonged trial of nearly thirty years were most disappointing . . . . The object of the department, viz. the production of a body of vernacular literature fitted to communicate in a familiar form the results of European research to the people of the country, was never attained.

While Dr A. Ballantyne was working for the vernacular schools in Benares, James Thomason was trying to attain the same object in the North-Western Provinces by another means. Son of Rev. C. Thomason who had in 1814 worked for vernacular education, he used his power as Lieut.-Governor (1843–53) to encourage rural schools, 'enlisting the persons whom the people may themselves select as teachers and support for that purpose'.[1] In 1849 he obtained

[1] Richey, *Selections from the Educational Records*, 61.

from the Government an annual grant of £50,000 for this purpose. In each circle of 5 villages (*halqabandi*) he started a few primary schools, with a high (*zilla*) school at the centre and a middle school for each subdivision (*tahsil*). There was a school within a mile from every village, so that no child had to walk more than a mile to school.

This reminds us of what over a century later our Education Departments are now trying to achieve and have not yet succeeded in achieving. Another feature of Thomason's system which has been reintroduced—amid stormy protests—in our own day in Bengal, is the compulsory tax of about 1 per cent on the assessment of land (or $\frac{1}{2}$ per cent on the gross produce) which was levied towards the maintenance of free compulsory primary schools. This system was at first voluntarily introduced in eight districts and later extended on a compulsory basis as other districts came under the land-revenue settlement. The cess of 1 per cent was deducted before the revenue was assessed, so that both the Government and the landholder sacrificed something towards education.

Thomason may thus be regarded as one of the greatest benefactors of India. In ten years he opened 897 schools in the North-Western Provinces and provided elementary education for 23,688 children—and at the same time taught the landholder that education was one of his duties.

While Thomason was promoting vernacular

education in the villages of the north-west, Mountstuart Elphinstone laid the foundations of the entire educational policy of the province of Bombay. Besides helping the American Mission Society with land, the Society for the Promotion of the Education of the Poor with a monthly grant of Rs. 5,000, and the Native School-Book Society and the Native Society of Konkan with an annual grant of Rs. 12,720, he started several Government schools. The Hindu College at Poona was started in 1821 on the model of the Sanskrit College of Benares, at an annual cost of Rs. 15,250 (in 1825 increased to Rs. 16,210) for 100 stipendiary students. A small Engineering College and a Medical School also began during this period.

Elphinstone's own principle was that the Government should only *indirectly* interfere in the policy followed by Indian schools, by means of competitive examinations, certificates, scholarships, and prizes, which were to be managed by an Education Society, and by the training of teachers of village schools. English was to be taught as a classical language was taught in Europe, through translation and composition; but the vernacular schools were to continue. An English school was started in Bombay with an endowment of Rs. 2,500 a year. The higher classes had to pay for English education; the village schools would be financed by the Government.

The Directors of the East India Company approved of this plan and agreed that the Govern-

ment's first care should be to 'afford means to their subjects to acquire simply the *elementary* [italics mine] parts of literature, reading, writing, and arithmetic.' Elphinstone accordingly multiplied Government vernacular schools, so that in 1842 in the Bombay Province alone there were 120 such schools, with nearly 8,000 pupils, while the Government English schools were only 4, with less than 200 pupils.

The policy of encouraging vernacular schools, however, still met with opposition from members of the Council; and as if to put their seal of approval on this opposition the Hindus of Bombay started the Elphinstone Institution (still flourishing as Elphinstone College) with private subscriptions amounting to £22,500—on the express condition that all the teaching there should be imparted in English and by European professors. But Bombay deserves credit for having ignored the filtration theory and boldly advocated vernacular schools. Its success was, it is true, not great: there were only 2,800 schools and 80,000 pupils in a population of about ten millions. But to Elphinstone and other Europeans is due the gratitude of Indians for a wiser and pedagogically sounder policy than that followed or recommended by others (even Indians) in other parts of India.

Bombay, therefore, differed from Bengal, and Bengal from the North-Western Provinces. Madras differed from all these. Here the Governor, Sir Thomas Munro, in a Minute of 10 March 1826, proposed to the Company's Direc-

tors a plan by which, at a cost of less than £5,000 a year, he could maintain about 350 schools in all—40 high schools (one for Hindus and one for Muslims in each of the 20 collectorates of the province) and over 300 middle schools (one for each of the 15 *tahsils* which made up a collectorate). This plan was approved, but the Committee of Public Instruction appointed in 1826 did not carry it successfully into execution. Meanwhile Macaulay's Minute and Bentinck's Proclamation had given a different direction to educational policy, and it was left to Mountstuart Elphinstone and the new 'Committee of Native Education', which had in the same year replaced the old Committee of Public Instruction, to make and carry out new projects. To prepare the way for a university at Madras, a preparatory school was started in 1839 with 50 boys, and a high school (the Madras High School) in 1841, where an English education was given to some 70 boys. In 1852, after an elaborate inquiry and report on the question, the College Department was opened, offering instruction in literature, philosophy, and science. But two years later it had less than 30 students, while the High School had 220: the College was spending £2,800 a year; and all the other Government schools together, not more than £6,000.

Various missionary bodies, Catholic and Protestant (and among the latter chiefly the Church Missionary Society), were responsible for the education of 30,000 pupils in the Madras Province. Jesuit and other educational institutions,

high, middle, and primary, dotted the whole territory and catered chiefly for the poor in the villages of southern India. For while the Government had mainly high schools, these were mostly primary and non-paying schools, and on the whole less attractive in the sense of influence and equipment. But India owes much more to the education given by missionaries—at hardly any cost to herself—than by her own Government with money taken from her. La Martiniere and the Scottish Church College in Calcutta, the Doveton colleges, the Jesuit colleges in all the chief towns—these have educated most of the leaders of the country who were poor in their boyhood. In 1852–3, there were less than 30,000 students in all the Government educational institutions in India, and more than 300,000 in missionary schools.

Before proceeding to the next great period in the history of Indian education, it is useful to review the achievements of the twenty years which followed Lord William Bentinck's Proclamation.

The most striking feature of this period (1835–54) is the want of uniformity in the policy followed in the different provinces or even at different times in the same province. There was no centralization beyond a nominal control of the subsidy granted by the Directors in England to the local Governments. The result was that practically everything depended on the Governor of each province and on the individuals who made up the Committees of Public Instruction.

Thomas Munro, Mountstuart Elphinstone, James Thomason—these were the dictators of whatever educational policy there was in the two decades we have just been considering. And even these men often depended on their councillors for money and freedom to carry out their plans for India's education.

Another feature of this period is the rise of secondary education through the medium of English. There was as yet no university in India, though Elphinstone opened a 'university' at Madras without the power to confer degrees. Primary education continued mostly in Hindu, Muhammadan and Christian (missionary) hands, and was imparted in the vernacular, with hardly any financial help from the Government. It is only in Bombay and the North-Western Provinces that the Government ran some primary schools. These, however, were not very efficient because there was no system of supervision or of teachers' training by which uniformity or method could be secured. Side by side with these new schools, Government or missionary, the old *pathsalas* continued in Hindu, and *maktabs* in Muslim, villages, financed by voluntary contributions and paying little attention to Western art or science which was trickling into the towns through the English high schools.

What characterizes these two decades in Indian education is the growth of the vernacular middle and the English high school—both together forming the secondary school. The rise of the high schools was mostly due to Government

initiative and expense; but it cannot be adequately explained without taking into account a general desire on the part of leading Indians to plunge into the stream of European culture and swim with the rest of the world. There was inevitably severe opposition from both orthodox Hindus and orthodox Muslims, who thought their religion was in danger of contamination by foreign languages and cultures. This explains the slowness with which the New Education spread in spite of official propaganda and patronage. But by 1854 there remained no doubt that the future was with European learning.

The standard of the new high schools—the Bengal 'colleges', the Elphinstone Institution in Bombay, the Madras 'university', the *zillah* schools of Bengal and the north-west, the seven high schools of the Bombay Province—was fairly high in language and literature, but low in the practical aspect of science. In the syllabus for senior scholarships in Bengal there is mention of differential and integral calculus, hydrostatics and optics; but though the standard seems high, there is no evidence of depth or personal study. The evils of Indian education today—bookishness and superficiality—were sown before 1854. And the question papers of the time give the same impression as those of today—that they are based on books and notes rather than on subjects and things.

And the time-honoured oriental education went on, crippled by loss of popular favour and State grants, but with that suitableness to the

people to whom it was imparted which is more important than a wilderness of up-to-date information.

CHAPTER IV

EDUCATION 1854-82

BEFORE the renewal of the Company's Charter in 1853 a thorough inquiry into Indian educational policy was made by a Committee of the House of Lords in 1852. Both officials, like Sir Charles Trevelyan and Sir Erskine Perry, and missionaries, like Dr Duff and the Rev H. Marshman, gave evidence before this Committee, and the Company thereupon began a new chapter in its history as an educator.

Two important features of this chapter are the policy of religious neutrality which the Government of India now officially took up in education and the starting of universities.

Religious Education

The problem of religious education in State schools is necessarily very difficult to solve, for the country is vast and heterogeneous in belief and practice. On the one hand, no educator can deny or shirk the duty of educating the soul of the child no less than the body or the mind. Mere morality without religion—which includes faith and conduct—is neither lasting nor even rational: it is a ship without a compass. On the other hand, a Government which has subjects belonging to different religions cannot impose instruction in any one religion on *all* its children

—for this would be encroachment on personal liberty of worship. The Protestant missionaries who gave evidence before the Lords' Committee in 1852 insisted on the use of the Bible as a textbook—of literature, if not religion—to justify their very existence in India as educationists. The Government placed a copy of the Bible in every school library, but refused to force its study on non-Christian pupils or to give grants-in-aid out of Government funds to schools in which the Christian religion was taught. The Protestant missionaries were naturally disappointed and condemned the Government educational system as 'a blot upon the Honourable Company's record, involving the most awful guilt before Almighty God'.

There was certainly much truth in Dr Duff's contention that education without religion is a monstrosity. But which religion out of so many was to be taught? And if each child was to be taught his own religion, how was this to be provided for? These questions are still waiting for an answer.

Universities

Another great milestone in Indian education was laid by the establishment of three universities in Calcutta, Madras, and Bombay in 1857. The Council of Education had proposed a university for Calcutta in 1845, but the Directors had not accepted the scheme. In 1852 the Hon. C. H. Cameron urged Parliament to found universities in the three Presidencies. Accord-

ingly Sir Charles Wood's Dispatch of 19 July 1854 sanctioned the establishment of the three examining universities on the model of London University and of such a standard as to 'command respect without discouraging the efforts of deserving students'. Calcutta and Bombay were considered ripe for universities; in Madras, in spite of the existence already for some years of a 'university', it was recommended that a university might be started if there was a sufficient number of colleges to be affiliated to it. Teaching would be left to the individual colleges, Government or private, though some university professorships would be instituted in professional faculties like law, medicine, and civil engineering. Chairs were also to be founded in Sanskrit, Arabic, and Persian and in the modern vernaculars.

The difficulty of co-ordinating the work done at the various affiliated colleges was provided for by the recommendation that such a standard should be maintained 'as will afford a guarantee for high ability and valuable attainments, the subjects for examinations being so selected as to include the best portions of the different schemes of study pursued at the affiliated institutions.'

The Calcutta University held its first Matriculation examination in 1857; Madras and Bombay held theirs in 1859. The Punjab University grew out of the Punjab University College in 1878, and the Allahabad University was started in 1887.

The early administration of these universities

is of interest to the student of Indian education. They were meant (in spite of the exceptions recommended by the Wood Dispatch of 1854) to be purely examining bodies, deriving their income from fees. Their property and other material affairs were managed by a Senate consisting of a Chancellor (the Governor of the province, *ex officio*), a Vice-Chancellor (who was the real head), and Fellows—mostly Government servants. The senate made by-laws and regulations which had to be approved by the Governor-General in Council (for the University of Calcutta) and by the Governor in Council (for Madras and Bombay). The universities had the power to give 'academical degrees as evidence of attainments and marks of honour proportioned thereto', and to admit to their examinations students who were presented by the colleges affiliated by permission of their provincial Governments.

The Senate vested executive authority in a Syndicate composed of the Vice-Chancellor and six Fellows elected by the four Faculties—Arts, Law, Medicine and Engineering. The Syndicate appointed members of the various faculties, which in turn recommended examiners for appointment by the Syndicate. But the actual teaching was done by the scattered colleges affiliated to the university and managed either directly by the Government or by missionary or private agencies. Private colleges were encouraged as a matter of policy because they cost the State less than Government colleges and were

often more efficient. Accordingly, many individuals and groups came forward with proposals to start colleges, especially in Bengal where private enterprise has always been more noticeable than in any other province. The greatest number of these colleges were 'Arts' colleges grown out of populous high schools and giving a literary education to boys of the higher Hindu castes whose goal was Government service or the Bar or teaching. The whole of India possessed only two engineering colleges, one at Rurki (opened in 1847) and the other at Sibpur, Calcutta (started in 1856). There were medical colleges at Bombay, Madras, and Calcutta. Law colleges—so much blamed in our day for their fecundity—had not yet been invented.

Admission to the university courses was through the Matriculation, an entrance examination conducted by the university and sufficient for most subordinate posts under the Government. After this came a two-years' course leading up to a First Arts or Intermediate examination; two years more brought the undergraduate to the Bachelor's degree examination. The degree of Master of Arts was given after another examination, as at London, not with the mere efflux of time as at Oxford and Cambridge.

Colleges were classified as first or second grade according as they prepared students for the Bachelor's degree or only for the First Arts or Intermediate examination. But teaching in all of them was done in English; and since lectures and not tutorial direction was the chief means of

instruction, it was difficult for students who had not been trained in English-teaching schools to follow these lectures intelligently. This had a consequence which will come in for fuller examination later in this chapter.

The newly founded universities gave a fillip to education in general. In a Note on Education in in 1865–6 written by A. M. Monteath, Secretary to the Government of India, and placed before Parliament together with critical observations by Sir A. Grant, Director of Public Instruction in Bombay,[1] we are told that the universities had 'supplied reliable tests' of educational efficiency. Bengal came first in both the number and the quality of its colleges and their students (who paid most fees because they belonged to an intelligent and prosperous land-owning class). To the University of Calcutta were affiliated eighteen colleges in Bengal (out of which ten were private), seven in the North-Western Provinces (three of which were private), one in the Punjab, one in the Central Provinces, and two in Ceylon. In 1861, 1,058 candidates appeared for the Calcutta Matriculation, and 477 passed; in 1865, 1,350 appeared, and 638 passed. In 1861, the Calcutta University gave the Bachelor's degree to 15; in 1866, to 79.

In Madras, there were nineteen affiliated colleges, of which eleven were run by missionary bodies, and there were many non-collegiate students who obtained degrees. In 1861, 80 students appeared for the Madras Matriculation; in 1866, 555, of whom 229 passed.

[1] cf. *Parliamentary Papers*, 1867-8, L, I ff.

Bombay was the least advanced of the three universities. In 1866 only 109 passed its Matriculation, and only 12 obtained its Bachelor's degree. It had only four affiliated colleges, three of which were in Bombay itself. But large private donations were pouring in (Rs. 4,01,200 in the single year 1864–5), and the future was bright.

Secondary Education

The universities, however, had an unfortunate effect on the schools which continues even to this day. They dominated and bullied secondary education. Colleges, scattered and fairly independent of the university except for grants-in-aid and degree examinations, took the easiest road to success by admitting as many paying pupils as they could accommodate and subjecting them to 'lectures'. Many of these colleges were owned or staffed by Europeans: the only convenient medium of instruction was therefore English. And English became the language of the lectures. Boys coming up from schools where the vernacular was the medium of teaching found themselves unable to follow the college lectures. And since the demand for university education increased with the Government appointments to which it became the passport, the schools had to 'Anglicize' themselves if they did not want to be empty of pupils. Thus secondary education, instead of being a preparation for life adapted to the majority (who ought to be satisfied with it), became (what it still is in spite of patent disillusionment) a preparation for the university. This

had a twofold disadvantage: it filled the universities with unfit students, and it made the schools fail of their proper function in the educational system.

These symptoms are best seen in the largest university in India—Calcutta. The Government Inspectors, who according to the Dispatch of 1854 had to recommend new schools for 'recognition' and 'grants', naturally carried out the Government's policy of favouring English and discouraging the vernaculars. The Senate of the Calcutta University, which had in 1858 allowed its Matriculation candidates to answer questions in geography, history and mathematics in any living language, passed a rule in 1861–2 that all papers should be answered in English unless otherwise specified. This had an immediate effect on the high schools—though they were still in theory free to teach in English or in the vernacular—and through the high schools even on the 'Middle English' and 'Middle Vernacular' schools: they all became 'Englished' as steps leading to the inevitable university course.

Below the high school were 'Middle English' and 'Middle Vernacular' schools; and, still lower, 'Upper Primary' and 'Lower Primary' schools, as we have them now, these last being either of the traditional *pathsala* or *maktab* kind or of a modern State-aided type. To staff all these vernacular schools, batches of teachers were trained in Government 'Normal' schools.

But while university education—and, on account of it, high school education—made rapid

progress during this period, primary and middle vernacular education did not. The Government could not (perhaps also, according to the policy then in vogue, would not) help these schools with money. Private benefactions were not constant or enthusiastic when the more glittering cause of higher education came more prominently into view. The only reliable champions of what is after all the most important stage of the educational building—the education of the masses—were missionaries of every hue of sect and 'Church'. They settled down in the villages, learnt the language, and ran schools primarily for their co-religionists and secondarily for the other children of the village. While Burma had not yet a Department of Public Instruction in 1866, Buddhist monasteries were responsible for giving an elementary education to 75 per cent of the boys in the country.

Primary Education

In 1854 there was hardly a single pupil in a State school in Bengal who was receiving what we now call an elementary education, though there were 13,000 pupils under education in the province; Madras had about 300, out of 4,500; Bombay, 19,000 out of 21,400; and the North-Western Provinces, 17,000 out of 24,000. While about 36,000 children were thus being educated in Government primary schools in 1854, missionary schools were educating almost twice this number. At the end of this period, in 1881–2, there were 13,637 Government elementary

schools, with 663,915 pupils; 57,841 aided schools, with 1,141,844 pupils; and 11,938 unaided schools, with 225,782 pupils: thus there were in all about 2,000,000 children under instruction in about 80,000 elementary schools.

Bengal was the first province to undertake primary education. In 1855 T. Woodrow, Director of Public Instruction, proposed a plan, which was approved in 1857, of grouping village schools into 'circles' each under a visiting inspector who should control and co-ordinate all the schools within his circle. The villagers themselves were encouraged to open schools and promised a grant and a teacher. But Lord Stanley's Dispatch of 1859 disapproved of the system of 'circles' and grants for primary schools. Sir Peter Grant therefore started the normal school system in 1860—by which the Government provided training schools for the teachers of already existing village schools (to be maintained by their schools while they were being trained) and promised to pay them after they were trained on condition that they in turn promised to serve in recognized schools. By 1872 about 2,500 schools had been staffed with trained teachers and the total number of pupils under elementary instruction was about 133,000.

This was not enough for the vast population of Bengal; Sir George Campbell therefore determined in 1872 to limit his attention to imparting the bare minimum of the three R's by means of normal schools and yearly examinations on the results of which school grants would be allotted.

By 1876 about 360,000 children were being educated at a cost to the Government of less than 4 lacs of rupees. Sir Richard Temple raised this number to 836,000 pupils by 1881, and the annual expense was only 5 lacs of rupees.

This system of encouraging primary education through vernacular village schools was followed by Bengal, Assam, and the Central Provinces. In the North-Western Provinces, Madras, and Bombay, the same object was achieved by levying cesses on the village population.

In the North-Western Provinces, G. Thomason's system of *tahsil* (middle) and *halqabandi* (primary) schools, maintained from a small rate, continued till the Mutiny. In 1869 the education 'rate' was included in the ordinary State tax on land. While Bengal schools were mostly (91 per cent) 'aided', those in the North-Western Provinces, the Punjab, and the Central Provinces were mostly 'departmental' (i.e. State-owned and managed).

Madras had hardly any State policy towards primary schools before 1863, though some village schools were won over by presents of books and money. In 1863 a voluntary rate was imposed on the Godavari District which possessed about 80 primary schools. This system, however, did not succeed on account of the villagers' lack of preparedness for paying to educate their children, and was therefore discontinued. Only missionary and private vernacular schools gave primary instruction to some 15,000 children. In 1868 the rules for grants-in-aid were revised, an

educational cess of one per cent was levied on land, and schools were promised payment by results, as in England. Thus the number of children in elementary schools grew to 160,000 in 1871 (90,000 in State schools and 70,000 in private); and in 1882, to 360,000 (of whom more than 300,000 were in private aided schools).

Bombay, as we have seen, was the most advanced province as far as primary education was concerned. Already in 1855, about 18,000 children were under instruction, and the 'partially self-supporting' system, by which the Government paid for teachers and books while the villagers provided the site and building for the school, gave a powerful impetus to elementary education. By 1864 the Bombay Government introduced the education cess, promising to devote a fixed proportion of it to primary education. By 1882, Bombay had 5,350 primary schools with 333,000 pupils, of whom (unlike Madras) 71 per cent were in Government schools.

There were thus two distinct methods in use with regard to primary education during this period: the cess or rate method, by which the State practically monopolized elementary education (as in Bombay and the North-Western Provinces), and the method of indirect State control by means of grants (as in Madras, Bengal, and Assam). The cost of the State schools was much greater than that of aided schools, but the results obtained by private schools were much better in quantity as well as

quality. In 1882, the Government spent Rs 80,00,000 on primary education, of which one-third was obtained from rates and one-fourth from fees, and the rest was obtained from the general resources.

The standard of primary education was different in different provinces, though everywhere the Lower Primary examination was passed after three years' study of reading, writing, and the first four rules of arithmetic, and the Upper Primary after five years of the same subjects besides some history, geography, and elementary science.

But these examinations were not compulsory at this period, and less than one-fifth of the total number of pupils were presented by their teachers for these examinations. There was therefore as yet little uniformity of standard in primary education.

The effect of this new primary education on the old which had come down from Hindu and Muslim times was to absorb or kill most of it. In 1820, in every ten Hindu boys of school age there was one who was receiving education in a Hindu school of the traditional type. In 1882 only one in every forty was at such a school. This does not mean that the total number of boys at school had fallen, but only that the old Hindu *pathsalas* had been abandoned in favour of the new schools managed either by the State or by missionary or other private agencies. In those provinces (like Bengal, Madras, Assam, and the Central Provinces) where the State had started a

large number of primary schools, the pupils of the Hindu vernacular schools were absorbed by these Government schools. In Bombay, the Punjab and the North-Western Provinces, where indigenous schools were encouraged to continue, though many of them were closed through want of money or political disturbance, the number of pupils in the rest increased—which meant that they became larger and more effective.

The exclusively religious oriental schools for Hindus or Muslims suffered most in the general change of orientation in primary education. They could no longer receive grants from public funds; and they could no longer compete with the new schools which were considered a straight route to lucrative employment. They therefore disappeared or sank into an inconspicuous place in the educational landscape.

But while Hindu or Muslim education receded into the background, Christian schools made their way steadily into prominence. In 1852, missionaries of various Christian denominations were teaching about 100,000 children, a third of whom were in secondary schools. By 1882 the number of children educated by them had nearly doubled and about half of the total number were in elementary schools. This shows that the missionaries put their weight on the side of the poor and of mass literacy instead of rendering more acute the already unequal distribution of Hindu society.

Leaving out for the present the part played by missionary colleges, we may remark that missionary schools (primary and secondary) were cheaper

and generally more efficient than the corresponding State schools and therefore drew greater numbers. They taught the elements of the Christian religion in the Bible class and in other ways. But since the number of their Christian pupils and teachers was small compared to that of non-Christians, missionaries were unable to carry out their complete programme of religious instruction. Besides, to compete with State schools where no religion was taught, they often dissimulated or at least checked the outward manifestation of their Christian profession, to the great disappointment of those European societies who financed the Indian missions. This is worth mentioning here because it shows that the importance of a religious education *was* recognized by European missionaries, though it was at least in practice denied by the Government.

CHAPTER V

EDUCATION 1882–1935

University Education

THE Dispatch of 1854, which introduced two important changes in Indian education—a system of State elementary schools and the policy of grants-in-aid to private institutions—is the most important landmark in our educational history. When it had worked for about thirty years, the need was felt of surveying the whole field and assessing the achievement. An Education Commission was therefore appointed in 1882, with Sir William Hunter (then Member of the Viceroy's Legislative Council) as President and B. L. Rice as Secretary, 'to inquire particularly . . . into the manner in which effect has been given to the principles of the Dispatch of 1854, and to suggest such measures as it may think desirable in order to the further carrying out of the policy therein laid down'. 'The general working of the Indian universities' was not included in the field of this Commission's inquiry, though they were expected to inspect the colleges where university education was being imparted.

To understand the importance of this Commission it is necessary to recall the Dispatch of 1854. After stating (in §40) that the Govern-

ment had 'pointed out the manner in which a liberal education is to be obtained, and assisted them [the colleges] to a very considerable extent from the public funds', the Dispatch lays down its future policy of providing education for those 'who are utterly incapable of obtaining any education worthy of the name by their own unaided efforts . . . for the attainment of which we are ready to sanction a considerable increase of expenditure'. This clearly meant that the Government was not intending to open more State colleges or high schools, but to concentrate its attention on elementary education. As Sir Charles Wood himself wrote to the Rev. James Johnston in 1879: 'The general object [of the Dispatch of 1854] was to promote the *general* education of the people of India, and to leave the higher and richer portion of the population to provide mainly for their own education.'

Accordingly, the amount of public money spent on education was increased from 7½ lacs in 1854 to 160 lacs in 1882 (though part of this came from local and municipal funds). But, while all the Government institutions (colleges and schools) in 1854 cost 7½ lacs, the Government colleges alone cost 6½ lacs in 1882; and whereas the Dispatch of 1854 had discountenanced the increase of Government colleges, these had increased from 14 to 30 in 27 years. Besides, in 1882, another 6½ lacs were spent on Government high schools. On the other hand, the State primary and middle schools cost about 35 lacs in 1882—out of which more than 23 lacs came from

rates and cesses levied on the poor themselves, and only about 12 lacs came from the Central Government. If we take aided colleges and high schools also into account, the State was spending 16 lacs on higher education and only 24½ lacs on middle and primary education taken together. Hence the object of the Dispatch of 1854 seemed to many not to have been attained.

Another ground of discontent was the expensiveness of Government as compared with aided institutions. In 1881-2, State colleges were spending about 9 lacs of rupees of public money to educate 2,700 students, while aided colleges, which were educating 2,000 students, were costing the public only Rs. 65,000. And it was universally admitted that State colleges and schools were at least not proportionately more efficient than those that were merely aided. The public therefore asked why so many new State institutions had been started between 1854 and 1882.

The number of pupils, too, had not increased in proportion to the amount of public money spent. The number of children of school age who were not under instruction was increasing instead of diminishing: from 1870 to 1880 it had grown from 26 to 28 millions, while the money spent had increased much more, as we have shown.

Finally, it was felt that the Government had not sufficiently carried out the policy enunciated by the Dispatch of 1854 with regard to grants-in-aid. Instead of encouraging private initiative

it had tended to crush it by starting its own institutions where aided ones would have been much cheaper and more efficient. Except in Bengal and Madras, where aided high schools were more numerous than Government ones, the State had by far the greater number of schools and pupils in Bombay, the Punjab, the Central Provinces, and the North-Western Provinces. And for university education, Madras was the only province which had more aided than Government institutions.

Among the chief complainants against the existing system and agitators for an inquiry were the missionaries. These men and women, who had done such splendid work in all the stages of education and who in 1880 possessed almost all the 20 aided arts colleges in India, complained bitterly of the unfair treatment meted to them by Government officials who, to favour Government schools, deprived theirs of grants-in-aid and their pupils of Government scholarships, imposed hard and unreasonable regulations and textbooks as a condition of grants and recognition, etc. Though the Dispatch of 1854 had explicitly laid it down that wherever an efficient aided school existed the State should not start a school of its own, jealousy of Mission schools often led Government officials to render their position impossible by indirect and often dishonest means. The missionaries naturally saw in this attitude not merely human passion but even a conviction that 'religion had an insignificant part to play in the world' and a habit of

'idolizing matter as the all-in-all of the Universe'.[1]

To make these complaints against the existing system win the attention of the authorities both in England and in India, the General Council on Education was formed in 1878 with the Rev. James Johnston as secretary. It was to a deputation of this Council that the Marquis of Ripon in 1880 promised an inquiry into the carrying out of the principles of the 1854 Dispatch. The Commission of 1882 was the fulfilment of this promise.

The two main questions the Commission had to decide were:

(1) Had the Government unduly encouraged higher education and paid insufficient attention to primary and middle school education?

(2) Were Government colleges and schools charging less fees than aided schools in order to attract students to themselves, and thus increasing the burden of taxation on the people?

The Commission sat seven weeks in Calcutta: then the President toured the various provinces for eight months, examining two hundred witnesses and receiving over three hundred memorials; finally all the members again met in Calcutta from December 1882 to March 1883 and passed 222 resolutions and issued a report of over 600 folio pages. After reviewing the past progress of education in India, this Report separately examines the following subjects: indigenous education, primary education, secondary education, collegiate education, internal

[1] *Answers of Missionaries to Questions by the General Council on Education*, 1880.

administration of the Department of Education, external relations of the Department, education of classes requiring special treatment, female education, educational legislation, and finance.

One of the most important of the Commission's Resolutions dealt with primary education:

'That, while every branch of education can justly claim the fostering care of the State, it is desirable in the present circumstances of the country to declare the elementary education of the masses, its provision, extension, and improvement, to be that part of the educational system to which the strenuous efforts of the State should now be directed in a still larger measure than before.' For this purpose the Commission recommends 'that primary education be declared to be that part of the whole system of Public Instruction which possesses an almost exclusive claim on local funds set apart for education and a large claim on Provincial revenues'. The curriculum of the primary school is to be revised so as to include *practical* subjects like Indian mensuration, arithmetic, and science. For elementary education is to be considered as a complete education for the ordinary child, and not merely as a step towards the university. Indigenous schools are to be recognized, encouraged, and improved.

For all this the Commission deserves hearty approval. If so much dissatisfaction is felt with the educational system today, it is because it has not followed the spirit of the policy laid down in 1882, even though it may have observed the

letter. But in one principle the Commission was mistaken. It was its recommendation 'that preference be given to that system which regulates the aid given mainly according to the results of examinations'. This system was at that time being practised in Great Britain, but it has since been abandoned, for it has proved unsatisfactory and unscientific wherever it has been tried. 'Payment by results' may stimulate somnolent teachers into activity, but it reduces education to a sordid trade and brings cramming, interference, and even dishonesty in its train.

The Commission's attitude to secondary education is seen from its Resolution

> that it be distinctly laid down that the relation of the State to secondary is different from its relation to primary education in that the means of primary education may be provided without regard to the existence of local co-operation, while it is ordinarily expedient to provide the means of secondary education only where adequate local co-operation is forthcoming, and that, therefore, in all ordinary cases secondary schools for instruction in English be hereafter established by the State preferably on the footing of the system of grants-in-aid.

This attitude is not new, for the Dispatch of 1854 and even earlier documents showed it. But it needed restating in view of the tendency of modern Governments everywhere to extend their activities beyond the strictly necessary and useful, and of the history of the twenty-eight years between 1854 and 1882. As we have shown above, in spite of the clear ruling of the Dispatch of 1854, the Government had started several new secondary

schools, at an enormous cost of public funds.

It has sometimes been questioned whether the system of grants-in-aid, which was, like so many other things, bodily imported from European countries, is suited to Indian conditions. It is true that private initiative needs stimulating and, above all, regulating and keeping up, especially when it has so many different motives and standards as in India. But this can be sufficiently done by means of the periodical inspections and examinations which determine the Government grants to private schools. Indian philanthropy—Hindu or Muslim or Parsi or Christian—is wonderfully sensitive to popular confidence and averse to State interference. Large hospitals and schools are munificently maintained by private benefactions; as soon as the Government takes charge, the sources of charity begin to dry up. Grants-in-aid have, of course, the obvious disadvantage of depending on the whims of individual officials and leading to the danger of official tyranny or partiality; but these dangers are inherent in any human system of control.

The Commission of 1882 also laid down a similar policy in regard to university education. The Dispatch of 1854 had recommended grants-in-aid because of 'the impossibility of Government alone doing all that must be done' for the education of India, and in order to inculcate 'a spirit of reliance upon local exertions'. The Commission of 1882 goes further and recommends

that all Directors of Public Instruction aim at the gradual transfer to local native management of Government schools

of secondary instruction (including schools attached to first- or second-grade colleges) in every case in which the transfer can be effected without lowering the standard or diminishing the supply of education and without endangering the permanence of the institution transferred.

Three categories of colleges are mentioned:

(1) those on which (because they were the best) the higher education of a whole province would depend, and from which it was inadvisable for the Government to withdraw;

(2) those which might safely be transferred to private management under strict conditions of permanence and efficiency on which affiliation and grants-in-aid would depend: and

(3) those which the Government might profitably make over to private management, if any was forthcoming, or discontinue altogether without much loss to education.

It is comforting to note that the system of payment by results, which was recommended in primary schools, was not applied to university education. Here each application for a grant was to be considered according to the *needs* of the college which made it. Self-supporting colleges, however efficient, were not to be 'aided' by the Government. Others should be helped, but the maximum grant (one-half of the entire expenditure) was to be given only to girls', primary, and normal schools, never to colleges.

To solve the problem of maintenance of private schools, the Commission recommended

that in order to encourage the establishment of aided schools, the managers be not required to charge fees as

high as those of a neighbouring Government school of the same class.

And for colleges :

that while it is desirable to affirm the principle that fees at the highest rate consistent with the undiminished spread of education should be levied in every college aided by the State, no aided college should be required to levy fees at the same rate as that charged in a neighbouring Government college.

This recommendation implicitly affirms the sound principle that higher education should be reserved for the few who can afford it (exceptions, of course, can be provided for by scholarships) and not for the many who do not need it and therefore do not deserve the help of public money to obtain it. The recommendation also aims at helping private colleges to compete with Government colleges by allowing them to charge lower fees. The first object has not been attained. Government grants have been given rather sparingly to private colleges ; but so great has been the demand for university education that even inefficient colleges have been able to draw large crowds of students with low fees, and not only maintain themselves from fees alone but even make a profit on the capital invested in higher education !

Another important recommendation made by the Commission of 1882 is that *moral* education should be imparted at every stage :

A moral textbook, based upon the fundamental principles of natural religion, should be used in all colleges, and the Principal is everywhere to be required to deliver sessional lectures on the duties of a man and citizen.

Speaking of secondary schools, it recommends:

that the importance of requiring inspecting officers to see that the teaching and discipline of every school are such as to exert a right influence on the manners, the conduct, and the character of pupils, be reaffirmed.

And for primary schools:

that all inspecting officers and teachers be directed to see that all the teaching and discipline of every school are such as to exert a right influence on the manners and conduct and the character of the children.

Besides, for the moral no less than the physical advantages they bring, the Commission recommends that provision should be made in all schools and colleges for sports, games, and drill.

These suggestions are wise, but they have not yet been carried out in India. Moral teaching is done more or less conscientiously in schools, but, mostly owing to the close connexion between morality and religion and the consequent danger of rousing religious susceptibilities, it does not play the important part it deserves in our educational system. And in colleges it is still far from decided whether moral science should be taught at all, and much less how.

Perhaps the wisest of all the acts of the Commission of 1882 was the suggestion

that in the upper classes of high schools there be two divisions—one leading to the Entrance examination of the Universities, the other of a more practical character, intended to fit youths for commercial and other non-literary pursuits.

That this is even today a dead letter is no praise to those who have guided India's educational policy since 1882. The outcry against the sameness of our educated youth and the proportion

of unemployable men among them would be much less if this recommendation had been followed. The easier course for all concerned was to open the same door wider and wider till cruel disillusionment showed that it opened into an empty palace. It is only today that the Sapru Committee Report and the Abbott-Wood Report and other documents are rediscovering—and still discovering—a way which a wise Commission had pointed out over half a century ago.

Finally, the Commission recommended the institution of School Boards. Local Boards, with a certain degree of control over primary education (except in Bengal), already existed in all the provinces before 1882. The schools were now grouped and divided into districts coinciding with the units of local self-government. School Boards, which were generally sub-committees of the Local Boards, would supervise all the schools, governmental and private, within their district and decide on matters of administration, teaching and grants-in-aid. They would prepare an annual budget, assign grants, and co-ordinate teaching, without however changing anything of importance—which the Provincial Government alone had the power to do. These School Boards had the disposal of a portion of provincial revenues, a percentage of local and municipal funds, fees, and unspent balances.

Much opposition was shown in certain quarters to the introduction of these School Boards and especially to their having power over secondary education. But they were brought into being

and have worked down to our own days—with what success the sequel will show.

The Imperial Government, to which all the recommendations of the Commission were submitted, approved of all except three, all dealing with religion and morality:

(1) the one about the moral textbook for colleges;

(2) the one about the Principal of a college delivering lectures on 'the duties of a man and a citizen'; and

(3) 'that the system of grants-in-aid be based, in accordance with paragraph 53 of the Dispatch of 1854, on an entire abstinence from interference with the religious instruction conveyed in the institution assisted, provided that, when the only institution of any particular grade existing in any town or village is an institution in which religious instruction forms a part of the ordinary course, it shall be open to parents to withdraw their children from attendance at such instruction without forfeiting any of the benefits of the institution'.

The reason for this action is obvious. Many Protestant missionaries, however, notably the Rev. J. Johnston, protested against what they called this unchristian indifference to religion of the Central Government; but in the circumstances it is difficult to see what other course could have been adopted by a Government ruling over followers of so many and such diverse religions. Even today no better solution has been found of this problem.

The effect of the Commission of 1882 was to produce a remarkable expansion of secondary and university education. The policy of the Government's 'gradual withdrawal' from higher education and the approval of lower fees in private colleges caused the number of pupils to rise

almost immediately. In 1881–2 the total number of pupils in secondary English schools was 149,233. In 1884–5 it was 254,802; in 1886–7, 271,654; in 1891–2, 300,000. Thus in ten years it had doubled itself. After another ten years, in 1901–2, it was 422,187; in 1906–7, 473,130.

These figures, however, include the pupils in Middle English schools. The Commission of 1882 estimated the number in high schools as 65,448; in 1901 this number had increased to 251,626–which is four times as much. In 1882 there were 7,429 candidates for Matriculation in the four universities; in 1885-6, there were 13,093; in 1889, 19,138; and in 1906, 24,963. If we take Bengal alone, which led the way in university education, it had 2,144 candidates for Matriculation in 1872; in 1882, there were 3,000; in 1885, 4,317; in 1888, 6,134; in 1900, 6,309. After 1902 the number was over 7,000 (except in 1907). In 1938, it was 30,000!

In the first flush of enthusiasm which follows the inauguration of a new policy, hardly anyone expressed any other feeling than satisfaction at this phenomenal increase of students in universities. Convocation addresses were, as usual, monotonously self-congratulatory. The only discordant note was struck by Sir Courtney Ilbert in 1885 when, after praising the revised courses and their 'tendency towards greater specialization and concentration at the later stages of the university course, and thus towards more exact and thorough knowledge of the subjects which the student applies himself to master', and

admitting that 'not only is the number of graduates in Honours steadily increasing, but the highest standard which they attain is steadily rising', he says: 'As collegiate education has become more common, the value of the symbol which denotes it has proportionately fallen.'

The same warning was more openly repeated in 1889 by Lord Lansdowne when as Chancellor he said: 'I am afraid that we must not disguise from ourselves that if our schools and colleges continue to educate the youth of India at the present rate, we are likely to hear even more than we do at present of the complaint that we are turning out every year an increasing number of young men whom we have provided with an intellectual equipment admirable in itself but practically useless to them on account of the small number of openings which the professions afford for gentlemen who have received this kind of education.'

The Director of Public Instruction of North-Western Provinces and the Principal of the Bareilly College had already pointed out to the University of Calcutta the danger of an ambitious course of studies that lacked accuracy and depth. In 1871, the Principal of a Calcutta college complained that under the existing system a kind of graduates who might be called 'mere machines of memory' were multiplying too fast, and added: 'Education has too long been viewed in Bengal as the cramming in a large amount of ill-digested knowledge—memory has been cultivated to the exclusion of the higher faculties;

and a class of students has been produced who, whatever crammed book-knowledge they possess, have, with a few noble exceptions, neither original ideas nor the power of observing or judging for themselves.' This diagnosis has since been more and more glaringly proved to have been correct. But it is the clever doctor who detects the first symptoms of the disease.

No remedy, however, was prescribed or applied. The Calcutta University Commission of 1886–7 contented itself with veiled and vague recommendations of an 'adequate standard of English' and a complete course of general education, without which any candidate gifted with a good memory is sure to carry off his Entrance certificate'. A head of one of the colleges, whose opinion was invited by this Commission, said that the whole evil—the fact that the value of degrees had fallen very low because cram was sufficient to secure them—was due to 'the appointment of textbooks in every subject containing all that a student is expected to answer at the examination'. And the Vice-Chancellor of the Calcutta University in his Convocation address of 1883, intending to praise the first two ladies who had just graduated that year, said he had heard from one of their examiners that though their answers in his subject did not deserve the highest marks, they showed 'originality, thoroughness, and a real comprehension of the subject'. Both Vice-Chancellor and examiner thus gave themselves and their system away.

The evil began to grow till 1901, when a Commission was appointed by Lord Curzon to investigate into the causes of university inefficiency. An attempt had been made by some sincere and fearless educationists in 1895 to go into the question of reform; but it was not before Lord Curzon's powerful personality threw its weight on their side that the Indian Universities Commission became a reality. This Commission published its Report in June 1902. The reforms it suggested were primarily meant for the Calcutta University, but they showed the way to the other Universities as well. Its chief recommendations were:

(1) that the Syndicate of each university should fix the minimum fee for each stage of the university course; and

(2) that second-grade colleges (i.e. those which prepare students only for the First Arts or Intermediate examination) should be gradually discontinued.

But there was such a general outcry against these recommendations of the Commission that the Government was obliged to expunge them from the Report. An Act to amend the existing regulations for the universities of India was introduced in the Legislative Council and came into force on 1 September 1904. Accordingly, new Senates and Syndicates were brought into being and these made a body of regulations which took effect in July 1906.

These regulations have been the cause of 'a new life for higher education in India'—as Lord

Curzon claimed for them. They have forced existing colleges and high schools to improve and keep up their improvement: they have forced the Government itself to spend much more money than before on education both in its own and in aided institutions. By making grants-in-aid depend on frequent (and unannounced) inspection and satisfactory reports of progress in the directions indicated by the inspectors, the Act has provided an automatic machinery of continual improvement, provided, of course, the inspectors are rightly selected and conscientiously discharge their duty. The Government itself was obliged to improve the staffs of State colleges and thus set an example to the others. For affiliation is not granted to a new college, and it is withdrawn from an old college, unless staff and equipment conform to regulations.

Another important reform introduced by the Act of 1906 was the teaching of Science, first in Calcutta and then in other universities. Presidency College in Calcutta was the first institution to start a Faculty of Science, thus inaugurating a new policy which has since been found necessary if India is to advance materially with the rest of the world and develop her industries and even her agriculture.

Lord Curzon deserves credit for the dominant (and dominating) part he took in this reform. It was not an empty boast that he uttered when in his Simla speech on the eve of his departure from India in 1905 he claimed:

> It is the setting free of the service of education, by

placing in authoritative control over education the best intellects and agencies that can be enlisted in the task, and it is the casting away of the miserable gyves and manacles that had been fastened on the limbs of the youths of India, stunting their growth, crippling their faculties, and tying them down.

The years which followed Lord Curzon's departure from India were a time of political and social unrest. The Russo-Japanese war, the increasing study in the universities of European literature and politics, the slowly growing unemployment among educated youth—all combined to produce, first in Bengal and then elsewhere, a discontentment with the existing educational system which made the normal progress of university work almost impossible. This discontent took a political and racial colour from the political influences of the time, and an anti-British campaign was launched through the colleges and even at academic university meetings. There was a loud outcry against the kind of education which was causing so much unemployment; and, strangely enough but understandably, there was a greater demand than before for the very Western education which was found so unsatisfactory.

The Central Government tried to meet this demand by voting ampler grants of money for university education. In 1910 Education was transferred from the Home Department of the Government of India to a new Department of Education, Health and Lands, and in 1911 a special non-recurring grant of over 90 lacs of rupees was disbursed for educational purposes,

to which at the Coronation Durbar of December 11 was added a recurring grant of 50 lacs.

The Quinquennial Report for 1907–12 says that, while new universities in Aligarh and Benares for Muslims and Hindus respectively were proposed during this period and a teaching university at Dacca was planned, 'among single incidents the most striking is undoubtedly the movement for collegiate education among the frontier tribes'—which took concrete shape in the opening of the Islamia College at Peshawar by Sir Harcourt Butler.

The number of universities between 1917 and 1922 grew to fourteen, of which twelve were in British India. From 1887 to 1916 the growing demand for university education was met by increasing the number and size of affiliated colleges, not by founding new universities. In 1917 there were only five universities; in 1922 there were fourteen. The Government of India's Resolution of 1913 had expressed the desirability of smaller universities which would be residential and teaching and possibly based on linguistic divisions. The Patna, Lucknow, and Rangoon Universities were due to local patriotism; Benares and Aligarh to communal or religious; Dacca to both.

While these principles were in the air, the Sadler University Commission was appointed to inquire into the affairs of the Calcutta University, the worst offender with regard to crowding. It contained such men as Dr (later Sir) Michael Sadler, Dr J. W. Gregory, Mr (later Sir)

P. J. Hartog, Professor Ramsay Muir, Sir Asutosh Mukerjee, and Dr Ziauddin Ahmed. It met in Calcutta in November 1917 and submitted its Report in March 1919. It recommended the immediate establishment of a new unitary teaching university at Dacca and the gradual development of similar universities elsewhere, the separation of Intermediate Colleges from the university and their placing under a Board of Secondary and Intermediate Education, the differentiation between the academic and the administrative functions of the university, and the constitution of a mofussil board to supervise and co-ordinate the work of mofussil colleges.

The Government of India issued a Resolution in January 1920, summarizing the Report of the Calcutta University Commission and recommending it to other Provincial Governments as well. All the University Acts of any importance passed since then in any part of India have embodied some of the recommendations of the Sadler Commission, which may be said to have been the greatest single factor till now in the history of Indian university education.

In Calcutta itself the recommendations of the Sadler Commission could not be carried out owing to the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms by which the university was removed from the control of the Government of India and placed under the Provincial Government, with the Governor of Bengal, instead of the Viceroy, as Chancellor. This for a time prevented any reform from being introduced in the university,

but in 1921 a resolution was passed in the Bengal Council recommending a large proportion of elected members in the Senate.

The Dacca University was the first to carry into effect the recommendations of the Sadler Commission. Its administration is entrusted to three main bodies:

(1) the University Court (a large body partly elected and partly nominated), which makes statutes and passes recommendations on the annual report submitted by the Executive Council, and has an authoritative voice in all the important business of the university;

(2) the Executive Council, with executive authority in regard to appointments and finance, as well as residual powers; and

(3) the Academic Council, consisting almost entirely of university teachers and representing all departments of study, and responsible for academic matters—standards of education and examination, syllabuses, etc. The Governor is *ex officio* Chancellor of the Dacca University, with power to nominate 40 members of the Court and 4 of the Executive Council, and to veto any statute or ordinance. The Vice-Chancellor, a whole-time officer, is the chief executive and academic officer of the university.

This constitution of the Dacca University has since been imitated by the newer, and even to some extent by the older, universities. It allows for the representation of the many interests inevitably involved in any educational scheme which affect a large area.

The Hindu University of Benares and the Muslim University of Aligarh were the result of long negotiations between the religious bodies concerned and the Central Government; the latter decided that it was more in the interests of education in India to allow each community a small unitary university in a town of their choice than to grant each a central federal university to which colleges all over India would be affiliated. Both Benares and Aligarh are directly under the Central Government and receive grants from it. They have both called forth much financial help from princes and other rich benefactors. And they have to some extent justified their separate existence as specialized centres of Sanskrit and Arabic learning respectively—to some extent, for they too have yielded to the pull of fashion and repeated what all the other universities in India are doing without sticking to what might have been their distinctive contribution to Indian education.

The Rangoon University, with its two constituent colleges, University College and Judson College, was started in 1917 with the idea of having a national university 'closely in touch with national life'. It has Departments of Arts and Science, Teaching, Law, Medicine, Engineering, Forestry, and Fine Arts.

The Lucknow University was formed in 1920 out of three colleges—Canning College, King George's Medical College, and Isabella Thoburn College. Like Dacca, Aligarh, and the remodelled Allahabad University, Lucknow has followed the

Sadler Commission's advice in separating the Intermediate course from the sphere of the university and placing it under a Board of Secondary and Intermediate Education.

The result of this separation was best seen in Allahabad. The constituent colleges outside Allahabad realized that they would be unable to maintain themselves without the fees realized from their Intermediate students, and that their safety lay in developing into universities themselves. Thus in 1922 Nagpur became a university distinct from Allahabad, and Agra followed soon after.

The Delhi University was ushered into being by an Act of 1922, with a constitution like that of Lucknow. It was formed out of three colleges —St Stephen's, Hindu College, and Ramjas College. It has since progressed creditably, though it has made no distinctive contribution to science or art.

The effect of the Sadler Report on the Madras University is seen in a Resolution of the Senate in October 1920:

> That the time has come when the increasing demands for liberal education in this presidency should be met by the establishment of more universities and by the redistribution of the territorial areas of the existing University so as to provide as far as practicable at least one university for each linguistic area within the presidency; and that the establishment of a university for the Andhras should be taken in hand without further delay.

Since 1920, the Andhra University has been started for the Telugu area; the private munificence of Raja Sir Annamalai Chettiar has been

responsible for the establishment of the residential teaching unitary university of Chidambaram in the Tamil area (hence renamed Annamalainagar); and the Travancore State opened its own university (since the plan of an all-Kerala University did not materialize) in 1938. Though there is a justification for a university for each linguistic and cultural region, there is the corresponding loss of universality (*universitas*) and the disadvantage of provincialism or communalism which is not negligible in a large and disunited country like India. Such small and restricted universities may still be defended if they preserve and foster a rich regional or linguistic culture which would otherwise be stifled or unduly subordinated; but when they are mere reproductions of the same undistinguished type, it is less easy to defend their expensive separatism.

The Punjab University was till 1922 waging a doubtful battle with its constituent colleges. As the Director of Public Instruction wrote:

> The university exercises an excessive control over the courses and curricula, but an inadequate control over the teaching given in its name.

In 1922, however, an Academic Council was formed to deal with all university teaching, university or inter-collegiate, under the authority of the Syndicate and the Senate.

The Mysore and Osmania Universities are directly under their Princes. The former has no distinctive features, the latter is the only university in India to use Urdu as the medium of higher instruction.

The results of the Sadler Commission are best seen in the university for which it was primarily, and indeed exclusively, meant: Calcutta. The post-graduate department of this university is the largest and best provided for in India. Nowhere else have private benefactions for education been so abundant: not only rajahs and zamindars but business men and even lawyers and professors make over to the university a part of their savings for the development of research or the endowment of scholarships and libraries. The University College of Science, with its branches the Palit Research Institute and the Bose Research Institute, provides for the most generous Science courses, while the Post-Graduate Department of the university offers instruction in every language and non-science subject any Indian can desire to learn. The Calcutta University thus fulfils one of the chief duties of a university—teaching and research—by monopolizing all post-graduate work.

This is a great achievement for a university in a poor country like ours. But the criticism has often been made since 1917 that it is very dear at the price. The large staff of highly paid professors in these post-graduate departments of Calcutta does not produce the quality of graduates one would expect. This might be explained partly by the fact that the M.A. and M.Sc. classes are too numerous for efficient personal guidance of the students in the methods of study and research, and partly by the fact that the higher ranks of the staff are often overburdened with

lecturing and other duties which leave them little time for their own research and acquisition of new knowledge as well as for that close contact with their pupils which is more than anywhere else necessary in the post-graduate stage of university life.

Owing to these two drawbacks, the Calcutta University is less efficient in the quality of its work than it might be. But in the variety and lavishness of its programmes and the number of its students it is easily the first in India.

An important feature of the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms was the allocation of Education to the Transferred half of the Provincial Government under more or less popular and responsible Ministers. The immediate effect of this change was the influence of popular opinion and even party politics on educational policy. While a small and hated minority stood up for higher standards, the weight of the overwhelming number was cast on the side of easy degrees and numerous graduates.

The growing unemployment among the university-educated has, it is true, to some extent counteracted the rush for cheap degrees; but it is only now that the popular mind is beginning to see the futility of an education which neither leads to a living nor prepares for life.

Under the Provincial Governments, each university has developed since 1919 on its own lines, taking its inspiration from the recommendations of the Calcutta University Commission. It is unnecessary here to follow the work done, in each

of the fourteen universities then existing, in quite different directions. It is enough to remark that the principle that *teaching* is no less important a function of a university than examining has been more and more admitted and put in practice through inter-collegiate lectures, visiting professorships, extension lectures, and university professorships. The tutorial system has been introduced in some halting way in many colleges, to make up for the glaring want of personal contact between staff and students in these large and impersonal institutions. University Training Corps were started in 1917, at first attached to the Indian Defence Force and later in a category of their own as a means of physical exercise rather than of military training in the strict sense.

Today the future of our universities, as of the other stages of the educational journey, seems gloomy and obscure. They have come to a dead wall. Going back, as the older leaders advise, seems to hurt national pride; to go forward in the same direction is impossible. The remedies will be discussed in a future chapter.

Secondary Education

Though secondary education is more important for the general well-being of a nation than university education, the history of Indian educational policy since 1882 has been a history of the progressive domination of the school by the university. We have shown how the Commission of 1882 had recommended that

in the upper classes of high schools there should be two

divisions—one leading to the Entrance examination of the Universities, the other of a more practical character intended to fit youths for commercial and other non-literary pursuits.

But there was such a rush for university studies and such an inherited distaste (in a caste-ridden country) for manual work or even 'commerce', that the Quinquennial Review of 1912–17 still complained that '95 per cent of the boys who pass through secondary schools follow the curricula prescribed by the Universities for the Matriculation examination.' This proportion has not decreased—if anything, it has increased—since 1917, in spite of indirect attempts made by Government and other employers to favour those candidates who know typewriting and book-keeping and other 'useful' subjects rather than the usual 'literary' kind who only know English, mathematics, and a dead language.

It must be admitted, however, that the fault was not entirely the parents'. They were not offered any alternative to the ordinary high school to which they could send their children with a reasonable hope of future employment. An English education was necessary for almost every walk of life, and it could be had nowhere else than in a high school or 'English middle' school. The 'vernacular middle' schools, as we have seen, could not stand the competition with the English schools and steadily decayed except in a few neighbourhoods of temples or mosques. The brunt of the blame must fall on the *policy* which took the line of least resistance and linked the

school to the college in such a way as to forget the very purpose of secondary education. The university courses were in English, and to follow them the students who came up from the high school had to be already familiar with teaching in English. Hence English was made the medium of instruction in the school for all the subjects of the curriculum. The Intermediate courses presupposed a certain standard of knowledge in each subject. Hence that standard was imposed in the high school, without considering whether it was necessary for *all* the students who attend a high school.

There was after 1882 a great variety of high schools, some preparing students for Matriculation and others for the 'High School' or 'Secondary School' examination. But their general tendency was to make the university the goal of their ambitions. The multiplication of schools went so far that the Director of Public Instruction in Bengal wrote in his Report for 1887-8:

> The number of these [high] schools is now far beyond the needs of the community, and many of them are started as purely money-making speculations. . . . Many of these schools, especially in mofussil towns, are held in unsuitable buildings, and have no books of reference and no proper supply of furniture.

This was written of Bengal then; it is not so true of any province today, thanks to greater supervision and stricter inspection. But the evil still exists to some extent everywhere in India.

In 1891 the Government of Bengal made an attempt to induce the university 'to widen the

course for matriculation by the introduction of alternative subjects designed to facilitate the studies of candidates intended for professional careers'. This meant that instead of a second language candidates would be allowed to offer physics or chemistry, and that book-keeping and shorthand would be introduced as optional subjects. But even this apology for technical education was not approved by the heads of schools and colleges, who proposed instead that a choice should be given between elementary mensuration and a portion of Euclid! It is an eloquent commentary on the popular attitude that even this almost laughable measure of escape from the domination of the university was not granted.

In the lower classes of high schools which prepared students for the university's Matriculation, no science was taught except the elementary portions required for passing the Matriculation test. In middle schools (both vernacular and English) which sent up pupils for the Middle School Examination, a course of elementary science including mensuration, sanitation, and either botany or chemistry or physics was taught.

We have mentioned the recommendation of the Commission of 1882 that the Government should progressively withdraw from secondary schools. It was not easy to give immediate effect to this recommendation. A remark made by the Director of Public Instruction in Bengal in 1892 may reveal at least one obstacle:

The process of withdrawing Government support from *zilla* schools by closing some and transferring others to local bodies must be a slow one, as otherwise Government, losing its sources of income derived from local receipts, will find itself burdened with a large number of supernumerary teachers, without the means of paying them which were formerly at its disposal.

Another factor which played a part in retarding the progress of the grants-in-aid system is glanced at in the Punjab Report:

It is a remarkable fact that the majority of secondary schools recently established under private management are unaided institutions. In some cases the Managers have applied for grants; but in others they prefer apparently, for a time at least, to be without them, owing mainly to the fact that they are not at present prepared to levy fees at the rates prescribed by the Code.

Still, from 1887 to 1892 the number of secondary English schools directly managed by the Government in British India had fallen from 236 to 220, and that of schools under local or municipal bodies from 340 to 328; while aided schools had increased from 1,267 to 1,381, and unaided schools from 395 to 536. The popularity of secondary education went on growing: in 1901–2 there were 1,573 aided secondary schools for boys and 828 unaided ones, whereas in 1896–7 there had been 1,489 and 612 respectively. In 1912 there were 2,770 private and only 271 Government schools. The number of private and even unaided schools increased everywhere, thanks to the general enthusiasm for secondary and higher education which marked the turn of the century. In Bengal, especially, the unaided schools were far more numerous

than in the other provinces. But even the Director of Public Instruction in Eastern Bengal and Assam complained of the 'unnecessary multiplication of high schools'.

There was progress, however, as time went on, in the variety of curricula followed in high schools. While English, a second language, mathematics, and history and geography were compulsory subjects for the Matriculation of almost all the universities, several of these offered a choice between a classical (foreign or Indian) and a modern Indian language, added physics and chemistry to the compulsory subjects, and gave greater importance to Indian than to English history.

Side by side with the university's Matriculation, too, another examination, conducted by the Department of Education, came into existence under the name of 'School Final' or 'School Leaving Certificate' with a greater variety of subjects to choose from and a more 'practical' curriculum—including book-keeping, shorthand, and commercial geography, for instance, and drawing and agriculture among the 'optional' subjects. The Director of Public Instruction of Bombay wrote in 1907:

> The object of the School Final Examination is to ascertain whether an ordinary school pupil in the highest classes of a secondary school has obtained, during his school course, a fairly good education calculated to fit him for the ordinary pursuits of life and for the lower grades of public service.

Such a reorientation of secondary education was indeed overdue, for the university had too

long dominated the school and made it forget its proper end—to prepare the average boy and girl for the average kind of life, and not to lure all indiscriminately towards a *higher* education for which they had no aptitude and which would render them useless for the life that awaited them. To make the School Final Examination more popular with the ordinary student, the Government declared it, and not the Matriculation, as the door to employment in the lower grades of its service. One province after another adopted it, and everything seemed to promise a long-desired solution of a problem that was yearly becoming acuter.

Madras developed the School Final system best of all the provinces. It had three groups of subjects: (A) which were common to all schools and compulsory for the examination: English, vernacular composition and translation, and elementary mathematics; (B) which were supposed to be taught in all schools but were not examination subjects: geography, Indian history, science, drawing, domestic science, physical training, needlework; (C) which were optional subjects to be chosen out of a large number and offered for examination: algebra and geometry, physics, chemistry, English history, a second language, book-keeping, commercial geography, etc. More importance was attached to class work—which was ignored under the Matriculation system—and both class marks and examination marks counted for the final 'eligibility' to the university course.

This system was in itself much better than the rigid Matriculation as a means of secondary education self-contained and complete in its own sphere: it was not dominated by the university but offered a certain variety of subjects and distinguished between important and less important subjects. It attached due importance to class work, which the Matriculation system ignored, and to the teacher who knew the candidate over a longer period than the examiner, and thus encouraged the teacher to feel his responsibility and discharge it better. It provided, without using the dignified term, a kind of technical or commercial education for those who were unfit for 'literary' studies.

But even such a good system was applied in a way which wrecked it. The overwhelming majority of students took those optional subjects which would lead to the university—physics, chemistry, algebra and geometry, history, language; and the 'useful' subjects were despised as 'mechanical' and fit for the 'duds'. The B group of subjects was neglected by both teachers and students, since they did not affect the coveted Secondary School Leaving Certificate. The school record was rendered untrustworthy by want of uniformity of standard between various schools. And finally the Matriculation system was followed in all except the name, and the general demand (voiced by the Madras University Senate at its meeting in July 1938) was that the Matriculation should be brought back and the School Final system abolished. It

cannot be denied that this system was forcing students at the age of twelve to specialize and choose a line which they could not without great difficulty change at all before the end of their education. But this was not the intention of those who introduced it: they intended most of the pupils to stop with the School Final examination and not go up to the university.

In other universities, where the old Matriculation was never dethroned, the high school course was made less 'classical' by the introduction of several books for 'perusal' instead of one book for 'detailed study' (which meant grammatical dissection and detailed annotation), by the addition of commercial subjects and mensuration to the curriculum, and the use of oral exercises in all the classes. Manual training, too, was started in many schools of Madras, the Punjab, and the United Provinces. Its success, however, was not as great as might have been anticipated because of the lack of competent instructors.

Since 1919, secondary education in each province has followed the general ministerial policy of the time. It would take too long to describe the many experiments made in deference to every new demand of the people's representatives. It is enough to say that it has been a period of almost excessive experimenting.

Repeated Reports of the Commissioner for Education with the Government of India (notably, of Sir George Anderson), and recommendations of the Central Advisory Board of Education, as well as the Report of the Abbott-

Wood Committee in 1937, have pointed out the need for a greater *variety* in the education imparted in schools, partly to reduce the appallingly increasing unemployment among the educated, and partly to prevent the waste of money and talent caused by want of suitable education. We have ourselves proposed a plan in many respects like that of the Mysore Education Committee of 1936 for reorganizing secondary education.[1] It consists in providing two parallel courses at each stage—the middle and the high school—one leading to the university or the learned professions, and the other to business or trade or a manual profession. Since the abilities of growing children reveal themselves only little by little and at different periods of their growth, there ought not to be a too early or irrevocable bifurcation. Children coming out of the elementary school will enter either a vocational or a middle school. At the end of the middle school some will go on to the high school and others to the higher technical school, which teaches, besides the compulsory subjects (the mother-tongue, elementary mathematics, science, and civics), advanced wood-work, building, motor mechanics, electric wiring and lighting, printing and book-binding, photography, textiles, founding and pattern-making, agriculture, sericulture, horticulture etc. (chosen according to environment and needs).

The question whether the two alternative courses should be provided in the same or in different schools is not of great importance to

[1] *The New Review*, September 1936, 237-50.

the theoretical educationist; but it is of great psychological and practical importance for with our immemorial Eastern contempt for 'low' (i.e. manual) occupations it will cost parents and children a pang of shame to be segregated from the favoured few who follow a purely 'literary' path to life. Hence it will be wiser, at least till the popular mind changes, to arrange for the two alternative courses in the same school, the time-table being so arranged that while some pupils study English or higher mathematics the others may be taught a technical subject. This will be much cheaper than doubling school buildings, grounds, equipment, and staffs.

The secondary schools of my plan will not be 'vocational' schools, but just schools with a vocational bias, i.e. giving a general education *including* (what is omitted in the present type of school) a general training of eye and hand which will be of use in any walk of life.

This system has been already in use, with obvious adaptations to differences of climate and occupation and standard of living, in London (where the County Council is responsible for a great variety of schools—'polytechnics', 'maintained technical', 'junior technical', and 'vocational'), and in Germany—especially the *Lichtwarkschule* of Hamburg (with its gymnasiums, art rooms, and workshops where all the boys are required to work after school hours). In India, there is the weight of popular prejudice to be counterbalanced; but success is certain, for the need of such a reorientation of

secondary education is coming to be realized.

Primary Education

The chief effect of the Commission of 1882 on primary education was, as we have seen, the transfer of responsibility for it to local bodies. Lord Ripon's two great gifts to India—the Municipal Act and the Local Self-Government Act—consisted in restoring to her the old panchayat system of local administration. The Commission obliged these local bodies to give free education in their own schools to a certain number of poor pupils. It also abolished the distinction between English primary and vernacular primary schools by making all primary schools teach in the vernacular and linking the English primary schools to the high or middle schools of which they formed part. The new primary school was divided into lower (three classes) and higher (two classes).

From 1886 to 1904 primary education—like secondary—was ruled by the system of payment by results. It produced an increase of numbers and efficiency in private aided schools; but it was soon found too rigid and 'commercial' and was abolished in 1906. Meanwhile the Local Government itself raised money for primary education by levying a cess on land and devoting a certain percentage of its general resources to primary schools. In Bombay, the Provincial Government promised to contribute out of its revenues half as much as the Local Government would assign to primary education.

The Madras Local Boards Act of 1884 ordered that the improvement of primary education should be the chief care of the district boards, and the Government of Madras simultaneously announced that 5 per cent of its revenues would be spent on education. In Bengal, the Government itself undertook to provide for elementary education, since local funds did not exist (for want of an educational cess) and municipal revenues were meagre. In 1884, it allotted 8 lacs of rupees to primary education alone, and planned to increase this grant to 18 lacs in nine years, though it was unable to carry out this plan. The North-Western Provinces (later the United Provinces) made the same arrangement as Bengal. But in the Punjab the Government bore the cost of training teachers and inspecting schools, while the local boards looked after the teaching and equipment of elementary schools. The Government of the Central Provinces allotted 5 per cent of its revenue to education.

By 1891–2, the number of elementary schools maintained by the Government was very small compared to the number maintained by private bodies, municipalities (in towns), and district boards (in villages). In 1892, aided schools had 53·5 per cent of the total number of elementary school pupils; district boards maintained 14,531 schools, with 639,883 pupils; and municipalities maintained 1,041 primary schools, with 101,291 pupils.

During the next quinquennium (1892–7), Madras took a long stride forward in the number

of its *aided* primary schools (mostly under missionary management), while the number of municipal and district board schools went down owing to the urgency of other demands on local revenues (e.g. roads and irrigation canals). In Bombay, the local-board schools were handed over to the Government and maintained out of the cess; in Bengal the number of aided schools fell, but the number of pupils in each increased.

In 1897 the Government of the North-Western Provinces and Oudh and the Government of the Central Provinces gave substantial grants to district boards towards primary education; and in Assam (especially in the Garo hill tracts) the Government aided missionary primary schools with money.

This progress, however, was retarded by the famines and earthquakes which characterized the end of the nineteenth century in many parts of India. It was only after Lord Curzon's Resolution of 11 March 1904, that

> the Government of India fully accepted the proposition that the active extension of primary education is one of the most important duties of the State . . . not merely on general grounds but because, as Lord Lawrence observed in 1868, 'among all the sources of difficulty in our administration and of possible danger to the stability of our Government there are few so serious as the ignorance of the people.'

The Resolution also laid it down that the money set apart for education by district or municipal boards should be spent on primary rather than secondary or higher education, and that 'so much of the budget estimates of district or

municipal boards as relates to educational charges will be submitted through the Inspector to the Director of Public Instruction before sanction'.

This Resolution led to a general expansion of primary education in India, either through the addition of a primary department (5 classes) to secondary schools or through the starting of upper and lower primary vernacular schools for those pupils who were not likely to proceed to the secondary school. This, however, required money, and the Government of India increased its Education grant from 40 lacs in 1902 to 75 lacs in 1905 and promised an annual increase of 35 lacs. The whole of this grant was intended for primary education; but most of it went into secondary and higher education. The result was that the progress made in literacy was not commensurate with the increased amount of money spent on primary education. The number of pupils in primary schools increased only from 92,226 in 1902 to 102,947 in 1907, and the average number of pupils in each school rose during the quinquennium only from 34 to 36.

It is consoling, however, to record that the number of private primary schools (most of them 'aided' by the Government but owned and managed by missionary or other non-public bodies) increased to 76 per cent in 1907. This does not include the vernacular schools attached to temples, mosques, and churches where religion was the primary aim and the three R's were also taught: such schools had about 550,000 boys in 1907. But even with all this the total

percentage of boys of school-going age who attended school in 1907 was only 22·6.

The Resolution of 1904 also changed the system of grants-in-aid. It abolished payment by results and introduced a method, differently applied in different provinces, of fixing the grant according to the number of teachers employed and the number of pupils in regular attendance. Bengal was probably the most fortunate in this respect, for in that province the local boards had the power to decide rates of grant to private primary schools. The Punjab followed the 'block grants system' by which Government aid was assessed according to the average attendance for the last five years and the average pay of a certificate-holding teacher.

When Gopal Krishna Gokhale introduced his Elementary Education Bill in the Imperial Legislative Council in 1910, Baroda State was the only portion of India where elementary education had been made compulsory by its Ruler in 1907. Gokhale's Resolution was:

> That this Council recommends that a beginning should be made in the direction of making elementary education free and compulsory throughout the country, and that a mixed commission of officials and non-officials be appointed at an early date to frame definite proposals.

In a famous speech on that occasion Gokhale urged that the introduction of compulsory education should be left to the local boards, that it should be applied only to boys, that the age of compulsion should be 6 to 10, that compulsion should be introduced only in those areas where

one-third of the boys of school age were already under instruction, and that the cost of this free compulsory education should be shared by the Government and local bodies in the ratio of 2 to 1.

Gokhale withdrew his Resolution on being assured by the Home Minister that it would be given due consideration. Meanwhile in 1910 Education was erected into a separate Department under the care of a Member of the Viceroy's Executive Council. Gokhale's proposal was therefore shelved. He brought in another Bill in 1911 'to make better provision for the extension of elementary education', in which he suggested that compulsion should be introduced in those areas where a certain percentage (to be determined by the Department) of boys and girls of school age (6–10) were already receiving instruction, that it should be left to the discretion of local boards to apply the Act to certain areas under their jurisdiction or not, and that both for the fixing of the required percentage of attendance and for the introduction of compulsion, the previous sanction of the Viceroy and the Governor respectively was necessary.

The Imperial Legislative Council in the meantime referred the Bill to the Provincial Governments, universities, municipalities, and local boards for their opinions. On 18 March 1912, Gokhale moved a resolution that his Bill be referred to a Select Committee of 15 members of the Viceroy's Council for detailed examination. In an historic speech he argued that if elementary

education was to make progress in India at all it must be made compulsory, and if it was to be compulsory it must be free: unless there was an Act to this effect, the local bodies would be powerless to introduce compulsory education. And it was obvious that India had made so little headway as regards literacy in the last 60 years!

The Bill was rejected by 36 votes to 13, all the official and some non-official members (especially zemindars) opposing it on the ground that it was unnecessary, premature, unworkable, and so on.

While rejecting Gokhale's Bill, however, the Government of India promised more grants to local bodies for the encouragement of primary education, and urged the Provincial Government to pay more attention to this subject. Between 1907 and 1912 the number of pupils in the primary classes rose from 4 to 5 millions. But even then the defect which has been so frequently pointed out of late by Commissioners and Commissions made itself felt: the great majority of the pupils in primary schools left them before they could attain literacy in any real sense. From 1907 to 1912 the number of pupils in the *upper* primary classes rose from 12·3 to only 12·5 per cent of the total number of pupils under primary education.

Thus education gradually became free in all the provinces except the three Presidencies of Bengal, Bombay, and Madras: the Quinquennial Report of 1912 says that in the North-West Frontier Province it was completely free, in Assam fees were voluntary, in the United

and Central Provinces they were very low.

The visit of King George V to India in 1912 and his proclamation that 'it is my wish that there may be spread over the land a network of schools and colleges', obliged the Under-Secretary of State for India to allot £330,000 annually to education (primarily to primary education) and to proclaim that the number of primary schools would be increased by 75 per cent and their pupils doubled. The Government of India therefore published a Resolution in 1913 the main paragraph of which (XI) dealt with primary education. Its most important provisions were that lower primary schools were to be raised to upper primary, and that *board* schools were to be established wherever this was financially possible in preference to aided private schools, which were to be encouraged, subject to due supervision before recognition, and periodical inspection after it. It rightly devoted some attention to the teachers, on whom the real success of primary education would immediately as well as ultimately depend, and it ruled that teachers should be drawn from the class of boys whom they would teach, and be trained in special theoretical and practical 'normal' schools; that their minimum pay should be fixed and their prospects improved; and that they should not be made to teach more than 50 pupils in a class.

This Resolution was immediately carried into effect, and by 1917 almost all the primary education in Bombay, the Punjab, the United

Provinces, the Central Provinces, the North-West Frontier Province, and Assam was monopolized by board schools. In the other provinces, the Government could not oust the private schools on which it had relied so long to spread elementary education. But in Bengal the 'Panchayati Union Scheme' was started, by which the Government provided at its own cost one *model* lower primary school (with 3 classes) in each 'Union' (about 14 sq. miles), and entrusted its management to the district board. These model schools were models only in having better buildings than private *maktabs* and *pathsalas*; their curriculum was not of lasting use, their teachers were ill-paid, and oftener than not their management was neglected by the boards.

At the end of the quinquennium 1912–17, there was on an average one boys' school to every 8 square miles, and the number of boys attending primary schools of some sort was less than 33 per cent of the number of boys of school age in British India.

The last period (1917–32) saw a general awakening in India to the urgent need of expanding elementary education. This was largely due to the promise made by the Secretary of State for India in 1917 and implemented by the Government of India Act of 1918, by which India was to be progressively given a share in her own government. The need of literacy among the masses if they are to be intelligent citizens of a democratic state is obvious. The

Provincial Governments therefore passed various Education Acts, giving municipalities and district boards the power to make primary education free and compulsory in the areas under their jurisdiction.

It is unnecessary to examine these Acts in detail, as the students of each province will find complete treatises written on them together with their full texts.

The first province to pass a Primary Education Act was *Bombay* (No. I of 1918), though this Act was superseded by the more detailed Bombay Primary Education Act of 1923. It allowed municipalities outside the City of Bombay to make primary education free and compulsory (after due discussion, passing by two-thirds of the Municipal Council, and sanction by the Provincial Government) on children between the ages of 6 and 11 and to levy a cess to meet the cost. Four municipalities used these powers and introduced compulsory primary education before the new Act was passed, ordering that each district board or municipality which was authorized to run elementary schools should have a school board consisting of between 7 and 9 elected members in a municipality and between 9 and 16 in a district board (to which the Government could add another 5 members by nomination), and that this school board should administer elementary education in its area, provided its annual budget was sanctioned by the Local Government. The Act of 1923 seems to have

worked fairly well in the urban area, according to the reports of the Directors of Public Instruction. In the City of Bombay, a special Act of 1920 (Bombay Act No. XV of 1920) provided that the corporation should provide for free and compulsory primary education of children between 6 and 11 years of age and obtain the permission of the Governor in Council before enforcing it, and that a School Committee (corresponding to the school board under a district board) should be made up of 16 members, 12 of whom should be councillors of the corporation and 2 of the rest should be women resident in Bombay. Accordingly, the corporation introduced compulsion in two or three out of the seven wards with some success.

The Committee on Primary and Secondary Education in Bombay, appointed in 1927, reported in 1929 that 'little progress has been made towards introducing compulsion' and that 63 per cent of the boys and 89 per cent of the girls of school-going age were not attending school. It complained of wastage, stagnation, and inefficient teaching, much as we do now.

The *Bengal* Primary Education Act (Bengal Act No. IV of 1919) was similar to the one of Bombay. It extended to all municipalities and ordered them to make a complete survey of primary education within their area and report to the Government on the possibility of introducing compulsion for boys between 6 and 10 years of age. Each municipality had to appoint a school committee which would

secure the attendance of boys at school and decide whether they could pay fees or not (for education was not to be free except for the poor). The Municipal Commissioners (i.e. councillors) could, if their funds together with the Government grant were not enough, levy an education cess with the sanction of the Provincial Government.

This Act applied only to municipalities and unions; it was amended in 1921 to include also village unions (according to the Bengal Village Self-Government Act of 1919) and provide that union boards should, subject to control by district or local boards, look after primary education in the villages.

In spite of these Acts, however, Evan Biss reported in 1920 that 'Bengal is very far behind Madras and an immense distance behind Bombay in the part taken by Government and local bodies in providing schools for the people'. This would not in itself have been an evil if there had been private agencies enough to render the service. There were private agencies, but these were not sufficient or efficient; and the few efficient ones did not receive the encouragement from the Government which they deserved. Biss, like many other Government officials before and since, was an admirer of Government schools as the only ones capable of efficient work. He was not concerned about their cost.

According to his recommendations, however, primary schools were increased in Bengal so

that there was one school to every 2 square miles, and there were about 2 million pupils at school. But most of these pupils were in the lowest class and did not go beyond it: 30 per cent reached Class I, 20 Class II, 5 Class III, and 3 Class IV. Thus only 3 per cent attained even elementary literacy. And in the City of Calcutta, in spite of the Calcutta Municipal Act of 1923, the corporation satisfied itself with spending about a lac of rupees annually in maintaining 230 free primary schools of its own and helping private primary schools with grants. The idea of *universal* primary education was still far from its ambition. In Chittagong the municipality introduced compulsion according to the Primary Education Act of 1919. The Calcutta corporation introduced it in only one of its wards in January 1933. The Act of 1919 was amended in 1932 (Bengal Act No. VII) so as to allow the Chittagong municipality to extend compulsion to girls between 6 and 10 years old.

In the villages, though the 1921 amendment of the Bengal Primary Education Act of 1919 authorized union boards to extend elementary education within their rural areas, there was little progress till 1926, when a Government Resolution announced the levy of a cess and the setting up of district school boards to look after primary education. This led to the passing of the Bengal (Rural) Primary Education Act of 1930 after two years' unsuccessful attempts made by several Ministers and Members of Education. This Act

was meant only for rural areas and applied to children between 6 and 11 years of age. It constituted a district school board for each district, made up of a few officials and a majority of non-officials (*ex officio*, nominated, and elected), with full power to start and maintain primary schools and give grants to private schools in that district.

To watch over these district school boards and advise the Government on primary education, a Central Primary Education Committee was also formed consisting of the Director of Public Instruction, ten elected members (two from each division of Bengal), and five members nominated by the Provincial Government.

But in spite of all these provisions and the White Paper of 1933, the Act has not yet been put into execution. The recent attempts to revive it will be noticed in a later chapter.

The *Punjab* Primary Education Act (No. VII) was passed in 1919 and provided that the local authority should submit to the Provincial Government a complete statement on the conditions required for compulsory elementary education, and that if these conditions were fulfilled free compulsory education should be introduced for boys between 6 and 11 years of age (or, with the consent of the Government, between 7 and 12) and an additional tax imposed for the purpose, subject to the Government's approval.

There has been considerable progress in elementary education since this Act was passed. The prosperity of the Punjab, thanks to the

irrigation schemes recently carried through, enables its Government to allot liberal grants for primary education without the necessity of levying an additional tax. The Act was therefore applied in certain areas, and board schools were started at certain distances from one another. If a sufficient number of the boys within two miles of the school did not of their own accord attend it, compulsion was resorted to. When education was made compulsory in one area, the neighbouring villages also *asked* for it. By March 1931, 2,578 rural areas and 50 municipalities had introduced compulsion. Thus elementary education has spread fast and smoothly in the Punjab. A special Inspector of Vernacular Education supervises these schools and deals with parents who do not send their children to school. Fortunately, in the Punjab this number is less than 20 per cent. The average Punjab elementary school has 70 boys, while the average Bengal school has only 36.

In 1925 the Punjab Primary Education Act was extended to Delhi (city and suburbs), and compulsion has since been introduced in the city and in 6 rural areas of the suburbs.

The *United Provinces* passed a Primary Education Act in 1919 (Acts No. VII) allowing municipalities to make primary education compulsory and free in urban areas for children between 6 and 11 years of age. This Act ordered that compulsion should first be applied to boys and only later, with the permission of the Government, to girls; that municipalities should

appoint school committees to carry out and supervise compulsion; that they might levy an education cess to be used entirely for primary education.

Accordingly the Government of the United Provinces promised a contribution of two-thirds of the cost of the scheme as well as the extra cost of raising the pay of teachers in municipal schools, provided the Government's contribution was not more than 60 per cent of the total cost of primary education. This generous gesture encouraged 24 municipalities to introduce compulsory elementary education before the end of the quinquennium 1922–7.

This has been fairly successful. Compulsion (by proceeding against defaulting parents) was enforced only three years after the Act was put into execution, to give the parents and the children time to realize the utility of the scheme. Its success would be greater if the municipalities and their education officers were bolder and more consistent in carrying out their policy.

Outside the municipalities, the district boards were entrusted with the duty of maintaining primary schools (besides middle vernacular schools and *maktabs*), towards which they received a grant from the Government on condition that they did not spend less than the prescribed minimum under each of the five heads: middle vernacular, primary, Muslim, Scheduled Caste, and female education. This method worked satisfactorily. In 1925 the Government went a step further and developed the one-teacher

preparatory schools (with 3 classes) into full primary schools with one teacher for every 30 pupils. In 1926 it went still further and passed the United Provinces District Boards Primary Education Act by which, on a resolution passed by more than half the members of a district board that primary education should be made compulsory and the assurance that it would be provided for, the Provincial Government would introduce *free* compulsory primary education for children between 6 and 11 years old in that area; and thereupon the board would appoint school committees to supervise this education and punish defaulters with a fine not exceeding Rs. 5.

This Act was put into execution in 1927, when several district boards introduced it in rural areas and the Government paid the whole of the extra expense. The Government of India's report on *Education in India in 1930–31* recorded that compulsion had been introduced in 378 rural areas of 25 districts.

Madras passed an Elementary Education Act in 1920 (Madras Act No. VIII). It directed the formation of a district educational council consisting of elected and nominated representatives of all important interests and holding office (without pay) for three years. This council (whose president was to be the executive authority) would grant 'recognition' to schools, decide grants-in-aid to private primary schools, and help the Director of Public Instruction to obtain a sufficient supply and employment of trained teachers of elementary schools. It must maintain

an Elementary Education Fund and levy an education cess of not more than 25 per cent of the taxes comprised under the heads of property, companies, profession, and land. The Government would allot a sum equal to this education cess, besides its ordinary contribution to education from the general funds of the presidency. The age of compulsion would be fixed by the Government. Religious instruction was to be allowed in private aided schools, provided those children were exempted from this intruction whose guardians (more than ten in number) asked for exemption.

Since 1920 the Madras Government has been considering the advisability of amending this Act in the light of subsequent experience. Conferences were held in 1924 and a survey of the whole field of elementary education was conducted by the Director of Public Instruction, and a Report published in which the needs of aided schools were duly stressed. These schools were hard hit by the opening of a large number of free board schools in their neighbourhood, since their chief source of income was school-fees.

The district educational councils have not been satisfactory, mainly because they are not competent or disinterested enough in their work. R. M. Statham (later, Sir) submitted a Report to the Government in 1927, recommending their abolition and the starting in their stead of school committees in municipalities and district boards to look after elementary education, the gradual elimination of one-teacher schools, the substitution

of trained for untrained teachers, the transfer of the power of 'recognizing' private schools from the district educational council to the Education Department, the allotment of more liberal grants to private schools, and the adaptation of education in rural schools to rural needs and surroundings.

This report as well as several others made since by official and unofficial bodies had to wait for final incorporation into an Act of the Madras Legislature under the Government of India Act of 1935.

The *Bihar and Orissa* Primary Education Act was passed in 1919 (Act No. I), allowing the local authority, with the sanction of the Government, to introduce compulsory education for boys between 6 and 10. This education would be free in areas where an education cess was levied. The local authority could appoint a school committee, with the composition prescribed by the Government, to enforce the Act, allot grants, etc. If the local body (municipality or union) had not enough money to meet the cost of compulsory primary education, it could levy an education cess, with the approval of the Government, equivalent to not more than 33·3 per cent of the maximum tax leviable in a municipality or 50 per cent of the maximum land tax leviable by a union.

At the end of the quinquennium 1922–7, the Director of Public Instruction reported that primary schools were very haphazardly distributed over Bihar and Orissa. This is not so true

today as it was then, but it is not untrue even now. The Government, too, is not able to give the local bodies as generous a contribution as the Punjab or the United Provinces Government does. Hence compulsion has been introduced only in a few areas, urban or rural.

The *Central Provinces* Primary Education Act of 1920 (No. III) allows local bodies to make primary education compulsory and free, with the sanction of the Government, for children between 6 and 14 years of age, for which each local authority must maintain a register, open to the public, of all the children liable to compulsion within its area. The responsibility and right of organizing and enforcing primary education lies with the Provincial Government and not with the municipality or union. Education is free wherever it is compulsory, and the Government has the right (independently of this Act) to levy an education cess if necessary. Till 1930 only 90 rural and 13 urban areas had introduced compulsion; by 1931 it had spread to 344 rural and 22 urban areas.

Assam passed its Primary Education Act only in 1926 (No. V). This Act allowed local authorities, with the sanction of the Government of the province, to compel children between 6 and 11 years of age to attend a primary school. To carry out this scheme, the municipality or board should pay one-third of the cost (levying an education cess if necessary), and the other two-thirds would be borne by the Government. Wherever educa-

tion was compulsory, it would also be free.

Owing to the peculiarly backward condition of parts of Assam, the Act has not yet been put into execution there. But private primary schools, mostly run by missionaries with Government help, exist all over the province, even in the hilly Garo tracts.

CHAPTER VI

EDUCATION 1935–50

University Education

SINCE 1935 several new universities have been established in India: Travancore started its own university in 1937 with its seat at Trivandrum where the Maharaja's Arts and Science college, the Engineering, Law and Women's colleges form constituent colleges, while the private colleges of Alwaye, Changanacherry, Kottayam, Alleppey, Nagercoil, Trivandrum, Palai, and Quilon are affiliated institutions. From some 4,000 students in 1941-2 the number has now risen to over 15,000, and still a large percentage of 'eligible' candidates seek admission into universities out of Travancore with only partial success. To meet the charge that it was not fulfilling its promise as a regional university, Travancore made an attempt to develop a research side with special stress on local industries like fish and coconut; but it may still be asked of this, as of every other university in India, whether it differs from other factories for turning out graduates of the traditional uniform type. In the report of the Travancore Education Reorganization Committee presented to the Maharaja in May 1945, it was suggested that a University Entrance examination should be the only door leading to university courses,

which would last three years and end with a bachelor's degree, thus abolishing the present Intermediate course. This recommendation is in line with what the Sadler Commission had said in 1919. But so heavy is the weight of custom and tradition that the people of Travancore have not shown the least enthusiasm for the pre-university school or the Entrance examination after it, and the old two-year Intermediate and two-year B.A. courses are still flourishing.

Besides Travancore, recent years have witnessed the birth and rise of Utkal University in Orissa, Gauhati University in Assam, Saugor University in Madhya Pradesh, and the East Punjab University after partition. Pakistan retained the University of Lahore, renamed West Punjab University and Dacca University for East Bengal, and started a new University for Sind.

The Madras University sent out an Inspection Commission in 1945 whose Report appeared in 1947 reviewing the whole ambit of University education in the Province. Beneath its many detailed administrative suggestions can be distinctly heard the obvious complaint that its colleges have become too large, its students too many for their teachers to have any real contact with them, its libraries and laboratories and playgrounds too small to give that sense of time and space which play no little part in a liberal education. This university has started many new courses—Commerce, Technology, Oriental Learning—and the number of students

has rapidly increased in the war and post-war years.

The same may be said of the other universities where, in spite of the expected disillusionment of the public as to the money value of university education—which the growing unemployment among graduates (even in the sciences and professions) and the deliberate disrespect shown to them by Public Service Commissions and other employers have contributed to produce—the number of students has grown from 120,000 to over 264,000 within the fifteen years covered by this chapter. From its very first meeting, in December 1935, the Central Advisory Board of Education realized with deep concern 'the increasing number of students in universities who are unable to benefit by university instruction, and in consequence, the difficulty of making satisfactory provision for the better qualified students and for research'. This agrees with the modest remark of the Hartog Committee as early as 1929 that 'universities are not giving adequate attention to the proper adjustment of admission to graduation standards'. The remedy for all this waste would be a war on many fronts which is neither easy nor short, for it is a social and economic no less than an educational reform that is needed.

On 31 March 1949 there were in India 26 universities, with 455 arts and science colleges and 200 professional colleges affiliated to them, the former with 264,000 students and the latter with 58,700.

Secondary Education

In high and middle schools there was a similar rise of numbers and a similar fall of standards. In spite of repeated recommendations that some variety of courses should be provided at each stage of the school, the traditional 'literary' type of education has gone on, with a stray attempt here and there to make students spend an hour a week in a carpentry or book-binding or weaving workshop. In 1937 the Government of Madras proposed a scheme of reform along the lines suggested by the Abbott-Wood Commission and the Wardha Scheme, and after inviting criticism from the public, embodied its decisions in a comprehensive *Report* providing for bifurcation at the beginning of the high school stage into two courses, one giving pre-university 'literary' instruction and leading to matriculation (which was to be revived instead of the School-Leaving examination conducted by the Government) and the other giving general as well as 'vocational' education and leading to a really final examination. Though the 'vocational' aspiration of Madras did not soar much higher (or lower) than book-keeping, shorthand, and typewriting, it was at least a sincere confession that some reform was needed. But the resignation of the Ministry in 1939 and the opposition from conservative circles once again postponed all reform. With the return of the Congress to power after Independence Day, 1947, the attempts of Education Ministers to 'bifurcate' have been renewed,

now with greater self-assurance if not with more financial strength. In Madras and Bombay, the leading States in this respect, the new scheme of high school education is already in force and 'secretarial' courses (which seem least hurtful to our traditional dignity) are being introduced in many schools as an alternative to the purely academic high school course leading to the university. Agriculture has been offered by some high schools as an option; but not many have been bold enough to start the truly handsoiling and therefore 'low' crafts of carpentry or electric wiring and servicing or dyeing and weaving. A psychological reform is much longer overdue than any ukases of Education Ministers.

The introduction of the mother-tongue as medium of instruction in schools throughout India also falls within this period, and was not altogether unconnected with the last throes of Indian independence. Still, there was considerable fear in certain quarters that this change would lower the standard of English and of education in general. It has certainly lowered the *prestige* of English in India, which was bound in any case to fall with the political change; if it also means a lowering of the Indian's ability to understand and use this language, that is due not so much to the change of medium as to the defective method of teaching what is to Indians a foreign language. Many schools, frightened by the change, applied for permission to continue to teach *in* English, and not only immigrants from other States but even local parents of superior status thought

their children would lose by hearing their mother-tongue all day. Such exemptions were more freely granted before 1947, much less so after that date; and in spite of the slowness with which such a far-reaching change is bound to 'penetrate' the public mind, the results are encouraging. The pupil obviously assimilates subjects better through his own mother-tongue (i.e. the language of his home environment) than through a foreign and very imperfectly known language, however rich or superior (ethnologically or philologically) in itself.[1] And these students coming up to the university are distinctly more mature and more at home with ideas (though not perhaps with English *words*) than their predecessors who had done all their early studies through the medium of English.

At the end of the year 1948-9 there were in India 18,900 secondary schools, with 4,354,800 pupils, and 16,160 professional and special schools with 586,500 pupils, besides 10,890 unrecognized institutions with 425,400 students.

Primary Education

The number of boys and girls at primary schools has appreciably risen, though many one-teacher and less-than-five-class schools have been closed in some States, chiefly Madras and Bengal. This reduction of small primary schools has undoubtedly caused some hardship, but wherever the former school was really inefficient and wasteful it has been a blessing because it has

[1] This has been confirmed by a study of the effect of teaching the various high-school subjects through the mother-tongue made by teachers in Tinnevelly District and recorded in a symposium.

enabled better schools to develop into complete primary (higher or lower, i.e. five-year or seven-year) schools.

The abolition of local boards and educational councils which formerly controlled primary education has brought greater efficiency and less interference from local magnates, though since 1947 the influence of politicians in this sacred domain cannot be said to have been altogether beneficial. The Education Department of the Government (which means the party in power) has itself undertaken the care of supervising primary schools, allocating grants, inspecting, training teachers, etc. This may be to the good, provided other communities and parties are let live, private initiative in the starting and running of schools (according to the Constitution's Fundamental Rights) is not killed, and a legitimate measure of freedom is not denied to parents and teachers, who are after all the best friends of their children.

Primary education was most affected by the Wardha Scheme and the attempts made in the Congress-governed States (chiefly after 15 August 1947) to introduce it at least in a modified form in primary schools, especially in villages. The success of this Scheme is discussed in a later chapter. It is enough to say here that it has given a new direction to primary education throughout the country, for it has reminded parents and teachers that the school, especially the primary school, must be a continuation and completion of the home and not an escape from it.

On 31 March 1949, there were in India 192,800 recognized primary schools, with 16,001,800 pupils attending them.

Adult Education

Adult education, which can hardly be said to have existed in India in 1935, has made rapid strides especially since 1942. The War seems to have brought home to Government as well as to the public in general the need of literacy for adults. As I shall show in detail in another chapter, there can be no real democracy without educated adults. This is sufficiently understood by our Governments, but poverty is again in the way of progress. Voluntary and honorary teaching of adults has been tried in certain States, especially through the young enthusiasm of undergraduates; but this work has shown more goodwill than success, and since Independence Day the State Governments have tried to allot a small grant out of their diminished purse to this important branch of education. In the Report of the United Provinces for the year ending 31 March 1946 (the latest I could consult) Government are said to have spent 4 lacs and municipalities 13,000 rupees on adult education, the number of such schools being about 2,000 in urban and 100 in rural areas, serving about 50,000 adult students in all. In the Nizam's Dominions in 1940–1 there were 2,651 schools for adult men and 119 for adult women. The Report of Cochin State for 1945–6 mentions 10 public (urban) and 217 village libraries for adults

and 5 schools with 105 pupils, besides demonstrations of improved methods of agriculture by members of that Department. The Bombay Presidency Report for 1943–4 (the latest available) gives a total of 825 schools for adult men with an attendance of 20,000, and 151 for adult women with 3,388 attending on 31 March 1944.

These facts are encouraging, but not flattering. There is an ocean of ignorant adults to be still brought to the shore of literacy and, what is much more, an intelligent interest in the world around them.

As the Scheme put forward by the Central Advisory Board of Education in 1944 for the entire reform of education in all its aspects and stages throughout the then undivided India is the greatest 'event' in recent educational history, I have reserved it for a separate chapter.

Part II

PROBLEMS

CHAPTER VII

WOMEN'S EDUCATION

THE education of women is not a modern problem in India, as most foreign writers seem to imagine. Owing mainly to the *purdah* system and the restrictions which went with it—from the time of the Muslim conquest of India—it became more difficult to give girls the education they had a right to receive. Being confined to the inner part of the home and not expected to see men who did not belong to the inner family circle, their education was reduced to the barest elements of reading and writing and ended permanently with the approach of puberty.

After a long submergence, however, women are again coming into their own in modern India. With the advent of male education, the necessity of female education is being more generally admitted. In the course of the history of education in India I have referred to the arrangement made at various times, from the Mughal empire down to the recent Primary Education Acts of State Governments, to offer girls at least the minimum general education they need as human beings. But it was always half apologetically that this was done, as if it required no little 'modernness' to advocate education for women.

And yet among educationists there never was any doubt as to the right and capacity of women

for education. Women have the same intellectual and moral powers as men. Their bodies are in certain secondary respects differently made from men's; they are on the whole less strong, but in some respects more enduring and capable of more sustained small sufferings and privations than men. Psychologically, girls develop differently from boys; they react differently to stimuli; their emotive growth, like their physical, is at a different pace from that of boys. But they too need to exercise their faculties and by exercising to develop them to their full stature.

The championship of women's education is therefore unnecessary at this time of day. It has been ably undertaken by Indian women themselves, who have proved the usefulness of their education by becoming not only better wives and mothers but no less able doctors, lawyers, members of legislatures, and even ministers, than men. The percentage of women's education is still much lower than men's. In Bengal, for instance, according to the Report for 1933–4 while there were 1,152 high schools for boys with 274,000 pupils, there were only 69 for girls, with 18,000 pupils; while there were 1,871 middle schools for boys, there were only 78 for girls; while boys had 45,400 primary schools, there were only 18,200 for girls. The total number of boys at school was 1,790,000, and of girls 496,000, while the number of boys of school-going age was 3,906,259, and of girls 3,610,800.

East and West Bengal are backward as far as women's education is concerned for *purdah* still

reigns even in its Hindu households, and East Bengal has a majority of Muslim inhabitants. In the other states of India, particularly in Travancore-Cochin and Mysore, there is a higher percentage of literate women, though the figure for the whole of India is still only a little over 2.

It is unnecessary to repeat the detailed recommendations as to grants and schools made by every Quinquennial Report since 1897 and by various Commissions appointed to inquire into the state of education in India. What is more useful is to discuss what kind of education Indian women require.

As to the *subjects* to be taught in the primary school, there is no difference between the needs of boys and those of girls. Girls, in towns as well as villages, need a knowledge of reading and writing their mother-tongue, the four operations of arithmetic and simple sums connected with money and mensuration, geography and history of India with special emphasis on their own part of India, elementary science (chiefly hygiene) and civics. Every primary school should provide instruction in these subjects to girls no less than boys. In games and free subjects, however, girls may be allowed slightly different fare, more in keeping with their physical condition and their future occupations—sewing, weaving, and skipping taking the place of carpentry, gardening and football.

In the secondary school, when the differentiation between boys and girls becomes more pronounced, the kind of subjects that are required

to draw out their more and more diverging faculties are more and more different. Here again, as in the primary stage, certain subjects must obviously be common to both sexes. But the 'optional' and 'subsidiary' subjects should be adapted to the needs of each. This seems to have been fairly generally realized, for in secondary schools for girls, hygiene, domestic science, needlework, music (which is still strangely considered proper only to girls in India) are taught instead of the more manly subjects—physics, chemistry, higher mathematics, shorthand and typewriting!

A more important aspect of the problem of women's education, however, is co-education[1]—probably the most urgent and baffling question of female educational policy in India today. With the insistent demand for the education of women and the constant assertion by the once weaker sex of its equality with the other, it was inevitable that educationists in India should think of a solution which has all the attraction of novelty and cheapness and all the recommendation of utility. The advisability of introducing co-education in schools was discussed by the Inter-University Board in March 1934 and then proposed to all the universities of India. The opinions of these universities were not unanimous, but they showed that there was a good volume of popular backing for co-education.

To avoid confusion, it is well to remark that we are not speaking here of instruction but of education. Education comprises that period of our lives

[1] The word was first used in 1874 and is of U.S. origin.

in which our characters are formed and moulded and our faculties so developed and regulated by reason that we can therefore face life with equanimity. The question, therefore, is whether the education of boys and girls *at that stage* 'in the same school or institution, in the same classes, and through the same courses of study'[1] is possible and useful. The training of *grown-up* men and women in law or medicine or in a post-graduate faculty of Arts is not co-education but co-instruction—which does not concern us here.

Signor Pestalozzi's authority is often invoked for the theory that co-education is the best form of education, since it provides in the school an imitation of the home where boys and girls live together and play and work together. What Pestalozzi said (and it was hailed as a discovery at the time) was that since school is a preparation for life it should, as far as possible, be *natural* and resemble as closely as it can the conditions of healthy, unself-conscious home life. But is it possible to have among children of different parents and brought up in different social surroundings the perfectly natural and innocent relations of brothers and sisters? The atmosphere of a good home is something unique: it can never be imitated or reproduced. Even small children distinguish between relations and strangers, between friends and enemies, between boys and girls. And as they grow up, these distinctions become clearer and produce physical and psychological reactions which are unknown among the members of a family.

[1] *Encyclopædia Britannica*, eleventh edition, 637, col. 1.

Another argument adduced in favour of co-education is that it prepares boys and girls for their future life by giving them a timely knowledge of each other. 'If', says Dr S. Herbert, 'education is a preparation for life, then co-education would seem one of the best means of attaining that end . . . . To train the sexes apart during school life, and then to fling them together in society on the chance of their realizing harmonious co-operation, is at best a gambler's game.'[1] Experience, however, does not seem to bear out this theory, for family life in India and Catholic countries in Europe where co-education has not been introduced has not been less happy than elsewhere, while America, Scotland, and Russia, where co-education has been tried on the largest scale, show the largest percentages of divorces and unhappy homes. Marriage, of course, is a free and voluntary contract and therefore presupposes some mutual knowledge; but the acquaintance which co-educational schools give is not always accompanied by that respect and dignity which makes for matrimonial happiness.

Neither is there more value in the argument that co-education raises women to the same level as men. On the contrary, co-education proceeds from the assumption that women are inferior to men. Separate schools do not show that girls are inferior to boys, but that they are *different*. The progress of biology and psychology has in recent years shown that they are different at every stage of life, and increasingly so as they grow older.

[1] *Fundamentals in Sexual Ethics*, 334.

Indeed, strictly speaking, it is *impossible* to *educate* a boy and a girl together—not that *what* is taught them should be altogether different, but because they have to be taught in a different *way*. Those explanations, illustrations, comparisons, stories which call forth associations of ideas in boys fail to interest or produce the same effect in girls. And without comparisons and stories taken from their own lives, or at least from the things that are connected with their lives, it is impossible to teach the young.

Neither is the company of the other sex beneficial to either. Co-educationists, indeed, like Dr Herbert, claim that 'the boys' standard of manner and courtesy is raised; the girls gain in independence and directness'.[1] And Alice Wood, the editor of *Co-Education*, says: 'The truth about boys and girls is this: each sex is most itself in the presence of the other.'[2] There is no doubt that the company of girls makes boys less rough and boisterous, and that contact with boys gives girls a certain strength and manliness which is far from ungraceful. You can always tell the boy who has never had a sister. There is always something missing in the girl who, like Queen Victoria, has never had a brother 'to break in upon the gentle monotony of the daily round with impetuosity, with rudeness, with careless laughter'.[3] But this advantage is not derived to the same extent by a boy in the company of girls who are not his sisters, or by a

[1] [illegible]
[2] London (1903), 85.
[3] Lytton Strachey, *Queen Victoria*, 32.

girl in the company of boys who are not her brothers. Experience rather seems to show that boys become girlish and girls boyish when they are educated in mixed schools.

Boys and girls will later on be happy only in the measure in which they are *complements* to each other. The happiness of married life consists in either party finding in the other those qualities which it lacks: the husband, manly, courageous, enterprising, active; the wife, womanly, tender, delicate, devoted, modest. A common education tends to exchange characteristics and produce a common type, neither boy nor girl and having the distinctive virtues of neither. The effeminate boy and the tomboy are typical products of co-educational schools.

Besides, far from making school life natural and easy, co-education makes it awkward and difficult for both teachers and pupils. A lady teacher can raise a harmless titter in a class of girls at the eccentric amours of Don Quixote or Sir Roger de Coverley; a schoolmaster will throw a class of boys into roars of laughter at the vanity of Mrs Beau Tibbs or Lady Catherine; but if both boys and girls are present in the same class, no joke can be made about either without causing awkward situations.

Another drawback of co-education is that even its champions find it cannot be practised on children of every age. J. H. Badley, Headmaster of Bedales, after praising mixed schools, feels himself bound to add: 'Care should be taken to see that as regards numbers, age, and the balance

of sexes on the staff, there is no excessive influence on one side or the other.' Professor J. A. Thomson insists that 'the sexes should be taught together, *and* taught separately, taught by men *and* by women'.[1] Grant and Hodgson recommend co-educational schools on the elective system, with two sets of subjects, one for boys and the other for girls, and men and women respectively to teach them.[2] Others propose that though boys and girls sit in the same class-room they should never be together for games or debates or even literary meetings; the girls in a class should be a very small percentage; the discipline and supervision should be very strict. .... Is there not in all this the unmistakable ring of defeat?

Co-education is proposed as a way of economizing on staff and equipment; and it requires separate subjects for boys and girls, separate teachers, wardens, supervisors of games, and physical instructors! It is meant to give boys and girls not only an equal but an identical education; and we are told not to give the same home-work to girls as to boys at certain ages when they are weaker and more nervous than boys, not to give them the same subjects but rather domestic economy, hygiene, cooking, and music! Co-education is intended to foster intercourse and mutual knowledge between boys and girls; and its champions prevent them from meeting except in the silence of the class-room!

Educationists, however, agree that co-education

[1] *The Position of Woman*, 25.
[2] *The Case for Co-Education*, 181.

is harmless at the infant or primary stage when the differentiation between the two sexes has hardly begun to be perceptible. This is theoretically correct, but difficult to carry into practice; for except at the pre-school age (when the problem does not arise) the children in a class are not all of the same age, and even those of the same age are not in the same stage of bodily or mental or moral development. In a class of the primary school there may be a boy of fourteen and a girl of twelve, though the average age of the class is eight.

Since, therefore, it is in practice all but impossible to observe all the 'amendments' which conscientious co-educationists themselves propose to safeguard their scheme, it is better to abandon the scheme as unsound and rather have slightly costlier separate schools than the apparently cheaper mixed schools.

The common opinion of enlightened women in the country, too, is decidedly against co-education. They rightly point to the womanly virtues which have so far characterized Indian women and won for them the praise of foreigners like Sir Francis Younghusband who wrote:

> The result of the Hindu conception of women has been to ennoble the woman .... Out of her very humility and meekness has come forth strength.

Education is what Indian women need, not co-education.

CHAPTER VIII

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

IT was not a particularly other-worldly civilization that expressed the ideal of education as *mens sana in corpore sano*. But such an ideal is based on a deep fact of nature which science has only recently proved and not yet fully investigated. The Greek cult of the beautiful in bodily form—the curve of muscle, the line of bone and sinew, the co-ordination of parts among themselves and their subordination to the whole—which produced the athletes of Marathon and Athens, was prompted by a sense (not yet fully reasoned out) of the companionship and mutual dependence of soul and body for the well-being of the *animal rationale*. This Greek heritage has been preserved in European education, and, though some countries have paid more attention to the container than the thing contained, and others have perhaps neglected the body in a mad race of intellectual efficiency, the need of physical education may be said to have received due recognition, at least in theory, in every European system of education.

The British Medical Association—which may be considered fairly representative in this respect—declares that 'the aim of physical education is to obtain and maintain the best possible development and functioning of the body, and thereby

to aid the development of mental capacity and of character'. The training of the body, then, is not an end in itself, an ideal to be pursued for its own sake, but a means to the end for which the whole man has been created—the attainment of perfect happiness through the full development of his personality. This, however, requires the natural subordination of bodily to spiritual training, for education must be based on nature.

There is therefore something topsy-turvy about much of the propaganda now so obtrusively vocal even in India in favour of physical fitness or beauty or strength *for its own sake*, as if man were no more than an animal; or in favour of national or racial fitness, in view of international or interracial competitions and exhibitions, as if rational men were just so many stall-fed cows or prize bulls. Education must, of course, include the body, for the body is a necessary and substantial companion of the soul; but it must keep the natural hierarchy of things and give pride of place to the soul which is the leading partner: religious, moral, intellectual, physical—this is the order which education must keep if it will draw out the best and fullest that is in man.

The object of physical education immediately follows from this examination of the nature of man. It is not strength or agility or beauty; but the degree of bodily *fitness* which is necessary for the normal functioning of the soul and the well-being of the whole man. Now fitness, in young or old, implies cleanliness and hygiene, as

well as a good carriage and agility. The first of these may be acquired in spite of poverty and without set exercises. It is the result of personal habits which are best cultivated at home and may be taught at school, especially in a boarding school. The second requires more care. The importance of a well-poised body and an upright, manly carriage for the proper functioning of heart, lungs, liver, and other organs, and of the whole muscular and nervous system, is only now coming to be better understood. Even the instinctive and reflex action of stretching (which domestic pets often perform before their masters) answers the natural need of a reconditioning and replacing of the organs after sleep or cramping activity. Games and physical exercises on bars or with dumb-bells, skipping and swimming and dancing, running and brisk walking—all help the body to develop poise and agility and to acquire a good style not only in playing but even in standing and sitting and walking. Neatness and finish in one's movements is one of the best rewards of physical education.

But physical education also plays a higher part. It is one of the necessary agents in the formation of character. For character in the restricted sense in which this word is used by educationists, means the inner consistency of conduct which comes of intellectual conviction and free but determined will in spite of changes in the inanimate world or in human society. A certain reserve of strength and resilience and energy (that half physical, half moral 'kick' which

conquers the natural inertia of matter) is necessary to stand the changes of weather, the dangers of infection in air and food, the normal physiological metabolism due to fatigue and rest, pleasure and pain, physical feelings and psychological states, and to maintain a steady and constant temper and activity. Frequent and long exercise of *acts* of patience, calmness, politeness, self-forgetfulness, kindness, obedience is required to produce fairly reliable *habits* of polite and virtuous behaviour in social life, with its uncertainties of mood, its whims of praise and blame, gratitude and ingratitude, its deep and hidden currents of motive and impulse. Opportunities for these acts are nowhere more abundant and less dangerous than in games and other physical activities, where the body is hardened and the soul forced to steel itself against hardship. There the child is pleasantly taught to subordinate his personal interests and tastes to the common good of the team and to work in co-operation with others and in subordination to one head, the captain, not because he is the best or oldest player (often he is not), but just because he is legally appointed captain, to accept without question and without sulkiness or revenge the decisions of the umpire or referee (whoever and whatever he be), to sacrifice his natural desire to shine on the field for the unselfish desire that the team may win, to bear long hours of fielding in sun or drizzle (as in cricket) or strenuous running and rough scrummage (as in hockey or rugger), and, above all, to play a losing game, with a weak

partner or a poor side, without a sigh or a grouse, and give cheers no less lustily than he receives them—take a defeat as gracefully as a victory.

Apart from the general need of physical education for the production and maintenance of a sound body, there is a special need of it in India where the danger is not of too much but too little care of the body. Not that we are excessively spiritual or ascetical. Manu prescribes a sound body as a prerequisite for a 'dharmic' life:

Sariram adyam khalu dharmasadhanam

And the *Taittiriya Upanishad* prays:

Sariram me vicharshanam

India has produced sturdy Rajputs and Pathans and Coorgis in her cooler and less enervating climates. But the monotonous heat of the plains, the far from nourishing food of the great majority of the people, their general poverty and ignorance of hygiene, the unhealthy surroundings in which they live, and their proneness to tropical diseases—such handicaps have made the average Indian weaker than the average European or American.

To this was added an education which paid little attention to the body in a feverish greed for unreal learning. Huddled in the narrow lanes of cities and bending over their books in the dimly lighted attics of shops or hotels, India's children have for nearly a century been losing the little vitality which the heat and the undernourishment left them. In Bengal before the partition (which was not a poor province) tuber-

culosis affected 1,000,000 persons between 20 and 30 years of age, and carried away 100,000 annually. In the single city of Delhi (not the poorest or worst in India out of 9,400 deaths in 1930, 1,241 were from tuberculosis. The following percentages taken from the Annual Report for 1935-6 issued by the Students' Welfare Committee after medically examining 1933 typical students of the University of Calcutta, may serve as a clear danger-signal for the whole of India:

	College Students	*School Students*
Malnutrition	28·54	33·9
Defective Vision	29·4	20·43
Throat Diseases	12·43	19·75
Skin Diseases	11·78	15·98
Lung Diseases	6·32	3·54

The Report added that the percentage of students suffering from physical defects of one kind or another had increased from 56 in 1934-5 to 63 in 1935-6.

The need of physical education is now generally admitted in India. In November 1937 the Government of the Central Provinces appointed a Physical Uplift Committee to study how the physique of students might be improved. This Committee suggested the creation of a Central Board of Physical Welfare, compulsory physical education in all schools both for pupils and teachers, frequent medical inspection and assistance, and effective propaganda through pamphlets, films, efficiency-tests, and prizes for a better standard of national health and fitness. The Physical Education Committee appointed by the

Bombay Government recommended, besides other changes:

(1) that physical education should be looked upon as an integral part of general education;

(2) that the Government should undertake the responsibility of paying the full shares of the grants-in-aid due on all expenditure on physical education incurred by a school or local body, irrespective of the Government's ability to pay ordinary grants-in-aid on the total expenditure of that school or body;

(3) that physical education should be considered as a compulsory subject in school courses of study and should have the status of a major subject; . . . forty-five minutes at least should be daily given to physical activities;

(4) that the majority of teachers should be Physical Instructors.

On the *necessity* of physical education, then, there is fairly general agreement in India today. The difficulties are wholly practical. How is this education to be planned and given? Are games enough, or is formal drill necessary? What emphasis is to be put on bodily fitness in the general time-table? Is military training a good substitute for games and drill?

The answer to these questions will largely depend on the circumstances of each province or institution. The needs of different types of boys and girls are different: some need strenuous games, others are too slender for anything more exacting than drill or skipping, some are interested in military exercises, others are bored by them;

some forms of exercise are more suitable to the cooler climate of a hill station, others are better suited to the heat and humidity of the plains. Much liberty should therefore be left to each institution to choose the forms of exercise best suited to its pupils.

But in spite of this liberty the essential truth must be remembered that the aim of physical education is the body's *fitness* for its distinctive contribution to the well-being of the whole man, and not the body's welfare considered as an end in itself.[1] Physical education is *education* and ought therefore to follow the same principles as education in general.

The standard of fitness to be attained differs according to age, occupation, and temperament. But it must include three elements: health, energy, and endurance. Health is not just the absence of disease (though it includes this): in its full concept it is something positive as well. To be fairly stable and useful, the health of a still growing student must include also the absence of actual sickness and a certain sense of well-being which sometimes overflows as animal spirits. The young man or woman requires a fund of energy for present and future use—a physical no less than a moral (and the two are generally connected) 'pep' which gives initiative, quickness, brightness, elegance, and interest both in work and in play. Endurance, too, is necessary, for life on a finite planet is essentially exposed to contingencies of climate, weather, health, work,

[1] A body may be said to be fit when it does not attract more attention or care than its relative value in the whole man deserves.

surroundings. Repeated acts of resistance to fatigue and inconvenience are the only way to acquire the habit of endurance without which no perseverance or steadiness is possible, and still less, greatness.

Before suggesting the means by which these three qualities may best be attained, I must point out a prerequisite without which the best schemes of physical education are sure to fail. Sixty per cent of the school-going students in India are underfed, and more than eighty per cent of the schools have no adequate playing fields. More than 50 per cent of the total number of school-children in India (in towns the percentage is 75) live in dark, ill-ventilated, insanitary homes, where the germs of disease only wait for a favourable opportunity to triumph over the slender resistance which their starved systems can offer.

Before discussing any scheme of physical education, therefore, it is the duty of Government and private bodies to provide poor children with nourishing food and clean sanitary lodgings. A beginning may be made with at least a midday meal which will fit the pupil to play a game after school or have a few swings of Indian clubs or a few pull-ups at the parallel bars. In several parts of India, what are known as 'tiffin schemes' are being carried out or at least discussed, and it is to be hoped that every school-child in India will soon have something substantial to break the long interval between the meagre and hastily gobbled breakfast and the late evening meal.

This, however, is not enough. Ignorance is often more responsible for the choice of food and lodging than poverty. The Punjabi does not spend much more on his food than the Bengali, but his food is much more nourishing and sustaining. The excess of carbohydrates and the lack of proteins and vitamins in the ordinary Indian's diet accounts for a good half of his weakness and proneness to disease. It is therefore necessary that an elementary knowledge of food values as well as of ordinary hygiene and prophylaxis should be given to every school boy and girl, so that, helped by Government and other agencies, they may improve both their food and their habits of life.

But food and sanitation will only give health. To acquire energy and endurance, the body must be regularly exercised. Exercise is to the body what the subjects in the curriculum are to the mind—not causes, but *occasions* (in the Latin sense) for the drawing out and development of its latent powers. There is, of course, no rigid separation of body and soul in human *compositum*: even bodily exercise calls for the spiritual faculties and requires courage, willpower, perseverance, humility, unselfishness, just as systematic intellectual work requires bodily fitness, energy, strength, endurance. But physical exercise is more especially suited to the 'education' of the bodily functions—to stimulate the circulation, to tone up the digestion, to ensure the excretion of toxic deposits, to quiet the nerves, and bring on sleep through a pleasant fatigue.

In choosing between one form of exercise and another, the educator should be guided by their relative fitness (time and expense being equal) to draw out more and better faculties of body and soul. It is by this standard that games, especially group and organized games, are preferable to solitary dumb-bells or clubs or *asanas*. For besides exercising more muscles and organs and shaking up the whole system, they teach co-opertion, leadership and obedience, unselfishness, self-restraint, and the art of playing the game. The importance of games, therefore, cannot be exaggerated especially in a country where caste and communal divisions are so deep: on the play-ground there is no caste or community, no superior or inferior, rich or poor, but all work for a common cause, and sink their individual tastes and ambitions for the common good.

Besides, games, like folk-dances (Bratachari, Kathakali, etc.) and hiking excursions, are a *pleasant* form of exercise. God has attached a distinctive pleasure to the satisfaction of every natural 'urge', in order to draw men sweetly to do their duty and reward them for doing it. A wise educator too, will offer his pupils subjects and activities which they like. What they do unwillingly and without relish loses half its educational value. In physical education therefore, no less than in intellectual and moral, as much use as possible should be made of the 'play way'. Exercise does not appeal to children for its exercise value—this is an acquired and arti-

ficial taste of later life—but for its play or pleasure value. This is the psychological cause why most schemes of drill and other formal methods of bodily exercise, though more scientific and efficient in themselves, are less successful in schools and colleges than games.[1]

But games require grounds and money—which very few managements in India can boast of. Scarcely one institution in a hundred has enough playing space or playing materials to afford all its pupils even half an hour's game a day. The only alternative, therefore, is drill—a highly scientific form of excercise which has the unrivalled charm of cheapness. A shed or even the shade of a banyan tree is all the building it needs, and a pair of limbs the only equipment. Hence drill has been made compulsory in almost every school, and of late even in the university. For besides affording exercise to the body, it also gives it suppleness and smartness. When it is remembered that, according to a distinguished Vice-Chancellor and medical man, 'there was altogether too great a number of students . . . who held themselves in a wretched posture with the chest in and the chin out',[2] and this is ten times truer of Indian students, the necessity of regular drill and gymnastics will be easily appreciated.

From drill to military training or scouting is a

[1] The unpopularity of the drill hour with students in all stages of education, not excluding the university, is well known. The folk-dance is much more popular, and as inexpensive—and it has more than a merely physical value.

[2] Third Congress of the Universities of the Empire: Report of Proceedings, 174-5.

short step. The recent experience of two wars has made compulsory military exercise a regular feature of many schools on the Continent: young Italy, Russia, Poland are all soldierly. Indian opinion, too, is veering round in the same direction. Japan's example is quoted to prove that compulsory military training at school meets two needs at once—physical education and active nationalism. The National Cadet Corps with a University and a High-School section, though in its original form of University Training Corps it had to overcome much mistrust and prejudice, has at last begun to take with students of all ranks and communities, though even now it is sometimes associated with the lower strata of society. The Baden-Powell Boy Scout and Girl Guide movements have of late been amalgamated with indigenous scout movements and seem to be popular and useful. Already in 1934–5 the Educational Commissioner with the Government of India had recorded a rise in one year from 231,956 to 272,853 boy scouts, and from 12,485 to 34,318 girl guides; their number has considerably risen since. It is a comforting sign that the rigour and briskness of military life is beginning to be appreciated even by parents not only as a ticket to employment but for its own sake as an education in punctuality, smartness, and toughness—qualities so essential if India is to defend herself and take her seat among the strong. While I heartily agree with this view, I think one *caveat* should be uttered in view of certain signs in the heavens: unless military

training is related to an enlightened scheme of general education, it will produce blustering jingoes, unthinking brutes who understand no language but that of force—and the last state of India will be worse than the first. But an intelligent system of military education is not only useful but at the present day necessary. It ought to be made compulsory—in an elementary way, through scouting, for example in the school, and the real thing, with drill and camp, in the college.

Swami Vivekananda once said, with much rhetoric and some truth: 'What India needs today is not the *Bhagavadgita* but the football field.' She needs both: a religion which teaches a right use of the body, and a bodily fitness which is not acquired at the expense of the soul; an education which is based on the relative value of soul and body—which, in the royal words of George V on a memorable occasion, 'develops to the fullest extent, *in due proportion*, the potentialities, physical, mental and spiritual, of every member of the community.' She needs a sound mind in a sound body.

CHAPTER IX

ADULT EDUCATION

ADULT education is becoming an urgent problem in India. With the progress of democracy the average adult becomes an important factor in politics; the quick changes in science and society render the elementary education of his childhood insufficient for the adult. There is, besides, the influence of the parent on the child. The greatest obstacle to the spread of primary education in India is the parents' lack of appreciation of the value of education for their children. And this is just a corollary of their own want of education. The Census of 1941 disclosed the appalling percentage of illiteracy among adults (i.e. 15 or more years of age) to be 72 for men and 95 for women.

With such a weight of illiteracy it is impossible for many years to achieve any appreciable progress in democracy or self-government, which requires that the voter and taxpayer shall at least be able to read the daily paper and use his vote intelligently on current issues. Besides this practical argument, there is a strong *intrinsic* reason for the education of the adult, whether literate or illiterate. In his presidential address to the Educational Science section of the British Association in 1936, Sir Richard Livingstone said that it was impossible to carry out the Hadow Report's recommenda-

tion and impart 'a humane or liberal education' to boys and girls in their teens, because many cultural subjects were unsuited to the immature mind.

'A boy reads literature—*Hamlet* or *King Lear*—should read them; but what can the profound scepticism of Hamlet, the passion and agony of Lear, mean to him? He reads history, can he form a true conception of Charles and Cromwell, Bismarck and Napoleon III?' If many adults have shed their school lore on leaving school, it is not always because it was merely 'mugged', but because it had never and could not have been assimilated at the age at which it was forced on them. The cultural and formative value of humane studies depends on the maturity and preparedness of the soil in which they are sown.

The only remedy, therefore, is to educate, or re-educate, the adult. In every other modern country this is being done by direct methods no less than by indirect. Under the name of continuation schools or night schools or university extension classes or adult training centres, regular courses of instruction both on general subjects, like literature and science, and on particular trades and professions, are given free of cost—and sometimes even compulsorily—to all the men and women of the neighbourhood who have either never been to school or left it after the primary stage.

In the German *Fortbildungsschulen* (continuation schools), those children of the working classes who have left the elementary school at fourteen

are given two or three years more of a general education. Saxony made three years' attendance at a continuation school compulsory as far back as 1873. It is now a law throughout Germany. These schools are taught by the same teachers as the primary schools, with the help (especially in towns) of technical instructors; they teach in the towns, at night throughout the year and on Saturday and even Sunday afternoon, and, in the rural districts, during the slack season; in the towns schools are worked in close relation with trades, both with regard to the subjects taught and the hours chosen for classes.

In Scotland, the Education (Scotland) Act of 1908 empowered (though it did not oblige) school boards to make by-laws enforcing attendance at continuation schools up to the age of seventeen, and obliged them to make suitable provision for the teaching of the arts and crafts practised in the district.

The English continuation schools arose out of a remark made by the consultative Committee of the Board of Education in 1909, that the public money spent on elementary education would be wasted unless a co-ordinated system of adult education was also adopted. The elementary curriculum was accordingly made less bookish and more directly related to agriculture and industry; the system of half-time attendance at elementary schools was reformed; and the upper limit of compulsory attendance was raised to thirteen, and soon after to fourteen —in 1936 it was further raised to fifteen years.

Continuative education till the age of seventeen was made compulsory by by-laws passed by local education authorities.

Similar arrangements have been made in France, Poland, Sweden, and Canada. Denmark has of all European countries been the most successful in adult education, for its 'Folk High Schools' are voluntary and at their own expense attended by 30 per cent of the small farmers and workers, though their course lasts five months in the year and is in the broadest sense humanistic and not purely technical or utilitarian.

Japan's example, however, deserves separate description, because she has much more in common with India than any European country has, and she has had to fight against much the same difficulties as confront us here—poverty, conservatism, passivity. The adult education movement in Japan began in 1919. In 1929, the Education Ministry created a special branch of Adult Education, which organized courses in general education, civic education, mothers' education, and wage-earners' education. The universities, technical schools, and provincial governments were ordered to establish Adult Education courses in about 130 centres. In 1934, the attendance at these was 28,000, of whom 24,000 were literates. The Mothers' Courses were followed by over 3,550, of whom 2,000 were housewives, and included theoretical as well as practical instruction in domestic hygiene and home education. The Wage-earners' Courses had made even greater strides: in the large factory centres there

were in 1921 over 170 special tutorial classes for workers, with about 50 in each; and the Japan Workers' Education Association, which was founded in 1931, had over 30,000 members, all workers, who attended lectures and held meetings in factories and mines and thus improved their general knowledge as well as their professional efficiency.

In India, so far very little has been done to educate the adult, though this is more important here than in Europe, for it is for him the first and only chance of education. The theory of 'filtration'—which believes that if the 'leaders' are educated their education will automatically filter down to the masses—seems to have found favour with Government and private agencies alike, from the time of Lord William Bentinck's Resolution down to Gokhale's Elementary Education Bill of 1911. But the desired effect has not been achieved, and public opinion is now unanimously in favour of universal elementary education for adults no less than for children.

There have been some scattered attempts in different provinces to carry out this popular wish. The University of Madras has since 1923 arranged for university extension lectures to be given in several centres by professors and prominent professional men; but these lectures have generally been little more than additional academic inflictions on already overlectured undergraduates, instead of being (what they were obviously meant to be) popular talks to workmen and farmers who have no other means of acquiring such know-

ledge. The Y.M.C.A. Fellowship has in recent years embarked on an 'Adult Education Series', which consists of talks, often illustrated with lantern slides or projections and followed by questions and discussions, on moral and religious subjects. Bombay has an Adult Education Committee, which was started through private initiative years ago and has been carrying out systematic experiments to spread literacy among mill workers. In May 1939 an intensive literacy campaign was started, and 573 classes for adults were held in the city and its suburbs, attended by 10,773 men and women. The Buckingham and Carnatic Mills of Madras, through their admirable Welfare Committee, started in 1904 a full-time school for the children of their workers as well as a half-time school for their younger workmen. They next opened a night school for adult workers, which now attracts several hundreds, and uses Tamil, Telugu, and Urdu as media of instruction.

The Government of Bengal before division undertook, in 1936, a more systematic task. Referring to the opinion of the Royal Commission on Agriculture in India[1] that

> while a universal system of rural education is obviously indispensable for the future, it cannot affect the present situation, and if it is not supplemented by a determined effort to spread adult education, many of the improvements in agriculture which we so earnestly desire to see must be postponed until a new generation is sprung up fitted by early tuition to reap the advantage we seek to place within their reach—

it took the initiative—in the absence of the non-official activity on which the Commission had

[1] *Report*, par. 499.

relied—to survey the whole field. In March 1937, it was decided, on the advice of the Inspector-General of Registration, that rural sub-registrars should be requested to devote their spare time to the opening of adult education centres in as many villages as they could within their jurisdiction, where elementary instruction would be given to all the available adults on (1) agriculture, (2) care of cattle, (3) sanitation and prevention of common diseases, (4) co-operative organization, (5) marketing of agricultural produce, etc. The sub-registrars were also to arrange for simple lectures (illustrated with magic-lantern slides, if possible) on important topics of the day, and instructive readings out of papers and books, followed by questions and discussions. Other Government officials, like District Health Officers, Sanitary Inspectors, Agricultural Officers, Veterinary Officers, Co-operative Inspectors and Supervisors, as well as teachers and inspectors of local schools, were to be invited to give periodical lectures to the villagers on various aspects of rural improvement—hygiene, sanitation, agriculture, animal husbandry, and general culture.

All this was to be voluntary, unpaid work. The only expense was the buying of a few books and papers for each village library; and this was met out of the Rural Development grant sanctioned by the Government of India. Besides, the Minister for Education placed Rs. 1,000 (from a private fund) at the disposal of the Inspector-General of Registration for the preliminary work of establishing Adult Education-

centres in the villages, and requested him to form a Central Committee in Calcutta which should direct the mofussil centres. This was done, and a Press Note of 23 June 1937 announced the personnel of the Central Adult Education Committee as consisting of the Director of Public Instruction, the Director of Public Health, the Special Officer in charge of Primary Education, and the Inspector-General of Registration. This Committee is engaged in drafting practical rules for the working of Adult Education centres under the voluntary and spare-time care of rural sub-registrars and in deciding what kind of instruction, as well as what kinds of slides and films, are suitable for the improvement of grown-up villagers in Bengal.

The Indian Adult Education Society was formed on an all-India basis (with Banning Richardson as president) to promote (1) the teaching of improved methods of handicrafts to undergraduates with the intention that during the vacations this instruction should be passed on to their rural relations and friends; (2) literacy work; (3) rural broadcasting; (4) the teaching of scholastic subjects to matriculates who have not been able to continue their studies at a university; (5) the giving of instruction in their own religion by the most capable believer in that faith available. An appeal for funds to carry out this programme was sent out to England, with what result I am unable to say.

Before discussing the curriculum of adult

education, it is necessary to answer an important administrative question. Should adult education be undertaken by the State or left to private enterprise? The Linlithgow Commission was decidedly of the opinion that adult education should be undertaken by private agencies, partly (perhaps chiefly) because in the existing allocation of public money there is no hope of the adult getting cake when the child is still without bread, and partly because private initiative is always (and possibly more in India than in Europe) psychologically more effective and efficient than State machinery. This principle is sound as far as the financing and carrying out of humanitarian schemes in general are concerned; but it is not equally applicable to education, and still less to adult education, for its necessity or charitableness has not yet dawned on the common unofficial mind in India, and even where it has, though money may not be too unwillingly contributed, the organization and supervision of the work require the steadying (if slow and impersonal) control of the Government Services.

Fortunately not much money is needed for adult education, since it can be organized with a slight generosity and willingness on the part of the existing—or shortly expected—universal elementary-school teachers, and the Health, Sanitation Agricultural, Co-operative, and Municipal or Corporation Departments, whose officials travel all over the towns and villages. These officials already have the necessary contact and influence to *impose* (with as little show of compulsion as may be)

on the illiterate adult population of the countryside a benefit which they cannot appreciate till they have tasted it. No private body can command the same 'reverence' with the villager as the most faded khaki coat and unpolished brass buttons can. Neither can it requisition the collateral services of other departments as a central committee, like the one in Calcutta, which contains the heads of four important Government Services—Public Instruction, Public Health, Primary Education, and Registration—can do.

Money, which is required for other educational schemes, is not the chief requirement for adult education. The only source of expense at the start will be village libraries and reading-rooms, without which lectures and centres are all but useless. To meet this expense, however, a small periodical grant out of the discretionary resources of the Minister of Education and the Minister of Development will go a long way. The Rural Development grant, which has been sanctioned by the Government of India with a view to just such contingencies, may be applied to the furnishing of adult education centres in the villages. The Village Self-Government Act [Section 32, 2 (b)] authorizes Union Boards to make moderate grants out of their funds towards rural libraries and reading-rooms. Besides, wherever Adult Education Committees have been formed, their members will rightly think it an honour to contribute in money and in kind (books, papers, pictures, maps) towards the success of a work which can only redound to their own glory (that

last infirmity!) and the improvement of their poorer countrymen.

The Organization of Adult Education

After proving the need of adult education in India and showing that it is not impossible of accomplishment, we must deal with its practical organization.

One of the most urgent problems on its practical side is how literacy can most quickly (and with sufficient reliability) be acquired. In a country where 90 per cent of the adult population have never learned to read and write, the educationist has to put aside his golden dreams of culture and humanism for the more prosaic and unexciting ambition of enabling as many people as possible to acquire literacy in as short a time as possible. The method he has to adopt for this purpose may not be the most scientifically perfect, but the one that yields the best and quickest results.

The psychology of the adult is still little known, and, unlike that of the child, little studied. But it is at least certain that the adult's mind is different from the child's. The Readers and Methods which have succeeded with children are, therefore, not *a priori* suitable to their parents: for these, however illiterate, are not *infants* or *tabulæ rasoe*—they have a store of experiences, a stock of words, gestures, 'expressions', a natural and acquired common sense. Hence it has been observed that adults learn much faster than children provided they *under-*

stand what they are taught and have not to trust too much to their mechanical memory. They learn more by association than by individual attempts; the synthetic method of teaching is therefore more successful with them than the analytical.

To make the Indian adult learn to read and write, therefore, a method which uses the vocabulary already familiar to him and reduces the memory work to a minimum is likely to give the quickest results. Such a method seems to have been discovered (or adapted) by Dr Frank Laubach, an American missionary among the Moros in the Philippines. He first selected five or six monosyllabic words in constant use; then he derived other words of two syllables from these, and with them made a few simple sentences. With the additional help of charts containing these words, he succeeded in getting every adult to know all the letters—thirteen consonants and four vowels—within a day. Everyone who had learnt to read was now sent out, armed with charts, to teach his family and neighbourhood. In five years, 70,000 Moros out of a total of 150,000 in the province of Lanao were able to read and write.

Dr Laubach was in India in 1935, and again from December to March 1937, and in the winter of 1938–9, applying his method to Marathi, Telugu, Bengali, Hindi, Tamil, and Gujarati, and making simple charts for teaching the elements of these languages. The missionaries of Moga, in the Punjab, already report a con-

soling increase of literacy among their once illiterate converts. It is true the Devanagari, Tamil, and Telugu alphabets are much more complicated than the primitive Moro, but Dr Laubach first grouped each of them into about thirteen consonants and four or five vowels, and then found five key-words in which each of these thirteen consonants is used only once, with the vowel *a*, and finally prepared a chart of commonly used words to illustrate each key-word and give the learner practice in the systematic use of the consonants and vowels.

The chief merit of this method is that it is synthetic and does not burden the memory—two qualities peculiarly precious to the adult. It proceeds on the same principle as Basic English and the corresponding method of learning European languages.[1] But such a method presupposes the existence of suitable books and newspapers by which the newly acquired literacy may be preserved and even increased. These books and papers should use the simplest words and expressions, and, above all, *interest* those for whom they are intended. A monthly or fortnightly paper has been started in each linguistic area of the Philippines: it is cheap, and gives news as well as views in the familiar colloquial style of the newly literate adult; its success is already encouraging. At Dr Laubach's suggestion, a similar newspaper was started in the Chhatisgarh District of the Central Provinces. Similar attempts deserve to be made in other

[1] cf., for example, *The Basis and Essentials of French*, by Charles Duff (Nelson).

parts of India. They need specially trained writers; but these will be available as soon as the method is put into practice.

Curriculum for Adult Education

The next practical problem is what subjects the Indian adult should be taught. Mere university extension lectures are of little use, as Madras (after London) has learnt. Sir Richard Livingstone was vehement in his British Association lecture of 1936 when he said:

> Education for the masses has been conceived (in England) as an extension of the existing higher education to the working man. That was excellent for the intelligentsia of the working class, but for the majority it was too academic, too highbrow. To nourish them we must enlarge our conception of adult education. Music, drama, handicraft, gardening, and many other subjects are a part of it no less than history, politics, science and literature.

That is true of India, too, and much more so than of England, for literacy must go before 'culture', and necessaries before luxuries.

To find out what is best for India, it may be useful to recall the experience of other countries, though the problem in most of these is only how to *inform* the adult of recent events and discoveries, while India's problem is also how to *educate* her adults. England is not a good model in this respect, for its 'continued' education is too 'literary' and has come in for scathing criticism from educationists like Sir Richard Livingstone and C. E. M. Joad. Evening Institutes, Technical Colleges, Women's Institutes, B.B.C. Area Education Groups, Workers' Educational Assoc-

iations have multiplied; but their curriculum is too much like the ordinary school syllabus and contains little of art, music, general knowledge, and civics. Evening classes are being held all over the country, as in the days embalmed in *Adam Bede;* the students come long distances and sit in a room (no longer cold), reading and writing (no longer by candlelight). But merciful sleep comes betimes to the miner who got up at 4.15 and worked underground for eight hours before walking seven miles to the continuation class.

The English system, therefore, is not the ideal for the Indian adult. The curriculum of the People's High School in Denmark, which is a poor and agricultural country like India, and has regenerated itself, as India has to, within, instead of seeking conquests without, is a more suitable model. It was Nikolai Grundtvig who in 1844 laid the foundations of adult education in Denmark by choosing peasants between 18 and 30 and putting them through a course of instruction, the women in the three summer months and the men in the five winter months. No examinations darken the horizon; no compulsion provokes resistance. At present every year between six and eight thousand attend these schools. Every class begins and ends with a traditional song, half folk-song, half hymn meant to enthuse one with national ideals; the first lecture is on history treated in a practical rather than a scientific way, with frequent allusions to the pupils' needs and the country's traditions; the second hour is devoted to gymnastics; the third to 'Questions'

put by the students and answered by the teacher; the Director himself takes the pupils during the midday meal, reviewing and commenting on the important events of the day at home and abroad; the time immediately after the meal is spent in the reading of newspapers; the afternoon is occupied with lectures on literature, mythology, and natural science, and group study and discussion of Danish, writing, composition, and mathematics. Agricultural instruction was for some time included in the curriculum; but it has since been almost everywhere separated into an optional course for a subsequent year.

A still better model for India, because it still more nearly than Denmark resembles her needs and difficulties, is China. In this country, as in India, the problem of adult education is, not how to continue the education already given in the elementary school, but how to supply at a later age the want of any education in childhood. Under the Manchu regime no systematic attempt was made to solve this problem, though evening schools, afternoon schools, and word-reading schools were from time to time started in various parts of the country. The Republic continued these schools and made them the means of training the common people to citizenship. But the national Government under Dr Sun Yat Sen has since 1929 taken adult education seriously in hand and already doubled the number of literates. In 1929, the whole of China had 6,708 adult schools, with 206,021 students and a staff of 8,827 at an expense of

466,562 Chinese dollars. In 1933, there were 36,929 adult schools, with 1,292,672 students and a staff of 80,261, at a cost of 1,975,747 Chinese dollars. Though progress is not uniform in all the provinces, there is progress everywhere; and in addition to their former object of training their pupils in reading and writing and citizenship, the adult schools have taken up such social functions as self-government, hygiene, district-protection, afforestation, road-building, dam-building, fire-fighting, improvement of crops, co-operative societies, and athletics. Adult education in China has thus become not only a continuation and completion of elementary education but also a means of social and national regeneration.

The curriculum of the adult school in China deserves special mention for its suitableness to India. I quote some of the regulations issued by the Ministry of Education:

> The aim of the adult school is to train people of both sexes from 16 to 50 years of age in elementary knowledge and vocation, in reading and writing, common sense and common knowledge of citizenship, so that they may be able to adapt themselves to social life.
>
> The courses of study in adult schools include word-reading, the Three Principles of Dr Sun Yat Sen (i.e. Nationalism, Democracy, and Social Justice), arithmetic abacus-counting, singing, drawing, elements of history, geography, and hygiene, and vocational courses of agriculture, engineering or commerce according to local conditions.

India's present condition is like China's when the National Government came into power—uneducated and illiterate adults, children without

schools to attend or teachers to teach them. Unlike European countries, therefore, the task of adult education in India (as in China) is the same as that of children's education—to equip them with the primary necessaries of modern civilized existence.

Whether literacy is one of these necessaries has been questioned by no less sincere a patriot than M. K. Gandhi. In an article in the *Harijan* (31 July 1937), while advocating the education of children through a handicraft, he said: 'Literacy is not the end of education, nor even the beginning. It is only one of the means whereby men and women can be educated.'

If this be true of children, it must be far truer of grown-ups. But is it true? Literacy can be understood either rigidly, as is done by the census commissioners, as the ability to read and write certain test passages, or, more broadly, as any degree of ability to read and write one's mother-tongue. Literacy in itself is certainly neither a sign nor a test of education: for one's faculties may be fully developed without the help of the written word. This was seen in some of the ancient sages and poets. It is seen, too, in not a few village communities in India today, of whom N. A. Thoothi says, speaking of Gujarati:[1]

> Although the Indian villager is illiterate, he is not therefore uneducated. He is educated in a sense. He has a tremendous memory, in which he carries a vast amount of folk-lore. Women have the choicest out of the poets of Gujarat by heart. In the early morning they perform their domestic duties and attend to the cows, they sing

[1] *The Vaishnavas of Gujarat*, 180.

songs of the early life of Krishna, his games, his mother's troubles, and so on.

This may not be a sufficient proof of education, but it serves at least to point out the distinction between literacy and education.

But in the present state of the world, with its vast output of books and papers, posters and guides, can a man be truly or at least socially and politically educated, without literacy? Such an education though in theory possible, would hardly suffice in the practical life of today. Pictures or libraries or even papers and leaflets cannot be used as means towards adult education unless the adult can read. One who can read can educate himself. Voting and the other trappings of democratic citizenship are a farce without literacy. As Dr Edwin Embree said at the Fifth Educational Conference at Washington (29-30 October 1936):

> Reading is . . . the first commandment even among the basic three R's. No one can live as a competent member of modern society without this essential tool . . . The difference between educated and uneducated people is almost entirely the difference in the range and understanding of their reading.

It will be generally admitted, therefore, that reading and writing should be the first (though not necessarily the most important) subject in the adult curriculum. We have already described Dr Laubach's method of acquiring literacy. But whether it is adopted or not, some simplification of the complicated alphabets of Indian languages seems to be necessary if a literate India is not to be too long delayed. The gradual adoption of

Hindi or Hindustani may be one solution, provided simultaneously a number of easy textbooks and translations are got ready in that language. With the already growing popularity of Hindi throughout India—even in the Dravidian language areas of the south—it will not be difficult to make it the lowest common denominator of literacy: this would not only solve one great problem of adult education but also provide a national link between the various parts of India.

Another solution would be to use Latin characters in all Indian languages. These are easier than Devanagari or any Dravidian script, and at once open the lock of European languages as well. In 1927, when its language was still written in Arabic characters, Turkey had only 1,111,496 literates; in December 1928, Kemal Ataturk made Latin characters compulsory, and in 1929 forbade the publication of any book in Arabic script. By 1935, the number of literates rose to 3,000,000. The adoption of a common language, or at least a common script, would also go a long way to remove one of the greatest obstacles to India's unity.

Once the ability to read and write has been gained, the adult is easier to educate than the child, for he has already acquired the habit of looking after himself and has enough perseverance to take him through the monotony and hardship of work. Lectures may be given by officials or non-officials on trade, agriculture, hygiene, civics, and other subjects which every modern adult should know. The village school

may be made the centre of adult education, or, according to the Central Provinces plan, the *Vidya Mandir* may be used for simple evening classes where adults are taught how to improve agriculture, sanitation, and health, as well as the elements of reading and counting.

One scheme has been tried and found fairly satisfactory: the Visvabharati has opened a new department, the *Loke Siksha Samsad*, and started preparing suitable textbooks in Bengali (Tagore himself wrote one) for adult villagers, on Bengali language and literature, Indian history and administration, general knowledge, arithmetic, popular science, geography, hygiene, and domestic science. It offers to hold examinations every year and award diplomas of Adya, Madya, and Upadhi. But it restricts itself to the work of supplying textbooks and examining candidates, and leaves it to local centres to teach those textbooks and prepare adults for those examinations.

But literacy alone is not enough for the Indian adult. Nor is it in itself an interesting enough object for him to aim at. He should be taught more than he already knows of his own profession: a farmer, more about soil, seed, and cattle; a carpenter, more about timber and the uses to which it can be put; a mason, more about modern concrete and steel building. And everyone should be taught, if possible, a subsidiary occupation which may serve as a stand-by in the slack season or in time of unemployment or famine or flood.

This is easy enough in the rural districts, where

all the inhabitants are agriculturists—owners or labourers—and all need to know much more than they do about improved methods of cultivation. With the opening of adult classes in certain villages of the Punjab, the average income of the farmer has almost doubled; the advice (so often suspected and feared) of the Government Agricultural Demonstrators and Farm Advisers in south India has prevented waste of manure and reduced the scourge of parasites in maize, paddy, and sugarcane; the villages round Sriniketan have put on a new lushness with the as yet tentative but enthusiastic lectures of a few of Tagore's disciples; the experiments in Shegaon and Wardha have succeeded beyond expectation even with an otherwise backward (and 'untouchable') class of villagers.

The towns present greater difficulties. There it is difficult to group adult pupils according to their trades or aptitudes; and it is impossible to provide each centre with a complete choice of vocational courses. Still, in mill and factory areas, which are the commonest habitats of the poorer urban population, a common handicraft or profession can easily be found: jute, for instance, in Calcutta, cotton in Bombay, fish curing and canning on the coast, *gur* and molasses and sugar in the sandy neighbourhood of palmyra and sugarcane, iron and steel in Bihar and the Central Provinces. Just as the private adult schools started by the Tata Iron Works in Jamshedpur, the Buckingham and Carnatic Mills in Madras, the Harvey Mills in Tinnevelly and Tuticorin,

teach their grown-up workers the trade they are actually engaged in, the whole scheme of adult education in the towns, whether worked by private initiative or by public bodies, may be made to include the most prevalent handicraft or industry of the locality.

I would even go further and suggest that the adult be educated *through* such a handicraft. In fact, it is the success of this scheme with adults in Shegaon that encouraged M. K. Gandhi to recommend it also to children. Psychologically such a method is wise and practical because it is based on the principle that education should proceed from the known to the unknown, from the concrete to the abstract, from the particular to the universal, from what is immediately useful and interesting to what is useful and interesting in the long run. If this is true of children, it is much more so of adults, whose faculties are less elastic and whose natural curiosity (that mother of science!) has been damped by cares and disillusionment. An adult education scheme, therefore, which starts from the actual occupation they know and promises to make that more efficient and lucrative, and *through* it to draw out and develop their powers of body and soul and give them all the knowledge they need for their private and civic life, is much more likely to arouse their interest and educate them than one which sets out to teach them many useful things of which they fail to see the usefulness.

The teaching of Indian history and civics is also indispensable to the adult of today in both

town and country. No nation can be educated socially and politically except through its own history and institutions. If the real India—i.e. the 90 per cent illiterate India—is to become conscious of its backwardness as a nation and rouse itself to progress, it must first study its own geography and history in order to project against the follies of the past, the dangers of the present and the hopes of the future. By whatever method taught—by free libraries and cheap plays, by lectures and broadcasts, by films and dramas, by folk songs and dances—the history and culture of India must be made accessible to every Indian, if he is to feel any enthusiasm for political and civic progress and take an active part in the life of the groups to which he belongs. And this can only be done through geography, history, and civics.

But these must not be taught in the way of most schools in Europe today, with their excessive nationalism to which even education is pressed into service. In his address to Section L of the British Association in September 1937, H. G. Wells denounced both the 'crazy combative patriotism' which threatens to destroy all civilization and the 'furtive anti-patriotism of the leftist teacher'. Both these dangers exist in India, too, and will exist. If they are to be feared in secondary schools and colleges, they are much more to be feared in adult schools, where impressions have less time to sink in and be calmly examined but are blindly accepted and acted upon. We cannot be content with the sort

of history which Herbert Spencer already in his day derided as 'an obituary of kings and queens', and John Richard Green called 'drum-and-trumpet history'. The Indian adult should be taught the history, not of his little community or province, but of the whole of India in its true perspective, with neither a foolish communal or provincial braggadocio nor an equally unintelligent and sentimental whine. The nation that is to be safe for *swaraj* must be fed on the whole truth (as far as it is humanly knowable) about itself.

The elements of civics are also an indispensable item in the adult curriculum. There are five Indians who know the composition of the British Parliament and the clauses of the Act of Succession to every one who knows even the headings of the new Constitution of 1948 or the Constitution of his Province's Assembly. Among the uneducated, this ignorance is even deeper, as recent elections have revealed. It is therefore urgently needed that the masses should be taught the rudiments of our civic life and educated into a civic or corporate sense. Some principles of economics, with special reference to India, are also necessary to arm the poor man against the wiles of the *mahajan* and the zemindar, to teach him the need and value of receipts for money paid, of keeping accounts, of calculating and checking rates of interest.

The adult, like the child, needs physical education too. But while the child needs exercise to develop his limbs and muscles, the adult needs it

to give suppleness and poise to his limbs. Even factory or field workers need those forms of exercise which involve the whole body and make up for the specialization and monotony of their labour. Drill with or without clubs or dumb-bells, gymnastics on parallel or horizontal bars, running and jumping, skipping and swimming and dancing—these are the most suitable. But the most practicable are those physical exercises which are at the same time pleasurable and rhythmical. Folk dances accompanied with folk songs, skipping or swimming, gymnastics to the accompaniment of music, provide just that mixture of the useful and the agreeable which is the secret of success in education.

Other subjects may be added to the adult curriculum according to circumstances and needs. Some hobby or art may be provided in the richer centres; the radio and the cinema may be prudently used to educate the taste of the rural or urban worker. But in India there is more immediate need of a systematic education of the adult in sanitation, hygiene, and general cleanliness. In an article on blindness in India [1] I have had occasion to deplore the part played by ignorance and superstition in the incidence of blindness. Other diseases are not less preventable by better ventilation and cleanliness. Every adult, therefore, should be taught the principal facts of physiology and the applicaton of elementary science to the prevention of disease, the care of the teeth and eyes, the precautions against contagion, the care of the sick, the right balance

[1] *The New Review*, July 1937.

of diet, etc. Three-fourths of India's annual deaths could be prevented by the spread among the masses of an elementary knowledge of science. And those who survive would have twice as much energy and vitality if they knew how to live reasonably.

These suggestions bristle with practical difficulties in their carrying out, and these difficulties will vary from place to place. But without trial and error no scheme can ever be launched. What is important, however, is that the end be clearly defined before the means to attain it are chosen. The adult, especially if (as in India) his education was neglected in childhood, has a right to be educated at least now. Even if he was educated as a boy, he has a right to a share in the common heritage and progress of mankind. If he is too poor to pay for them, he has a right to have them free, at the expense of society. The moral law, which makes it a duty for the materially rich to help the materially poor with material food, also and with greater reason makes it a duty for the intellectually rich to help the intellectually poor with the knowledge and ability without which in the present condition of the world they cannot lead a human life and play the part for which God has created them. Adult education aims, to quote from a useful book,[1] at the enrichment of individual personality; in India it is the belated attempt to give the human personality a development and direction which it ought to have received from parents and teachers in childhood: it is sheer restitution of something stolen, mere

[1] *Learn and Live*, by W. E. Williams and A. E. Heath.

righting of a grave wrong. The modern farmer or worker, looking around him, realizes that he has missed something which those more fortunately placed enjoy. He cannot read, as they can, of what is happening in the world; he cannot see and judge for himself but must be at the mercy of unscrupulous propagandists; he cannot take an interest, as others do, in the things of the mind; he cannot find relaxation after work, as others can, in elevating pastimes to which he has never been initiated; he cannot react as a free responsible *personality* to the political, social, and religious stimuli which lie across his path.

It is the object of adult education to give him these things.

CHAPTER X

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

IT will be readily admitted that religion is a subject for education. This is not the place to prove that the attitude of man to God is one of the most important of the problems of life. On it depends the success or failure of life itself. Its place in education is our present concern.

Since the knowledge and practice of religion are necessary in life, it follows that both this knowledge and this practice have to be taught in childhood. Education is a preparation for life —indeed, it is life itself practised or rehearsed for adult life. The faculty for knowing and serving God is as innate in man as the faculty of knowing himself and the world around him, the faculty of doing, and the faculty of loving. It therefore requires drawing out no less than these —by exercise in a suitable environment (at home and at school), under suitable guides and models (parents and teachers), with suitable opportunities (theoretical and practical instruction).

The necessity of religion being a part of education is universally admitted. What is less commonly agreed upon is

(1) what is meant by religion,
(2) who is to teach it, and
(3) how it is to be taught.

Religion in so far as it is a part of education

is often today confused with morality—a view characteristic of the modern attitude to the things of the spirit. There is in India an additional reason for this attitude—the multiplicity of religions and the experience of riots and suspicions in the name of religion. 'Religions as they are taught and practised today,' says M. K. Gandhi, 'lead to conflict rather than unity.' And again: 'I regard it as fatal to the growth of a friendly spirit among the children belonging to the different faiths if they are taught either that their religion is superior to every other or that it is the only true religion.' A practical objection to the teaching of religion in Indian schools was also mentioned by M. K. Gandhi in an article in the *Harijan*: 'Unless there is a State religion, it is very difficult, if not impossible, to provide religious instruction, as it would mean providing for every denomination'—and there are so many.

We shall deal with these practical difficulties after discussing the theoretical aspect.

Religion means the whole attitude of man to God. This attitude depends not only on what man can find out by himself about God—from God's works and 'vestiges' in the world around him—but also, and chiefly, on what God has revealed to man about Himself—His own nature and life, His plan for the salvation of man, the way by which He wants man to come to Him. In other words, religious education must be based not only on reason but also on revelation: God being directly unknowable, the

only direct and reliable way of knowing Him is from what He Himself has made known by authentic means. The child, therefore, has a right to be taught not merely what reason tells him he must *do*, but also—and much more—what revelation tells him he must *believe* as well as do. For doing is very much the outcome of believing; and action cannot be consistent unless it is based on belief and conviction as to its motive and its object. Love of one's fellow men, for instance, cannot be sincere or disinterested unless we believe that other men are our brothers and equals in the natural sense of having the same kind of soul and body and coming from the same common ancestor; but if we believe that all men have been created and redeemed by God and raised to the supernatural level of children of God, our love for our fellow men becomes stronger and sincerer. Similarly, prayer becomes easier and intenser in proportion to our belief in the personality and love of God; devotion and self-sacrifice become more consistent, and even possible, if God Himself is known to have become man and sacrificed Himself for men.

If the child has a right to be educated, he has a right to be *fully* educated, nothing being withheld from him which will prepare him better for life and enable him to develop his faculties more fully. The only limitation to this right can come from the child's age, which makes him incapable of assimilating certain branches of knowledge except in graduated doses. Religious knowledge, therefore, in the strict and complete sense of

theory no less than practice, dogma no less than conduct, belief no less than devotion, revelation no less than reason, must be imparted to him during his education, i.e. he must be told what he is to believe, and why; what he is to do and avoid, and why. For he is a rational being, and as he grows up he has to make a conscious and free act of adherence to the religion which he is satisfied after fair examination to have been revealed by God and to be therefore the way appointed by God to reach Him and thus attain his own eternal salvation.

Having proved that religion has to be taught, and what is meant by religious education, we have to answer the next question: By whom is religion to be taught?

The responsibility of educating children devolves primarily and directly on those who have been most instrumental in bringing them into the world—the parents. Their right and duty to educate the children whom they have voluntarily undertaken to bring forth and bring up, is inalienable. They may delegate it to others, but they can never divest themselves of it. Teachers are only delegates of the parents, and share their responsibility in the measure in which their mutual understanding divides it. But the primary and direct responsibility, for religious no less than physical and intellectual education, rests with the parents.

The circumstances of the parents may render them unfit or unable to give religious education to their children. They are, of course, all able

to give the first lessons, to teach the simple prayers and other duties of religion, both by example and by precept. But as the child grows up to school age, his parents often have not the time or the knowledge to explain religion to him. This duty is therefore generally delegated to the school to which the child is sent. The head of the school freely undertakes this responsibility along with that of the child's physical and mental education: and every teacher in the school, through the headmaster, undertakes his share of it. From this it follows that the choice of a school is a matter of the greatest responsibility for a parent, since he voluntarily and freely chooses it out of many as his substitute, as another parent (*loco parentis*, as the phrase goes), towards his child. He should therefore send his child to a school which can and will give his child the religious education he needs—where the atmosphere is conducive to virtue and faith, where the teachers practise the religion they teach, where the religion of the pupils is seriously and systematically taught.

Can the ordinary lay teacher also teach religion? Religion, like any other subject, needs training and practice. It is therefore not enough to possess a Primer of Hinduism or Islam or Christianity to teach any of these religions. The training courses of teachers should provide for this subject no less than for geography and arithmetic. Religion, in fact, is more difficult to teach than any other subject and therefore requires longer preparation than a mere B.T. or L.T.

course can provide. Such a preparation is ordinarily possessed only by priests or similar specialists in their respective religions: hence these are the most competent to impart religious education with the thoroughness and effectiveness it deserves.

The next practical problem is how religion is to be taught. It is often said that religion is caught, not taught—which is a telling way of saying that example is better than precept. This, however, does not mean that teaching may be dispensed with. All men, at any age, are drawn to virtue by example more than by theory, and children are more impressed by what they see than by what they hear. But as they grow older they are less carried away by what others do; they want to reason their beliefs and practices out for themselves. At this stage religion cannot be wholly caught: it must be patiently and systematically taught, each step in the reasoning proved and the objections to it discussed. In fact, the ten or eleven years of the entire school course are not too long for a satisfactory curriculum of religious instruction.

And this has to be confirmed and strengthened by a steady practice in the school as well as the home of what is taught in theory. Hence the denominational school, where everything is maintained in harmony and religion permeates the very life of teachers and pupils alike, is the only logical kind of school. If such a school promotes hatred and rivalry between various religions, this is not because it teaches religion

but because it does not teach it as it should. For true religion brings humility; and humility brings love; and love, toleration. The reason why religion is made the excuse for discord in India is that religious education has been long neglected.

These principles can be established with perfect certitude and hold good of every stage of education--primary, secondary, and university. There is, however, a practical problem of educational policy which has of late been sometimes discussed in India but not yet solved: whether, in the actual state of our universities, *moral* instruction should form part of their curriculum.

In the primary and secondary school an elementary course of ethics is being given and even imposed throughout India. This proves that the need of some kind of moral instruction is generally realized by parents and educators. The reports of schools too, both primary and secondary, seem to show that the moral science class is in no way more difficult to teach or less appreciated by the pupil than any other, though, if we may judge from the common opinion of parents, it would appear to be more successful in certain private schools where the staff devote themselves not only with a sense of duty but with something like love to this not-for-the-examination subject.

By the time the pupil reaches the Matriculation class, then, he has gone through a more or less complete course of ethics and been taught his chief duties towards God, towards himself, and

towards his fellow-creatures. Is this not enough? Is it necessary to introduce moral science into the university classes as well?

When this question was brought before the Academic Council of the University of Madras in February 1936, it was brushed aside with the argument that morality was each one's private concern and that university students were old enough to know moral science. But since then several managements have considered the problem as sufficiently urgent to demand immediate attention, and others have introduced a compulsory course of an hour a week lasting three years during which general, personal, and social ethics are explained and discussed.

That the undergraduates of Indian colleges know enough about their moral duties to need no further instruction, those who have had intimate contact with them would not dare to maintain. These students are getting younger every year: the average student who now goes up to the university is scarcely more than fifteen. He may be able to roll off, parrot-like, the names of the capital sins or the arguments against suicide which his high-school teacher has taught him: but the least opposition with just a varnish of sophistry is enough to dispossess him of his modest moral wallet. Can such a student be trusted with the daily paper, with its chaos of news and comment and counter-comment, still less with the *Sturm und Drang* of after-college life?

No conscientious educator can contemplate

this prospect without feeling his responsibility for those whom their parents have entrusted to his care, not only to be put through an examination but chiefly to be directed and rigged out for life's moral adventure. There is a general unrest among the youth of India today: a few years later than in Europe but no less surely, the Indian boy and girl have inherited the modern mind, with its uncertainty, its sensitiveness, its instability, its want of staying power. Youth has always been unaccountable to Age; but it is more than ever unaccountable today. Cases of 'strange behaviour'—under which unoffending mask even suicide and immorality hide—have of late been on the increase among undergraduates and other 'educated' young Indians. Failure in a university examination, unemployment, parental opposition to a love match which defies caste and convenience, even a snub or an insult, seems to be enough to drive some of them to desperate lengths. Love and hatred have for centuries pleaded blindness; but the cause here is deeper than blind love or hatred: it is the want of convictions. These strange acts are not the result of a sudden strong temptation; they have been calmly meditated and planned and discussed with friends; they have been calmly and deliberately done. And when such extreme limits are not reached, yet on the steep road of honesty and truthfulness and unselfishness, in the shady forest of bribery and oppression and jealousy into which every career leads its unwary followers, how many of our graduates

and undergraduates can be relied upon to pick their way unharmed?

The young graduate, besides, is confronted in the world of today with a number of moral problems which were hardly more than curiosities to his parents in their day and which will baffle him unless he has been deeply and delicately initiated into them while at college. The social question, with its hundreds of branches—capital and labour, wages, justice, equality, private property, taxation, etc—has become *the* question of our day, and cannot be understood by the high-school boy. In the college, the economics student, who is not even one in a hundred undergraduates, may have an opportunity of studying it with something like thoroughness if he is lucky enough to be taught by a professor who is not satisfied with mere coaching for a degree. The ninety-nine others have no chance of acquiring so necessary a knowledge unless they are given a course of social ethics. To have correct ideas on socialism, communism, fascism, totalitarianism and capitalism is essential to every member of modern society, and more especially to those to whom by their education will fall the duty of leading and instructing others.

Another subject on which there has been much discussion in recent years is that first and most fundamental of all human societies—the family. The progress made by sex psychology and psychoanalysis no less than the outcry of the economists against the bogy of over-population has thrown a garish light on the sacred institution of marriage

and the relationships which result from it. The moral problems that arise from these subjects are extremely difficult and delicate; they cannot be explained to pupils at the high-school stage with any hope of being understood; neither is there any provision in the regular curriculum of a university for the thorough study they deserve. The only solution, therefore, is to treat them fully in a moral science course to college students.

But more than about any of these subjects the Indian student of today is troubled about politics. He finds it difficult to reconcile his love of his country with what he has from childhood been taught, sometimes unintelligently, about loyalty to the 'Government as by law established'. So much, indeed, is he worried by this moral dilemma and at the same time so afraid is he of being suspected or accused of 'politics', that it is almost a test of the confidence with which a professor inspires him if he asks his advice on it. How far can a student take an interest in politics? How far can he sympathize with the Hindu Mahasabha or with the Socialists or Communists? Would he be right in taking part in Civil Disobedience? Can he fast to death for his party or for the *Harijan* cause? These are the questions which at one time or another occur to every Indian undergraduate and which, if not calmly and seriously treated by a sympathetic professor at college, will be answered in headlong practice as soon as some great leader or provoking event releases his pent-up emotions and sweeps him off his feet.

To say, in the face of these facts, that the moral education of the undergraduate is his own business is to shirk the educator's sacred responsibility towards his charge. The student's success in the university examinations is also his own business; his bodily health, too, is his own business. Yet who will say that the university need not interest itself in these?

The example of Japan, a country in many ways like India, may be useful to us. In the Report of an International Inquiry into the Problem of Moral Instruction and Training published in 1910 by its Secretary, Professor (later Sir) Michael Sadler, Baron Kikuchi, ex-Minister of Education, said:

> I certainly consider that the courage and devotion of the Japanese soldiers during the late war was, to a great extent, the result of this systematic moral instruction and training in schools . . . I think that by this organized moral teaching we have prevented a great melting away of principle; we were drifting, and seemed to be loosened from all solid ground of morality. We had kept our moral standard in our families, but there was no public basis for morality; only what we had inherited, and that was not put into explicit form.

What was true of Japan at the turn of this century is true of India today—perhaps our condition is even worse. The need of systematic moral instruction even in the college is therefore clear. The difficulty begins when we think of satisfying this need.

It is refreshing to see that money, for once, is not in the way. Moral (or religious) instruction costs no extra money. But it costs labour and

inconvenience to those who have to teach it. Since it is not a subject in which any university examines its students, they cannot easily be got to attend classes in it. Our educational system is so examination-ridden that both professors and students take little interest in those activities which, however important in education (like debates, games, social gatherings), are not directly a means towards the coveted degree. But to say that moral science *cannot* be taught because it is not an examination subject would be to proclaim the incompetence of a college and its teachers.

The fact that it *is* being taught—an hour a week—and has been taught in several Indian colleges for some years past with satisfactory results, is a proof that it *can* be taught. A well-defined syllabus is drawn up,[1] spreading the three branches of ethics—general ethics, personal ethics, and social ethics—over three or four years, from the first year after Matriculation till the first or second year of the Bachelor's course. The secret of the success of this, as of any other subject, is the ability of the teacher to interest his pupils and at once excite and satisfy their legitimate thirst for knowledge; but while in other subjects his power over the students' worldly prospects can come to the rescue of his incapacity as a teacher, here he has to stand, unpropped, on his own merits to win their confidence and prove the usefulness of what he is teaching them. It is, therefore, only if the best professors undertake

[1]As is done by the Rev D. Ferroli, S.J., in his three-volume *Ethics* (Catholic Press, Ranchi, 1948).

to teach moral science that its success will be assured. Attendance at these classes can be made compulsory, just as attendance at physical instruction or games is compulsory in many Indian universities, and attendance at Chapel and Hall is compulsory at Oxford and Cambridge. Examinations and prizes are helps to the desire of success and the fear of failure which are inherent in man and which even a sordid utilitarianism cannot quite suppress.

But a more formidable practical difficulty is the syllabus of moral science. The best method of teaching this subject would be to make it a part of a course of religion, for (as we have explained) rational morality is completed and strengthened by supernatural revelation. But if this is not immediately possible, pure rational ethics can be taught, starting from the existence of a moral law, and proceeding step by step to each duty and its violation, and taking care that no progress be made to a new chapter until the whole class is satisfied that the previous argument does hold water. Each proof may be followed by a discussion between the teacher and the students, who will bring forward the objections they themselves have against it or have heard advanced by others. Far from being a dull hour, this weekly class becomes a mind-sharpener and an open forum for serious discussion; and Old Boys of colleges where moral science was systematically taught have confessed to the lasting good it has done them.

The difficulty of drawing up a syllabus, how-

ever, is less than the difficulty of finding suitable and willing professors to teach it. In some colleges there is a comparative uniformity of convictions among the members of the staff on matters moral and religious; but in others, to the bewildering variety of sects and schools among the students there corresponds an astonishing difference of opinion among the professors themselves on the most elementary questions of morality. Such professors obviously cannot teach moral science with anything like uniformity or even consistency. This difficulty is insuperable except in those colleges which can find a sufficient number of professors with correct and concordant convictions at least on the major questions of morality and willing to undertake this far from attractive but very useful work. Since only one hour's lecture a week is required for each of the college classes (exempting the senior B.A. and B.Sc. classes if necessary), and since this hour need not be the same hour of the same day of the week for all the classes, it will be enough to find one or two suitable professors to make the moral science course a reality.

So far we have considered only the direct and theoretical teaching of morality as a subject of study. The indirect and practical teaching of it by the very life of teachers and taught, by the healthy contact between staff and students and among the students themselves, by games and other character-training activities, by the whole spirit and atmosphere of the institution, is much more important. Morality, too, is caught no less

than taught; at any rate, it will not be caught unless the one who teaches it also practises his teaching. It is chiefly by his example that Dr Thomas Arnold made his Rugby boys consider it 'a shame to tell the Headmaster a lie' and add the reason: 'He always believes your word.'

Our schools as well as our colleges need much more of this example of truthfulness, honesty, purity, broadmindedness, universal love, piety (in both the Latin and the English sense), and self-sacrifice for the common good. A greater trust on the part of the teacher might call forth a greater sense of responsibility on the part of the pupil. A faultless professor might win the instinctive hero-worship of his pupils and lead them to unsuspected heights of generosity. And —what is most lacking in large Indian colleges— greater contact between teacher and pupil might make life happier and more useful to both.

An excellent teacher, the late Sir Walter Raleigh, used to say: 'A university consists, not of pupils and teachers, but of junior and senior students'. If professors took such a view of themselves, their company would be much pleasanter and immensely more educative to their pupils: it would tune them up to greater interest in their studies and consequently greater progress in them; it would make them less suspicious of Gunpowder Plots against their dignity; it would give them a much more beneficial hold on the moral careers of those who will in a few years be the leaders of their country. The students, in their turn, meeting their betters

on equal terms in the playground and the common room, at excursion and debate, will unconsciously feel prodded on to imitate them and rise to their stature in politeness, in sociableness, in service of others, in unflinching devotion to whatever is true and noble. Such a silent yet irresistibly practical moral *training* is necessary if the theoretical course of moral science is to be profitable or even possible; the two together will soon leaven the whole mass.

For in this as in every other aspect of education the most important factor is the teacher. Discipline, games, corporate life, intellectual work—all these depend on him for their life and spirit. If morality is to be caught rather than taught, from whom can it be caught but from the teacher? In summing up the Report on Moral Instruction, Sir Michael Sadler wrote:

> Our evidence shows how widespread among those best qualified to form a judgement is the conviction that the most potent factor in moral education, more potent even than the corporate influence of an honourable community, is the personality of the teacher. . . . And, difficult though it be to analyse this power of personality, its transmission may be traced, first and above all, to some kindling ray of sympathy and insight, but also to the influence of example, to the moral force of a clearly apprehended ideal, and to the wise, though often instinctive, choice of the method of approach.

These qualities are as necessary in a college as in a school, for though there the student is older, and therefore less dependent on the teacher, his need of moral guidance and his instinctive difficulty in expressing that need and seeking

help is proportionately greater, and there is no one to whom he can confide his doubts and anxieties with greater confidence than a professor who has merited his admiration and trust by his *guru*-like qualities. If such a professor after practising moral science outside the schoolroom also teaches it inside, he will have no difficulty in nourishing the student's mind with correct and high ideals; while his sense of his high calling will make him a source of strength to the unfolding character and thus round off an otherwise lop-sided and inharmonious education.

CHAPTER XI

EXPERIMENTS IN EDUCATION

We have discussed many of the problems which make Indian education truly unique. It may be of interest to mention a few of the attempts made in recent times to solve some of these problems.

Visvabharati was started by Rabindranath Tagore towards the beginning of this century on the estate which his father had called Santiniketan (Abode of Peace), near Bolpur, a station about 100 miles north of Calcutta. Started as a small Bengali school, it was gradually enlarged into a high school presenting students for the Matriculation of the Calcutta University. It has since become a complete college in Arts and sends up its students for the Intermediate and B.A. examinations as well.

What is distinctive and original about Visvabharati is Tagore's original idea of a private university for the whole of India (as the word 'Visvabharati' shows), where Indian culture would be taught, Indian manners and customs respected, and a simple life be led in common by teachers and pupils in a village remote from the noise and distractions of the town. All the students reside on the premises, eat and drink and sleep together without distinction of religion or caste. Several small cottages are used by batches of boys, the girls living by themselves in

a hostel near by. Food is cooked and served in common to all, and it is simple and cheap. The students do most of their own work—draw the water from the well near which they bathe, keep their rooms tidy, even wash their ordinary clothes.

The classes are held in the open under one of the gigantic mango trees with which the garden of Santiniketan is studded. A stone sofa built in a semi-circle is the 'form' on which the pupils sit; the blackboard is stood on the ground; and the teacher sits or stands before it. The gong strikes at intervals from five o'clock in the morning till the last class is over at noon, and from the number of strokes one can tell what hour of the day it is. The whole establishment is up at five; washing and dressing is done by six or half-past six in summer, when school begins amid the chirping of innumerable birds. Breakfast comes after two hours of class and divides the long morning into two. All the regular classes are over by noon. The afternoon is given to extra subjects like Indian painting (in which a regular three years' course is given in a separate school under the well-known Nandalal Bose), Indian dancing (during Tagore's lifetime under his own supervision), Indian music, physical training, games (especially Indian and Bengali games), etc.

Another original feature of Visvabharati is its conception of discipline. Discipline really means the attitude of a disciple, which means good behaviour, teachableness, respect for others,

orderliness, punctuality, cleanliness, modesty—all that befits a student and without which a life of serious study is impossible. In Western countries discipline has taken on a military tint on account of their warlike pursuits, which have naturally given their colour to education as well. Besides, mass education makes a more rigid and impersonal conception of discipline inevitable. Large classes which have to be taught by a small staff can only be kept quiet by a mechanical system of regularity and order: they are taught to keep silence, to study, to move about even without a teacher or 'prefect' (a Roman military word) to look after them; a bell or a gong (even mechanically rung) is enough to keep a whole crowd in order.

There is certainly something admirable about such an impersonal view of discipline in a school, apart from the consolation it is to weak or incompetent teachers: it presupposes and promotes a respect for the *principle* of order, for order and discipline *in the abstract*, independently of persons —from a sheer sense of duty. Such training is necessary in civic and social life, and is especially so in modern crowded conditions when the personal factor is not easy to secure in human relationships. But it also has a serious shortcoming: it sinks the human personality too much under the undiscriminating weight of the collectivity. There is already too much of the tendency in modern States to file the individual into a mere cog in an immense machine: it is not necessary or good for educational institutions to

begin this process from the child's tenderest years. There must be respect for order and method: but it must be a reasonable respect, based on willing acquiescence and conviction. Unreasonable opposition must, of course, be detected and punished; but school discipline should not degenerate into a soulless fear or a sullen uniformity.

There is a danger of excess in both conceptions; but the danger of the personal view of discipline is less serious and its advantages are greater. And it is more in keeping with Indian ideals and traditions. When a boy enters a large school where a rigid impersonal discipline is maintained, he feels as if he is entering a huge prison, where he will no longer count, where he will no longer be John, but just No. 100—where his personality will never come into play but will have to conform to the common standard, where he will be standardized, reduced to the lowest common denominator. This may be a gain to a few incorrigible or unreasonable pupils who are below this lowest common denominator; but it is ruinous to rich individual natures and even to the mediocre who can by personal influence be raised a little higher.

In Visvabharati, from the lowest class to the highest, every pupil counts, and feels he counts, and is made to feel he counts. What each one is and does is known to and affects, for the better or for the worse, every one else. The teacher knows and lives with every pupil, and every pupil knows his teacher and his fellow pupils. There is thus a family spirit which one misses in our ordinary

schools. Mischief there must be, and there must be black sheep even in this small and chosen number of pupils. But even punishment is dealt out in a personal and family spirit. The delinquent is informed that if he confesses his fault and promises to amend, he will be pardoned. And in difficult cases there was always the final remedy of an interview with *Gurudev* (as Rabindranath Tagore was affectionately called at Santiniketan) who spoke to the heart as a father or a grandfather would to an only child.

One or two features of Visvabharati, however, are regrettable. Co-education is there practised in all the stages of the pupil's life. We have already discussed this subject in Chapter VII. Another drawback is the absence of religious education. This is no doubt due to the presence of various religions and sects among staff and pupils and to the Brahmo Samaj views of Tagore himself who occasionally conducted a 'prayer' in the glass Hall of Prayer built by his father near the entrance into the institution. But the absence of any definite religious education is a serious defect of Visvabharati, for the reasons given in Chapter X.

But Tagore deserves credit for having tried to revive in modern times the ancient Indian ideal of education and combine what is best in Western art and science with the manners, customs, and art of India. If this has not succeeded better, it is because this ideal no longer (or not yet) appeals to educated Indians, who send their children to those schools which promise the

best posts, whether they truly educate or not.

The death of its founder in 1941 has deprived Santiniketan and its practical and rural counterpart, Sriniketan, of its very soul. The spirit and ideals which Tagore has tried to embalm in these ways will, we hope, survive this great loss. The buildings may indeed survive and even improve under a more practical and businesslike administration than a poet could command single-handed in the later years of a long life. But Visvabharati is nothing if not an ideal struggling to express itself in spite of the most formidable odds; and only an idealist who has an ideal can carry it out or even try to do so. Visvabharati has now been taken over by the Government of India.

Another recent experiment in education is the *Doon School* at Dehra Dun. This school is the very antipodes of Visvabharati: it is thoroughly European. Started by the Government of India at the repeated request of Indian Princes and other rich parents, it attempts to reproduce Eton on Indian soil. Built on a spacious estate in the lower Himalayas, with a climate like that of southern Europe, it is in many ways an ideal place for the healthy training of children. The administration is almost entirely English, though there are some Indians on the staff. The courses prepare for Oxford and Cambridge preparatory school examinations. Much attention is paid to physical exercise—games, riding, boxing, swimming, etc.—under expert coaches, and to hobbies like carpentry and photography.

The expenses are also very high. Only the richest parents can afford to send their boys to the Doon School. The pupils therefore live there in the company of other rich children. Here, too, as in Visvabharati, all the students reside in the school, with a House Master to look after each House as at Eton. On acount of the want of homogeneity among the students, however, the school has to provide for different tastes, European and Indian, vegetarian and non-vegetarian.

It is too early to assess the success of this experiment. The advantages of the Dehra Dun climate and of the beautiful and affluent surroundings of the Doon School are obvious. But the danger of importing into a poor country like India the snobbishness of the Public School at a time when it has many respectable enemies even in England, prevents this experiment from obtaining general approval.

Another interesting attempt to find the ideal way of educating Indian boys is the *Boys' Own Home*, at Cossipore near Calcutta. Its founder in 1904 and its Principal till death, Rewachand Animananda, here tried to follow the ancient Indian ideal of the *guru* who is not merely a teacher but chiefly a father to his *śishyas*. He took only a few boys, so that he might be able to study and educate each of them; they must be over five and under ten when they enter —neither too young nor too old to catch the spirit of the Home—and not leave it before they are sixteen (by which time they have caught

it); they must be ready to do the humblest manual work in the school, as the ancient pupils did—sweeping, dusting, whitewashing, varnishing, repairing, buying, and cooking; they must not keep a private tutor, lest he follow a different method from that of the Home and undo its work. The relation between the teachers (these were only four, including the Principal) and the boys were those of parents and children: this was secured by the fact that the teachers were Old Boys of the Home and therefore possessed its spirit.

Another merit of the school is the method of teaching it follows. Every subject is taught by the direct method—observation and experiment for science, reading and Socratic questioning for language and literature, map-reading for geography. This method gives the pupils an alertness and freshness as well as an initiative and active outlook which is glaringly wanting in the ordinary school. Sir Michael Sadler called the school 'one of the most interesting in existence', and remarked that its pupils were far more precise in their English and diction than English boys. The pupils themselves become teachers before they leave the Home: the oldest boys are entrusted with the teaching of the elements to the youngest, so that they may acquire facility of communication and clear exposition.

There are no classes in this school: only groups based on proficiency in each subject. The same boy may be in one group for English, another group for Bengali, and a third group for

geography, according to his progress and ability in each subject. And there is no annual examination or promotion. Every Saturday there is a repetition of what has been taught during the week ; when a subject or book is finished, there is an examination on it. When a pupil is too good for one group he is promoted to a higher group, whatever part of the term or year it may be. Thus hard work is always required, and the shame and demoralization of 'repeating' a year is avoided.

The boys are in the Home from 10 a.m. to 5-30 p.m., studying, listening to the teacher, playing Indian games, doing manual work, swimming—all in the company and under the paternal care of the teachers. Their character is thus developed and guided towards a respect for authority, a love of order and duty, a care for cleanliness and tidiness, a scrupulous truthfulness and honesty which are the test of true education. Religion is not explicitly taught, but the whole atmosphere of the school is religious, and every occasion in the lesson is used to inculcate the knowledge and practice of religion.

Originally started in Santiniketan by Swami Upadhyaya Brahmabandhav, the Boys' Own Home is a nearer approach to a satisfactory solution of India's educational problem than Visvabharati, though both are still under a cloud of incomprehension and wait for an awakening of cultural consciousness in this country.

We must here mention the latest experiment in Indian education—the Wardha Scheme, so

called because it was first sketched in 1937 by M.K. Gandhi in the *Harijan* published at Wardha. To understand this scheme it must be remembered that

(1) it is meant only for villages, where illiteracy is greater than in towns (95 per cent, as against 85 per cent in towns);

(2) it is meant to give only a minimum education consisting of practical literacy and a knowledge of some useful handicraft.

(3) it promises not to burden the taxpayer but to be virtually self-supporting;

(4) it aims also at preventing the rush of population from the village to the town which is one of the most serious problems in India (as in other countries where the standards of town and country life are greatly different).

The novelty of the Wardha Scheme is that, though it professes to give not vocational but general education, it does this *through* a 'vocation' or handicraft. As it has been explained by the Zakir Husain Committee of the Congress and the Kher Sub-Committee of the Central Advisory Board of Education, its essential feature is that the whole of the elementary school curriculum should centre round a basic handicraft, i.e. a handicraft that is fundamental and leads to several subsidiary occupations. Thus in a cotton-growing area, spinning will be taught to all the boys both theoretically and practically, and all the other subjects—history, geography, arithmetic, elementary science, civics, economics—will be taught in connexion with it. Similarly, carpentry, *gur*-making, coconut industry, iron-work may be the basic handicraft according to the province or region in which a school is

situated. The expression 'in terms of the basic handicraft' has not to be taken too strictly. It means that the teachers should take every opportunity to relate new knowledge to the pupil's environment, which includes the handicraft which is his parents' occupation and will probably be his when he grows up.

From the produce of the handicraft the Wardha school is expected to support itself. In the time-table drawn up by the Zakir Husain Committee, 3½ hours out of 5½ are to be given to the handicraft (which includes theory as well as practice)—the rest being divided between music, arithmetic, reading and writing the mother-tongue, civics, elementary science, and drill. The pupils will be trained and supervised by an expert teacher so that they will while they learn also produce marketable commodities (yarn, cloth, *gur*, baskets, etc.), which will help towards the support of the teacher and the upkeep of the school. M. K. Gandhi hoped that the scheme would be self-supporting at the end of the seven years' course (7 to 14 was to be the compulsory school age). The land and building would, of course, have to be provided either by private donation (Madhya Pradesh has already invited and obtained grants of land which will yield about Rs. 200 a year and on which modest schools called *Vidya Mandirs* will be built) or by the Government. The teacher's pay (Rs 15 to 20 a month) and the cost of equipment and repairs would be met from the sale of the product of the handicraft—which the Gov-

ernment would buy or arrange to sell. This principle is sound provided the child's own education is kept primarily in view rather than the value of his handiwork or the teacher's gain. If production is put before education, the school degenerates into a factory and education is a mask for exploitation.

There is no theoretical originality in this scheme, for the principle of educating through manual activity is already well known since Pestalozzi's time and is practised in the folk-schools of Denmark and certain private schools in the United States. Its originality lies in its attempt to solve several problems with one simple solution—which is Gandhi's special genius. The relating of every other subject to the handicraft is an application of the psychological principle, largely used by Madame Montessori, that children (and even grown-ups) learn more quickly and retain more surely in proportion to the association of what they learn with what they already know and see and are interested in.

There are, however, two serious omissions in the Wardha Scheme. One is the correlation of the Wardha curriculum with that of the ordinary high school. Though the great majority of the village pupils of the Wardha school will not proceed further, a few will show aptitude for higher studies, even for university and professional courses. These must be provided for, since it is from such pupils that the best scientists and artists will come, and since all those who have the necessary bent for higher studies

should both in their own interest and in that of the country be encouraged. A bridge should therefore be made leading from the highest classes of the Wardha school to the highest forms of the ordinary 'literary' high school and thence to the university.

Secondly, the Wardha Scheme makes no provision for religious education in the strict sense of the term. Since the Wardha school is the only school most village children will ever attend, and since their parents are unable to teach them their religion, where else can they be given a systematic religious education if not in this school? As we have said elsewhere, it is no excuse to say that there are many difficulties in India or that religion leads to mutual distrust and division. A clear duty cannot be evaded on the plea of difficulty in accomplishing it. The religious education of children in the Wardha school can be best provided for by allowing private denominational bodies to open their own schools, provided they conform to the Wardha Scheme (which can be checked by inspection and grants-in-aid regulations). These bodies will not only provide religious education better than the State could, but also cost less to the taxpayer. And there is not much danger of overlapping, for in the villages there is greater religious homogeneity than in the towns—religious groups in fact are the origin of many villages in India.

With these qualifications, therefore, the Wardha Scheme may be considered the boldest and completest attempt so far made to solve the great

problem of India's illiteracy for the villages. If it succeeds it may be extended, in a modified form, to the urban areas as well. But its success or failure will depend entirely on the teachers who have to work it. Every educational system ultimately depends on the teacher; the Wardha Scheme depends *entirely* on him—for it cannot be institutionalized; it depends on the spirit in which the teacher understands his vocation and the place he fills in the future of India. If suitable teachers are forthcoming—able, self-sacrificing, unselfish, dedicated to their great mission—the Scheme will remove one of the great obstacles to India's greatness.

Attempts have been made since the Wardha Scheme was first launched to put it into practice. In Bombay, Bihar, the Central and United Provinces, in Assam, and in Orissa the Government inaugurated schools and training centres which should work it. The resignation of the Congress ministries in these provinces and World War II prevented the scheme from getting a fair trial, and four years are in any case too short to test with anything like fairness an educational experiment so contrary to custom and so provocative of prejudice. But it may still be of interest to examine how far it gave promise of success in the places where it was introduced.

The Government of Bombay sanctioned the opening of 100 'basic' schools (this adjective has been applied to schools run on Wardha Scheme lines because they centre education round a *basic* handicraft). The United Provinces

even started a 'Government Basic Training College' at Allahabad which, according to Dr Zakir Husain, 'makes no special claims but is ready to adapt and adopt any fruitful methods to brighten and improve education', and works 'this modified Wardha Scheme of Education.'[1] Bihar made an experiment at Brindavan and opened 25 'basic' schools with spinning and gardening as basic crafts. In the Central Provinces the Government approved the 'basic' syllabus and allowed its introduction in primary schools, provided the teachers, equipment, and material were otherwise obtained. Sixty-eight offers of Vidya Mandirs were considered by the Government and 153 teachers were trained for such schools. The Government of Assam sanctioned Rs 1,200 for the training of teachers under the Wardha Scheme. In Orissa the Government set up a Board of Basic Education and deputed seven persons to learn the method at Wardha and introduce it in Orissa on their return.

Madras, Bengal, the Punjab, the North-West Frontier Province, and Sind did not adopt the 'basic' scheme in their recognized schools, though they encouraged private schools to try it. The Punjab adopted some of its features in a scheme of its own.

After working the Wardha Scheme for a brief two years the Orissa Government, in a communique of 6 February 1941, decided to close its 'basic' schools and training school from 1 March because 'this experiment cannot even be given

[1] *Education in India in 1938-39*, p. 73.

the best chance of success in this province'. Similarly other provinces which had tried the scheme also gave it up one by one, partly because the political party that had sponsored it was no longer in power to enforce its continuance, and partly because the scheme itself revealed certain drawbacks which had been only dimly foreseen before.

At the Second Basic Education Conference, held in Delhi in April 1941, the chief results of the Wardha experiment were assessed. Every place where it had been tried reported that 'the children in basic schools are more active, cheerful, self-reliant, their power of self-expression is well developed, they are acquiring habits of co-operative work, and social prejudices are breaking down.'[1] This was expected, for the 'basic' school undoubtedly places the village child in his natural surroundings and therefore gives him more scope for healthy development than our traditional bookish type of school. And if the experiment were tried longer and tried out, still better results of this kind might here be expected.

But the defects, or at any rate the difficulties, of the scheme had also stood out from its three-year test. The Conference was stern in holding on to its recommendation that there should be no whittling down or adaptation of the scheme which would, as generally happens in such cases, cut the ground from under its feet. But it also admitted that supervision of schools and teachers, which is as important as teaching

[1] *Two Years of Work*, 1942, p. 251.

itself, should be sympathetic and efficient if any real success is to be secured. An even greater difficulty is the correlation of teaching to the handicraft. This seems easy enough in theory; but when a whole course of five or more years is to be so correlated, there is danger of overlapping, of repetition, and of monotony. Hence the resolution of the Conference that 'correlation should not be forced and pedantic, and that all the three centres of correlation, viz the craft, the social environment, and the physical environment, should be fully exploited.' Experience alone can guide us in a practical experiment like this; and the only way of profiting by the experience of others is to keep and publish 'full and faithful diaries of competent teachers using this technique'. Such diaries will after several years allow one to formulate a general syllabus of correlation and thus ensure the uniformity which is needed in a system of such wide application.

It is this want of right correlation which accounts for the fairly universal criticism that the child in the Wardha school is overburdened with 'work'. The introduction of art in both training and basic schools (the first will lead to the second) will partially remedy this defect. And, above all, the efficient teaching of religion in its true sense will (though the Conference did not seem to realize it) give the whole system a moral and spiritual and psychological background which counts for more towards its success or failure than a wilderness of earthly reasons.

Since August 1947 the Government of India has officially sponsored the Wardha system of basic education and directed the States to gradually transform all their primary schools into basic, giving all their teachers a 'basic training' for this purpose. Even graduate teachers are encouraged to specialize in basic education and in each State one or more Training Colleges have been started to impart such training. The original Wardha ideal of self-sufficiency and 'earn while you learn' has been considerably watered down, and the principle of teaching all other subjects *through* a handicraft has been modified almost beyond recognition; but the word 'basic' has all the charm of its departed originator, and the idea of simplicity behind it is undoubtedly Indian.

CHAPTER XII

THE SARGENT SCHEME

An Outline

WHILE the White Paper in England was passing into an Act, the Central Advisory Board of Education which contained about forty official and non-official members connected with education, published in 1944 a Report of 99 pages (besides seven statistical tables) on 'Post-war Educational Development in India' which sets out a comprehensive plan for the education of India. Sir John Sargent, whose name is popularly associated with this scheme, was not its sole author, but he was much more than one of its thirty-four signatories, for ever since his arrival in India his heart had been set on a post-war plan for India that should compare with R. A. Butler's for his own country. To call this Government plan 'national' might sound pretentious, if not suspicious; but the intention of its authors is to claim that it is universal, i.e., not for one Province but for the whole of India, not for a stage or kind of education but for all the rungs of the ladder from the age of two to forty.

The Introduction claims with understandable pride that this is the first time in the history of India that a serious attempt has been made to grasp the whole educational nettle, with all its stinging thorns—administration, finance, person-

nel. This claim may do less than justice to Ram Mohan Roy, Gokhale, and successive Commissions since 1854. But no one will grudge the Central Advisory Board the credit for making the first systematic attempt to tackle the whole problem at one go. And for a poor country like ours, whose poverty has successfully laid to earth the brightest schemes for its improvement, the courage that has not winced at an annual expense of 312 crores of rupees deserves praise.

The lowest stage of education is that which precedes the age of 6 when compulsion begins. This is known in other countries as the infants' or nursery school, but is here referred to, rather unmusically, as pre-primary education. These schools will not be compulsory but they will be made attractive enough to draw as many children as possible of the age 2–6. No one who is even superficially in touch with modern research in child psychology will deny that this is the most important stage of the entire educational process and that it needs the best teachers and the most carefully chosen environment, if the later structure is to produce a really better India. The secret of Madame Montessori's revolution in education is just this discovery that the age of educability is much earlier than was ever thought and that education is not given by a teacher but absorbed by the pupil from a suitable environment (in Montessori language, 'didactic material'). It is heartening to see that the Report shows acquaintance with this generally little known subject. Quoting from the Report

on Vocational Education by Abbott and Wood, it says:

> A growing child needs experience more than instruction. . . . The education of young children should provide . . . for their physical care, for training them in good habits and for widening their experience through interesting activities . . . acting and singing, physical exercises, games and dancing, care of flowers and animals, drawing and making things.

That last phrase—*making things*—is the key to education at that (and not only at that) age, for the instinct to 'create', in the broad sense of doing something by oneself and feeling it is one's own handiwork, is one of the earliest and noblest in the growing child, though it is unfortunately given little scope for exercise and development in the ordinary stereotyped school. A pre-primary school, therefore, on Montessori lines would be the best beginning of a happier orientation of education.

There is one danger, however, which must be pointed out with all the greater earnestness as the Russian example has had time to be known by its fruits. To wean children from their mothers at the age of 2 to 6 is in itself a risky undertaking, for the worst mother is in many ways better for such a child than the best creche or kindergarten. Mothers who work all day in a factory may need to put their children somewhere else while they are there. But even they cannot be *forced* to send their children to any institution, however well managed, not to speak of State-controlled and totalitarian-doped nurseries where the very first principles of morality are

flouted. The prophylactic against this danger is not the abolition of such pre-primary schools but their protection from contamination. If they are left to private agencies and the free choice of them is left to those who are responsible, first and last, for the education of their children, they will be a powerful leaven of the new India.

The Report insists that the teachers of pre-primary schools for both sexes should be women. Hardly any educationist is likely to disagree with this, though some may wonder *when* India will provide sufficient women teachers with the qualities and qualifications necessary for this important task. Many years of first propaganda and then choice and training will be needed before this can be worked.

The second and most extensive—because compulsory and universal—stage of education is the primary or elementary, which is to last from the age of 6 to 14 and apply to boys as well as girls (the upper limit for girls coinciding with the lower limit for marriage according to the Sarda Act.) This stage has by a delicate courtesy been called Basic education and divided into junior basic—from 6 to 11 *plus*—and senior basic from—11 to 14. All children will here be taught whatever an ordinary modern citizen ought to know, as well as a handicraft which is useful in that locality, the difference between the Wardha Scheme and the Sargent lying in the former wishing everything to be taught *round* a craft and the latter being satisfied with teaching everything *and* a craft.

The basic school has two stages; a junior, which corresponds to the primary school and is strictly compulsory on all children, and a senior which corresponds to the middle school and is meant for those who will finish their education with it and not proceed to the high school. To provide for those children who have the necessary aptitudes for either a high school or a technical school, there must be at the end of the junior basic school a selection, to be made by the teachers in consultation with the parents, in the best interests of the child. This 'selection' will be the most unpleasant of a teacher's duties in a country where a 'literary' (i.e., bookish) education is considered incomparably superior to a commercial or technical or vocational. As Lamb said (not of Indians but of India House) the wood (of the clerk's desk) has entered our soul. Those who have some experience of admitting students to various alternative courses of optional subjects either in school or college know how much ignorant obstinacy they have to contend with—how shameful it is considered to take history rather than chemistry (with its stinks), or chemistry rather than mathematics (with its chalk)! What headmaster, then, can have the heart, even if he has the head, to choose a less dignified subject or school for a pupil on the threshold of the basic school?

This will, I think, be the test and the stumbling-block of the whole Sargent Scheme. The principle of selection according to aptitude is

perfectly sound. As the child develops in the junior basic school he will reveal his latent potentialities, and the teacher's duty is to observe the child and guide the parent, the parent's to trust the teacher and lead the child in the path that is best *for him.* This will be possible only when parents are themselves educated to understand these truths of education. It is also to be hoped that when India develops industrially and commercially, as she must if left to herself, these truths will penetrate the public mind and it will at last dawn on parents that there is no such thing as a *varnasrama* among subjects or types of education.

The medium of instruction in the basic school, as in the high school, will be the pupil's mother-tongue; but, for obvious practical reasons, while the junior basic school is wholly vernacular, the senior basic may be of two kinds—vernacular and anglo-vernacular.

The long-felt need of variety in our school courses is admitted in the following recommendation of the Committee:

> The various types of post-primary schools (other than the senior basic school) to which suitable children may be transferred at the end of the junior basic stage should provide a variety of courses extending over a period of at least five years after the age of eleven. These courses, while preserving an essentially cultural character, should be designed to prepare pupils for entry to industrial and commercial (and one may add, agricultural) occupations as well as to universities.

The carrying out of this wise reform, besides presupposing the education of popular opinion on

the lines I have suggested, also implies a co-operation between education and business or industry which does not yet exist in India. It is only if firms like Tata and Birla and Dalmia take an interest in training their future workmen, give them stipends while they study, and absorb them into their service when they are trained, first as apprentices and later as master-craftsmen, that in a poor and timid country like ours parents will begin to believe in technical or commercial education.

The high school in the Sargent Scheme is to be alternative to the senior basic school and last six years from the age of eleven *plus* to seventeen. Those children who at the end of the junior basic school are considered fit for the high school are to be directed thither. Since high school education will at least for a long time to come be neither compulsory nor free, poor but suitable children will have to be helped with scholarships from public funds or private donations. In other countries it has been found that one pupil in every four or five who pass out of an elementary school is suitable for a high school education. If the same proportion is kept, about 7,258,500 pupils will need a high school education in India. To provide these schools, to staff them with the best available teachers, to locate them conveniently in rural and urban areas—these are practical problems for the administrator. But for the educationist the chief anxiety is the right choice of pupils for the high school and the alternative senior basic and technical schools, so

that no talent or aptitude may go to waste through want of means or guidance.

In the high school itself there will be two parallel or rather concentric and converging paths—one academic and leading to the university, the other technical and leading to a 'vocation'. Both will have a common core of the humanities—the mother-tongue, English as a second language, modern languages, history, geography, mathematics, agriculture, music. But while the academic side has classical languages and civics, the technical side will do wood and metal work, elementary engineering, measured drawing, book-keeping, shorthand, typewriting, accountancy—not all these at once but according to local and personal choice. Girls' high schools will offer domestic science besides the subjects meant for boys.

The fact that both types of high schools are fundamentally equally educative and that the technical school is not meant to be a specialized technological or commercial institute but only a place for general education with a vocational bias, is a feature of the Scheme which deserves special praise; for it shows knowledge of the true object of a high school as well as a grasp of the psychology of the Indian mind. If both types of school could, as we hope, be housed in the same building; so that the technical student need not feel that between him and the academic student there is fixed a great gulf a great problem would be solved.

Besides the craft taught in the basic school

and the technical side provided in the high school, the Sargent Scheme also includes technical, commercial, and art schools strictly so called. The object of these is not to educate but to provide skilled craftsmen, intelligent foremen and executives, and research workers. The recruitment to such schools will naturally be from the different stages of the basic and high school: the skilled craftsmen coming from the senior basic school, the foremen and minor executives from the technical high school, and the research workers and chief executives from the technological department of a university or from a technical institute of the Polytechnic type.

As Abbott and Wood have pointed out, we in India need, and shall more and more need, not mere artisans but directors and managers of industry who know the inside working of a factory or business and can wisely guide its policy. A systematic network of technical courses, helped by the captains of industry and commerce, is the only way of providing for this great need.

On University education the Report has not much to say, not that it is perfect, but because this stage of education is not of as universal and pressing an importance as the others. Every one who knows our universities, and especially those who are themselves products of them, will agree with the following guarded judgement:

> In spite of all the attention which has been devoted to

the subject of university education and of the valuable contributions to human knowledge which have undoubtedly been made by Indian universities, it cannot be said that as a whole they have yet realized the full aims and aspirations of a university education in the highest sense.

—where the word 'realized' is probably meant in more than one sense. One of the best (or worst) indictments of our universities out of our own mouths is the universal Indian opinion that any Indian who has graduated at any European or American university is superior to any graduate of any Indian university. The inferiority microbe has nowhere bitten deeper!

This is not the place to speak at length of what our Indian universities lack. Compared to the number of high school students their enrolment is very large: about one in every three high school students here enters the university, while in England it is one in seven, and about the same proportion in Germany (before the war). But the proportion of university students to the entire population is only 1 to 2,200 in India, while it is 1 to 690 in (pre-war) Germany, 1 to 837 in Great Britain, and 1 to 225 in the United States.

Such a top-heavy structure would be justifiable if it really produced the 'infiltration' which Macaulay and Bentinck expected from it and fulfilled a well-known definition:

'A University aims at raising the intellectual tone of society, at cultivating the public mind, at purifying the national taste, at supplying true principles to popular aspiration, at giving enlargement and sobriety to the ideas of the age, at

facilitating the exercise of political power and refining the intercourse of private life.'

Poverty is, of course, responsible for almost all the defects of our university education. But we have not even cut our coat according to our cloth. The Report therefore recommends that there should be a strict selection of students for university courses and a raising of the standards which can be done only if the selection is strict. Poor but fit students should be helped, and the unfit rich be with kind cruelty kept out. Better methods of teaching will follow a better choice of students; better teachers will result from better students.

The number of university students, however, cannot be arbitrarily reduced but should on the contrary be increased, for the entire system will need, besides other learned professions, at least ten times as many teachers as there are now, most of whom must be graduates.

To co-ordinate and unify the work of the universities and prevent waste, the Report suggests an all-India committee on the same lines as the University Grants Committee in Great Britain, consisting of a few eminent non-officials of university experience who shall advise the Central Government as well as Provincial Governments on the allocation of grants from public funds and see that while each university jealously guards its autonomy, it also works for and not against the common good of all and of the country as a whole.

This proposal is reasonable and even necessary,

especially in such a vast and divided country as ours is. But there is a danger inevitable to it which must not be overlooked. A university is by its very definition an autonomous and inviolably independent moral person. It must keep its finger on the nation's string and tune itself to its life; but no poverty or necessity should ever force it to sell its birthright. A Grants Committee begins with advice; on that advice will depend the favour of the Central and Provincial Government and, above all, the grants without which no Indian university can live. Who can guarantee that our entire university education will not soon become, as in Germany and Russia, a slave of the State?

I need not dwell on the other parts of the Sargent Scheme because I have dealt with them in other chapters. Adult education, for example, has to be given to all men and women between 14 and 40 either in night schools (in towns) or during off seasons (in the villages). Religion, in the sense of moral science, is to be taught in all State schools, and religious (dogmatic) teaching to be allowed in denominational institutions; though how far and how much, is still being discussed by a special committee of the Central Advisory Board. We would put before them the Scottish example which has worked as satisfactorily as can be expected in the difficult circumstances. The East India Company's policy of neutrality has degenerated into indifference, and no one who sees below the surface can boast any longer of the spirituality of the educated Indian

of to-day. This nettle, too, must be grasped, though the thorns prick.

I have not mentioned, except indirectly, a feature of the scheme which will gladden the hearts of all teachers and attract better men and women to their profession—the raising of their scales of pay. It is consoling to think that there will be no teacher even in the most elementary school who gets less than Rs 30 a month, that headmasters of high schools will get Rs. 300 or more, that there will be never more than 30 pupils in a class or section, that teachers will be given a much better training than now. . .

The plan will take thirty years to come into full force and the transition will be slow and painful. But much is to be expected if the public are convinced of its necessity and importance. Provided the State does not encroach on inalienable personal and family rights, no thinking man will object to State intervention and control for the greater good of all. But when Indians feel that the State is working for their own good and that there is something for which they can cheerfully sacrifice money and men . . . without dishonour ?

Selection of pupils

I have said that the most difficult and most important item of the whole scheme is the selection of pupils for each stage and kind of education. Its importance is obvious to any one who understands the meaning of education and

appreciates the value of the individual child in himself and to the nation as a family. No two children have exactly the same gifts and potentialities of body and soul: as star differs from star in brightness, even less does God repeat Himself in man, the most complex work of His hands. In each human child He has sown different seeds of energy, intellect, and virtue through the natural channels of heredity and pre-natal environment. The only function of education is to provide suitable opportunities for the germinating and growth of these seeds to the full stature of maturity of which they are capable.

But since these gifts and latent powers are different, the opportunities for their development through repeated exercise must also be different. The tragedy of wasted talent which India has witnessed for the last century is mostly due to just the want of *different* kinds of education for different kinds of children. The total number of graduates and matriculates our country boasts of is far from small compared to the number of those who can read and write. But how much alike they are, and how they all crowd into the same few professions and careers, leaving large and important gaps in the national service! Long political subjection is not the only reason for the large number of foreigners who hold key positions in our industry and trade and are indispensable to the very life of India as a civilized country. That there is no talent in our four hundred millions for such

professions, that India is so spiritual, art-loving, plunged in thought, averse to material progress, as to be incapable of ever standing on her own legs as a self-sufficing nation, not even the most imperialistic diehard will dare to say at this time of day. But that most of our talent remains undeveloped and atrophied for lack of suitable opportunity, i.e. of suitable education, who can deny?

This is not merely a question of public policy or State economy. It is one of justice and charity to the individual as well as to society, for both have a right to the opportunities required for the normal exercise of their God-given gifts to attain the welfare of both—which is interdependent.

If the education of each child, then, is to be suitable to his talents and if different children have different talents, it follows that different kinds of education must be provided for different children if they are not to be misfits in life. Strictly speaking there should be as many kinds of schools or of subjects taught at school as there are kinds of talents and potentialities among children. But if this is too costly, there should at least be an academic and a 'vocational' side to education at each stage, so that the two main categories of aptitudes may be suitably drawn out and developed.

This is what the Sargent Scheme at last boldly proposes to do in India on a wide scale. And no educationist will say that it is too early a reform of our system. But many of our legislators and

politicians who hold fast the bird in the hand are alarmed at the implications of this 'bifurcation'. As long as there was only one groove for all, there was no choice to be made and every child blindly went on from class to class unless poverty or health stood in the way, from primary to middle school, from middle to high school, from school to college. Bifurcation means selection, and selection means rejection. Who is to choose the suitable school or subject for each child at each stage? Who is to decide whether the child, at the age of eleven *plus*, is more fit for the senior basic school or for the high school, for the academic high school or the technical high school, for the university or the technical college? The pupil? The parent? The teacher? Ay, there's the rub.

The child himself is obviously unable to decide for himself at the age of eleven, though his aptitudes must have by that time revealed themselves to his parents and class teachers through his success or failure, his voluntary choice of games and hobbies, his reactions to the various impacts of the home and school environment. He must at any rate be consulted on his preferences, for even at this early age he may have a clear sense of his own aptitudes especially if he has an active rather than a passive temperament.

The best to choose are the parents, who have the primary right and duty to educate their children according to their capacity. They, indeed, ought to know the aptitudes of their children and have their future welfare at heart.

Under the caste system the father chose the kind of education for his sons by the very trade or craft he followed, and he became his son's teacher till he was old enough to succeed him. In our modern society, the parent should at least help the child to find out what kind of post-primary school would best suit him. And if he is unselfish and intelligent, no wiser choice can be imagined than the one he would make for his child. But where are such parents to be found? Does not a 'fond' love of themselves and their children blind most of them into choosing, not what is best *for their children*, but what seems best *in itself* or for 'society'? Indeed, if the choice of the kind of school were left to Indian parents, the traditional 'academic' kind of education would go on for ever and no parent would accept the 'shame' of putting his son in a senior basic or technical high school where low subjects like history or book-keeping are taught instead of high things like Algebra and Geometry.

Since the ideally wise and detached parent has not yet been born since the Fall, all countries have entrusted part of the responsibility of selecting the suitable kind of education for children (which is a morally better job than that of selecting pupils for each kind or stage of education) to the teacher. He is a specialist in the science and art of knowing the person no less than the thing he teaches. And he is impartial—or more likely than any one else to be so—in his judgement of the pupil's aptitudes.

It may indeed be said that the Indian teacher *as he is to day* is not as technically competent as his English or American brother, that Indian society does not place the same admiring confidence in either the professional value or the personal impartiality of his judgements. This suspicion—or want of confidence—unfortunately gains additional support from our ingrained caste and religious and racial differences which make it all but impossible for any Indian to have honour in his own country. But we have to trust some one, if education and society are to go on; and whom can we trust if not the teacher who has specialized in studying and drawing out the aptitudes of children? To say that Indian teachers cannot be trusted for competence or disinterestedness is to despair of India. Let us improve the choice and training of our teachers; let us by respecting and trusting them force them to deserve our confidence; in any case, the worst service an Indian can do to India is to despair of his own countrymen.

By 'teacher', however, I do not mean any particular class of teacher—government or private, headmaster or assistant—but every one who knows the child and has taught him in the years immediately preceding the selection of which I am speaking. Whether this should be the responsibility of the headmaster or of the class teacher is of less importance to the educationist than to the student of comparative dignity. The child's welfare—and hence the nation's—requires that the teacher who advises the parent and gives

an authoritative opinion does really know the child's aptitudes, not by a casual test but by intimate observation and experiment over a number of years.

Whether the final and definitive advice of the teacher should be based on an examination may be discussed. I suspect that many a headmaster hard pressed by interested parents would gladly take refuge in an impersonal examination, which would relieve him of an odious duty. But an examination, however scientific and reliable, is no substitute for a serious, impartial and intelligent teacher's opinion, for it is blind and mechanical and tests only a certain point of time; and as I have shown elsewhere,[1] how few examinations are at all reliable?

The only reason why an examination may be necessary at the end of the junior basic school is the purely accidental and practical one that with such a large number of pupils to be 'selected' it will be very laborious and embarrassing for teachers to do it themselves. This difficulty, however, will be less formidable than we imagine, since under the Sargent Scheme there will be a proportionately immensely larger number and better quality of teachers available for consultation. Still, if an examination is held, it should be made to serve its purpose—which is selection on the basis of *aptitude for the next stage of education*, not of achievement in the previous stage. This distinction is fundamental and needs the most serious stressing.

It is true that the Sargent Report is aware

[1] *The New Review*, December 1936.

of its importance, for it, says (page 20):

> The candidates on the lists so revised should undergo a common examination which should not be too strenuous and should be designed to test intelligence and promise rather than actual attainment.

But it is not easy to assess intelligence by mere tests, as critics of the Binet-Simon method of finding the Intelligence Quotient (even with Terman's modifications) and of Spearman's experiments for discovering 'g' and 's' have shown. And still less easy is it to find out aptitudes for various subjects of study by means of a single examination held one warm morning. For how in practice can such an examination be conducted? Obviously by asking a number of questions on arithmetic, everyday science, geography, languages, and giving the pupil little time to answer them. Such an examination will be not selective but competitive, therefore not only useless but even harmful. It will be a repetition of the entrance examination to secondary schools in England at the age of eleven, which the Director of Education for Hertfordshire calls 'catastrophic', for a child's whole future education (and consequently future career) is decided on the way he or she answers a certain number of relatively simple questions in the basic subjects on one spring morning[1].

The reason for this universal distrust of examinations to assess aptitudes for further studies is obvious. It is almost impossible to devise a satisfactory examination like this; competitive examinations are easy to devise, examinations to

[1] *Willingly to School*, by John Newson.

test achievement (i.e. study) of a definite standard are easy to devise; but how can an examination (especially, as is almost inevitable when the number of examinees is so large) be devised to test the aptitude of children of eleven for basic or academic subjects?

The Sargent Report takes the examination for granted and even suggests that Inspectors of Schools be made to conduct them (presumably for greater impartiality than can be expected of headmasters). It also takes for granted the competence of Inspectors to conduct this examination—with what justification, may be doubted by those who know how our Inspectors of Schools are recruited and how much professional ability they bring to their responsible task.

I would suggest that an examination be avoided if possible, and that even if it is unavoidable it be used only as a secondary and confirmatory test, the main responsibility being thrown on the teachers who have many and prolonged means of testing and finding out their pupils' aptitude. They may, in the course of the junior basic school, apply intelligence tests or tests of general and special aptitudes, remembering that they are not all of equal value, for vocational and practical tests (e.g. observation or carpentry tests) are more reliable than general or theoretical tests (e.g. I. Q. or G.). It is the unintelligent use and worship of intelligence tests that made Boris Sidis say that 'the intelligence tests are silly, pedantic, absurd and grossly misleading'.[1] But if our teachers are in their training schools and

[1] *The Foundations of Normal and Abnormal Psychology*, Preface, V.

colleges trained in the rational and intelligent administration of tests, they can *in the course of their teaching* use them to find out fairly accurately at least the main aptitudes of their pupils.

It may further be asked whether the decision of the teacher (with or without the help of an *ad hoc* examination) is to be final and binding on the parent and pupil. The Sargent Report says that preliminary lists of pupils fit for the high school should be prepared by the heads of junior basic schools, revised by Inspectors, and tested and confirmed by an examination controlled by a special Board of Examiners. Parents may insist on their children being allowed to appear for the examination, but not on their being selected for one kind of post-junior basic school or another.

This attitude is, I think, correct. If selection is necessary, as will be universally admitted, it must be made by a competent and impartial judge; the parent guided by the teacher is morally and technically the ideal judge, not ignoring the child's own tastes and desires as far as they are articulate at the age of eleven. It is mere sentimental wobbling to say, as the authors of the Madras Scheme do, that parents should be left free to send their children to whichever kind of school they like, for this would only continue the tragedy of the last hundred years and all the paper spent on Schemes need never have been dirtied. There must, chiefly in view of our ingrained worship of 'literary' education, be a certain salutary sternness and rigidity in the selection of pupils, though there should also be

sufficient elasticity to prevent mistakes and, if they have been made, to allow them to be corrected as soon as they are detected at any stage of the child's education.

The Sargent Report rightly says:

> Facilities will have to be provided for the transfer of suitable children from the senior basic (middle) to the high school at a later stage, particularly when they show definite signs of late development.

This is fair and scientifically sound, for the rate of development varies from child to child and even from one period of a child's life (even apart from health or illness) to another.

What will follow this 'selection' has been already discussed. I have suggested that to make the diversity of courses in the high school *psychologically* easier to the Indian parent and pupil, the same school should offer both literary and technical subjects, so that no one may feel the disgrace of studying woodwork or book-keeping while his cousin is studying Algebra and Geometry. I have found a writer in *The Economist*[1] advocate the same system of 'multilateral' schools in England, not so much for the psychological or sentimental reason (which is more actual in India) as for the practical reason that the transfer of pupils from one type of school to another as and when they reveal their aptitudes becomes easier if the same school provides more than one kind of education.

In India as in England the importance of selection on as impartial and objective a basis as is possible cannot be overstressed—in India

[1] 20 January 1945, p. 70.

even more than in England. As long as there is a 'higher' and a 'lower' education in the popular mind, this selection will at times be painful. But it has to be done both for the individual's and the country's good. 'Only when there are not merely secondary schools for all, but the right place in the right school for each child, can the strain and disappointment of competition be replaced by the harmony and continuity of natural educational development'.[1]

[1] Op. cit., p. 71.

CHAPTER XIII

THE INDIAN UNIVERSITY EDUCATION COMMISSION

THE Commission appointed by the Government of India on 4 November 1948 'to report on Indian University Education and suggest improvements and extensions that may be desirable to suit present and future requirements of the country', is likely to go down in history as a landmark in the long course of higher education in this country. Consisting of ten members, including Sir James Duff of Durham and Drs Arthur Morgan and John Tigert from the United States, with Dr S. Radhakrishnan as Chairman, it toured the whole of India visiting all the university centres, interviewing teachers, students, Ministers, Vice-Chancellors and Syndics. It published the first volume of its Report in 1949, in 747 formidable pages setting out a wealth of observation and wisdom which though it bears the marks of divers hands will make a fairly good textbook for teachers and educationists for many a year.

It is not necessary to summarize or comment on the whole of this interesting Report. I shall point out a few of its recommendations which are of greater interest to teachers and legislators.

After tracing briefly the history of University education in India, the Report explains the

scope of this stage of education in the context of modern political and social conditions. Our education must be Indian, i.e. built on the foundations of our country's history and spirit (which I have elsewhere called its ' personality '), if it is to be true education and not just a superficial veneer of hastily applied and therefore easily scraped-off polish. That is the chief lesson we have learned from the otherwise useful system introduced by the British in 1835 and retained till within recent memory. But more important still is the lesson the whole world has learned from World War II. It is not rash to ascribe most of the sufferings of Europe today to the submergence of the humanities in its educational system in a frantic emphasis on physical science which holds the key to material progress. Every educator will rejoice (p. 66 of the Report) that

> if we wish to bring about a savage upheaval in our society, a *rakshasa raj*, all that we need to do is to give vocational and technical education and starve the spirit.

Since Universities are the natural birthplace of a country's leaders, it is obviously there more than anywhere else that the right emphasis must be secured, the right balance kept between the body and the soul, the individual and society, matter and spirit. They must not only preserve and spread the treasures of the past but also add to them by research and discovery.

What the Report says on teachers will meet with general agreement, though to carry it out is not within the power of any one class of men

but needs the convinced co-operation of the entire community. Reading between the lines of the Report we see the disappointment we all share with the Commission at the poor quality of work done: climate, poverty, want of incentive—material or spiritual—these are excuses made by vested interests; but the deepest reason is that the best men and women do not become teachers in India, and those who do have too much teaching or administration to leave enough energy and interest for self-improvement, without which a teacher is as dead as mutton. We welcome the suggestion that periodical leave should be given to University teachers (one year at a time and three years in total service) on half pay, for further study in India or abroad. But this again brings back the fundamental difficulty of the poverty of the teacher: only a well-to-do man can afford to take study leave on half pay and go to some learned centre to re-educate himself. When most University teachers in India (not to speak of their poorer brethren in schools) cannot even afford to attend an annual teachers' conference or refresher course, it is mere fun to suggest that they should be given leisure, without the means to use it.

Another wise recommendation is the tutorial system, not in the spoon-feeding sense it is often understood, but for genuine personal contact between teachers and taught by which both may be stimulated and encouraged. Here again, however, to work the tutorial system successfully depends, not so much on the number of tutors

employed (though this has its importance) as on the kind of men or women employed as tutors. Not by insisting on first or second class graduates for these posts (though this also means something, other things being equal) will the right type be found for this most useful but unglamorous work. The reason why tutorial work and even teaching has not produced the desired effect in our Universities seems to have escaped the Commission, or at any rate has not been clearly expressed in their Report: pay and prospects alone are not enough to explain it, nor Government alone or the public alone, but all these together in differing degrees.

The courses of study, the organization of arts and science colleges, and the professions are given long chapters. The technical experience of Dr Morgan and Dr Tigert is responsible for many of these wise pages. But the problem finally returns to the quality of the teachers of all these subjects. And important as the teacher is in the lower stages of education, he becomes not less but more so as the student advances. Only a burning torch, says Bergson, can light a new one—not at a distance, but by actual contact. The recruitment, training, and treatment of University teachers, therefore, seems to me the central problem which needs immediate solution and on which all others depend.

There is a chapter on examinations, pointing out the admitted defects of our prevailing system of written tests covering the work of two or more years, and recommending as an alternative

the now popular American system of 'objective' tests at shorter intervals during the course and a greater emphasis on day-to-day records of oral and written work. I am not quite sure that these tests will be an improvement in every way or for every kind of examination. They may be successful and reliable in intelligence and attainment rating, but not so in competitive or aptitude grading, especially with the large numbers to be dealt with and the poor equipment of most colleges in India. Frequent tests on small areas of knowledge may be easier for the candidate but they will not give him the opportunity to let a subject sink into his mind and connect itself with other branches and departments of knowledge, nor will it give him the immensely useful training for after-life of sustained effort and calm coolness in the face of danger. And, finally, will this 'objective' testing not depend, more than any examination we now have, on the *subjective* attitude, mood, and judgement of the teacher? It might seem churlish to so much as hint at this, but it cannot be denied that before any 'objective' tests can be given, the country must have confidence in the subjective competence and reliability of the testers. In a large and heterogeneous nation like ours, with a tradition of centuries of dividedness, this is not as easy as it should be.

A striking recommendation in Chapter XI of the Report is that 'a modified proctorial system, in which students will play a large part, or student government, be developed' (p. 391). The Com-

mission say that they have seen this at work in 'a few colleges' and name just one where 'student government operates effectively and smoothly'—Isabella Thoburn College for Women at Lucknow. This is a small college, very compact, run by Christian missionary women for women. I am not aware of any other college in India of more than five hundred students where the same success has been recorded. The idea is undoubtedly good, and it does work in some small and homogeneous colleges in America and Europe, where traditions are different from ours. To succeed in our large educational markets, a long preparation would be first necessary.

On the nettlish subject of religious education there is a whole chapter which bears the unmistakable stamp of Dr Radhakrishnan. After briefly reviewing its history and quoting the relevant articles of our new Constitution, the Report admits the need of religion in a secular state with a long tradition of 'spirituality' like India. But it does not clearly distinguish between morality and religion but contents itself with delightfully vague statements like 'Religion is a permeative influence, a quality of life, an elevation of purpose' (p. 300), advocates books for study which contradict one another—*Bhagavad Gita*, *Dhammapada*, *Zend Avesta*, the Old Testament, the Gospel according to St John (of all Gospels!), the Koran, the Guru Granth Sahib (p. 302). What religion students, even post-graduate, will learn or 'catch' from such an

assortment, and where suitable chefs can be found to serve it up, we are not told.

After the recent heat of battle over the medium of instruction it is refreshing to read the ninth chapter of the Report. No educationist will deny that 'It is educationally unsound to make a foreign tongue the means of acquiring knowledge' (p. 317). The question is whether the *practical* difficulties peculiar to India do not outweigh the *theoretical* advantages at the University stage. While advocating the use of the regional language as medium, the Report does not define what is the regional language of Madras or Bombay or Delhi or Nagpur, or answer the all-important question whether a University teaching and examining everything in a regional language would be a University in the true sense, whether specialists from another region will no longer be wanted, whether men and women educated within the narrow limits of their region will be able 'to give a powerful stimulus to research and extension of the boundaries of knowledge' (p. 395).

A less flattering but more fundamental and therefore inescapable subject for any thinker on University education is whether it deserves the name. After what the Harvard Report has said about American universities, may we not ask ourselves, too, whether by multiplying colleges and graduates we have not multiplied institutions and persons that used to be known by a more modest name? Even the so-far conservative and almost snobbish universities of Oxford and

Cambridge complain that with the large influx of ex-service men and the large measure of assistance given by a Labour Government to students coming up from less exclusive schools, their standards, academic and social, have suffered since the War. It is therefore not unbecoming or idle for our own universities to ask themselves whether they are still aiming high enough to justify their title.

The University Commission Report, after recording drily that 'many of our witnesses have expressed the opinion that the average standards of our university teaching and examinations are low', adds that 'one principal of a degree college maintained that an average graduate of an Indian university was not very much superior to a matriculate of a British university'. This, of course, the Commission indignantly remarks, 'may be an exaggeration', but goes on to admit that 'many of our universities do not compare favourably with the best of British and American universities in respect of their teaching and examination standards' (p. 84). I am not interested in comparing our universities with those of other countries: it is enough to examine the standard of these institutions from which we hope to draw the leaders of our country.

No one who actually teaches in any of our colleges will deny that the level of both aptitude and achievement in them is low, compared either with twenty years ago or with an absolute standard of university requirements. The difficulty lies in locating the cause or causes of this decline.

The Commission deplores the large percentage of failures (as high as 59 in Madras) in the Intermediate examination. But this may be only a symptom of the unfitness of many of those who come up from the school to the university and the all but impossibility of giving them any real education in the large and crowded class rooms and crowded hostels and playgrounds of our colleges. And this in turn may be connected with the low quality of those who teach, and this again may not be unconnected with the low salaries and other prospects of the profession. As soon as one touches one end of this complex symptom one sees the whole chain of diseases in a chronic patient! It is the duty of a University Commission to diagnose and prescribe for the entire *malaise*—saying in what order the treatment should proceed. To say that the quality of our Intermediate colleges is poor is to shift the problem back to the secondary school, and from there back to the primary. To blame the teachers is to blame the colleges from which they come—and start the whole cycle again.

I think the fundamental cause of our low standards is the unfitness of a large proportion of those who enter our universities. By the immature age of 14, many boys and girls pass the equivalent of matriculation, parents vying with one another to get their children through the school as early as they can. From the school they naturally and almost automatically pass into the university, as if that were just another step in the same ladder. The Commission rightly points

out that the average Intermediate student in our colleges is much too young and immature to profit by a university course or to be treated as a university student: indeed, both he and his parents want him to be spoon-fed and apron-strung till graduation—nor can the teachers and wardens find any other way of treating him if he is not to make shipwreck of his adolescent mind and character.

One way, therefore, of improving the quality of our university education (for standards are set, not by teachers and examiners, but by pupils and examinees) is obviously what the University Commission recommends—to raise the age for admission to university courses to about 18. Why just 18, it may not be easy to prove with stethoscope and X-ray; but everyone who knows the Indian boy and girl will *feel* that this is about the age when their aptitudes and tastes are fairly known and their minds are mature enough to *understand* (and not merely to remember) what a university tries to put before them.

This raising of the college age implies a lengthening of the school course by a year or two, which leads to new problems of planning and finance. Perhaps the key to the whole solution of our school problem would be a definite unhinging of the notoriously converging stages of secondary and higher education and a clear policy which makes the School Final Examination truly final instead of being a step in a continuous process from primary to degree stage. There is certainly enough work to be done till the age of

18, especially by those whose aptitudes and circumstances fit them for a university course. The difficulty of money and teachers and equipment is beyond the scope of this chapter.

In any reform of our system of higher education the need of selecting from among the large number that apply for admission to arts or science or professional colleges seems to me inescapable, however painful the process may be, for selection of any kind implies rejection. In the best interest of the applicants themselves and of the nation and the whole world there must be some test of *fitness* for the course they take if waste and misfits are to be avoided. The same question was discussed at the Conference of the Universities of Great Britain and Northern Ireland in December 1948, at which (according to *Nature*)[1], 'the most impressive features of the discussion generally were the recognition of the vital importance of maintaining standards, and of ensuring that the only criterion for admission to a university should be the personal merits of the candidate'. The word 'merit' will in a caste-ridden country at once raise the spectre of communal percentages and rotations and revive in simple souls their traditional faith in 'marks'—those infallible numbers which, however often proved to be unreliable and inconsistent, still when added up without any attention to subject or standard are a sure guide to their possessor's fitness for any profession or course he may choose! How the total marks in a number of unrelated subjects are a *complete*

[1] 11 February 1950, p. 209.

and sufficient criterion of an applicant's fitness for such diverse professions as medicine, engineering, and law, no one seems to pause to consider. The attempt made by the Army to judge fitness for its commissions, though not infallibly reliable, is on the right lines. The special tests which applicants to the Christian Medical College, Vellore, go through deserve to be imitated (not copied) by every Arts and Science college, and much more by every professional college that wants to keep a high standard and benefit the country.

This is not the place to suggest the kind of test best fitted to select students for our university courses. We may briefly say that neither intelligence alone nor aptitude alone nor attitude alone but *g* and every relevant *s* should be adequately assessed. Valuable as tests are, they may be dangerous and misleading if unskilfully administered—if, for example, the dependence of their reliability on associations of language, home and school education, and socio-economic environment is not taken into due account. A warning given by Dr S. Biesheuvel is of great practical wisdom: 'Cultural associations go far deeper than content . . . and far deeper than the mental habits established by school education. They affect manipulative habits, symbolic reactions, possibly the entire approach to and interpretation of the perceptual world.' India needs a large body of skilled psychologists who can be relied on to work out various kinds of tests applicable to the different areas and groups and courses; this

branch of applied psychology should be immediately incorporated in the syllabus of every training school and college so that the new generation of teachers may know how to work tests intelligently and impartially.

This brings me to the urgent need of many thousand more teachers of all grades to take up the unremunerative and in many ways thankless but all the more sublime and meritorious profession of educating the new independent India. Speaking of teachers in *English Studies* (1949), an experienced headmaster says: 'Yet there is also not one of them, probably, who would if he had the chance choose any other profession even though he might have reason to believe that his talents in the world of industry or commerce would bring him not only greater material rewards but a refreshing sense of achievement.' The University Commission rightly remark: 'The success of the educational process depends so much on the character and ability of the teacher that in any plan of university reform the main concern must be for securing an adequate staff with qualifications necessary for the discharge of its many-sided duties.' What the chapter says about the recruiting and training and after-care of teachers of all grades deserves to be pondered by a nation that has unaccountably lost its ancient respect for the *guru*. The very existence of India as an independent country will depend on whether she succeeds in drawing and keeping the best men and women in the vocation of teaching.

But it is regrettable that the Commission has not mentioned *the* defect of our educational system in general and of our universities in particular. This system was successful in producing fit candidates for subordinate posts in British India. In spite of the new responsibilities of an independent country, no change seems to have been even contemplated in the entire outlook of pupils in every stage of education. To produce first-rate men who can be entrusted with the highest positions of responsibility, a system is urgently needed which shall encourage initiative and originality by suitable teaching and examination, foster habits of personal study of original rather than second-hand sources, train young men and women in intellectual and moral honesty, and in the entire life of a hostel or college teach them to win the confidence of others by deserving it. It is only by such a complete overhaul of the purpose of higher (and proportionately of lower) education, which again depends on a new outlook in teachers, that India will be worthy of her independence.

CHAPTER XIV

CONCLUSION

WE have in the foregoing pages only touched a few of the problems which Indian education has encountered in its long and eventful history. The different periods of this history have been the subject of detailed studies; it is to these books that the student of each period should go for complete information. Our intention in these few pages has been to draw the reader's attention only to the chief *currents* of Indian educational history and show how the problems of today may be understood in the light of previous attempts to solve them.

It is unnecessary to repeat the suggestions we have made in each chapter. But in concluding this survey I feel it my duty, even at the risk of repetition, to point out the most important of them all and the one on which all the others depend—without which the rest will be at best a child's answer to a world question. If India is to be educated, her education must be Indian.

Our educational policy for over a century mainly consisted in copying English schemes with a loyalty which was worthy of a better cause. This was inevitable in the circumstances. English education was a novelty, and it was the way to safe and honourable employment under the rulers. It was an imported article, and the men

who could handle it had to be imported too. The history of education in India since 1835 shows Director after Director trying to introduce into his province the methods and ideals he had seen used in his youth in England, and often advocating systems which had already been tried and discarded in his own country. When the system of payment by results had failed in England, it was warmly recommended here; when residential universities were England's greatest contribution to educational history, affiliating universities were started in India; when the Montessori system is everywhere established in Europe, it is still being discussed here.

The result of this slavish copying of other countries' methods is that, in spite of the large number of graduates and schools of all grades India possesses today (which though, absolutely speaking, still small, is always growing), we are not an educated nation. Our highly educated men and women are unable to put their knowledge to constructive use, they lack the power of *applying* principles to new situations, they cannot adapt their theoretical experience to the life around them, they do not feel the instinctive urge of true learning to communicate itself, and to improve and create.

It has been remarked by foreigners that the average educated man or woman in India is intellectually immature and therefore lacking in initiative and creativeness; and there is not a little truth in the remark. It is difficult otherwise to explain the poverty of India's contribution to

art and science in spite of the centuries-long start she had on America and most countries of Europe, and the intellectual and moral quality of her people which even her enemies cannot ignore. Political subjection—with its worse corrollary, the inferiority complex—is not the whole cause. The great defect of Indian education during the last century is that it has not been Indian and consequently not been education. By 'Indian' is not meant restricted to the knowledge of things Indian, for the *informative* content of education should be as universal as possible and nothing could be more uneducative than an exclusive study of one's own country's history, language, traditions, and ideas. By 'Indian' is meant suited to India.

Just as each man's character is the resultant of heredity, environment, and experience (which includes every thought, word, and deed of which he has been actively or passively the subject), so each country's temperament is the product of its climate, history, and achievement in the domain of matter as well as of spirit. Just as each man has a personality distinct and different from every other man, each country has a personality (though not in the same strict sense) distinct and different from every other country. Hence, just as a child cannot be *educated* except in terms of his own personality, so a nation can only be educated in terms of its own 'personality'. And it will be able to make its distinctive contribution to the common welfare of mankind (each nation, however 'backward', has a contribution to make

which no other can) only if this personality is developed to maturity in its own sphere.

What has been really defective in Indian education, then, is that it has not built on the language, art, history, and philosophy that already existed, but ignored these and *juxtaposed* another language, other customs, another history, art, philosophy. The school thus became, not a continuation and complement of the home, but an unreal dream of six hours in the day, during which a language was heard spoken quite different from the language of real home life, birds and animals and events and phenomena were described which were remote from the student's experience and perhaps even his rosiest ambitions, and customs and institutions were held up for his admiration which had no connexion with his life. Since the schoolboy always idealizes his school, the world of which his school books spoke became for him the ideal, and the real world of home seemed wrong and backward. He grew ashamed, without knowing why, of the very language his parents spoke to him, of their dress, their manners and traditions, the religion they held dear and sacred. He tried to forget the realities of home and longed to shed them as soon as he could. He would not return to the village home, but sought a life, however lowly, in the society which he had learned to admire at school.

If education makes the child see what is really wrong in his life and try to correct and improve it, this is a sign that it is doing its work. It is the mark of an educated man to take nothing

on hearsay, to examine everything, to better himself and the world around him. But the educated Indian has not acquired this power: he does not *examine* his own language, religion, customs, to see what is wrong with them. He disowns and is ashamed of them without testing them in the light of calm reason. He has shed his own religion, language, art, customs, and not acquired any other. He has lost contact with the real world around him, and not found a new world (except in a dreamy mirage) to receive him.

This is the real tragedy of Indian education—that it has not been Indian and therefore not education. There were, of course, many difficulties in the way. But instead of patiently facing them, we have coolly ignored or evaded them. There were many languages, and few textbooks in these languages: instead of making the books (as every other country has done), ready-made books were imported from England and an unknown language was made the medium of instruction. There were many religions in India, and religion (even the East India Company did not deny) was essential in education: in spite of the protests and curses of the missionaries, religion was banished from the school and the harmful principle of neutrality officially admitted. The history and culture of India were difficult to learn and teach, and likely to rouse inconvenient passions, but they were a part of India's personality on which education had to be based: Indian history and culture were ignored, and English history and literature

taught—with the additional advantage of securing the newly acquired Empire.

Each of these difficulties, however, has to be squarely faced if Indian education is to be worth the name.

It is an elementary axiom of psychology that education can only proceed from the known to the unknown, providing the pupil with only one 'unknown' at a time. The mother-tongue (whether high or low in the philologist's eyes) is a part of the pupil's capital, and must therefore form the starting point and middle term of all his new knowledge. Words in that language have for him a clear meaning: they are more than symbols for him, they are images, and therefore alive with associations and rich in possibilities of new relations. This is true not only of the primary but even of the secondary school student—indeed, it is true of the grown-up man as well—that the language of familiar intercourse is the natural and therefore the most fruitful vehicle of *new* thoughts.

To make the pupil's mother-tongue the medium of instruction in the lower classes and, if the language is sufficiently developed, as far as Matriculation, was therefore the first change needed in the educational system of independent India. In no other country in the world (except in a few small subject countries) was a foreign language the medium of primary and secondary instruction. In the university stage, though theoretically the mother-tongue should continue to be the medium, the practical advantages of

English far outweigh the theoretical disadvantages, for it is the only means of unifying the intelligentsia of India and the only link between India and the rest of the world. Hindi, the national language of the Indian Union, may meanwhile develop naturally and organically, as living languages must, so that it may be able to convey abstract and complicated thought with the trappings of scientific terminology. In the High School, however, the mother-tongue should be the medium of all instruction (English, too, being a medium for those who claim it for their mother-tongue).

The second important factor of India's personality which no true education can ignore is religion. In India religion has from ancient times permeated and directed every other activity. Hence in educating an Indian the religious convictions and practices which have sunk by centuries of tradition into his very blood must be taken into account. It has been noticed that converts, even several generations old, keep in their subconscious minds the whole 'system' of ideas and images of their ancestors' religion. To teach even Indian Christians, therefore, and much more Indian Hindus or Muslims, a knowledge of the Hindu and Muslim 'mind' is necessary. It is the want of this knowledge and the deliberate denial of its need that has been one of the chief causes of the decay of religion in India. The student was never given an occasion to examine his own religion, to study it rationally and systematically and test the doctrines and

practices handed down by his elders. The result is the curious enigma of the modern educated Hindu or Muslim, who is half ashamed of his religion but does not know why, who conforms outwardly to please his grandparents but has no convictions one way or the other, who has some vague and incoherent prejudices against Christianity but has not the courage to study its claims, and whose mind is a perfect palimpsest in which fact and myth, history and legend, belief and opinion cross each other in undecipherable confusion.

Apart from the spiritual loss which such an 'education' means, there is the loss of one of India's richest sources of self-development. Religion should therefore be reinstated in its rightful place as the first subject in the curriculum and the guide and atmosphere of the whole school. It is on this sound educational principle and not through narrowness or 'communalism' that Catholics in all countries insist on being educated in Catholic schools, where their religion is seriously taught and practised, where the teachers are themselves Catholics and can therefore base their teaching of every subject on this important common foundation, and where the very air they breathe is fragrant with the perfume of religion.

Another great defect of our educational system is the submergence of Indian history and culture. There were, of course, good reasons for this. Indian history was not available in books (a cynic said that what passed for Indian history was neither Indian nor history); it was full of

'controversial' episodes; it was likely to foster 'nationalism'. The result was that an educated Indian knew more about Alfred than about Asoka, about the British constitution than about the Indian; and that ten Indians could be found to rattle off the names of the members of the British Cabinet to one that could name the Ministers of his own province. Besides, one cannot love what one does not know, or be interested in what one does not love. The product of our education is not interested in the realities around him, does not look at the birds, beasts, and trees before his very eyes: his mind is filled with second-hand ideas of snow and nightingales and midnight suns—mere words which answer to no reality in his consciousness.

What a loss this misorientation of education has meant to India from the educational point of view (not to speak of many others), it would be hard to over-state. Our knowledge has been national, not real; hence our threshold of dynamism has been lowered, and our virile instincts of action, initiative, resistance have been all but atrophied. Our education has ignored some of the elementary principles of psychology. There were excuses for this policy, no doubt, in the immensity of the country and the want of homogeneity in the material. But it has probably been the principal cause of India's backwardness compared with much smaller and younger countries like Germany, England, Italy, and Japan: for economic and political backwardness is the result of educational.

The remedy lies at hand and is not as costly as pretty schemes made in England. Those responsible for reorganizing our entire educational system have only to grasp the principle I have explained. The rest will soon follow: textbooks in the Indian languages are already available and are less costly than the corresponding English ones: competent teachers of Indian history, geography, music, folklore, and literature are available in greater numbers than can be employed; the teaching of religion may be left to the heads of each religion and ample scope given to private initiative under reasonable supervision and impartial State aid, as I have suggested in an article in the *New Review*.[1] It is because the Wardha Scheme, unlike so many others, shows some respect for India's personality and advocates an education in terms of the *village* child's actual environment, that I have welcomed it while pointing out its practical and theoretical defects.[2] It is because Messrs Abbott and Wood showed some understanding of the real mistake in Indian education and made a sincere, if partial, attempt to correct it in *urban* schools, that I approved of their Report, with certain modifications.[3]

But the days of half-hearted nibblings at the great problem of India's education are past. Before political or economic improvement can be dreamt of, a radical reorientation of the entire educational system, especially (though not only)

[1] September 1938, 212–26.
[2] *New Review*, December 1937, 505–20; September 1938, 212–26.
[3] ibid, October 1937, 332–47.

in the primary and secondary stages, is necessary. The relative importance of literacy and learning, general and special education, physical, intellectual, and religious education, should be understood and maintained. Above all, the right kind of teachers—the pivot and test of all education—should be chosen and trained. India will be India only when she is educated; and she can be educated only in her own way.

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